



**Pittsburgh Youth  
Symphony Orchestra  
Handbook  
2023-2024 Season**

**Heinz Hall  
600 Penn Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222-3259  
Phone: 412-392-4872  
Web Site: <https://www.pyso.org/>  
Email: [info@pyso.org](mailto:info@pyso.org)**

This document has been produced for the reference and convenience of Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra members and their parents. The goal of the PYSO Handbook is to facilitate the operation of an artistically sound and smoothly run orchestra.

# Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra

## 2023-2024 Season

### Artistic and Administrative Staff

Jacob Joyce, Music Director  
William Powers, Executive Director  
Eve Goodman, Program Director/Music Librarian  
Bridget McKenna, Manager of Marketing & Social Media

#### Sectional Coaches:

Violin 1.....Jeremy Black  
Violin 2.....Dennis O’Boyle  
Viola.....Marylène Gingras-Roy  
Cello ..... David Premo  
Bass .....John B. Moore  
Woodwinds.....Jack Howell  
Brass ..... George Vosburgh  
Percussion..... TBA  
Harp..... Gretchen Van Hoesen  
Keyboard ..... Rodrigo Ojeda

The **Mission** of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra is to teach and inspire musical excellence through orchestral training, to perform in premier venues, and to cultivate diverse audiences for classical music

**Table of Contents**

Membership .....page 4

Diversity Statement & Policy  
(Non-discrimination/Equal Opportunity) .....page 4

School Music Programs/Private Study .....page 4

Artistic Standards.....page 5

Facilities .....page 5

Attendance .....page 6

Department and Etiquette .....page 7

Instruments, Music, Personal Belongings .....pages 7 & 8

Arrival Procedure/Rehearsals .....page 8

Concert Attire.....page 8

Weather Emergency Cancellation &  
Schedule Changes .....page 9

Membership Dues & Scholarship Opportunities.....page 9

Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra’s  
Parent Association (PYSOPA) .....page 10

Travel & Parking .....page 10

## Membership

Membership in the orchestra is by invitation only, following highly competitive auditions. Maximum age for PYSO members is 20. If a student turns 21 during the season, they may remain in PYSO as a regular member until the end of that season. Renewal of the invitation each season *is not automatically guaranteed*, but is determined by the Music Director, sectional Coaches, and/or Executive Director. The musical progress of all members will be evaluated on a continuing basis throughout the season. This will be done by way of observation during rehearsals, sectionals, seating auditions and concerts.

## Diversity Statement & Policy (Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity)

The Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra (PYSO) embraces diversity as a core aspect of the organization's mission. PYSO defines diversity as the inclusion of all groups and the exclusion of none. Since its founding in 1945, PYSO has been committed to making our educational programs and concerts accessible to a diverse audience, and we recognize that continued efforts must be made to ensure that our organization reflects the ideals of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility, both within the organization and externally.

- **Inclusion:** PYSO endeavors to foster a culture of mutual respect for all experiences, voices, stories, and contributions, and to create a culture of dignity, respect and belonging for all individuals. We aim to reflect this culture through our organizational structure and policies as well as in our interactions with our audiences and community.
- **Diversity:** PYSO recognizes that we do not equitably represent all our communities and we must continue our efforts to change this at all levels of the organization.
- **Equity:** The Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra shall provide equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, physical characteristics and disabilities, or economic and social status.
- **Accessibility:** PYSO is committed to integrating accessibility principles at all levels, ensuring that those with visual, physical, sensory, or other accessibility needs can experience PYSO performances.

It is the policy of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra to afford equal employment opportunities to all individuals. PYSO will attempt to ensure that it recruits, hires, trains, transfers, and promotes persons in all job groups, without regard to race, creed, color, age, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, handicap or disability, perceived disability, citizenship status, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, marital status or veteran status, and any other protected category under the relevant federal or state laws.

## School Music Programs/Private Study

All PYSO Members are strongly encouraged to participate in their school music programs, if and when they are available. Our program supports and cooperates with the music education community. We expect our members to be role models and musical ambassadors in their school ensembles.

All members of the youth orchestra are expected to study privately. If help is needed, PYSO can offer suggestions for choosing a private teacher. Suggestions are not necessarily endorsements.

## Artistic Standards

The Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra is dedicated to promoting and maintaining the highest artistic standards. It is our expectation that all members endeavor to attain their full musical potential. The Music Director, Executive Director, Program Director and/or members of the Coaching Staff may notify youth orchestra members of musical deficiencies that require improvement, particularly when it is perceived that improvement is possible. Orchestra members so notified must show improvement within these deficient areas within a reasonable time frame, as determined by the Music Director, Executive Director, and/or members of the Coaching Staff. Failure to demonstrate improvement in deficient areas within a designated time frame may result in dismissal from the orchestra, at the discretion of the Conductors.

## Facilities

PYSO members will respect the rules, premises, and the property of Heinz Hall or any other facility where rehearsals, concerts, or other activities take place.

Please observe:

- Arrive no earlier than ½ hour (30 minutes) to PYSO rehearsals at Heinz Hall unless otherwise scheduled to do so.
- Please do not park, drop-off, or pick-up students in the bike lanes outside of the Stage Door of Heinz Hall. It is a violation of City of Pittsburgh ordinance and the police will issue tickets if they witness it.
- When the backstage lobby as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> floor rehearsal rooms, green room and other rooms backstage are being used by the PSO during their Sunday matinees, PYSO is **not** permitted in those areas until the PSO is finished.
- **No food or beverages are permitted on stage, backstage behind the acoustical shell, or in the auditorium of performance facilities. Any food or drink found in these areas by PYSO Staff will be thrown away.**
- The tables with red felt tops behind the acoustical shell at Heinz Hall are for instruments only. **Absolutely no food or beverages should ever be placed on them.** Any food or drink found on these tables by PYSO Staff will be thrown away.
- Do not disturb the stage or rehearsal room set-up. If assistance is needed, inform a PYSO staff member.

