



columbus
symphony
youth orchestras

Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestras

Audition Booklet

2026-2027 Season

Mission



The mission of the Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestras (CSYO) program is to provide talented young musicians of central Ohio with challenging rehearsal and performance experiences in professional settings. CSYO emphasizes the performance of traditional orchestral literature under the leadership of professional conductors.

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS



Membership in the CSYO is open to any talented, young musicians in grades 3-12 who wish to make music with their peers. We welcome musicians from direct counties in and around central Ohio, including Franklin, Morrow, Licking, Madison, Fairfield, Union, and Champaign.

We Support Music Education

The CSYO recognizes the significant importance of music education in the overall development of student musicians. We also support the dedication of private and school instructors within our community.

This is why we require* our CSYO members to:

- Participate in their school instrumental music programs
- Take private lessons on their instrument on which they perform in CSYO

*If you cannot meet these requirements for any reason, please contact the Education Coordinator at ndewberry@columbussympphony.com

Meet Our Ensembles

Each ensemble rehearses weekly and performs during the school year.
All four orchestras have performed at local, regional, and national
professional music conferences.



Junior Strings

Repertory Orchestra

Chamber Strings

Youth Orchestra



COLUMBUS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

JUNIOR STRINGS

RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 3-7*

SARA GIVEN

CONDUCTOR

Mrs. Given teaches middle and high school orchestra with Hilliard City Schools. Mrs. Given earned her masters degree in string music education with an emphasis in string pedagogy from The Ohio State University. She earned her undergraduate degree in instrumental music education from Ohio University.



REHEARSALS

Wednesday afternoons
4:45pm-6:00pm at Hilliard
Heritage Middle School**

PERFORMANCES

3-4 performances a season at
various locations throughout
central Ohio, including school
tour.

***location subject to change*

TUITION

**\$475 Tuition + \$40
Registration Fee**

One-time, yearly tuition will be billed to members at the beginning of the season in August. Payment Plans and Financial Aid are available upon request.

**Grade parameters are not flexible. Limited exceptions can be made. Students should consult CSYO staff and private teachers on the right ensemble fit for them.*

JUNIOR STRINGS

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Please review all of the requirements below carefully. Be sure to complete the Online Audition Application found on our Columbus Symphony website.

SCALE



Perform 1 Major Scale from the following choices and in as many octaves as possible:

- A major
- G major
- D Major
- C Major

SOLO REQUIREMENT



Perform 1 Prepared Solo that can be a solo piece, etude, or concerto

- No longer than 5 minutes
- Discuss your selection with your private teacher

PREPARED EXCERPTS



Auditionees are required to include BOTH of the listed excerpts for their instrument in their audition video. To view the prepared excerpts, click the link below.

[Click Here to View Prepared Excerpts](#)

COLUMBUS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

CHAMBER STRINGS

RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 6-9*



DR. ROBERT GILLESPIE

CONDUCTOR

Bob Gillespie is Ohio State University Professor Emeritus of string education/string pedagogy. Under Dr. Gillespie's leadership, Ohio State University received the 2015 Institutional String Education Award as the premier string education university in the country. Dr. Gillespie is a past national President of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA).

REHEARSALS

Tuesday afternoons
4:30pm-6:30pm at
Upper Arlington High School**

PERFORMANCES

3-4 performances a season at
various locations throughout
central Ohio, including school
tour.

**location subject to change

TUITION

\$495 Tuition + \$40
Registration Fee

One-time, yearly tuition will be
billed to members at the beginning
of the season in August. Payment
Plans and Financial Aid are
available upon request.

**Grade parameters are not flexible. Limited exceptions can be made. Students should consult CSYO staff and private teachers on the right ensemble fit for them.*

CHAMBER STRINGS

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Please review all of the requirements below carefully. Be sure to complete the Online Audition Application found on our Columbus Symphony website.

