

**Huntsville
Youth
Orchestra
Handbook

2009-2010**

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1 HYO Program Overview

1.1 The Orchestras

The current HYO program consists of the following six groups:

Huntsville Youth Symphony

The Huntsville Youth Symphony (HYS) is an advanced full orchestra open by audition to accomplished string, wind, and percussion students across the Tennessee Valley. String players wishing to audition for HYS should be performing repertoire at the Suzuki Book 7 level and be enrolled in private lessons. Wind and Percussion students should either take private lessons or be enrolled in their school band program or both. This orchestra rehearses on Monday evenings from 7:00-9:00 PM at the VBC. Students bring their own music stands to rehearsals. The HYS is the premier performing ensemble of the Huntsville Youth Orchestra, and among the finest youth orchestras in the southeast region. The HYS performs frequently in a wide variety of concert settings. For performances, females wear long, long sleeved, black dresses with black shoes and black hose. Males wear tuxedos, which are available for rental from the HYO. HYO costs \$325 for the year, \$310 if paid in full by the first rehearsal, which is August 17th. HYS is conducted by Joseph Lee.

Sinfonia

The Sinfonia is an intermediate full orchestra, open by audition to accomplished string, wind, and percussion students across the Tennessee Valley. String players wishing to audition for Sinfonia should be performing repertoire at the Suzuki Book 5/6 level (or equivalent), and should be enrolled in private lessons. Woodwind, brass and percussion students interested in auditioning for Sinfonia must possess strong music reading skills and take private lessons or be enrolled in their school band program. This orchestra rehearses on Monday evenings at the VBC from 5:15-6:45 PM. Students bring their own music stands to rehearsals. The Sinfonia performs frequently in a wide variety of concert settings. For performances, females wear long, long sleeved black dresses with black shoes and hose, and males wear black pants, socks, and shoes, and white tuxedo shirts with black bow tie and cummerbund. Cummerbunds are available for rental from HYO for a nominal fee. Sinfonia costs \$310 for the year, \$295 if paid in full by the first rehearsal, which is August 17th. Sinfonia is conducted by Joseph Lee.

Philharmonia

The Philharmonia is an intermediate chamber orchestra, open by audition to accomplished string students across the Tennessee Valley. String players wishing to audition for Philharmonia should be performing repertoire at the Suzuki Book 4 level (or equivalent) and possess intermediate music reading skills. This orchestra rehearses on Tuesday evenings at First Baptist Church from 6:15-7:45 PM. Students are asked to bring their own music stands to rehearsals. For performances, females wear white blouses and long black skirts with black shoes and hose, and males wear white dress shirts with black dress pants and black shoes and socks. Bowties and cummerbunds are furnished by HYO for a nominal fee. Philharmonia costs \$300 for the year,

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\$285 if paid in full by the first rehearsal, which is August 18th. Philharmonia is conducted by Jacob Frank.

Concert Orchestra

The Concert Orchestra (CO) is an intermediate level string orchestra for young string players with at least two years of experience. Concert Orchestra students continue to explore and develop skills and techniques that are essential to orchestral playing. This orchestra is designed to be a 2-3 year course. Students wishing to participate in the Concert Orchestra should be playing and reading at the Suzuki Book 3 level (or equivalent). This orchestra rehearses on Tuesday evenings at First Baptist Church from 5:00-6:00 PM. For rehearsals, students are asked to bring their own music stands. For performances, females wear white blouses and long black skirts, black hose and shoes, and males wear black dress pants, white dress shirt, and black shoes and socks. Bowties are furnished by HYO for a nominal rental fee. Concert Orchestra costs \$280 for the year, \$265 if paid in full by the first rehearsal, which is August 18th. Concert Orchestra is conducted by Leona Cotruvo.

