

Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra

Handbook

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Mission

The mission of the Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestras is to enrich the lives of participants by providing a professional environment for the study, preparation, and performance of music; to serve the community at large by providing high quality, free of charge performances; to complement participation in school music programs; and to encourage and advocate art, music, and music education in the Piedmont Triad region.

Background Information

The Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra (GSYO) was founded in 1971 by the Greensboro Symphony Society through the initial efforts of board member Sam Wilson. The GSYO has been conducted by many noted musicians, including Jack and Gayle Masarie, Peter Wilson, Markand Thacker, Paul Phillips, Steven Karidoyances, Paul Anthony McRae, David Hagy, Charles Gambetta, Cynthia Katsarelis, and Bruce Kiesling. Fouad Fakhouri now leads the GSYO into its 39th year.

The Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra is an educational project directed and underwritten by the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra. Created as an honors ensemble for Greensboro's best and brightest young musician, the youth orchestra has grown significantly in the past decade. Young musicians now travel to Greensboro to from Burlington, Raleigh, Durham, Pinehurst, and southern Virginia to participate in the youth orchestra. The youth orchestra program now includes five ensembles: Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra are directed by Dr. Bruce Kiesling, Philharmonic Strings is conducted by Karen Collins, and Youth Strings and Allegro Strings are led by Gregorio Midero.

The Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra season is made possible with the support of the Lincoln Financial Foundation. The Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra is also supported by the Greensboro Symphony Guild, the Friends of the GSYO, and the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra.

Eligibility

Student musicians in grades 12 and under are invited to apply. All members are strongly encouraged to take private lessons.

The Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra Program exists to enrich the lives of talented young musicians through the study and performance of music. Because the program is intended to complement students' involvement in their school music programs, musicians must participate in their school orchestra or band unless there is a valid reason they cannot.

All students must bring the School Ensemble Participation form to their school's orchestra or band director for the director's signature. Membership in the Youth Orchestra Program will not be finalized until this form is complete. If the student's school does not have a music program, an administrator may sign this form. If the student is homeschooled, a parent may sign this form.

Auditions

Membership in all of the Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestras is obtained by audition. Every member in every ensemble must re-audition each year. Auditions are held in the late summer for

the upcoming season. At auditions, students will be heard by the music director, ensemble conductors, and possibly by members of the Greensboro Symphony.

Applicants for all ensembles should prepare a short solo or etude of their choice, one major and one minor scale of their choice, and be prepared for possible sightreading or orchestral excerpts. Specific audition requirements will be made available in the months prior to auditions.

A \$15 audition fee is due at the time of the audition. Cash and checks are accepted. Checks should be made out to the "Friends of the GSYO."

Students should arrive 15 minutes prior to their scheduled audition time to allow enough time for warm up and completion of the registration process. A warm up room will be available, and an audition monitor will escort students from the warm up room to the audition room at the appropriate time.

Ensemble placement and seating is determined at this audition. Students accepted to the Philharmonic Strings may, with the permission of their conductor, audition to move to the Youth Orchestra in January. Dependent on interest, additional entrance auditions for Philharmonic Strings, Youth Strings, and Allegro Strings may be scheduled in January.

Current and prospective members may request an audition by phone at (336) 335-5456 x230 or by email at education@greensborosymphony.org.

Seating Policy

Seating in the Youth Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra is at the sole discretion of the Music Director. Seating in Philharmonic Strings, Youth Strings, and Allegro Strings is at the sole discretion of the conductors of the respective groups.

Following the auditions, a seating for the first concert will be determined by the music director and principals will be assigned. Co-principals may be named in any section. In the case of co-principals, specific parts will be assigned by the Music Director.

Two or three weeks prior to each concert, the Music Director may privately hear each string player perform two or three short excerpts from his or her part in the current repertoire. One or two of these excerpts will be announced during rehearsal in the weeks leading up to string re-seating audition. At least one excerpt will not be announced in advance and may be chosen from anywhere in the current repertoire. The student's performance on these excerpts will be used to determine a seating for the following concert.

Chamber Orchestra

The Chamber Orchestra is a highly select group of 40 players, specializing in the music of the Classical Era (Schubert, Mozart, and Beethoven) and contemporary works for smaller ensemble.

During seasons in which the GSYO offers a Chamber Orchestra, students will invited to participate by the GSYO music director. Selection will be based on the student's performance in GSYO rehearsals, concerts, and seating auditions, and the needs of the individual works that are programmed. Instrumentation and personnel needs may vary significantly from concert to concert.