SCALES



Perform two or more octaves of the following 4 scales with one note per bow at 80 on the metronome in this order:

- C Major
- D Major
- B flat Major
- F Major

SOLO REQUIREMENT



Perform 1 Prepared Solo that can be a solo piece, etude, or concerto

- Must be between 3-5 minutes
- Discuss your selection with your private teacher

PREPARED EXCERPTS



Auditionees are required to include BOTH of the listed excerpts for their instrument in their audition video. Brackets indicate where the excerpt begins and ends. To view the prepared excerpts, click the link below

[Click Here to View Violin Excerpt](#)

[Click Here to View Cello Excerpt](#)

[Click Here to View Viola Excerpt](#)

[Click Here to View Bass Excerpt](#)

COLUMBUS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

REPERTORY ORCHESTRA

RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 7-10*



DR. MARK SHOLL

CONDUCTOR

Dr. Sholl is the Performing Arts Coordinator for Hilliard City Schools and has taught high school orchestra for 30 years — 6 at Grove City High School and 24 at Hilliard Davidson High School. In 2011, he received the Ohio Music Education Association Outstanding Music Teacher of the Year Award. He has studied at The Peabody Conservatory at the The University of Michigan, where he received a Bachelor of Music, and The Ohio State University, from which he received his Master of Arts and PhD.

DR. JIM BATES

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Dr. Bates is Director of Orchestral Activities at Otterbein University and was the conductor for the Louisville (KY) Youth Orchestras for 18 years. In 1999, he joined the conducting staff of Interlochen Center for the Arts and continues to direct the Junior Orchestra program and Junior Advanced String Institute in the summer. Dr. Bates is also assistant conductor and principal bassist of the Westerville Symphony (OH), and is the creative director for The Early Interval, Columbus' professional early music performance ensemble.



COLUMBUS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

REPERTORY ORCHESTRA

RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 7-10*

REHEARSALS

Tuesday* evenings
7:00pm-9:15pm at
Hilliard City Schools

PERFORMANCES

3-4 performances a season at
various locations throughout
central Ohio

TUITION

\$515 Tuition + \$40
Registration Fee

One-time, yearly tuition will be
billed to members at the beginning
of the season in August. Payment
Plans and Financial Aid are
available upon request.

*Day of rehearsal subject to change



ACCESS TO CSO MUSICIANS:

Repertory Orchestra members have
access to Columbus Symphony
musicians through interaction in
sectionals, side-by-side rehearsal,
retreats, and cohort sit-ins throughout
the season.

**Grade parameters are not flexible. Limited exceptions can be made. Students should consult CSYO staff and private teachers on the right ensemble fit for them.*

REPERTORY ORCHESTRA

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Please review all of the requirements below carefully. Be sure to complete the Online Audition Application found on our Columbus Symphony website.

SCALES



- 2 Major Scales of your choice up to 4 flats and/or 4 sharps
- 2 or more octaves from memory. Brass are permitted to perform 1 octave if necessary
 - Strings - showcase contrasting speeds and bow technique
 - Woodwinds/Brass - showcase contrasting speeds and tongue articulations

SOLO REQUIREMENT



- 2 Contrasting short excerpts of a solo piece, etude, or concerto
- Combined pieces should not exceed 6 minutes
 - Recommended: one should be more lyrical and the second should be more technical
 - Discuss your selection with your private teacher

PREPARED EXCERPT



Auditionees are required to include the indicated excerpt for their instrument in their audition video. To view the prepared excerpt, click the link below.

[Click Here to View Prepared Excerpt](#)

REPERTORY ORCHESTRA

PERCUSSION AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Please review all of the requirements below carefully. All listed instrument requirements are required to audition. Percussion auditions will be in-person, no video required. Be sure to complete the Online Audition Application found on our [Columbus Symphony website](#).

[Click Here to View Percussion Excerpts](#)

SNARE DRUM

1. Exercise #75 from Fundamental Studies for Snare Drum by Garwood Whaley
 - Target tempo should be quarter note = 120 BPM
 - Rolls should be played as multiple bounce (buzz) rolls

TIMPANI

1. Excerpt of "Etude No. 12" from Fundamental Method for Timpani by Mitchell Peters
 - Student will be the correct pitches and asked to tune the drums to the appropriate pitches (A on 29" drum, D on 26" drum)
 - Target tempo should be quarter note = 100 BPM

MALLETS

1. "IV" from Page 26 of Modern School for Xylophone, Marimba, Vibraphone by Morris Goldenberg
 - a. Target tempo should be quarter note = 108 BPM
2. Scales in two octaves (D Major & E-flat Major)

SIGHT READING

1. Student will be asked to sight read basic rhythms on an accessory instrument (tambourine, triangle, or hand cymbals)

Additional Notes:

