

THE METROPOLITAN
YOUTH SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRAS OF ATLANTA
(MYSO)

HANDBOOK

Vision:

Young people who study and perform with The Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta (MYSO) achieve a high level of musical excellence. They will thrive as well-rounded learners and thoughtful contributors to the civility of a complex and challenging world of an ever-growing audience, supportive alumni, and enduring community partnerships that is evidence of the love for music and commitment to music education that MYSO has inspired.

Mission:

The Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta develops pride, self-esteem and discipline in young people through individual musical achievement; provides access and opportunity for artistic growth through a challenging program of orchestra repertoire; fosters a lifelong appreciation of classical music; and uplifts the community through inspiring performances by diverse group of dedicated young musicians.

Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta

Handbook

~Welcome!~

Welcome to Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta (MYSO), an organization in which young string, woodwind, brass, and percussion musicians from the greater Atlanta area and surrounding counties meet for the purpose of enhancing their music education by participating in orchestral and chamber ensemble opportunities.

The goals of MYSO are to develop talent, self-confidence, self-esteem, leadership skills, and discipline through music in each of its members. Additionally, MYSO strives to create an environment where its members develop lasting friendships and have fun. More importantly, it is hoped that the members of MYSO will develop pride in their accomplishments and continue to play their instruments into adulthood. The Board of Directors of MYSO is dedicated to making your participation in MYSO a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

Participation in *MYSO demands a high level of dedication and commitment*, not only from the MYSO musician, but also from the parents of the musician. It is imperative that the musicians and their parents make a solemn pledge to support MYSO with active participation in volunteer activities, to adhere to rehearsal/performance schedules, to comply with MYSO policies and procedures stated within this handbook, and to participate fully in all travel and fund-raising activities.

This handbook is provided to help everyone involved with the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta understand the organization, its policies, and its procedures.

~History of MYSO~

Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestra of Atlanta, Inc. (MYSO) is a non-profit [501(C)(3)] corporation registered in Georgia that serves the entire metropolitan Atlanta area and its surrounding communities. MYSO provides young musicians with the opportunity to continue their music education beyond the classroom in a full orchestra setting under the direction of professional musicians.

MYSO was co-founded in 1989 in Gwinnett County by Dr. James Middleton and Mrs. Julia Waugh and was comprised of thirteen string musicians from two Gwinnett County schools. The debut concert was presented on May 5, 1991. The first concert to incorporate winds into the Symphony Orchestra was presented on May 3, 1992. In 1994 Mr. Dave Cady became President of the Board of Directors and Dr. Marilyn Seelman was appointed Music Director. In January 1995, MYSO expanded into a full orchestra. In 1997 MYSO was deeply saddened by the untimely death of Mr. Cady and in his honor, MYSO created the *Dave Cady Memorial Scholarship Fund*.

Since 1994, MYSO has attracted musicians from throughout metro Atlanta and is now comprised of up to a 100 member Symphony Orchestra, and up to a forty member String Orchestra for musicians in the eighth grade and younger, chamber ensembles, and a chamber orchestra that premiered at Spivey Hall in the spring of 2001 and again in 2005.

In the beginning, the Symphony Orchestra initially scheduled two formal concerts each year that were held in local churches. With the expansion of the orchestra and support for the organization, concerts since 1993 have required seating capacity and parking for 500 or more guests. MYSO has contracted with the Gwinnett Civic and Cultural Center, Georgia State University Rialto Performing Arts Center, the Clayton County Performing Arts Center, and the Georgia World Congress Center, local high schools and the Salvation Army for its concert needs. Presently, MYSO members attend weekly rehearsals, held at Georgia State University. MYSO performs at least two formal concerts, two or more chamber orchestra concerts, a “pops” concert each year that are open to the public. The growth of MYSO has culminated in opportunities for the orchestra to perform in venues outside of its normal locations. In January 1997, MYSO was selected to perform at the Georgia Music Educators’ Association In-Service Conference held in Savannah, Georgia. Following that performance, MYSO successfully auditioned for and performed at the 51st Annual Midwest Clinic held in Chicago, Illinois, in December 1997. The Midwest Clinic is the largest and most prestigious music education event in the country, with attendance of approximately 12,000 music educators from around the world.

In June 1998, MYSO was selected to perform at the Georgia Municipal Association Conference held in Savannah, Georgia.