Special Events

Youth Orchestra members may be invited participate in other special events These events include, but are not limited to, side by side performances with the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra. Students will be selected for special events based on consultation with the Greensboro Symphony music director, Greensboro Symphony principal players and the practicality of additional players on the Greensboro Symphony programs.

Tuition

Tuition, combined with the efforts of the Greensboro Symphony Guild, the Friends of the GSYO, and foundational and corporate support make possible the many facets of the youth orchestra program.

Tuition has increased for the 2008-2009 season. Rates are as follows:

GSYO: \$250

Chamber Orchestra \$100 (In addition to GSYO Tuition)

Youth Philharmonic: \$150

Youth Strings: \$125

Allegro Strings: \$100

Checks should be made payable to the "Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra." Please mail tuition payments to:

Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra
200 N. Davie St. #10
Greensboro, NC 27401

Tuition invoices will be included in the acceptance packet, which will be mailed immediately following auditions in September. Tuition scholarship award information (if applicable) will be included on the invoice. The due date for tuition (a date in early October that will vary from year to year) will be printed on the invoice. Tuition should be paid in full by the due date. If financial reasons dictate so, tuition may be split into two equal payments, with the first due in October and the second due by the first rehearsal in January . No one is excluded from the youth orchestra program because of inability to pay. However, all students must pay tuition in full, pay in two installments, or make arrangements with the GSYO office by the October payment deadline. If you need to make special arrangements, please contact the GSYO office at (336) 335-5456 x230.

Tuition Scholarships

No one is excluded from the youth orchestra program because of inability to pay. Members of all ensembles may be considered for scholarships. Students and families seeking financial assistance absolutely must fill out the Youth Orchestra scholarship form at the time of audition. Scholarships are awarded immediately after acceptance decisions have been made. Students will be notified of any scholarship award on the tuition invoice in the acceptance packet. Tuition Scholarships are sponsored by the Greensboro Symphony Guild. For descriptions of specialized and merit-based scholarships, please see the section on "Scholarships and Awards."

Rehearsals

All Youth Orchestra ensembles rehearse on Sunday afternoons, from Labor Day to Memorial Day, in the University of North Carolina School of Music. General rehearsal times and locations are as follows:

Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra: 2:00-5:00 p.m., Room 111

Chamber Orchestra: 5:00-6:00 p.m., Room 111

Philharmonic Strings: 3:30-5:00 p.m., Room 110

Youth Strings: 2:00-3:20 p.m., Room 110

Allegro Strings: 3:30-5:00 p.m., Room 154

For a detailed list of rehearsal dates, see the rehearsal schedule on www.gsyo.org. Room assignments for sectional rehearsals will be posted on the day of the rehearsal; signs will be posted at the main entrance and at the door of the group's standard rehearsal room. Check your email regularly, and watch for GSYO email updates, as the schedule may change.

Attendance

A youth orchestra is a large community of young musicians and their families who rely on each other for high standards and the well being of the whole. The members of this ensemble are outstanding young people with many commitments. The attendance policy aims to support the standards of our youth orchestra. Admission to the Youth Orchestra (and Chamber Orchestra) has grown more competitive over the past two years. The attendance policy has been updated to reflect the more select nature of these ensembles.

1. Students may be excused from one rehearsal per concert cycle if they are a member of GSYO or Chamber Orchestra; students may be excused from one rehearsal per calendar month in Youth Philharmonic, Youth Strings, and Allegro.
2. Students must fill out a printed absence form and have it signed by the Music Director and the Orchestra Manager. This must be done in advance of the anticipated absence.
3. Absences will not be excused for sectionals, retreat, or dress rehearsals.
4. Consideration will be given for illness, family emergency, and college auditions.
5. Unexcused absences will lead to parental notification, seating reassignment, and in serious cases, dismissal from the ensemble.

Fall Retreat

Each year, all members of all ensembles participate in a retreat for intensive rehearsals and as a way to get to know one another better. Attendance at the retreat is mandatory. Students must bring their instrument, music, a pencil, and a music stand.

In Fall 2008, the Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra will have an overnight retreat. The retreat will be held October 4-5 at YMCA Camp Weaver, which is located just southeast of Greensboro. Youth Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra members will arrive on the afternoon of Saturday, October 4. Philharmonic Strings, Youth Strings, and Allegro members will join the retreat on the afternoon of Sunday, October 5.