Intermezzo Orchestra

The Intermezzo Orchestra (IO) is an elementary level string orchestra for young string players with at least one year of experience. Intermezzo Orchestra students begin to explore and develop skills and techniques that are essential to orchestral playing. Students wishing to participate in the Intermezzo Orchestra should be studying from either the second half of Suzuki Book 1 or from Suzuki Book 2 and possess elementary music reading skills. This orchestra rehearses on Tuesday evenings at First Baptist Church from 6:00-7:00 PM. Students are asked to bring their own music stands to rehearsals. For performances, females wear white blouses, long black skirts, and black shoes and hose. Males wear white dress shirts, black dress pants, and black shoes and socks. Bowties are furnished by HYO for a nominal fee. Intermezzo costs \$240 for the year, \$225 if paid in full by the first rehearsal, which is August 25th. Intermezzo Orchestra is conducted by Kelli Batraw.

Novice Strings

The Novice Strings (NS) program is a beginning level course, and open to children with little to NO experience. Novice Strings focuses on the development of elementary techniques, note reading, and the art of string playing. Students are enrolled for the entire year at the beginning of fall semester only. Students may be admitted later in the academic year at the discretion of the instructor. The Novice Strings program rehearses at First Baptist Church in Huntsville on Tuesday evenings from 5:00-6:00 PM. Students are asked to bring their own music stands to rehearsals. Please check with the conductor for concert attire. Novice Strings costs \$220 for the year, \$205 if paid in full by the first rehearsal, which is August 25th. Novice Strings is conducted by Kelli Batraw.

1.2 Registration and Fee Policy

The annual fee and attire rental are to be paid by the first rehearsal. Arrangements can be made for payment in installments if necessary. There are needs-based partial work scholarships available for

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players who need financial assistance. If interested, please request an application from the Orchestra Manager.

HYO's general policy is that student fees cannot be refunded unless a refund is requested within two weeks from the student's initial enrollment date. There are two potential exceptions to this general policy: 1) cases where HYO cannot, or chooses not to deliver the services for which fees were collected; and 2) cases of significant and unforeseen changes in family circumstances that merit consideration of a refund.

For safety issues, proper record-keeping, and reporting to grant makers, donors, and the public, **it is HYO policy that all student players shall be formally registered** for each season, and that such **registration shall include in addition to the registration and medical forms, one of the following: Full payment of fees** at the time of registration; **or a plan and schedule for paying all fees** within the season; **or an application for reduced fees** (i.e., scholarship), **with a promise to pay the difference between the full amount due and any awarded fee reductions.** Registration forms are available on the website.

To be "registered," a player must complete all required forms (including arrangements for payment of fees, if applicable), have them signed by an adult who is legally responsible for his or her care. Forms must be submitted to a designated HYO representative by the second rehearsal in which he or she participates. . Failure to return the registration forms at least one week before the first concert after registration will result in the player not being allowed to participate in that concert

Failure to meet agreed upon financial obligation by the Winter Concert will result in a player not being allowed to participate in the Spring Concert.

1.3 The Chamber Music Program

All players in HYS or Sinfonia are encouraged to join the HYO Chamber Music program, included at a nominal fee of \$50 with HYO membership. The program is open to others in the community, including adults, for a \$100 fee to defray program expenses.

Chamber music builds musicianship and camaraderie while enhancing the orchestral ensembles. Smaller groups (typically trios, quartets, and quintets) study an entirely different literature where lines are rarely doubled and every musician is in effect a soloist. An experienced musician coaches, but does not conduct, each group. The players themselves coordinate their performance, building precision, intonation, and confidence. Groups are encouraged to meet weekly from September 1st through April 30th, using the coach no more than twice per month. It is highly recommended that coachings and rehearsals occur on alternate weeks.

Most rehearsals are an hour in length, and are typically hosted in a private home. The informal setting is well suited to chamber music, and contributes to the development of friendship. The high degree of musical interdependence requires a corresponding high level of commitment. Thorough preparation and punctual attendance at rehearsals are a MUST, and a matter of respect for your fellow players.

