



Encore Program Evaluation Report

Fall Semester 2016



February 1, 2017

Introduction

Dear Encore Singers:

In December 2016, we asked you “how are we doing?” You replied to our Satisfaction Survey in large numbers and have given us great insight into what you like about Encore and how you feel we can improve. We want you to know we have taken your comments to heart. We were pleased to note that you overwhelmingly feel that we’re doing a good job. Not surprisingly, however, there are areas where you think we can do better – and we will strive to do so.

Our entire staff has reviewed the survey results. Additionally, we have distributed the survey report to each of our conductors and asked that they look for identified opportunities to do better.

Finally, we are sharing the results of the survey with you, along with our initial responses to some of your comments, in this document.

Thank you for your ongoing support for Encore – something we value greatly!

Survey Background

At Encore’s Board of Directors meeting of November 30, 2016, the Board directed the Executive and Artistic Directors to distribute a survey to all Encore singers at the end of the Fall 2016 semester. This was accomplished and this report details the results of the survey.

The survey asked the singers to rate their experience with Encore from several perspectives asking the following questions, generally to be answered on a five-point scale:

- How satisfied were you with your choral experience?
- How satisfied are you with the quality of instruction from your conductor(s)?
- How satisfied were you with the communication and advance information you received from the Encore office?
- How satisfied were you with the rehearsal facility and location?
- How enjoyable was the music/repertoire selection?
- How would you rate the level of challenge of the music selection?
- How satisfied were you with your rehearsal CD?
- How prepared did you feel for your final concert(s)?
- How satisfied were you with your final concert venue(s)?
- Do you plan on returning for the next semester? (Response choices were yes / no / not sure)

We also asked what did you especially like about the Encore program and/or what could we have done better or what changes would you like to see for the future?

Encore received survey responses from 368 singers, or approximately a third of all participants. While it is difficult to characterize whether this is a “good” or “bad” rate of return for Encore, it would be considered an excellent rate of return for surveys in general.

Survey Results

This section provides an overall view of survey responses across all programs. Other than “intent to return,” all responses are on a five-point scale, with five being the highest. Pie charts are color coded dark and light green for the highest and next highest rating, respectively; yellow is a neutral response; red and pink are the lowest and next lowest rating.

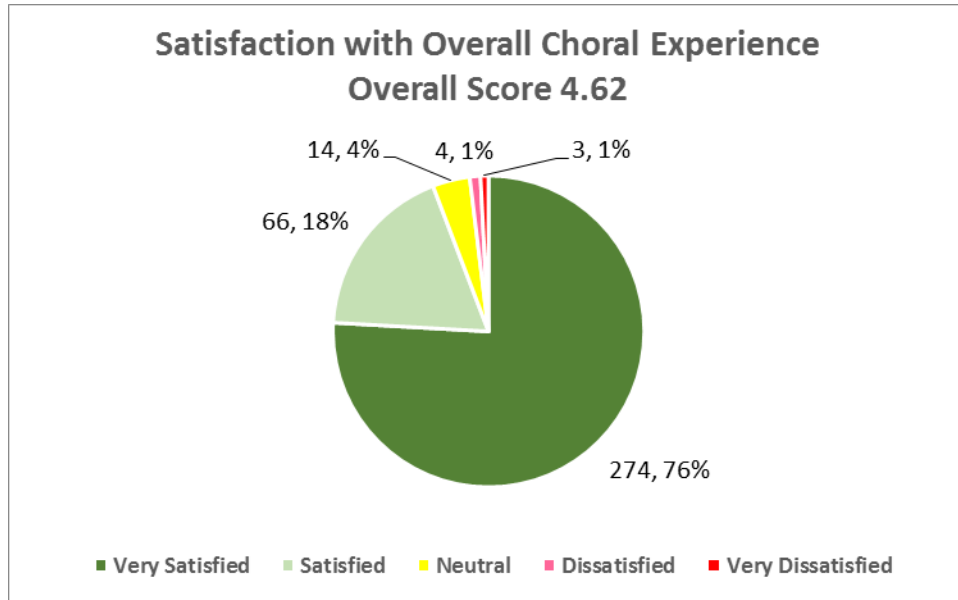
Score averages, with one exception (detailed below) ranged from a high of 4.72 to a low of 4.40 indicating a very high degree of satisfaction with Encore’s program delivery.