In June 1999, MYSO auditioned for and performed at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival held in Charleston, South Carolina. Piccolo Spoleto is a two week festival of music and performing arts that coincides with the Spoleto Festival, an annual event that attracts professional and amateur musicians and artists from around the world.

On January 30, 2000, fifty members of the Orchestra were selected by **Disney Entertainment** to be part of a multi-generational, multi-cultural orchestra to perform at the **E*TRADE Half-time Show of Super Bowl XXXIV**. This is the first time in Super Bowl history that an orchestra was asked to perform for the half-time show. MYSO teamed up with thirty members of the Cobb Symphony Orchestra to form Disney’s Millennium Orchestra to perform with Phil Collins, Christina Aguilera, Enrique Iglesias, Toni Braxton and Edward James Olmos.

On October 21, 2000, MYSO was asked to perform an original composition by Curtis Bryant to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the United Nations.

On February 17, 2001, the Symphony Orchestra had the pleasure of performing with Cecil Welch, lead trumpeter and soloist for Henry Mancini, in MYSO’s first Valentine’s Gala, a “Pops” concert and dinner dance. This event was such a huge success that it will become an annual event for the orchestra. The Gala is MYSO’s primary fund-raising activity of the year and, as such, requires the participation of the entire MYSO membership.

On June 16, 2001, Dr. Seelman conducted a chamber orchestra made up of twenty-five MYSO musicians to perform its premiere concert at Spivey Hall.

On February 9, 2002, Cecil Welch joined the Symphony Orchestra at the 2nd Annual Valentine’s Gala, presenting a wonderful evening of music “From Hollywood to Broadway.”

MYSO made its *Carnegie Hall* debut on April 14, 2002, to a sold-out house! The orchestra was rewarded by a rousing standing ovation before the final note was played.

During the summer of 2004, MYSO took a chamber orchestra to Honolulu, Hawaii where they played at Pearl Harbor on D-Day. MYSO was presented with an American Flag that once flew over the U. S. Arizona Memorial.

In the spring of 2006, MYSO have the privilege of traveling to China. MYSO performed in Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai China. This once in a lifetime trip provided the musicians with a cultural experience as well as an opportunity to have musical exchange with residents of each city.

In 2008 MYSO traveled to Europe performing in Budapest, Vienna and Prague. Each musician had the privilege of touring famous composers homes, graves and even performed at the Rudolfinum in Dvorak Hall.

~Structure of MYSO~

The orchestras' activities are governed by a formal set of By-Laws and a Handbook for Musicians and Parents. Implementation of the By-Laws is achieved under the direction of the volunteer Board of Directors.

The musical leadership and direction for the orchestras is provided through the position of Music Director and Conductor, held by Dr. Marilyn Seelman. Dr. Seelman has served as Director of Orchestras and Violist at Trinity University, the University of New Mexico, and Georgia State University. She has performed with the San Antonio Symphony, the New Mexico Symphony, the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, as well as with the Atlanta Ballet and the Atlanta Opera Orchestras. Dr. Seelman completed her Master of Music in viola from Boston University and received her Doctorate of Musical Arts in Conducting from the University of Miami. In addition to MYSO, she was the Music Director and Conductor of the Georgia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra and Assistant Conductor of the Peachtree Pops Orchestra. In the summer of 1998, Dr. Seelman served on the faculty of the renowned Interlochen Arts Camp. In 1999 she was chosen to be Georgia All-State Conductor of the 2000 Grades 9-10 orchestra. Dr. Seelman continues to serve as an active member of the American Federation of Musicians, on the Board of Directors of the American String Teachers' Association, the Conductor's Guild, the College Music Society, and the Georgia Music Educators' Association. She currently is the Strings Specialist at Georgia State University and also maintains a private viola studio.

The Symphony Orchestra is open to all musicians (Grade 8 (age 13 before September 1) through age twenty-one) who successfully complete blind auditions, consisting of a solo piece from the standard classical repertoire and specified excerpts, judged by professional musicians. Musicians in grades 8 and below may audition for the String Orchestra through a blind audition consisting of a solo piece from the standard classical repertoire and required orchestral excerpts.

MYSO of Atlanta offers its Symphony Orchestra musicians opportunities to audition for the Concerto Competition, the Scholarship Competition and a Chamber Ensemble Program. Members of our String Orchestra have the opportunity to audition for the Scholarship competition and be a member of the Chamber Ensemble Program. Scholarships will be announced for both orchestras at the Spring concert each year.