- All instruments will be provided
- Music, sticks, and mallets will be available, but the student should plan to bring their own

Questions? Contact ndewberry@columbussymphony.com

COLUMBUS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

YOUTH ORCHESTRA

RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 9-12*

ELIAS MILLER

CONDUCTOR,
CSYO MUSIC DIRECTOR

Music Director of the Apollo Ensemble of Boston since 2018 and incoming Assistant Conductor of the Columbus Symphony and Music Director of the Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestra, Elias Miller has established a reputation as a leading young conductor and orchestra builder. He holds degrees from Harvard University (A.B. in Music, summa cum laude) and the University of Michigan (M.M. in Orchestral Conducting) and completed his postgraduate studies at the University for Music and Performing Arts, Vienna.



REHEARSALS

Wednesday evenings
7:00pm-9:30pm at
Jo Ann Davidson Theater in the
Vern Riffe Center**

PERFORMANCES

3-4 performances a season at the
Jo Ann Davidson Theater

**location subject to change

TUITION

\$565 Tuition + \$40
Registration Fee

One-time, yearly tuition will be billed to members accordingly at the beginning of the season in August. Payment Plans and Financial Aid are available upon request.

**Grade parameters are not flexible. Limited exceptions can be made. Students should consult CSYO staff and private teachers on the right ensemble fit for them.*

COLUMBUS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

YOUTH ORCHESTRA

RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 9-12

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCES

ACCESS TO CSO MUSICIANS: Youth Orchestra members have access to Columbus Symphony musicians through interaction in large and small sectionals, side-by-side rehearsal, and cohort sit-ins throughout the season.

CONCERTO COMPETITION: Exclusive to just Youth Orchestra members, this annual competition gives musicians the opportunity to compete to perform a concerto with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra on one of the Young People's Education Concerts.

MUSICIANS SHOWCASE: The Columbus Symphony features the talent of young musicians, either as a soloist or as part of an ensemble, by giving them the opportunity to perform prior to a Masterworks performance in the Ohio Theater.



"This was my 2nd year in Youth and it honestly has been one of the best experiences of my life. I've been challenged to be at my best and try to bring my all to each rehearsal.

I'm so excited for next year!"

- Youth Orchestra Musician

YOUTH ORCHESTRA

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Please review all of the requirements below carefully. Be sure to complete the Online Audition Application found on our Columbus Symphony website.

SCALES

1 Major Scale OR 1 Melodic Minor Scale, of your choice up to 5 flats and/or 5 sharps



- 3 octaves for strings, 2 octaves for winds and brass from memory.
- Strings - showcase contrasting speeds and bow technique
- Woodwinds/Brass - showcase contrasting speeds and tongue articulations

SOLO REQUIREMENT

1 short excerpt of a solo piece, etude, or concerto



- Piece should not exceed 6 minutes
- Discuss your selection with your private teacher

PREPARED EXCERPT

Auditionees are required to include the indicated excerpt for their instrument in their audition video. To view the prepared excerpt, click the link below.



[Click Here to View Prepared Excerpt](#)

YOUTH ORCHESTRA

PERCUSSION AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Please review all of the requirements below carefully. All listed instrument requirements are required to audition. Percussion auditions will be in-person, no video required. Be sure to complete the Online Audition Application found on our [Columbus Symphony website](#).

[Click Here to View Percussion Excerpts](#)

SNARE DRUM

1. "Etude #3" from Advanced Snare Drum Studies by Mitchell Peters, pub. by Try Publishing Company

TIMPANI

1. "Etude No. 57" from Fundamental Method for Timpani by Mitchell Peters

MALLETS

1. "Reading Study #1 in G Minor" from Fundamental Method for Mallets by Mitchell Peters

SIGHT READING

1. Students will be asked to sight read rhythms on an accessory instrument (tambourine, triangle, bass drum, and hand cymbals)

Additional Notes:

- All instruments will be provided
- Music, sticks, and mallets will be available if needed, but the student should plan to bring their own

AUDITION OVERVIEW

Audition Videos and Fees are due by
11:59pm Sunday, May 10, 2026

AUDITION APPLICATION

If you have not already done so, complete the Online Audition Application for your chosen ensemble. All Auditionees MUST complete an application in order to receive their results. The application can be found on the Columbus Symphony website.

If you are auditioning for more than one ensemble, you only need to complete one application and pay one audition fee.

