

Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra Handbook

Ensemble Overview

Youth Orchestra is a full orchestra of strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion. As the top ensemble of the Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra (GSYO) program, it is a challenging and nurturing environment for advanced orchestral playing. The size of the Youth Orchestra is between 50 and 75 musicians and is open to both extra-curricular and professionally-focused young musicians through 12th grade.

In addition to weekly rehearsals, the Youth Orchestra undertakes special projects such as recordings and regional, national, and international performance trips. Membership in Youth Orchestra requires a substantial commitment from members, both in and outside of rehearsal.

The Youth Orchestra plays full orchestra repertoire - music for combined strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion - in original versions. "Original versions" refers to the scores of musical works as the composer wrote them, as compared to arrangements or transcriptions designed to simplify, reduce, or otherwise change or omit some aspect of the original work.

Dr. Evan Feldman is the GSYO Music Director.

Eligibility

Musicians are accepted into GSYO ensembles on the basis of their auditions. In the interest of continuing to offer young musicians a high-caliber experience, it is the expectation of all the GSYO members, conductors, and staff that all musicians continue to perform at or above their auditioned level. Practicing hearings are held periodically throughout the year. Students may be asked to play for the Music Director individually if he or she is concerned about the level of preparation a student is presenting in rehearsals.

All members must work on their individual parts outside of rehearsals. **The parts for Youth Orchestra cannot be learned solely by attending rehearsals.** Many students take their music to private teachers to assist the learning process. Private lessons are strongly encouraged, and in some cases scholarships are available. Students are also encouraged to listen to recordings and attend concerts to get a stronger sense of the style, character, and musical feeling present in their repertoire.

The GSYO program is intended to complement students' involvement in their school music programs. Musicians are strongly advised to participate and maintain good standing in their school orchestra or band. At the beginning of the season (and throughout the year as needed) the GSYO contacts school ensemble directors regarding students' involvement in ensembles. Input from school ensemble directors may be a factor in a student's admission to and membership in the GSYO.

Decisions on acceptance and ensemble placement are made by the GSYO Music Director, Ensemble Conductors, and Greensboro Symphony (GSO) Education Director, and are not open to appeal.

Attendance Policy

Members of all GSYO ensembles are required to attend all rehearsals. Attendance will be taken at every rehearsal by the Production Assistant and submitted weekly to the GSYO Music Director, Ensemble Conductors, and GSO Education Director (as appropriate.) Unexcused absences may lead to parental notification, seating reassignment, and in serious cases, dismissal from the GSYO.

Many GSYO members have commitments to school, religious, sports, and other extra-curricular organizations that may occasionally conflict with GSYO. It is essential that members keep conflicting activities at a minimum. The commitment of all members and families is needed to maintain high musical standards and quality of musical experience for everyone.

Absence Notification: When there is a need to miss a GSYO rehearsal, the GSYO must be notified at least two weeks (14 calendar days) in advance of the missed rehearsal via the online absence request form. The absence request form is on each ensemble's "Current Members" page at www.gsyo.org. Direct emails, phone calls, and verbal requests to the ensemble conductors are not sufficient for absence requests; members *must* submit the request in writing via the online form.

Excused Absences: Academic exams and mandatory school/academic functions are excused provided notice is given and the date is not a dress rehearsal or performance. For students in 11th and 12th grade, college visits and auditions are excused. Illness, injury or family emergency is excused with notification from a parent or guardian.

Unexcused Absences: Personal trips, vacations, and regular (consistent) conflicts with other organizations are not excused. Members are advised to take into account the GSYO calendar when planning other activities. Absences are not excused during sectionals, retreat, dress rehearsals, or performances.

Participation in Other Area Music Ensembles: The GSYO makes efforts to coordinate schedules with other musical ensembles in the area, including Regional-All State Orchestras, All-State Bands and the Triad Chamber Music Society Young Performers' Workshop. Students accepted into the All-State Orchestra (NCMEA) in November are excused from that week's rehearsal. However, conflicts with community music ensembles or ensembles whose rehearsal schedules conflict consistently (weekly) with GSYO cannot be accommodated.