The winner/s of the Concerto Competition will perform their concerto solo works at the spring concert and are accompanied by the Symphony orchestra. Competition winners are selected based on auditions. No MYSO musician may be a winner two consecutive years.

MYSO annually awards scholarships from the Dave Cady Memorial Scholarship Fund to qualified members of the orchestra for summer music camps/festivals, college tuition expenses or to further their music education through intense private instruction beyond their normal weekly lessons. This scholarship fund is maintained from the proceeds derived from the Fall and Spring concert ticket sales. Scholarships are awarded based upon the following criteria: rehearsal/concert attendance, attitude, school academics, and how the musician scored on his/her solo audition before a panel of judges. MYSO has granted scholarships to musicians totaling about \$8,500.

The Chamber Ensemble Program provides an opportunity for dedicated musicians to perform in a smaller chamber group at private, civic and charity events. MYSO has provided ensembles to perform at weddings, charity benefits for The Cobb Family Resources, The Cottage School, and Moonbeams for Diamond, special events for Brown & Company Jewelers and the Atlanta Botanical Gardens Spring Moon Stroll, a corporate reception for SITA, and the Junior League.

Opportunities are available under this program for all members of the Symphony Orchestra. Members of the Chamber Ensemble Program must be willing to commit to additional weekly rehearsals before or after regular orchestra rehearsal and at other times designed by the Chamber Ensemble Program Director. Coaching sessions with professional musicians are also scheduled regularly throughout the season. Attendance at coached sessions is critical. The repertoire and ensemble groupings are decided by the Chamber Ensemble Director and they will assign performance opportunities based on the level of preparedness of each ensemble.

Musicians who wish to participate in the Chamber Ensemble Program must take an audition and pay an audition fee. Acceptance is through an audition and the payment of a tuition fee for the season that is due when the musician is accepted into the program. These fees are used to help defray the cost of hiring an ensemble director, professional musicians to serve as coaches for this program, and purchasing ensemble music.

The String Orchestra, available to elementary and middle school-age children, affords the younger musician with an opportunity to increase their musical education beyond school participation and/or private instruction and to learn to play as a member of a group. This prepares the younger musician for advancement to a full symphony orchestra.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in MYSO is open to musicians from the greater Atlanta area and surrounding counties in grade 8 (age 13 prior to September 1) through age twenty-one for the Symphony Orchestra and grade 8 (not age 13 prior to September 1) and younger for the String Orchestra.

Membership into MYSO requires the submission of an application, application fee and a successful audition. The formal blind auditions are judged by professional musicians. Auditions are traditionally held in late August for the String Orchestra and in September for the Symphony Orchestra. MYSO expects each of its members to participate in his/her school music program if one is available. Also, ***MYSO membership requires each student to take private music lessons on his/her instrument.***

~Tuition ~

The non-refundable tuition fees for season (September-May) must be remitted at the first rehearsal in order for the musician to be seated in either the Symphony or String Orchestra. This fee provides the nucleus of MYSO's general operating fund, which is used primarily to pay rent on rehearsal and concert halls; to pay the music director, conductors', and coaches' (for sectional) fees; to pay other professional fees (accountant); to hire professionals to hold master classes and workshops; to purchase music, office supplies, and music folders for the musicians; and marketing/advertising expenses and other expenses MYSO may incur.

A non-refundable tuition fee for musicians who are members of the Chamber Ensemble Program is required and is due at the first ensemble rehearsal. This fee helps to defray the cost of ensemble music and coaches fees.

MYSO is committed to the advancement of music education. Financial assistance may be possible for those musicians seeking membership who qualify. Contact the President of the Board of Directors for further details. Receipt of financial aid requires that the musician make application and that his/her parents volunteer to serve the orchestra on orchestra committees and/or fundraisers.

~Financial Support~

A limited amount of financial aid **may** be available for qualifying musicians to defer tuition based on demonstrated financial need. Requests for financial aid must be submitted to the Treasurer and the Board of Directors for consideration.

Musicians who seek financial aid will be expected to donate their services to the organization in various ways such as assisting the Librarian, providing clerical support to the MYSO administrative staff, assisting with set-up and take-down duties before and after scheduled rehearsals, and assisting with concert preparations, snacks for rehearsals and concerts or in other needed areas. Parents of musicians receiving financial assistance will be expected to serve on one or more committees and participate in **all** fund-raising activities.

