

ROCHESTER PHILHARMONIC YOUTH ORCHESTRA

POLICIES and PROCEDURES

1. HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra is an extension of the Youth Festivals that were begun in 1954 by the Women's Committee of the Civic Music Association. Students auditioned in January, rehearsed in February, and played a concert with their Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra counterparts in March. After the concert in 1970, many students expressed a strong interest in having a year-round orchestral experience. Many meetings with very enthusiastic students, parents, musicians, and the RPO conductor ensued, and the RPYO was established.

The RPYO's first permanent conductor and its music director for almost twenty years was Mr. Howard Weiss, who developed the orchestra into a highly accomplished and respected ensemble. Since 1993 Dr. David Harman has served as RPYO music director and conductor. Under his leadership the RPYO has advanced its reputation as a major regional musical institution, strengthened its musical partnership with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and increased its collaboration with local, regional and international ensembles of young musicians to help promote the arts among young people.

Other distinguished RPYO conductors have included Sam Jones, Kenneth Brown, James Dumm, Nancy Strelau, and Darryl One, RPYO music director from 1990 to 1993.

Students are in grades eight through twelve and represent more than twenty school districts in Monroe and surrounding counties. They rehearse every Sunday afternoon from mid-September through May.

As it has grown, the RPYO has been most faithful in honoring the purpose for which it was founded. For that reason, the orchestra has frequently proved an important stepping-stone to music as a profession for some of its members. Graduates from the RPYO are currently enrolled in music conservatories and college programs throughout the country. Alumni currently hold positions in major national symphonies, as school and college music teachers, and in other music-related professions. The majority of RPYO alumni have not chosen to pursue music professionally but have become dedicated supporters of the arts in their communities and enthusiastic amateur musicians.

The RPYO has produced more than twenty recordings, has videotaped a special for PBS and Eastman Kodak, and has been part of a coast-to-coast NPR broadcast. It was recently featured with clarinetist Richard Stoltzman in a special video prepared for Young Audiences, Inc. and was the subject of a full-length program on WXXI-TV. It has made numerous national and international tours, most recently to England in 1995, to Germany in 1998, and to France in 2001.

The RPO is ultimately responsible for the maintenance and continuance of the RPYO. However, the RPYO remains responsible for its own operations.

2. PURPOSE

The goals of the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra are the following:

- A. To provide to music students of exceptional capability musical and educational experiences through playing in orchestral ensembles that rehearse and perform music of the highest quality.*
- B. To provide opportunities through RPYO activities for social interaction among these talented music students.*
- C. To develop the students' appreciation of the importance and value of accepting personal responsibilities.*

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is gained by audition. Once students are accepted, they are members of the RPYO until they graduate from high school provided they abide by the following rules and regulations:

- A. Attendance at the Retreat, all rehearsals and concerts is required.*
- B. Orchestra members must participate in an on-going instrumental music ensemble in their school, if provided. The Music Director and the RPYO Manager must be made aware immediately of any scheduling conflict.*
- C. Orchestra members are required to pay annual dues in the amount fixed by the Board of Directors. Payment of half of each year's dues is expected by August 20 and the second half by September 30. Dues are nonrefundable.*
- D. Orchestra members must participate in fund raising efforts.*
- E. Appropriate behavior and cooperation, as well as full participation in RPYO events, are required of all orchestra members.*
- F. Orchestra members are expected to maintain appropriate levels of musicianship.*
- G. The use of alcohol or drugs by orchestra members in association with any RPYO-sponsored activity or event is strictly prohibited.*
- H. Members are required to help with set-up and take-down of rehearsal rooms.*
- I. Members are required to participate in all planned tours of the RPYO.*
- J. In the fall of each year, all members will be required to audition for seating purposes.*

4. AUDITIONS

- A. Orchestra members are selected by an audition with the Music Director and members of the Audition Committee. The Audition Committee is composed of professional musicians chosen by the Music Director and the RPO Liaison. Auditions for new applicants are held once a year in the spring. If needed, an additional set of auditions will be held in the fall to fill any vacancies. Applicants are required to pay a non-refundable audition fee.*
- B. Exceptional Early Audition Applicants*

Unusually proficient players may be permitted to audition for RPYO membership at the end of the 6th grade only if the following conditions are met at least three weeks before the spring audition period begins:

