

Greensboro Symphony

Youth Strings Handbook

Ensemble Overview

Youth Strings is a string orchestra for students who play at the level of Suzuki Books 2 and 3. Students focus on technical, musical, and ensemble skills in an environment with students of similar age and level. Repertoire includes educational arrangements and other works that challenge and motivate continued improvement. The size of Youth Strings is between 25 and 35 members. Ms. Heather Lofdahl conducts the Youth Strings.

Eligibility

Musicians are accepted into Greensboro Symphony Youth Orchestra (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 GSYO members, conductors, and staff that all musicians continue to perform at or above their auditioned level.

All members must work on their individual parts outside of 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. 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 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.

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 GSYO 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 Strings tuition is \$200. 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 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

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 Strings concert attire is 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.)

Rehearsal Cancellation or Delay

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.

Friends of the GSYO

The Friends of the GSYO 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, 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 Friends of the GSYO President by filling out the web form at www.gsyo.org/support/friends-of-the-gsyo .

Contact Information

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