Overall Satisfaction

94% of survey respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their overall choral experience. 2% were “very dissatisfied” or “dissatisfied.”

Positive comments pointed to some things Encore strives for, such as making rehearsals fun, and providing an opportunity to socialize and meet new people. One singer said, “The program meets its goals entirely. It gives senior singers reasonably challenging material at the right level of difficulty. Also, it keeps our voices in shape for singing in other venues, e.g., church choirs. The atmosphere is cheerful and supportive of all singers”

New singers sometimes felt it was difficult to “join the club,” so to speak, and that we should do a better job of identifying, welcoming and orienting those who are new to our program as to what we’re all about. We think that’s a great idea and will be developing a “welcome to Encore” program in the next semester.



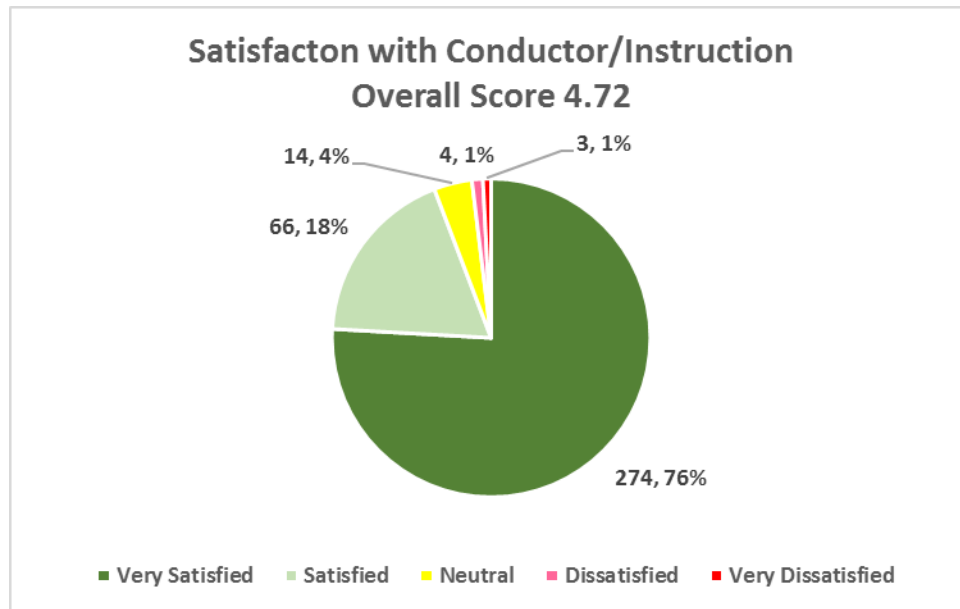
Conductor/Instruction

Overall satisfaction with Encore conductors was high, with 94% saying they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied.” Perhaps this one singer’s comment summed up the general feeling: “It is a privilege to have such talented professionals work with older adults.”

Areas of concern included changes to repertoire as semester progressed, especially near the end, and maintenance of discipline at rehearsals.

Unfortunately, at times, we discover issues as the semester is progressing that may dictate changes. For example, we found some of the music in the ROCKS repertoire was too difficult. We understand your concerns and will strive to keep mid-course corrections to a minimum.