 - (1) Submission of letters to the RPYO manager from the following individuals who support and clearly advocate the student's early audition:*
 - The student's private music teacher;*
 - The student's school major ensemble teacher (orchestra or band conductor);*
 - The student's parents;*
 - The conductor of the Hochstein Youth Orchestra if the student is currently a member of that ensemble.*
 - (2) Letters from the individual listed above must speak to the student's extraordinary need for appropriate musical development which membership in the RPYO could offer and to the student's level of social maturity at the time of application. If the above individuals are in agreement that membership in the RPYO would be advisable, the Music Director and the Chair of the RPYO Board may permit the student to participate in the audition process.*

It should be noted that

- (1) Permission to audition in no way implies automatic acceptance into the RPYO.*
- (2) Acceptance of such students is rare.*
- (3) Under no circumstances will a graduating 6th grader be initially accepted into the RPYO during a tour year.*

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR AUDITIONS

A. Auditions will include the following:

- (1) *One or two short selections (may be part of the same piece), totaling five minutes. The selections must show contrast between slow and expressive to fast and technical styles of playing*
- (2) *Scales (at the discretion of the Music Director)*
- (3) *Sight reading excerpt(s).*
- (4) *A standard orchestral excerpt to be mailed to the new applicant either three weeks prior to the audition or with the application form, and to returning musicians three weeks before the seating auditions.*

B. The following criteria will be used in the audition policy:

- (1) *Musicality and expressiveness.*
- (2) *Technical expertise.*
- (3) *Intonation, rhythm, and quality of sound.*
- (4) *Sight reading.*
- (5) *Years in the RPYO, grade in school, and past seating history.*

6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A musician in the RPYO may find it necessary to request a leave from the orchestra for a period of time because of a year of study away from the Rochester area, an extreme family problem or for verifiable personal medical reasons. In each case, the member requesting a leave will contact the Manager and/or the Music Director and discuss the situation.

A. Year of study away from the Rochester area.

An orchestra member requesting a one-year leave of absence for study must request the leave prior to the Spring auditions for new members. The request should be given to the Manager and/or the Music Director.

B. Medical Leave

To request a medical leave from the RPYO, the member will furnish the Manager and the Music Director with a letter from a physician stating the reason for the absence the expected duration of the absence. Depending upon the duration of the absence, the seat may be filled for the balance of the leave with a substitute player. If the leave is for more than one year, an audition will be necessary upon the return of the member.

C. Family Leave

The situation should be explained to the Manager and/or the Music Director who will treat the information appropriately and with confidence. (It would be helpful if this were in writing, but there may be times when that would not be wise.) The decision will be made as to granting the leave after consultation with the Chair of the RPYO Board of Directors.

See REFUND POLICY regarding students on leave.

7. REFUND POLICY

Because of illness or a family move, refunds will be given if:

A. The incidence occurs within the first three weeks from the start of the fall rehearsal

season, in which case the full amount will be refunded.

B. In no other cases will a refund be granted.

8. FINANCIAL AID

Limited amounts of financial aid are available for students who have a demonstrated financial need. Applications for financial aid may be obtained from the administration of the RPYO by interested students, local schools, or music educators. Financial aid awards may be renewed, but must be applied for on an annual basis. Families receiving financial aid are expected to contribute to the RPYO either through paying a portion of the membership fee or through extra volunteer service, or both.

Criteria for financial aid awards:

- (1) Students must audition and be accepted into the RPYO.*
- (2) Demonstrated financial need (including submission of complete Federal Income Tax Returns and verification of any additional income).*
- (3) Students who are former recipients of financial aid will be given first consideration in aid decisions, if they have fulfilled their RPYO contract agreement.*

No public announcement of awards will be made. Awards will be made following auditions. Evaluation of the aid program shall be made in the fall of each year.

9. SEATING POLICY

A. Seating Audition

Seating auditions will be held for all sections of the orchestra at the beginning of each season. The Music Director will conduct and evaluate the auditions in close cooperation with selected professionals from the RPO.

Each brief audition will include:

- (1) Approximately three minutes of a prepared work (unaccompanied) of the player's choice.*
- (2) Prepared excerpts from the standard orchestral repertoire selected by the Music Director.*
- (3) Sight reading.*

B. Seating Assignments

The following factors are considered when determining the seating of each section of the orchestra:

- (1) The quality of the seating audition.*
- (2) Years of membership in the RPYO and year in school.*
- (3) Quality and nature of previous musical contributions to the RPYO.*
- (4) The need for strength and balance throughout the orchestra for the best possible musical results.*

C. Principal, Co-Principal, Associate Principal, and Assistant Principal Chairs.

If used, these leadership positions are assigned for one year only. The designation of these chairs and any rotation of seating will be determined by the Music Director based upon the criteria used to seat players as well as the individual player's attentiveness,

attendance and leadership during the course of rehearsals for each concert. There may be some rotation among these chairs during the season to provide opportunities for these advanced players

to lead. In large sections, the seating will be maintained throughout the season except in unusual circumstances.