Rehearsals

~Rehearsal Times~

Rehearsals are normally held on weekends. The tentative calendar with the dates and times of rehearsals is posted on our website at www.mysoatlanta.com. The rehearsal/concert schedule is subject to change. Updates to the schedule are provided during rehearsals and communicated to orchestra members through our weekly email. It is the musician's responsibility to keep apprised of the rehearsal schedule. Attention must be paid to announcements given during rehearsals and to the weekly email. This will be the most up to date information.

Refreshments are served during the break in rehearsal. Refreshments are purchased and brought by a parent volunteer. Even though a snack fee was paid at the beginning of the season parents are expected to help with the preparation, set up, serving and clean up of the refreshments for the rehearsals, concerts or social events.

~Rehearsal Attendance~

It is imperative that each member of the orchestra attends every rehearsal for the entire rehearsal period in order to develop and produce a musical product of the highest caliber.

Musicians will be required to sign the attendance form at the beginning of each rehearsal. No parent, sibling or other musician will be allowed to sign you in.

MYSO has an absence policy that allows no more than **two (2) absences per concert period for a total of six (6) absences**. *A musician absent more than two (2) times per concert period may not be prepared to play his/her part(s) for the concert. On the third absence the musician will have to play for the conductor to determine if they are ready for the concert. If the conductor determines that the musician is not prepared for a concert due to excessive absences, the musician may not be permitted to perform in the subsequent concert.*

Advance absence forms are available at rehearsals, can be downloaded from MYSO's website or you can submit your absence online from the website. The musician's parent must sign the form (unless submitted online) Any member who will be absent from a rehearsal should advise the Dean of Students in advance using the approved methods. If an absence surfaces at the last minute, a call should be made to the MYSO voice mail at 770-972-7388 **AND** you must follow it up with an absence form. **DO NOT SEND AN EMAIL AS WE HAVE LIMITED ACCESS TO EMAILS AND IT WILL NOT BE RECEIVED UNTIL AFTER THE REHEARSAL.**

If a musician has not signed in a phone call will be placed to the parent asking why the musician is not at rehearsal. It is up to the musician to sign in as the Dean of Student will **NOT** check to see if you are there. If you have not signed in you will be marked as absent and it will count towards one of your absences.

~Sectional Rehearsals~

Periodically throughout the season, MYSO hires professional musicians, at professional rates, to work with each section of the orchestra to polish their parts and expand techniques for their individual instruments. Sectional rehearsals provide the musicians with an opportunity to rehearse critical passages designated by the conductor. Due to the fact that a considerable percentage of MYSO's operating income is allocated towards sectionals, it is **imperative** that each musician be present at every sectional and come prepared. Therefore, **an absence from a sectional rehearsal will count as one absence and an absence from that day's regular orchestra rehearsal will also count as one absence from the sectional -- for a total of two (2) absences for that day. Musician will be expected to sign in twice for the rehearsal. Once at the beginning of rehearsal, then at the beginning of the sectional rehearsal.**

~Excessive Absenteeism~

With the 7th absence (includes the combined total absences from orchestra rehearsals and sectional rehearsals), the musician will be dismissed from the orchestra, unless the musician can demonstrate that extenuating circumstances resulted in his/her excessive absenteeism. It is the responsibility of the musician to keep track of absences. No notification of excessive

absences will be given to the musician. With the 7th absence a formal dismissal notification will be sent to the musician and their parents. ***It a musicians has excessive absences during the current season they will not be permitted to audition for the following season.*** If there are extenuating circumstances that resulted in the excessive absenteeism, a written appeal may be made to the Dean of Students. A review of the appeal will be made by the Music Director. **The Music Director's ruling on the appeal will be final.**

~Mandatory Rehearsals~

Each concert period there are 3 mandatory rehearsals. The two mandatory regular rehearsals prior to the concert and the dress rehearsal the day of the concert. Therefore, an absence from a mandatory rehearsal will result in the musician not being seated for the concert, unless the musician can demonstrate that extenuating circumstances resulted in the absence. A written appeal **PRIOR to the mandatory rehearsals** may be made to the Dean of Students explaining the extenuating circumstances. A review of the appeal will be made by the Music Director. **The Music Director's ruling on the appeal will be final.**