What to bring:

1. Musical instrument and case, labeled with your name
2. Folding music stand, also labeled with your name
3. All sheet music and a pencil
3. Bed sheets and blanket or sleeping bag and pillow
4. Towel, washcloth and other personal overnight items
5. Casual clothes for rehearsals and recreation
6. Recreational items or equipment (basketball, frisbee, etc.)
7. Raincoat, umbrella, or jacket
8. Comfortable shoes.
9. A small amount of money for vending machines, if desired

What NOT to bring:

1. Valuable possessions (other than your instrument)
2. Electronic equipment
3. Skateboards, scooters, or bicycles

Concerts

The Youth Orchestra program gives three concerts every season. All ensembles perform on the first and third concerts, while the second concert may feature only the Youth Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, and concerto competition winners, though this is subject to change.

All Youth Orchestra Concerts are free and open to the public!

In general, members should bring food to eat between the dress rehearsal and the concert. There are also numerous options for dinner at quick-service restaurants in the Greensboro College area.

Concert Attire

Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra

Gentlemen: Black pants (not jeans), black shoes, black socks, white collared shirt, black bow tie, and black jacket.

Ladies: Dressed in black, either mid-calf skirt (or pants-cellists only, no jeans) with either 3/4-length or long sleeved blouse (no spaghetti straps), and black hose and black closed toe shoes. In the case of a black dress: mid-calf length and long or 3/4 sleeves are appropriate.

Philharmonic Strings, Youth Strings, and Allegro

Gentlemen: Black pants (no jeans) and black shirt. Black shoes and socks.

Ladies: Dressed in black, either mid-calf skirt (or pants-cellists only, no jeans) with either 3/4-length or long sleeved white blouse (no spaghetti straps), and black hose and black closed toe shoes.

In the event a musician arrives to the concert in attire that does not fit the above guidelines, he or she will be asked to immediately call home and retrieve the correct clothing from parents or guardians. If the musician is unable to produce the appropriate clothing, he or she will not be permitted to play the concert.

Concert dress is generally not required for dress rehearsals. In the case that concert dress is required, an announcement will be made at rehearsal one week prior to the dress rehearsal and a GSYO Email Update will be sent.

Concerto Competition

The Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra concerto competition is open only to Youth Orchestra members. All students of the Youth Orchestra are encouraged to participate in the competition.

The competition will be judged by musicians from the Greensboro Symphony. The judges may select up to three winners to perform with the Youth Orchestra or Chamber Orchestra on the March concert. The first place winner will receive the Sam Wilson Scholarship, which provides \$1,000 for study at a recognized summer music camp. Other awards may also be available.

In the competition, participants must perform a movement of a standard concerto for their instrument. It is highly recommended that the student play from memory. Piano accompaniment is required and students should make their own arrangements to have an accompanist. The best pianists will require a fee, and this is usually a worthwhile investment. Names of outstanding pianists can be obtained from the conductors. Previous winners cannot perform as soloists with the Youth Orchestra in consecutive years but may still be considered for scholarships.

Applications for the concerto competition will be due in October. Applications will be made available at the beginning of the GSYO season. Depending on the number of applicants, there may be a time limit for each player. Applicants will be notified of any time limit in their competition confirmation letter, which they will receive two weeks prior to the competition. If an applicant exceeds the allowed time, the judges and/or proctor may interrupt the applicant.

Severe Weather Policy

Any decision to delay the start of or cancel a rehearsal because of inclement weather will be made by 10:00 a.m. on the day of the rehearsal. A GSYO Email Update will be used to inform members and families of the cancellation or delay. Notify the Orchestra Manager at education@greensborosymphony.org if your contact information changes!

In case of a power outage and/or lack of internet access, call (336) 335-5456 x230. If rehearsals are cancelled or delayed, there will be a recorded message with information specific to the rehearsal in question.

Tickets to Greensboro Symphony Concerts

Youth Orchestra Program members receive two complimentary tickets to each Greensboro Symphony Masterworks concert. Because some families require more than two tickets to attend a specific concert, each Youth Orchestra program member now receives an allotment of twelve (12) tickets for the season's Masterworks series and ten (10) tickets to the Chamber series to use in whatever combination necessary. Once the allotment is exhausted, no more will be issued. Email requests for tickets must be made to the box office by 3:00 p.m. on concert days, or by 3:00 p.m. on Friday for a Saturday concert. The box office email is boxoffice@greensborosymphony.org. An auto-reply email will be sent to confirm that your request has been received. Please do not call the box office. Complimentary tickets are not available to Gospel or Pops series concerts.