D. String Rotation During Rehearsals.

Although specific seating assignments will be retained for concerts and dress rehearsals throughout the season, string stands (with the exception of the first two stands) will rotate front to back for each regular rehearsal. This system avoids having players "stuck in the back of the section all season" and it permits the conductor to more clearly observe each player's progress during the year.

E. Seating Reassignments

Should there be reasons, musical or otherwise, that cause the Music Director to consider the reassignment of any such chair(s) during the current season, it will be first discussed with the player(s) involved. If the Music Director decides a reassignment is necessary, there will be a new audition for that chair. If no one elects to audition, the Music Director will appoint someone for the remainder of the season.

F. Special Auditions

Special seating auditions for specific solo sections of major works may be held for wind and percussion parts during the course of the season at the discretion of the Music Director. All members of the a section may perform the solo sections in question and will be given at least two weeks to prepare for the special seating audition.

G. Doubling Policy

In most instances, woodwinds and brass will be doubled. All exceptions to this policy will be determined, on a case-by-case, basis by the Music Director (e.g. musical considerations, orchestral balances, solos, etc.)

H. Program Listing

With the exception of first stand players, first and second violins will be listed in alphabetical order under the headings Violin. Many players assigned to the second violin section are very capable of playing the first part. All other sections will be listed in alphabetical order with the exception of first stand players and players of color instruments (English horn, eb clarinet, etc.)

10. REHEARSALS

A. Attendance is required at the Retreat, all rehearsals and concerts.

Rehearsals are generally held every Sunday, from mid-September through May from 2:00 P.M. to 4:45 P.M. On occasion, because of a scheduling conflict of the Music Director or students, a rehearsal may be scheduled at another hour of the day or week. Orchestra members should arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the rehearsal, and must be in their seats, ready to play 10 minutes prior to the scheduled time of rehearsal. Each rehearsal period contains a 15 minute break. All orchestra members must be back in their chairs, ready to play, before the end of break.

B. Food and drink are not allowed in the rehearsal room.

C. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times.

D. Students may not leave the rehearsal site during the rehearsal time without explicit permission from parents or, in an emergency, from the Manager.

E. Instruments must be securely placed in cases at all times when not in use, for example, during rehearsal breaks or when a student leaves his or her seat. The RPYO is not responsible for damage to instruments.

F. *Orchestra members are notified at rehearsals should scheduling changes need to be made. Extra rehearsals may be scheduled prior to a concert or tour.*

G. *Absence from rehearsals and concerts because of extreme extenuating circumstances may be requested in accordance with the following:*

- (1) Notification to the Music Director at least three weeks in advance, using the absence request form.*
- (2) Being responsible for seeing that their music is delivered to rehearsal, so that others are not inconvenienced.*
- (3) Being responsible for finding out about announcements made and verifying subsequent schedules.*

11. SET-UP AND TAKE-DOWN POLICY FOR REHEARSALS

Because the RPYO cannot afford to hire custodial help to set-up and take-down the rehearsal room, students are asked to help with this process. Four students are needed for room set-up and four are needed for room take-down at each rehearsal. Students will be asked to volunteer by car-pool for these tasks since the set-up crew must arrive early and the take-down crew must stay after rehearsal, If no one volunteers, names for the season are drawn out of a hat.