~Tardiness~

Arriving late to rehearsal is disruptive to the conductor and fellow musicians. Please make every effort to arrive at rehearsal fifteen (15) minutes before the time designated on the rehearsal schedule so that instruments can be tuned and ready to play. Leaving rehearsal before dismissal is also disruptive and must be kept to an absolute minimum. The Dean of Students must be informed before rehearsal that a student plans to leave early. If the Dean of Students identifies a musician who makes a habit of leaving rehearsal prior to dismissal, that musician will be reported to the Music Director for review. **Note: A musician will be marked tardy if he/she arrives fifteen (15) minutes after the posted starting time. Being tardy will result in a ¼ absence. Leaving rehearsal any time before the posted dismissal time will also result in a ¼ absence.**

~Parking& Building Policy~

MYSO Musicians and parents are responsible for parking fee(s) in an around the rehearsal and concert venues. All member must enter the rehearsal venue at the designated areas only. No one is to open the doors that are not the designated entries. We do pay for a security guard to be on duty at all rehearsals so, if you are asked why you are entering the building please tell them you are with MYSO even if you come every week. Remember the guards change weekly and they may not remember every member or parent. The guard is there for our protection. **NO MUSICIAN** is allowed to leave the building once they have entered it until rehearsal is over and their ride is there to pick them up. If the parent is not there at the end of rehearsal the musician must remain in the building. Remember parents not everyone can be out front of the building to pick up at the same time as we **CAN NOT** block the road so you might have to circle around. If a police officer ask you to move on you **MUST** move on and circle around. Remember we rent the rehearsal venue so we must take care of the venue. This means we must clean up after ourselves and put the chairs back where we got them. The only approved areas for parents to sit are on the Concourse level or the tables and chairs on each floor. We do not have access to any of the rooms except for sectionals or other extra events. If you are staying during rehearsal we encourage you to see if there is anything you can help with such as snack or other things.

~Parents & Guests at Rehearsal~

Parents, relatives, and other guests are welcome and encouraged to attend rehearsals. Parents are particularly encouraged to come to rehearsals so that they might reinforce the instructions given from the podium. We also encourage parents to attend the rehearsals and help with the running of the organization. Remember your musicians are a member and the only way you will know how they benefit from the program is to be involved. Since we are a parent volunteer organization it takes everyone's help. GSU rents their facilities to MYSO so if you have younger children please do not allow them to roam the facility unsupervised or to disturb the musicians in the rehearsal rooms. MYSO musicians are required to clean up after themselves and to leave the rehearsal/concert facility clean and free of trash. Brass instrument students must bring newspaper or some other receptacle for collecting their spit and be responsible for removing that newspaper or spit receptacle at the end of rehearsal and disposing of it properly.

~Materials for Rehearsal~

Each musician is responsible for the following items at rehearsal:

1. Instrument in good playing condition. This also applies to percussionist's sticks.
2. A portable music stand (String Orchestra Only)
3. Assigned music folder with all MYSO music inside. DO NOT depend on your stand partner. You must bring your music each and every week. You must also keep track of the music that you are given. It is part of the \$35.00 music fee that is paid at the beginning of the season.
4. Two sharpened pencils with erasers to make markings on your music. NO PENS.
5. Accessories such as rosin, shoulder rest, mutes, endpin rests, extra strings, extra reeds, valve oil, bass stool, etc.

~Principal's Responsibilities~

Principal players of each section are expected to set an example of a professional demeanor. Expectations include: arriving early to rehearsals and concerts (warm-up and preliminary tuning); being thoroughly prepared technically (so that the orchestra can rehearse the music and not the notes) and encouraging your section to follow that example; and, to serve as the section liaison with the conductor. There may be periodic meetings arranged in advance that the principal players will be expected to attend to discuss section accomplishments and concerns. Section leaders are encouraged to discuss with the conductor, at any time, concerns and suggestions that they feel will strengthen the performance and well-being of their section. Section leaders are, along with all other section members, responsible for making sure the sectional coach has his/her music and that the sectional room is back in order. This means all chairs, tables and stands are returned to where they belong.

~Musician Responsibilities~

First and foremost, the MYSO musician must come to rehearsals prepared, i.e., with music

thoroughly practiced. Musicians are expected to work on MYSO music with their private instructors.

At the first rehearsal, each MYSO member will be issued a music folder that is intended solely for MYSO music. It is the musician's responsibility to keep the folder in good condition and to return it when they no longer participate in MYSO or at the end of the year. Likewise, it is the musician's responsibility to maintain the music provided to them by MYSO. **The music folder and all MYSO music are to be returned to the Music Librarian at the end of the season or upon the musician's departure from MYSO.**

If the musician is habitually arriving to rehearsal without copies of their music and request the Librarians to provide them with extra copies of their music, a fee of 10 cents per page will be required.