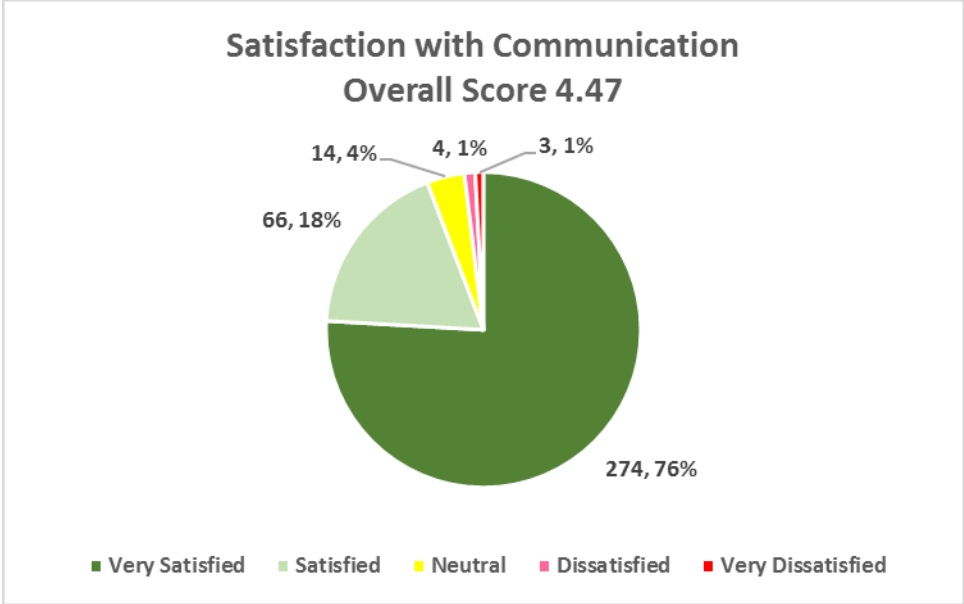
As this question was the most “personal” we will coordinate with individual conductors regarding any issues cited.



Communication

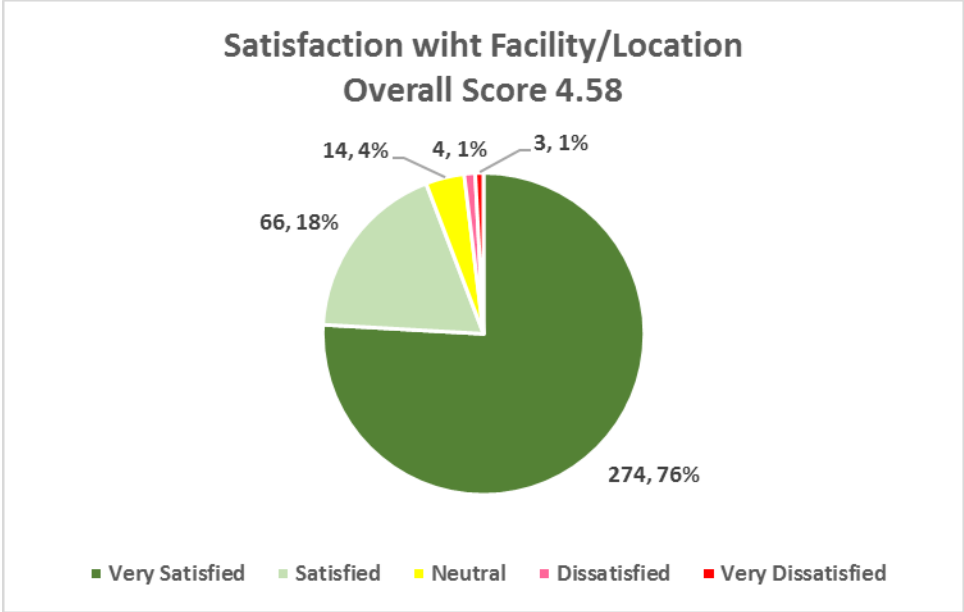
While Communication received 94% “very satisfied” and “satisfied” ratings, this category received a higher than average number of critical comments, suggesting room for improvement. There were no favorable comments, i.e., no one singled out communication as a positive thing worth mentioning. Critical comments were directed at the home office, as well as conductors.

We hear you and will be looking at ways we can improve. With nearly 1,000 singers and 20 programs, it’s a challenge to keep everyone informed. You can help us by reading the emails and newsletters we send out and let us know promptly if there is a problem.