In addition to performances at the HYO Chamber Music Concert, participants will be called on to play at other special occasions, which would include the regular HYO chamber concerts, for scheduled

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community performances, the Symphony Guild Silver Tea, outreach and recruiting events, store grand openings, weddings, receptions.

Though most young musicians do not go on to perform professionally, those with chamber music experience possess the means for a lifelong enjoyment of music performance.

Contact the HYO office for further information at (256) 880-0622, or check the website for guidelines for chamber groups.

1.4 What is Required of Parents

There are many activities where Huntsville Youth Orchestra requires parent volunteers. Parents support the Board, conductors, and players by recruiting new members, helping at rehearsals and concerts, chaperoning concerts and tours, and organizing after-concert receptions. Parents coordinate HYS student ushers for Huntsville Symphony Orchestra (HSO) concerts. Parents will provide refreshments for the receptions held after each concert. Parents are encouraged to help with the board fundraisers.

1.4.1 Parent Fundraising

Each HYO family with one or more players in HYS, Sinfonia, Philharmonia, IO, CO, or NS are expected to assist with fundraising activities or generate \$75 in fundraising revenue over and above annual fees and attire rental or parents can fulfill this obligation by simply donating the \$75. Fund-raiser may include selling program ads, geraniums, corporate donations, chair sponsorships and other fundraisers that arise during the year. The sponsorship of a student is a total donation of \$100 (\$150 for a principal). If you would like to sponsor a student, please contact the Orchestra Manager.

Parents are encouraged to sell program ads or seek corporate sponsors, but should check with a board member or orchestra manager first, so that potential contributors are not approached multiple times.

Donations are acknowledged in concert programs by category:

Conductor’s Circle	\$1,000.00	and	above
Benefactors	\$250.00	-	\$999.99
Patrons	\$25.00	-	\$249.99
Friends	\$10.00	-	\$24.99

Advertisements in the concert season programs (over 1,500 are printed each season) are an inexpensive way for individuals, businesses, and organizations to reach the HYO audience. Eighth-, quarter-, half-, and full-page ads for the entire season are priced at just \$100, \$150, \$225, and \$300 respectively. To purchase an ad or identify a prospect, complete an ad form and turn it in to the Orchestra Manager.

1.4.2 Parent Volunteering

Every HYO family is expected to contribute time and energy to the Huntsville Youth Orchestra.

Openings include:

- working as a Chaperone during rehearsals;

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- Coordinating Orchestra Parents to chaperone rehearsals and concerts;
- chaperoning backstage at concerts;
- helping with the Advertisement, Fundraising, Phone, Newsletter or Reception;
- fitting students for tuxedos and arranging cleaning and storage at season end;
- coordinating ushers for HSO concerts;
- acting as Librarian, Photographer, Parent Directory Coordinator or Historian;
- serving on the Board of Directors or one of its committees.

The Volunteer Sign-up form completed during registration gives more details about each position. Any HYO Board member would be glad to provide further information.

1.4.3 Parent Communication

Information about HYO is available from a variety of sources, including:

- in this Handbook;
- in announcements and / or handouts given to the players at rehearsals;
- in messages transmitted via email;
- the HYO web site (<http://www.huntsvilleyouthorchestra.org>);
- announcements at concerts.
- newsletters

1.5 *The Board of Directors*

The Huntsville Youth Orchestra (HYO) is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to “foster, promote and provide the support necessary for students from North Alabama to experience musical education in an orchestral setting”. Founded in 1961 by the late Russell Gerhart, HYO is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of community leaders, musicians, and HYO parents. The Board employs HYO personnel, manages HYO property, and funds HYO operations. Revenue sources include corporate and individual donations, concert program ads, players' annual fees, and various fund raising activities throughout the year.

The Board of Directors seeks motivated individuals to help shape and guide HYO. Parents are welcome on the Board. To be considered for vacant positions or for more information, contact a Board officer or a member of the Nominating Committee

2 HYO Membership Guidelines

2.1 *Personal Practice*

A personal practice routine is essential to good musicianship. Practice skills are just as important as technical skills on your instrument.