Calendar

Rehearsal / Concert calendars for the season are posted on each ensemble's "Current Members" page at www.gsyo.org. As updates are made during the year, members will be notified via email and a new calendar will be posted online.

Seating

Seating is determined by the ensemble conductor and represents a balance of many factors. Seating generally does **not** reflect an absolute ranking by student ability. Seating may be changed periodically for reasons including but not limited to the desirability of giving many qualified members opportunities to play principal roles, as well as rotate stand partners. The Ensemble Conductors' and Music Director's decisions on seating are final and are not open to student/parent appeal.

Conduct

Respectful, conscientious behavior is expected at all times; it should be the norm in interactions with colleagues as well as with the Music Director, conductors, coaches, parent group (Friends of the GSYO), chaperones, and individual parents.

On retreats and tours, students must respect all directions from staff and chaperones, respect all in-cabin/in-room curfew times, only go into cabins/rooms to which they are assigned, and stay in designated areas of the retreat/tour area. No siblings or guests are allowed at GSYO retreat.

If a conduct violation occurs, the GSYO Music Director and GSO Education Director will conference with the student's parents/guardians. Violations may result in the student's probation, suspension, or immediate dismissal from the ensemble, at the discretion of the Music Director. 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.

Instruments & Supplies

Members of GSYO must bring their instrument, all necessary accessories (mutes, reeds, rosin, etc.) sheet music, and a pencil to all rehearsals. Sheet music for practice, rehearsals, and performances is furnished by the GSYO. A black music folder is provided by the Friends of the GSYO. Students must turn in their folder following each performance, unless instructed otherwise.

Percussion: The School of Music at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) allows the GSYO use of large percussion instruments such as timpani, bass drum, and xylophone when these instruments are not in use for other concerts/rehearsals. Large percussion instruments are also provided at performance venues. Additionally, the GSYO owns a set of bass drum mallets, a cymbal bag, woodblock, and a tambourine. Please note these instruments are provided only as a convenience; percussion players are expected to bring all other instruments and sticks/mallets as required for the repertoire.

Harp: Harpists in GSYO ensembles are responsible for carting their instruments to and from auditions, weekly rehearsals, and local performances. The UNCG Music Building has elevators from the entrance level to the rehearsal room level. Logistics will be shared in advance for all performance venues. For tours, arrangements will be made to have a harp on site so long as the repertoire requirements and musician's participation are confirmed by the announced deadlines.

Auxiliary Instruments: Wind players doubling or whose parts require additional instruments (such as English Horn, A Clarinets, Bass Clarinets, C Trumpets, Contrabassoon) are generally responsible for obtaining these instruments independently. The GSYO is occasionally able to assist connecting students with additional instruments or transposed parts but cannot guarantee alternate part or instrument availability.

Communication

Email is the primary mode of communication between GSYO and members/parents. Members and parents will receive regular communications from both the GSO Education Director and some directly from the Music Director and Ensemble Conductors. A parent/guardian email address is required for every member; a member/student email address is optional. If your contact information changes, notify the GSO Education Director immediately at education@greensborosymphony.org so you do not miss any communications.

Tuition Payment

Youth Orchestra tuition is \$250. Tuition invoices will be mailed immediately following auditions in September. Tuition scholarship award information, if applicable, will be included on the invoice. Tuition may be paid online (via PayPal) through the link on the “Current Members” page for each ensemble. If paying by check, checks should be made payable to the “Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra.” Payments may be sent by mail to:

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

In years when a Regional Tour is scheduled, the additional fee is generally \$150 per person and is due in the late Winter. When the GSYO undertakes larger tours (national / international), information on fees and deadlines is announced as early as is feasible.