Facility

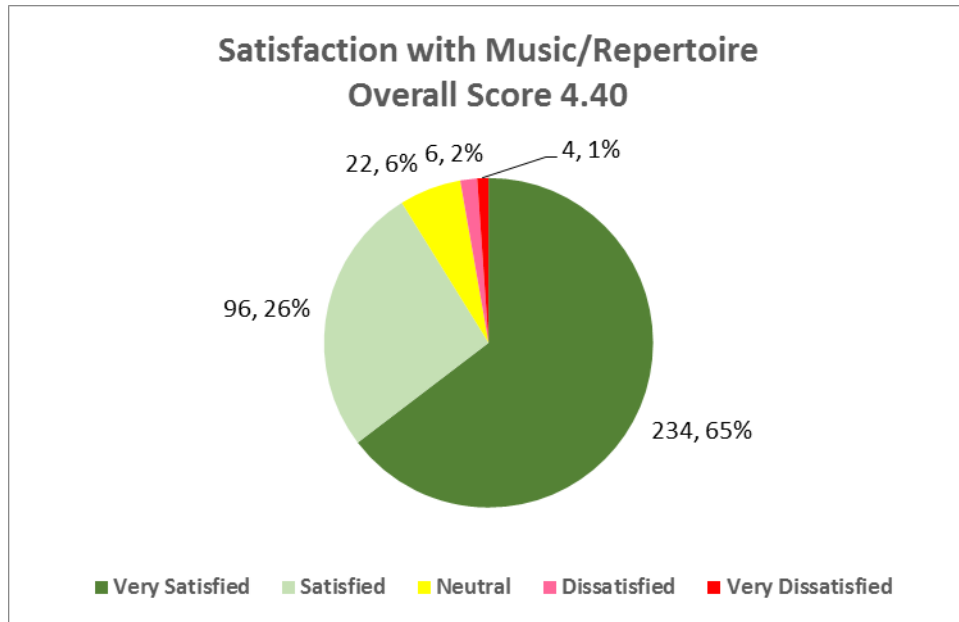
94% rated Facility/Location as “very satisfied” or “satisfied.” As we are using many facilities for our programs, each has its own strengths or weaknesses. Where problems can be remedied, we will be working to make changes. Where we have significant issues, we are considering alternative locations.



Music / Repertoire

While 91% rated Music/Repertoire as “very satisfied” or “satisfied,” this category received the most comments, both positive and negative. Many comments, especially negative, focused on holiday repertoire, with a variety of points of view, many conflicting, expressed.

Encore’s repertoire selection, and pleasing the most people, is probably the greatest challenge Encore has. People have widely differing desires and expectations. The music is almost entirely selected by Encore’s Artistic Director, Jeanne Kelly, and Associate Artistic Director, Jeff Dokken (for ROCKS). They strive to strike a balance in terms of music genres, levels of difficulty and finding music that our audiences will most enjoy. In the end, not everyone will be pleased with each selection, but we continue to try. Your comments in this area are helpful.