UPLOAD AUDITION

After completing the application, auditionees will receive an Audition packet. Follow all the information in the Packet to prepare, record, and upload your audition video.

We also accept the \$50 Audition Fee by check to Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestras.

Mail to:

Attn. Nia Dewberry
Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestras
55 E. State St.
Columbus, OH 43215.

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

See the Audition Requirements to know what to prepare for your audition. All of the information listed under each ensemble must be included in your video in order to be considered.

Students auditioning for more than one ensemble will submit only one audition video using the higher-level ensemble's requirements.

AUDITION RESULTS

Audition results will be delivered via mail during the last week of May, along with additional season information for those who are accepted into the program.

If you do not receive your audition results by June 26, please contact us.

FAQs

HOW MANY OPENINGS ARE AVAILABLE FOR NEW MEMBERS?

Openings for new members depend upon both the number of current members leaving their orchestra and the conductor's judgment. If you submit an audition application and fee but there is no opening for your instrument, the CSYO will notify you and refund your audition fee.

WHAT IS THE COST TO AUDITION?

Audition fees are **\$50** payable with audition registration. If you are auditioning for more than one orchestra, there is only one fee. Checks can be made out to "CSYO Auditions, Attn. Nla Dewberry" and mailed to 55 E. State. St., Columbus, OH 43215.

MY GRADE LEVEL QUALIFIES ME FOR TWO OR MORE GROUPS. HOW DO I DECIDE WHICH GROUP TO AUDITION FOR?

We suggest string students in sixth grade (or younger), who have not yet played in an organized ensemble, audition for Junior Strings, as there are a few differences between playing solo pieces and playing as part of an ensemble. Similarly, string students in seventh or eighth grade should audition for Chamber Strings. Woodwind, brass and percussion students who have performed in an ensemble fewer than two years should audition for Repertory Orchestra.

Students whose grade qualifies them for more than one orchestra are welcome to audition for each eligible orchestra. Students will audition using the higher-level ensemble's audition requirements. For example, if a student wishes to audition for Repertory and Youth Orchestra, they will record their audition using the Youth Orchestra requirements.

NOTE: If you audition for more than one orchestra, you must indicate so on your Audition Application. You will only need to pay one \$50 audition fee.

FAQs

WILL I RECEIVE COMMENTS FROM MY AUDITION?

No. Any written notes that conductors make during your audition are solely for their use in making decisions.

WHAT IS THE COST TO PARTICIPATE? DO I PAY THIS NOW?

The annual fees are as follows:

- Youth Orchestra: \$565 + \$40 Registration Fee
- Repertory Orchestra: \$515 + \$40 Registration Fee
- Chamber Strings: \$495 + \$40 Registration Fee
- Junior Strings: \$475 + \$40 Registration Fee

Do NOT pay tuition now. You will be billed for your tuition upon acceptance into the program. Need-based financial aid and payment plans are available.



FAQs

WHY AM I ALSO REQUIRED TO PLAY IN MY SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM?

The CSYO is firmly committed to the importance of school music programs and strives to cooperate with the music education community. Members must participate in their school instrumental music programs and take private lessons on the instrument on which they perform in CSYO. We expect our members to be role models and musical emissaries in their school ensembles. Students who are homeschooled or do not have instrumental programs at their school are exempt from this requirement.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER OF A CSYO ORCHESTRA?

CSYO musicians are expected to attend all scheduled rehearsals and concerts. Musicians are expected to practice their music at home and come to weekly rehearsals prepared to work as an ensemble.

I HAVE OTHER EXTRA-CURRICULAR RESPONSIBILITIES THAT COULD CONFLICT. IS THAT A PROBLEM?

CSYO musicians are expected to attend all scheduled rehearsals and concerts. If you believe you won't be able to make these dates a priority, you should carefully consider your decision to audition.

WHAT IF I AM UNABLE TO SUBMIT A VIDEO AUDITION RECORDING?

We highly encourage everyone to submit an audition video, however, if you DO NOT have a camera available or there are other extenuating circumstances, we will have live audition dates available upon request. Please let us know if this is necessary and we will contact you directly.



columbus symphony youth orchestras

We look forward to
hearing your audition!

If you have any questions on any of the contents of this
booklet or about the CSYO Program,
contact us at ndewberry@columbussymphony.com