Friends of the GSYO

The Friends of the GSYO is a non-profit organization made up of the parents and guardians of musicians in the Youth Orchestra's ensembles. The Friends provides assistance and volunteer efforts for the ensembles. Meetings are held several times a year. Join the Friends of the GSYO Yahoo Group at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Friends_of_the_GSYO.

Rehearsal Refreshments

Due to limited participation, refreshments may not be available during rehearsal breaks. Snack items may be available for sale through the Friends of the GSYO.

Communications

Friends of the GSYO communicates important information to parents on schedules, refreshment reminders, and fundraising. Mailings and e-mail communications are sent throughout the season, as needed. Our most important announcements happen through the Friends' Yahoo group. Make sure you are a part of it by joining at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Friends_of_the_GSYO

Fundraising

Through various fundraising initiatives throughout the year—CD sales, flower sales, t-shirt sales, bake sales, and more—the Friends gives needed financial support of the Youth Orchestra program.

Committees

Each family is asked to serve in some capacity to help support the young musicians of the Youth Orchestra program. Specifically, each family is asked to volunteer for one Friends of the GSYO committee. A list of committees is available at the September auditions, and on the Friends of the GSYO Yahoo Group.

Scholarships and Awards

Throughout the year, the Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra grants a number of special scholarships and awards. For all scholarships, it is expected that the recipients will audition for the Youth Orchestra the following year (unless they are graduating seniors.)

GSYO Honor String Quartet

The GSYO Honor String Quartet is comprised of the top players from the Youth Orchestra violin, viola, and cello sections. In the event that the principal players are unavailable for a given performance, other members of the youth orchestra may be invited to perform with the quartet. The Quartet performs four times per year. Two of the performances are at Greensboro Symphony Guild functions, and two performances are in conjunction with Greensboro Symphony events. The Quartet is organized and mentored by Karen Collins. Outside groups seeking to hire the GSYO Honor String Quartet should contact Ms. Collins.

Student Responsibilities

What is behind the music the Youth Orchestra performs? When was it written? What drives it? What was happening in history at the time? What were writers and other artists producing at that

time? What does the music mean to me? What does it demand from me? What does it demand from us as an ensemble? Beyond the basics of preparation, attentiveness and attendance, these questions are the responsibility of all musicians in the Youth Orchestra program.

Expectations

Musicians accepted into this ensemble are accepted on the basis of their audition and prepared excerpts. This is a worthwhile ensemble due to the high level of preparation of its members. In the interest of continuing to offer young musicians a high-caliber experience, it is the expectation of all the Youth Orchestra members, conductors, and staff that all the members continue to perform at or above their auditioned level. The Music Director works hard to create an environment that fosters both a relaxed atmosphere yet also a serious attitude toward the difficulties of the music. Simply put, musicians must learn their parts! With this goal, students may be asked to play for the Music Director or their ensemble's conductor if he or she is concerned about the level of preparation a student is presenting in rehearsals.

Preparation

All students absolutely must work their on parts outside of rehearsal. Many students take their parts to their private teachers to assist the learning process. Students are strongly encouraged to listen to recordings and attend concerts to get a stronger sense of the style, aesthetic, character, and musical feeling present in their repertoire. As a reminder, all members of the Youth Orchestra program receive complimentary tickets to Greensboro Symphony Masterworks concerts!

Attentiveness

Students must demonstrate attentiveness in rehearsals. In addition to listening and responding to instructions, students must listen to other parts to ensure their own part fits into the whole, and must be sensitive to the physical gestures of the conductor. Students need to listen and watch within their sections and within the orchestra to match articulations, bowings, and style.

Attendance

Students must be in their seats, warmed up, and ready to five minutes prior to the start of rehearsal. Appropriate instruments, music, and pencil are required. For more details, see the attendance policy above.

Behavior

Respectful, courteous behavior is expected at all times; it should be the norm in interactions with colleagues as well as with the Music Director, conductors, coaches, and parents.

Alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use will not be tolerated at any Youth Orchestra event or activity! This includes, but is not limited to rehearsals, concerts, retreat, tours, and special events.

Students may not leave the premises of the UNCG School of Music during rehearsal breaks.

Violations may result in the student's immediate dismissal from the orchestra, suspension, or probation at the discretion of the Music Director after a conference with the student's parents/guardians. If violations occur while the Youth Orchestra is on retreat or tour, the student's parents/guardians will be responsible for the cost of transporting the student home.

Contact Information

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