12. ATTENDANCE

- A. Attendance requirements. *Attendance is required at the Retreat, all rehearsals, all concerts and the Retreat..*
- B. Absence Requests. *Since the dedicated participation of each musician is essential to the success of this select, auditioned orchestra, there will be no unexcused absences from any rehearsal or concert. Approval for any absence must be requested using the absence request form at least three weeks in advance, except in the case of illness or true emergency. The signed and completed absence request form must be returned directly to the Music Director. If an absence is not approved, the student will be notified immediately. Excessive absences, either excused or unexcused, will be considered highly unusual and will require a special conference with the Music Director, which can lead to dismissal from the RPYO.*
- C. Excused Absences. *Absences may be approved for official music performance activities associated with the student's credit bearing school instrumental ensemble, or for other musical activities which may, in the judgment of the Music Director, clearly and substantially benefit the player's musical or cultural development. It is very rare that any absence request will be approved for an RPYO dress rehearsal, performance or mentor session. If any absence request is approved, the Music Director may require an absent member to present a written report of one to two typed pages that documents and describes the musical and cultural value of the activity associated with the absence. Absence requests not directly related to musical activities will generally not be approved except in cases of a family emergency. Students and families are urged to compare their RPYO calendar with other activity schedules in September in order to identify and avoid any potential conflicts.*
- D. Illness or Emergency. *Should illness or emergency occur, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Music Director and the Manager directly (leaving a message on an answering machine is a good first step but is not considered adequate) as soon as possible after the absence. The absence form must still be completed and given to the Music Director at the next rehearsal.*

- D. Tardiness. All orchestra rehearsals will begin promptly at their appointed time. Each member is expected to be in his/her chair 10 minutes before the rehearsal begins or else the member will be considered tardy.

Should a member enter a rehearsal late, it is that player's responsibility to talk to the Music Director before leaving that day. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.

- E. The absence form may be obtained directly from the RPYO Manager or at rehearsals.

13. CONCERTS

There will be several concerts and musical activities per year. Members must arrive for a performance at least one-half hour before the posted start and must be in their seats fifteen minutes prior to the posted start.

Students will dress for performances according to the following dress code unless otherwise directed.:

Girls: Long, ankle-length black skirt, long-sleeve black blouse (or long-sleeve ankle-length black dress), natural stockings, black dress shoes. No pants or culottes.

Boys: Black tuxedo jacket, black dress pants, long-sleeve white dress shirt with flat collar, black bow tie, black dress shoes, black socks.

Boys may rent tuxedo jackets from the RPYO for a season. These must be returned at the end of each season for cleaning and storage.

14. MUSIC FOLDERS

A. Each member is responsible for the care and safe-guarding of his/her music. This music is either the property of the RPYO or is loaned or rented to the RPYO, so there will be a replacement cost charged to the member who loses his/her music or who does not take proper care of it. Using anything other than a soft-leaded pencil to mark one's music is considered improper care, and the student will be charged with replacement costs.

B. Members who share a stand with another member (e.g. strings) or who cover another part (as with principal and associate principal or second and assistant second) are each responsible to take turns to obtain the part from the other so that each member can practice it at home. The RPYO is unable to provide music and folders to all students.

C. If a member is absent from rehearsal, it is the member's responsibility to be sure that the music is at rehearsal.

15. DEMOTION, SUSPENSION, AND DISMISSAL

A. Orchestra members who do not abide by the rules and regulations stipulated shall be subject to demotion, suspension, or dismissal from the RPYO.

B. A member can be demoted, suspended, or dismissed from his/her chair, a concert, or the orchestra by the Music Director for the following reasons:

- (1) *Unexcused absence, or excessive excused absences.*
- (2) *Unexcused tardiness, or excessive excused tardiness.*
- (3) *Lack of respect for the Manager or Music Director.*

- (4) *Lack of respect for fellow members during rehearsals or any other RPYO activity.*
- (5) *The use of drugs or alcohol at any RPYO activity.*
- (6) *Engaging in any activity which damages the name or reputation of the RPYO*

C. *In case of any violation of the rules and regulations, the Music Director may temporarily suspend an orchestra member, and schedule a conference with the orchestra member, the orchestra member's parents, the Music Director and Manager. If the problem cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the member may, in the discretion of the Music Director, be demoted, suspended or dismissed from the RPYO.*

D. *A member who feels that the determination of the Music Director in such member's case was unfair may seek a review of the decision by a review committee established by the RPYO Board of Directors.*

16. SOLOS

Orchestra members have the opportunity to perform a solo with the RPYO usually at its winter and spring concerts. Soloists are selected by auditions with the Music Director and a committee of professional musicians chosen by the Music Director. The auditionee is required to play the first or third movement of a concerto with accompaniment or to perform a vocal selection with accompaniment. The composition selected for audition and performance is subject to the Music Director's approval.