A \$35.00 refundable deposit is required at the time the musician takes possession of his/her music folder. If the folder is returned to MYSO in good, useable condition when the musician leaves the orchestra or at the end of the season, this deposit will be refunded to the musician.

~Responsibilities at Rehearsal~

The following guidelines are provided to ensure that rehearsal times are maximized for the Music Director and the musicians. It is important that every MYSO musician adhere to the standards set forth below.

1. Be at the right place at the right time with the right equipment, right attitude, and ready to concentrate.
2. Bring the MYSO music folder and all music to each rehearsal.
3. Arrive early to rehearsal. Late arrival is preferred rather than missing an entire rehearsal.
4. Refrain from talking when the conductor or coach is giving instructions in order to be considerate of the rights of others to hear what is being said.
5. Mark each part on the music as instructions are provided.
6. Refrain from chewing gum as it can be very distracting and it is prohibited at rehearsals.
7. No food or drink is to be consumed during rehearsal. A break is provided for refreshment consumption. **Food/drink is allowed only in designated areas of the rehearsal facility.**
8. A phone is available at the rehearsal hall but should be limited to emergencies and with approval of a responsible MYSO adult representative. There will be no texting, checking emails, or Facebook, etc during the rehearsal. If caught using the phone during the rehearsal it will be taken up until the end of rehearsal.

~Responsibilities at Break~

1. **TAKE A BREAK!** This is your opportunity to get away from your instrument so that concentration can be maintained during the second half of rehearsal.
2. Give the conductor a break.
3. Utilize the area where refreshments are being served. Stay close and visible so that you can be found if necessary.
4. **No food or drink is permitted outside of designated areas.**
5. Loud behavior is not appropriate in the rehearsal or concert venues.
6. Respect the property of others, especially that of your host.
7. Help with the cleanup of the break area. MYSO adult representatives are not responsible

for cleaning up after you. Please be considerate of others. Throw away your trash and make sure your peers do the same.

~Private Lessons~

All MYSO musicians are required to take private lessons on their instrument. The private teacher can provide the MYSO musician with valuable assistance in working on difficult passages.

Any musician or parent wishing to arrange private lessons or desiring to change private teachers is encouraged to contact the Music Director for recommendations.

MYSO is committed to the advancement of the student's musical education. Any family unable to afford private lesson costs should contact the President of the MYSO Board of Directors about the availability of financial aid scholarships.

~Practice and Preparation~

Musicians must come to every rehearsal thoroughly prepared. Each MYSO member is expected to practice the MYSO music daily. Each chamber ensemble member is expected to practice the ensemble music daily. Musicians are expected to work on MYSO music with their private instructors.

PASSAGES SPECIFICALLY ASSIGNED FOR STUDY AT REHEARSAL MUST BE PREPARED BY THE NEXT REHEARSAL. Practice may be defined as "achieving the greatest amount of technical and musical improvement in the least amount of time." The best practice is begun soon after a lesson or rehearsal while the material and instructions are fresh.

~Parent Support~

Parents of MYSO musicians are expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

1. MYSO provides an outstanding musical experience for your musician. Rare opportunities do not come without a sincere commitment on the part of all involved. It is imperative that the musicians and their parents make a solemn pledge to support MYSO with active participation in volunteer activities, with strict adherence to rehearsal and performance schedule, and with full participation in all fund-raising activities.
2. Read this handbook and discuss its contents with your musician.
3. Provide encouragement for the musician's efforts and participation in MYSO.
4. Provide a quiet place for music practice.
5. Keep all conflicts with rehearsals to a minimum. Please remember that attendance at rehearsals is an educational experience, a social opportunity, and a requirement for continued membership in MYSO.
6. Arrange for transportation to and from private lessons and MYSO rehearsals.
7. Communicate with the orchestra staff or any MYSO Board of Directors member as soon as problems or concerns arise.
8. Actively participate in all MYSO activities and fund-raising events and Ad Sales.
9. Attend all MYSO parent meetings to stay abreast of MYSO plans and events.
10. Remind the musician to check his/her e-mails daily for MYSO announcements.

Performances

~Concert Dates~

MYSO typically performs two formal concerts in a year, one in the late fall and one in the spring, and one “pops” concert. Handouts are provided at rehearsals identifying dates, locations, and other specifics concerning upcoming concerts. The MYSO website will also contain information on upcoming events.