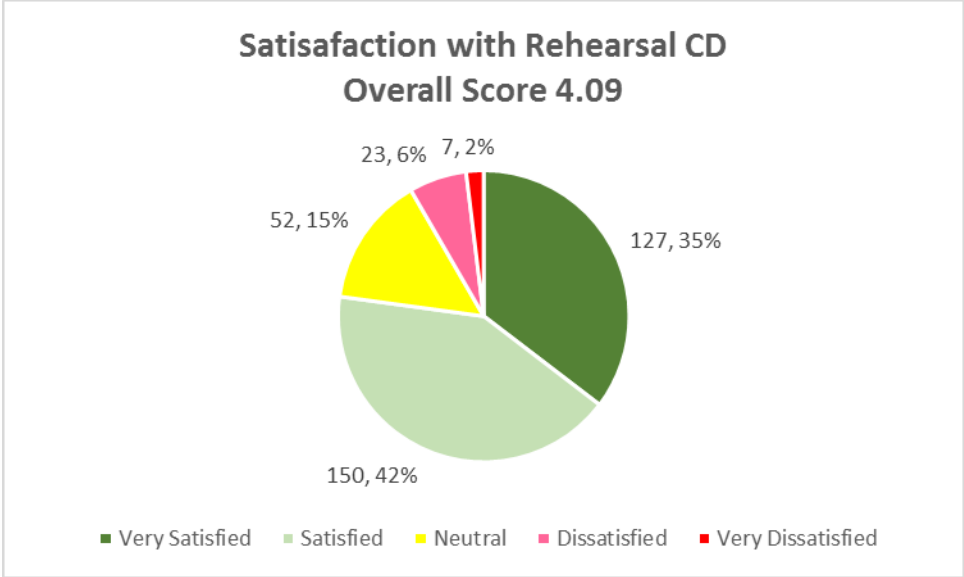


Rehearsal CD

Satisfaction with the rehearsal CD was lowest of all categories surveyed. 23% were dissatisfied or neutral. The single greatest complaint was the recording of female parts by a male. However, 77% said they were satisfied with the CD.

Providing a rehearsal CD is something that differentiates Encore for most choruses. Until the last couple of years, Encore “self-produced” the CDs. This was a time-consuming effort that produced inconsistent results. We do not have a variety of resources to have the CDs made. Our current source is the only one we are aware of that can custom-produce the CDs for our needs. We will share your comments with that source and, to the extent it is possible, we will try to make improvements.

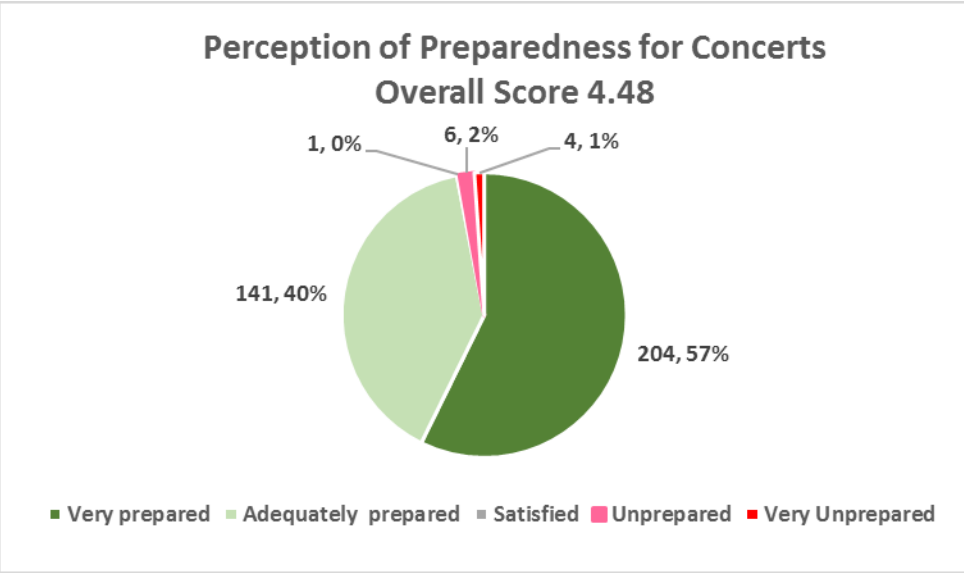
Note, we view the CDs mostly as an aid to learn the words and the notes. Style and presentation are addressed in rehearsals.



Concert Preparedness

Fewer than 3% of respondents felt they were not prepared to perform the concerts. Given our numbers and mixed levels of singing experience, we think that is very good and a reflection of the good work our conductors do.