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A good rule of thumb on practicing is to spend 15-25% on warm-up, 25% on etudes and exercises, 25-35% on solo material, and 25% on excerpts from your ensemble music, whether band, orchestra or chamber.

When working on excerpts, clearly mark those troublesome spots that you identified during rehearsal so that during your personal practice routine you can go directly to them without wasting time. Don't try to solve all the trouble spots in one sitting. Attack a new excerpt each day and review old ones as well. Solve excerpt problems as soon as possible. Don't wait until the last moment before a performance.

2.2 Rehearsals

Prepare your part before rehearsal. Learn the notes and rhythms at home.

Make sure that you have basic "rehearsal tools" for each rehearsal – pencil with eraser, music stand, extra strings and reeds, valve and slide oil, a good selection of sticks and mallets, as appropriate.

Arrive about 15 minutes early for each rehearsal and sign in. We will begin and end on time.

Rehearsals are structured so that the pieces using the greatest number of players are usually rehearsed first. Members who do not play on every piece may leave after all of their pieces have been rehearsed. If you are not playing on a particular piece, but must remain at the rehearsal hall, do so quietly. Bring a book. Don't disrupt a rehearsal in progress!

2.3 Attendance

All members are expected to attend each rehearsal and performance. Members should arrive at the rehearsal hall about 15 minutes before each rehearsal to set up and warm-up. Tune-up begins five minutes before rehearsal time so rehearsals can start and end promptly according to our rehearsal schedule. Attendance will be taken at all rehearsals

If an absence for a student in HYS or Sinfonia is unavoidable, notify the office in advance at (256) 714-0794 or (256) 880-0622. If no one is available to take your call, please leave a message and phone number. If you cannot provide prior notification, bring a brief explanatory note from your parents to the next rehearsal to excuse the absence. Discuss exceptional circumstances with the orchestra conductor.

Philharmonia, Concert Orchestra, Intermezzo Orchestra, and Novice Strings may contact their conductors if they must miss a rehearsal. Conductors will give out contact information at the first rehearsal.

More than two unexcused absences by a member during a concert cycle may result in suspension from the orchestra performance. A concert cycle consists of a concert and all rehearsals leading up to it. Two tardies are counted as one absence. Suspended members may return to the orchestra at the beginning of the next concert cycle. However, the substitute player who filled in for the suspended member has seating priority.

A student who is tardy for a rehearsal may have to sit at the back of the section for the rest of the rehearsal.

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A **pattern of chronic unexcused absences** by a member may result in suspension or dismissal for the rest of the year, including forfeiture of fees or repayment of any work/study scholarships or reduced fees.

Due to variations in school schedules and rehearsal needs, **school holiday rehearsals** are at the discretion of the conductors.

2.4 Inclement Weather

If serious weather threatens, please call either of the HYO phone number and/or watch your email for updates or rehearsal status.

2.5 Private Lessons

Private lessons or band instruction are required for all orchestras, except NS. It is believed that the student and orchestras as a whole will progress better with some personal musical instruction.

2.6 Auditions, Seating, and Sectionals

(HYS, Sinfonia, and Philharmonia only)

All returning students, new students, and students wanting to change to HYS, Sinfonia, or Philharmonia, audition in August prior to the start of the season. All new students interested in participating in HYS must audition for HYS and Sinfonia/Philharmonia.

Students are assigned a score, and placed in an orchestra according to audition. Students that are placed in Philharmonia will have a brief seating audition for the Philharmonia conductor at the first rehearsal.

The woodwinds, brass, and percussion students will be seated in order as determined by their audition score. The conductor reserves the right to assign co-principals and rotate students throughout the course of the season.

The string sections of HYS and Sinfonia will rotate per concert throughout the year. Students will NOT be seated based on score after the first concert. Sitting throughout the section provides the student with multiple educational opportunities. Throughout the year, each student will receive experience in sitting in different locations in the string section. Violinists may also receive the experience of performing 1st Violin and 2nd Violin. Concertmasters, Co-Concertmasters, and Principals may or may not rotate.