Any MYSO member who determines he/she will be unavailable for any of the scheduled concerts must **contact the Dean of Students** immediately. Written communication is advised, as rehearsals tend to be very busy and verbal communication may not get properly noted.

~Ticket Sales~

Concert tickets are required for admission to all MYSO performances. Exceptions could be for out of town performances. Tickets will be available in advance or for purchase at the door. Information on how to purchase tickets in advance will be announced at rehearsals, in the weekly blast or posted on the MYSO website. Proceeds from ticket sales (excluding Gala tickets) are allocated to the Dave Cady Memorial Scholarship Fund. Scholarships are awarded annually to qualifying musicians at the Spring Concert.

~Musician Etiquette~

Arrive at the performance venue on time!

Prior to each concert, a warm-up period is provided to allow musicians to adjust to the concert environment and be at ease before playing. Please be on stage and in position at the planned warm-up period.

The concertmaster is responsible for the orchestra tuning prior to performance. This is normally accomplished by section. Once your instrument is tuned, “quiet on stage” is to be maintained.

After a piece has been performed, the conductor will bow to accept the applause from the audience on behalf of the orchestra. At times, the conductor will recognize individual musicians or sections based upon solo performances. In addition, the conductor will determine when it is appropriate for the entire orchestra to stand and accept applause. When this occurs, each member should watch the concertmaster and stand only when motioned to do so.

During intermission, MYSO members are expected to maintain a calm and mature behavior. Please remember that each musician is a representative of the entire orchestra and behavior inappropriate for the occasion will not be accepted. **Inappropriate behavior will be addressed by the Board of Directors and may result in the expulsion of the musician from the orchestra and revocation of any monetary awards.**

~Concert Dress~

Gentlemen: Symphony - For concert performances, each young man will wear a **black tuxedo jacket and matching trousers, a black cummerbund, pleated white tuxedo shirt, and black bow tie.** The shoes should be black dress shoes with black socks. **No sneakers, white socks, or tennis shoes are permitted.**

Gentlemen: Strings – For concert performances, each young man will wear **black tuxedo trousers, a black cummerbund, pleated white tuxedo shirt, and black bow tie.** The shoes should be black dress shoes with black socks. **No sneakers, white socks, or tennis shoes are permitted.**

Ladies:

- ✎ **A black dress, black skirt, or black “dressy” slacks/trousers (no side, front or back slits in the dress or skirt)**
 - **no Capri, jeans, hip-huggers or cropped pants—pant legs are to be at least ankle length, no skin-tight pants will be permitted.** [When in doubt, ask!]
- ✎ and matching **black top with long sleeves** are permissible. **Short sleeves or three-quarter length sleeves are not acceptable.**
- ✎ No glitter or sparkling jewelry is permitted.
- ✎ No sandals, flip-flops, tennis shoes, spike heels or high heels are permitted.
- ✎ Black hose (black knee-hi’s) and black shoes only are to be worn.

The goal of the orchestra concert dress policy is to present to the audience a unified appearance. Any member who comes to a performance in unacceptable attire will not be allowed to perform until the attire conforms to the concert dress policy.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

~Flash Photography~

Flash pictures are not allowed during performances. It is appropriate to take pictures after the concert and not before. Flash photography can cause temporary blindness and make the performers unable to function momentarily.

~Videotaping~

Videotaping with available lighting is permitted in designated areas, usually at the back, sides, or balcony of the concert hall. Ushers or the concert hall manager will direct the placement of videotaping equipment so as not to impede evacuation routes in the event of an emergency and to provide consideration for the audience.

~Courtesy During Performances~

MYSO's primary concern is for the audience to show respect and consideration for the performers and the other members of the audience. It is rude to talk during a performance. It is also discourteous to move about or to cause a disturbance during a performance. Children are expected to sit with their parents and not be the cause of disturbances during the performance. It is wise for parents to take small children to the restroom prior to the beginning of the concert and during intermission. Since we have the two orchestra (String and Symphony) there will be some stage changes after each group. We asked that you be there for the entire concert. As we are all part of MYSO, we ask that you support each and every musician and not just the group where your musician is playing.

MYSO professionally records each concert. ***Please immediately remove children who cause a disturbance.*** Parents with infants or toddlers should sit on the aisles or at the back of the concert hall to allow for easy exit with a disruptive child.

Beepers and cellular phones should be turned off prior to entering the concert hall. The only time for entrance or exit from the concert hall is between movements within a multi-movement composition or between pieces. Exceptions to this requirement might be a restroom emergency, removal of a disruptive child, or excessive coughing.