To be eligible to audition for a solo, the RPYO member must:

- A. *Be a member of the RPYO at least one year just prior to auditioning.*
- B. *Be a junior or senior; seniors are given preference. If granted a solo as a junior, it is not permissible to re-audition a subsequent year, in order for the RPYO to provide more students the opportunity to perform.*
- C. *Be a musician who has reflected on the special opportunities for growth granted to a soloist performing with an orchestra. As part of the application process, the auditionee is asked to submit a single page handwritten or typed statement that shares the individual's reasons for wanting to perform a solo. (For example, what does the auditionee want to learn about music, about performance, about the solo piece, about him or herself, about the orchestral ensemble, about the role of youth orchestras, etc.) The statement is due at the time of signing up for the audition and may be used for publicity purposes. The auditionee is to sign and to date the statement.*

17. TOURS

- A. *Touring is a potentially enriching experience, musically and socially, for RPYO members.*
- B. *A tour will be defined as an event which takes into account time and costs. Thus, a tour will be a trip on which the student spends more than two overnights or contributes \$30 or more.*

C. *A tour will not occur more frequently than every three years. (A year begins, for this purpose, on September 1st.)*

D. *Every student is required to participate in all tours.*

E. *Potential members of the RPYO will be told, as they apply for the yearly auditions whether the coming year is a tour year. If this is so, they will be expected to go on the tour. Current members of the RPYO will be told in the spring before an upcoming tour year that there*

will be a tour. With the prior knowledge, and with fundraising opportunities that become available, each RPYO member will be able to make long term plans in order to participate in the tour. Members should make their plans accordingly and notify the Music Director as soon as possible if they have any conflicts.

F. *Students are also required to participate in all other trips that do not fall within the definition of a tour.*

18. RETREAT, RUNOUTS, AND TOUR RULES

A. *Possession or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs is absolutely forbidden.*

B. *Under no circumstances will members be allowed to enter the sleeping quarters of the opposite sex.*

C. *Quiet hours begin at 11 PM. All students should return to their assigned cabins at that time. Quiet talking is permitted between 11 PM and midnight. Curfew is midnight, and there will be cabin checks at that time. Parents will be notified in their child is disturbing others after quiet hours. Students may not leave their assigned cabin until 7:00 PM.*

D. *If the responsible adults are unable to locate a student, his or her parents will be notified immediately.*

E. *Students are discouraged from driving to the Retreat. Students will not be allowed to drive off the premises without written permission from their parents. The written request must be turned in at the Retreat registration on Friday.*

F. *Any damage to property is the responsibility of the musician. The RPYO assumes no responsibility for damages or loss of personal property, including musical instruments.*

H. *No radios, cassette players, etc. are allowed at the Retreat.. Walkmans are allowed as long as they are used responsibly.*

I. *There is limited electrical power in the Retreat cabins: do not bring unnecessary appliances. (For instance, only two hair dryers can be used at one time in a cabin or a fuse may blow.)*

J. *No smoking is allowed in any buildings at the Retreat's Camp Sunshine. Smoking is allowed in the breezeway between the Adstaff Building and Founders Hall.*

19. FUND-RAISING

A large portion of the operational budget and tour costs must be obtained through the fund- raising

efforts of RPYO members and their parents. Consequently, all members and their parents are required to participate in fund raising activities. Additional activities will be added if the orchestra should travel.

20. TICKET POLICY FOR RPYO CONCERTS

Students, parents, relatives, and friends are encouraged to sell tickets to each of the RPYO concerts. A member who is playing a concerto solo in a concert will receive six complimentary tickets for that concert. Complimentary tickets will also be given for certain donations to the Youth Orchestra. Students who sell over \$50.00 worth of tickets to a concert will have the amount sold over \$50.00 credited to their tour accounts.

21. FAMILY VOLUNTEERS

To maintain the range of musical opportunities for RPYO students, family members of each orchestra member are expected to volunteer in the many and varied behind-the-scenes activities. Parents are needed to work at the Boutique during RPO concerts, to help sell RPYO concert tickets, to help organize and run bake sales, the garage sale, the Musical Marathon, and to chair and work on committees such as concert production, special events, publicity, newsletter, alumni network, retreat, program advertisements, and the music library.

22. INSURANCE

The RPYO does not carry insurance on orchestra member's instruments while in Rochester or on tour. Orchestra members are responsible for securing their own insurance coverage on their musical instruments.

23. RPO COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS

RPYO students may request two complimentary tickets for most RPO Philharmonic concerts. To receive a ticket, the student must notify the RPYO Manager at least five days in advance of the concert. The Manager will obtain the tickets and give them to students at the rehearsal prior to the requested concert or may leave them at the Reservations Table in Eastman Theatre.