New students are welcome to audition for the youth orchestra program at any point throughout the season. A new student that enters after the first rehearsal of a concert cycle will be seated at the back of the section. This student will be assigned a new seat in the section for the following concert cycle. If a new student auditions after there have already been two rehearsals for a concert cycle, the conductor will have discretion to decide if the student will have to wait until the next concert cycle to enter the HYO or may join at that time.

The above paragraph also applies to current students that want to audition on a different instrument.

Due to the rotation policy, challenges will not occur in the string sections of Sinfonia and HYS. Woodwind, brass, and percussion students may be given the opportunity to challenge one seat up at the discretion of the Music Director. Challenges will always take place on the Monday night following a concert. Challenge rules and policies are in writing on the challenge form.

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If a student has an unexcused absence at a concert, that student will be moved to the back of the section for the next concert cycle.

2.7 Self-discipline

Maintain orderly and attentive behavior during rehearsals. Encourage other members through your example rather than words.

Develop your listening skills to a fine point. Follow verbal directions the first time they are given. Make musical adjustments as you hear the need for them.

Disruptive behavior is not permitted during rehearsals. If it occurs, a verbal warning will be issued. If it continues, the disruptive member will be asked to leave the rehearsal, resulting in an absence being recorded for that concert cycle. The member should return to the next scheduled rehearsal and future rehearsals with a renewed readiness to rehearse and behave well.

Players should neither ask to play other people's instruments, nor offer their instruments to be played by others during any HYO activity, not even during breaks.

Chemical substance abuse of any kind (alcohol or drugs) during any HYO activity will result in the immediate termination of membership, contact with the Parent or Guardian, and immediate return home (at Parent or Guardian's expense) if away from Huntsville on tour. Rehearsals and concerts are non-smoking events.

Please remember that you are a guest in our rehearsal facilities. Do not run, wander or explore. Be quiet and orderly. Be courteous to the people you meet there. Use the entrances specified by our hosts. We are very, very grateful to have excellent rehearsal spaces.

2.8 Concert Attire

Novice Strings: Please consult the conductor for concert attire.

Intermezzo Orchestra: Boys should wear black dress pants, white dress shirt, black shoes and dark socks. Girls should wear a long black skirt, white blouse, dark hose or tights and black shoes. Each player will be provided with a bow tie on arrival at the concert.

Concert Orchestra: Boys should wear black dress pants, white shirt, black shoes and dark socks. Girls should wear a long black skirt, white blouse, dark hose or tights and black shoes. Each player will be provided with a red bow tie on arrival at the concert venue.

Philharmonia Orchestra: Males will wear black dress pants, white shirt, black socks and black shoes. Females will wear black tea-length skirt (below the knees), white blouse, black shoes and black hose. Players will be provided with distinctive blue cummerbunds and bow ties.

Sinfonia: Males will wear black dress pants, black shoes and socks, white tuxedo shirt, black cummerbund and bow tie. Please see HYO staff for further instructions on shirt. Cummerbund will be furnished by the HYO. Females will wear dressy, all black, tea or ankle length dress or skirt and blouse. Top should have long sleeves. Females should wear black hose and shoes.

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HYS: Males will wear a basic black tuxedo (available from HYO), black shoes and black socks. Tuxedo rental from HYO (as shown in section 1.1) includes shirt, tie, and cummerbund. Females will wear long sleeved ankle length black dress, solid black (with no other color), black shoes, and black hose, no flip flops, If a blouse and skirt are worn, shirt must be long enough to cover your midriff when you sit and play.

Players will often be seen on a raised stage. Dress accordingly. Ankle to mid calf length skirts provide room for movement and look graceful during performance. Blouses and shirts should have adequate room for arm movement.