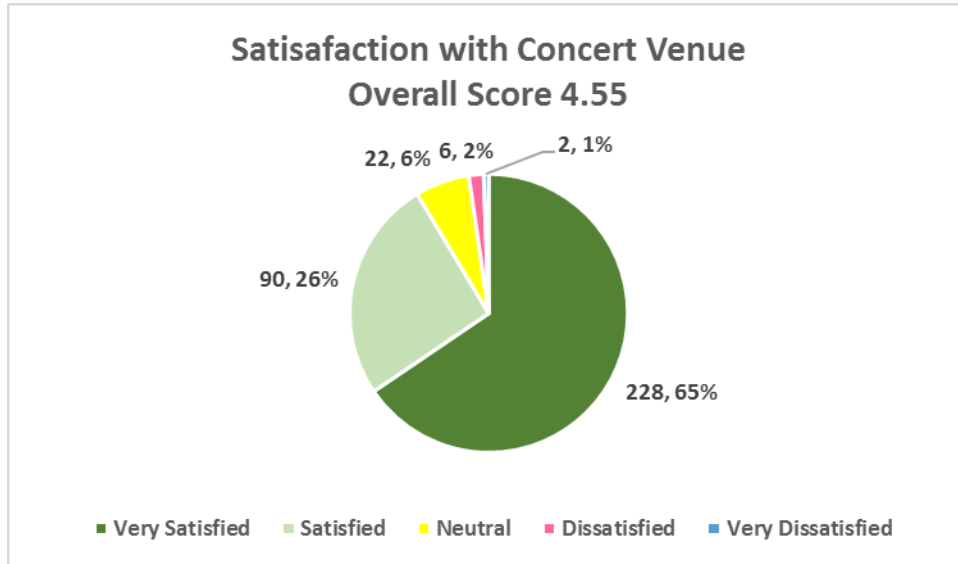
Again, here the negative comments expressed concerns about mid- or late-semester changes. We hear you.



Concert Venues

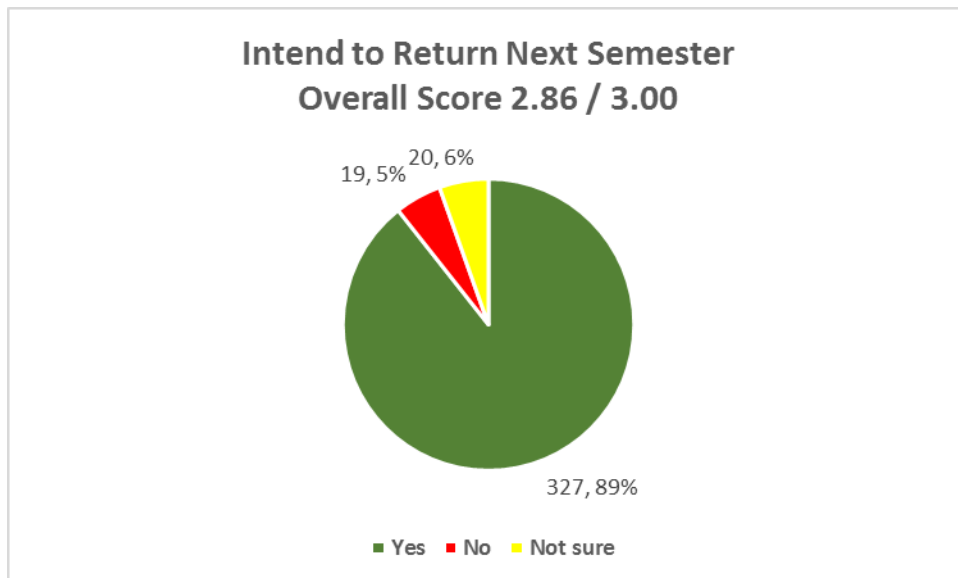
3% expressed dissatisfaction with concert venues. Pre-concert issues at Washington-Lee High School appear to have contributed to negative scores. While this question focused on the concert location,

other comments related to the concerts mentioned the logistical difficulties of getting everyone assembled and in place for the concerts, especially when members of multiple chorales are performing.



Intent to Return

Of the 366 respondents to the question, “Do you plan on returning for the next semester?” 327, or 89% said “yes,” while another 20, or 6% replied “unsure.” 19 or 5% said “no.” Of those stating they did not intend to return. 14, or slightly half, were for reasons related to dissatisfaction with the program. The rest were for reasons unrelated to Encore. We will be contacting as many of those who have not returned for reasons of dissatisfaction to discuss in greater detail their reasons.



Again, thanks to all who took the time to complete our survey! You have made a significant contribution to Encore’s future success.