Need-Based Financial Aid

Through the generosity of the Greensboro Symphony Guild and other supporters, need-based financial aid is available to members of all GSYO ensembles. **Students and families seeking financial assistance must fill out the Youth Orchestra scholarship form at the time of audition.** Financial aid is awarded immediately after acceptance decisions have been made. Students will be notified of any scholarship award on the tuition invoice. No one is excluded from the GSYO program because of inability to pay; however, students who have not filled out the scholarship form will be expected to pay tuition in full or make payment arrangements with the GSYO office by the deadline.

Merit-Based Awards

Throughout the year, the Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra grants a number of special scholarships and awards. All scholarship recipients are expected to audition for and participate in GSYO the following year (unless they are graduating seniors).

Concert Attire

Youth Orchestra concert attire is Concert Black / Black Suit, as follows:

Concert Black:

- Black long sleeve shirt or top;
- Black floor-length pants / skirt / dress;

Accessories including belts, socks, shoes as should be black and of appropriate formality for a concert. (No sneakers or jeans.)

Black Suit:

- Black suit jacket and pants
- White dress shirt
- Long tie (not a bow tie)
- Black dress belt, socks, and shoes

Concerto Competition

The GSYO Concerto Competition is held annually in late Fall and is open only to members of Youth Orchestra and Repertory Strings. All students of these ensembles are encouraged to participate. Participants must perform a movement of a standard concerto for their instrument. The first place winner will receive the Sam Wilson Scholarship, which provides \$1,000 for study at a recognized summer music camp, as well as the opportunity to perform their concerto with the Youth Orchestra later in the season. Other winners may also be awarded. Previous winners cannot perform as soloists with the Youth Orchestra in consecutive years but may still be considered for scholarships. The competition is judged by musicians from Greensboro Symphony Orchestra.

Applications and detailed information will be made available at the beginning of the GSYO season.

Rehearsal Cancellation Policy

Any decision to delay the start of or cancel a rehearsal because of inclement weather, conductor illness, or other reason will be made by 10:00 a.m. on the day of the rehearsal. Email will be used to inform members and families of the cancellation or delay.

In case of a power outage and/or lack of internet access, call (336) 335-5456 ext. 230. 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

All members of the GSYO program receive complimentary tickets to Greensboro Symphony Masterworks concerts, an excellent way to hear great music performed live! Because some families require more than two tickets to attend a specific concert, each Youth Orchestra program member receives an allotment of twelve (12) tickets for the season's Masterworks series to use in whatever combination necessary. Once the allotment is exhausted, no more will be issued.

To redeem tickets complimentary tickets, use the ticket request form on the "Current Members" page of www.gsyo.org or email boxoffice@greensborosymphony.org by 3:00 p.m. on concert days, or by 3:00 p.m. on Friday for a Saturday concert. An auto-reply email will be sent to confirm that your request has been received. Please do not call the box office. If your ticket request exceeds your annual allotment, you will be notified by email. Complimentary tickets are not available to Chamber or Pops series concerts, though student tickets may be available.

Friends of the GSYO

The Friends of the GSYO (FGSYO) is a parent group that provides fundraising and volunteer support for GSYO events and concerts. This includes chaperoning trips and the Fall Retreat, providing organizational assistance for auditions, concerts, trips, and special events, volunteering at GSO Pops Concert Water Fundraisers, and helping with the Spring Awards Banquet. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate with the FGSYO by volunteering their time, support, or talent. To become involved, contact the current FGSYO President by filling out the web form at www.gsyo.org/support/friends-of-the-gsyo.

GSYO Honors Quartet

The GSYO Honors Quartet comprises the principal players from the Youth Orchestra violin, viola, and cello sections. The quartet performs approximately five services per season on behalf of the Greensboro Symphony and Greensboro Symphony Guild. The members receive a stipend for each performance through the Greensboro Symphony. In the event the principal players are unavailable for a given performance, other members of the Youth Orchestra may be invited to perform with the quartet. The Honors Quartet is organized and mentored by Karen Collins.

Youth Orchestra members interested in forming chamber ensembles (whether on string or other instruments) are strongly encouraged to contact the Music Director or Youth Orchestra Manager for assistance and support!

Contact Information

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