~Applause~

It is appropriate to applaud after a piece has been completed. Whistling, foot stomping, and loud yells are not appropriate. If a composition is comprised of several movements, it is customary to applaud at the end of the last movement but not during the pause taken by the musicians between movements. Cue: If the conductor's back is to the audience, wait until he/she faces the audience to applaud. When in doubt, refer to the concert program for the movement being performed.

~Intermission~

Intermissions will normally last for fifteen minutes. This is a positive time to visit with the performers and members of the audience. Keep in mind that the musicians need the intermission to regroup their concentration for the remainder of the concert. Musicians are advised to utilize this time wisely. We asked that the guest not leave at the intermissions. We need to all support each group.

TRAVEL

~Financing Trips~

All musicians are expected to travel with the orchestra. Fund-raising opportunities will be scheduled during the season. Proceeds from these fund-raisers will be allocated to help defray the trip costs for each musician who participates. **All families are expected to participate in these fund-raising activities.**

~Behavior Expected on Trips~

Listed below are the general instructions applicable for any MYSO trip. Specific instructions, relative to the planned event, will be issued as needed.

1. **Alcohol and/or drugs are prohibited.** Any orchestra member found in possession of either at any time with the orchestra will be summarily and forthwith dismissed from MYSO.
2. **Smoking is prohibited.** Any orchestra member found to be smoking during MYSO events: i.e., rehearsals, concerts, trips, etc. will be asked to refrain and may be subject to further disciplinary action.
3. Each orchestra member is expected to exhibit mature behavior at all times.
4. Each MYSO member is expected to observe the rules of the transportation carrier, the motel/hotel, restaurants, and any institution or facility of which he or she may find himself or herself as a guest.
5. No member may ride in any vehicle other than those provided for the trip. In the event of an emergency, one of the chaperones should be contacted.
6. For protection and safety, each MYSO member must stay in his/her room between the time of lights out and wake-up call the next morning. Any member caught violating this policy is subject to immediate removal from the facility and **will** be returned to parents (**at parent's expense**) and **will** and dismissed from MYSO.
7. There is to be no excessive noise coming from the motel room occupied by any member(s) of MYSO. Any damage to rooms or facilities will be the liability of the individual persons.
8. Young men may not individually enter young ladies' rooms. Young ladies may not individually enter young men's rooms. Groups of young men or groups of young ladies may enter each other's rooms with the chaperone's approval.
9. No member will be allowed to leave the group for any reason. A chaperone must know a member's whereabouts at all times.

Any member violating any of the above may be immediately dismissed from the orchestra and required to return home at his/her own expense.

MYSO ORGANIZATION

The daily musical operation is handled by the Musical Director/Conductor of MYSO. The Music Director/Conductor is a member of the Board of Directors of MYSO as outlined in the By-Laws.

~The Board of Directors of MYSO~

The Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestra, Inc. is a non-profit corporation [501(c)(3)] chartered by the State of Georgia. MYSO's activities are governed by the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

The Board of Directors and President of MYSO handle all of the administrative duties of the orchestra that is not music related. The Board creates the apparatus for raising funds to sustain the orchestra and to support the needs of the orchestra.

The Board of Directors, with the exception of the Music Director/Conductor, and String Orchestra Conductor are voluntary positions and are elected in accordance with the By-Laws.

~Parental Involvement in MYSO~

Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta rely on parents to participate in the various committees that are vital to the operation of the organization. ***Every parent is expected to give his/her time, talents, or resources*** to the orchestra, either by serving on a committee, offering professional assistance/services on a *pro bono* basis, or becoming a patron of the orchestras by making a substantial donation to the corporation to assist in program development.

Listed below are the various committees that are open to you:

Ad Sales	Database	Scrapbook	Administrative duties
Alumni	Facilities	Snacks	Secretary
Applications	Fund-raising	Socials	Librarians
Chaperones	Newsletter	Dean of Students	Auditions
Concerts	Concert programs	Merchandise/CD	Publicity
Ticket Sales	Travel	Gala	and much more...

~Orchestra Council~

The Orchestra Council is made up of orchestra musicians. Any musician is eligible to participate in the Orchestra Council. The council works with a member of MYSO's Administrative Staff and Dean of Students to plan social activities for the orchestra and acts as a liaison to the Administrative Staff in respect to the affairs of the orchestra.