2.9 Dress Rehearsals and Concerts

Any dress rehearsals will be scheduled by the conductor. On the day of the concert, each group has its own designated warm up area where students gather and can leave instrument cases. Chaperones supervise the students backstage and throughout the concert. They also help Sinfonia, Concert, and Intermezzo with bow ties, cummerbunds, etc.

Each group warms up, performs a sound check, and rehearses briefly on stage, starting with HYS and progressing from the oldest to the youngest group scheduled to perform that day. They then return to their designated warm up area.

In general, concerts are performed on Sunday afternoon at 3 PM. The groups perform in order from youngest to oldest, ending with HYS. After performing, each group quickly stores their instruments in their designated warm up area and returns to the concert hall to enjoy the music of the older groups. Thus, the concert is deliberately structured to expose the younger students to great music in the hands of more experienced players.

2.10 Concert Receptions

Parents from the Huntsville Youth Orchestra coordinate a reception following each Sunday concert. The reception is a relaxing and enjoyable opportunity for students and their families to get to know the other families in HYO. With our busy rehearsal schedule and other activities, this is one time to slow down and socialize. Make arrangements to linger, compliment the students and conductors, and build friendships.

Please watch your email and / or listen for instructions on what to bring.

3 Auditions, Competitions, Scholarships

Huntsville Youth Orchestra encourages all members to take advantage of these musical opportunities.

3.1 All-State Orchestra

These auditions are held in November of each year. The winners meet to form an orchestra for one weekend in February. Information can be found at www.alabamamea.org. The HYO will pay the registration fees for those who are accepted into the All-State Orchestra.

3.2 *HSO Young Artist Auditions*

These auditions are typically held in late fall. The winners perform with the Huntsville Symphony. The HSO conductor must approve the choice of concerto movement to be memorized. Contact the HSO office at (256) 539-4818 for an application and details such as entry fee and deadline.

3.3 *RUTH COLE WEBER Scholarships*

These scholarships are given annually by the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra Guild to help a string player attend a summer music camp. One or two awards are given for a student in grades 9-11 and two smaller scholarships for students in grades 6-8. There is an application form and deadline. Applications are generally handed out by private teachers, but may be available from the HYO office.

3.4 *GERHART Scholarships*

A maximum of two are given by HYO each year to help defray the costs of summer music camp for HYS students who will to play with HYO the following season. Apply in January. Forms will be available at rehearsals. Auditions are typically held in February, and winners are announced at the spring concert. The money is sent directly to the selected music camp.

3.5 *HYO Concerto Competition*

The auditions are typically held in late fall. A contestant must be an active HYS or Sinfonia member in good standing and must complete an application prior to the deadline given out at rehearsals. The selection to be performed must have an orchestration available. The score or piano reduction must be submitted to, and approved by, the music director. Failure to acquire a score for the conductor's approval in advance may disqualify a winner. The applicant's private instructor, the conductor, and the applicant sign the application. Applications will be available at HYO rehearsals and must be returned to Mrs. Brown or Mrs. South, or mailed to the HYO office. The HYO office will contact the applicant with an assigned audition time. The audition must be performed with an accompanist. The contestant must memorize the music and provide his/her own accompanist for the audition. The judges will select two winners. The judges reserve the right to select fewer winners or no winner if no contestant qualifies to win. The previous year's winner must compete on a different instrument or in a different division the following year. Recommended students may be invited to play in an Honor's Recital. Students will be responsible for their own accompanist. There will be one winner in the Strings Division, and one winner in the Non-Strings division.

4 Contacts and Telephone Numbers

Website – www.huntsvilleyouthorchestra.org

Email address - hyo@hiwaay.net

HYO Office phones and email addresses:

Deborah Brown, (256) 880-0622, hyomanager@yahoo.com

Paula South, (256) 714-0794, hyosouth@aol.com

Note: Please leave a message if no one answers the phone, and someone will return your call.

HYO Mailing Address:

Huntsville Youth Orchestra

P.O. Box 2532

Huntsville, AL 35804