## Attendance Policy

A guiding philosophy of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra is that professional responsibility is critical to musical performance. Absences may negatively impact the orchestra's progress as well as be counterproductive to your own personal growth. However, we understand that absences may be unavoidable and have developed the following attendance policy.

*Students are permitted a total of 5 absences per season, not to exceed more than 3 in any one rehearsal cycle leading up to a major concert.*

- All members are expected to attend all scheduled orchestra rehearsals, sectionals, and performances.
- Reasons for absences will be treated on a case-by-case basis.
- Conflicts with religious holidays and/or mandatory school activities will not be counted as an absence if we are made aware of conflicts in advance.
- [Absence Forms](#) are located on the "[For Members](#)" page of the website and need to be filled out and submitted **online** no less than two weeks before the scheduled activity. The PYSO Staff evaluates absence requests/notifications on an individual basis.
- The [PYSO Calendar](#) located under the "What's Happening" tab on PYSO's website includes the 2023-24 season schedule and has the most up-to-date information for programs and activities.
- Weekly reminders will be posted by Friday midday on the For Members' page of the PYSO website. Reminders and last-minute changes or cancellations will be sent out via **Remind.com** as well as emailed to students and parents.
- Outside musical engagements (paid or unpaid), attending concerts or sporting events that are not a required school activity, are not legitimate reasons to miss rehearsal.
- In the case of sudden illness or emergency, please notify the PYSO office via telephone (412-392-4872); leave a message on voice mail if no one is in the office.
- **Missing a dress rehearsal or concert is grounds for dismissal.**
- Excessive absences and/or missing a dress rehearsal may result in reassignment of parts, re-seating in the section, loss of principal status, not being permitted to play a concert, or in extreme circumstances, being asked to leave the orchestra.
- Continued "forgetfulness" on the part of members to notify PYSO Staff of their absence(s) can result in reassignment of parts, re-seating in the section, loss of principal status, not being permitted to play a concert, or in extreme circumstances, being asked to leave the orchestra.

**TARDINESS & LEAVING EARLY:** Late arrival to a rehearsal is not acceptable. It is unprofessional, irresponsible, and extremely disrespectful to your colleagues. Significant tardiness or leaving early, or regular such occurrences, may count as an absence or partial absence.

**SUBSTITUTES for Woodwind, Brass & Percussion Players:** If you will be absent from a rehearsal, please ASK your section mates to cover your part in your absence. Get their contact information at the first rehearsal so you can set this up BEFORE the rehearsal date you will be absent.

## Department & Etiquette

PYSO members should always conduct themselves in a professional manner during rehearsals, sectionals, performances, and other youth orchestra functions. This means alert, observant, and courteous attention; enthusiasm for activities; cooperation; respectful good manners; punctuality and dedication; attention to all directions given by the Music Director, Coaches, and Orchestra Staff.

Out of respect for your colleagues please **do not** wear any perfume or cologne to rehearsals.

Failure on the part of any student to behave in an appropriate manner may result in that student's dismissal from the PYSO organization. Behavior, which may result in dismissal include, but are not limited to the following:

- Use of cell phones on stage (or rehearsal room) during rehearsal *is prohibited!* If you are seen using one during rehearsal, it will be held until the end of rehearsal.
- Excessive absenteeism especially in the weeks prior to the concert. Students should discuss any anticipated absence with Mr. Powers and Ms. Goodman.
- Repeated failure to comply with concert dress policy.
- Failure to comply with the instructions of conductors, staff, PYSO volunteers, or staff of rehearsal facility.
- Physical violence or threats of physical violence towards any staff or orchestra member.
- Acts of vandalism or theft from rehearsal or concert facilities.
- Repeated acts of disruption during rehearsals. Disruption to be determined by the conductors.
- Verbal, sexual, or any other form of harassment.
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or un-prescribed drugs.

If you experience or witness any form of bullying or harassment, please notify a member of the PYSO staff immediately.

In the case of dismissal, no refund of tuition will be made.
--

## Instruments, Music, Personal Belongings

### Instruments:

Members are responsible for their own instruments. Do not leave instruments or bows unattended where they might be accidentally damaged. Do not leave your instrument on your chair during breaks or leave it on the floor. Instruments should be safely put into cases when not being needed or not being played. All instruments should be insured. Most homeowner policies can include an inexpensive rider to cover instrument insurance.

PYSO has a small collection of instruments that students may borrow. These can be borrowed for the season or if your personal instrument is under repair. Should you need to borrow an instrument contact Ms. Goodman at [eve@pyso.org](mailto:eve@pyso.org).

## PYSO HANDBOOK – 2023-2024 SEASON

### Music

It is the responsibility of each musician to have their music at every rehearsal. If you are a member of the wind, brass, percussion, harp or keyboard section and will be absent from a rehearsal you are expected to notify your section mates and be sure your part is covered for rehearsal.

Markings to your music should be made neatly and legibly in **No. 2 pencil only**. Please bring pencils and an eraser to every rehearsal. Leave music **on your music stand** after the last concert that it is needed, unless instructed otherwise.

### Personal Belongings

Please do not leave personal belongings or items of value unattended, particularly in public areas or at concerts. PYSO and/or Heinz Hall are not responsible for stolen or lost articles.

### Arrival Procedure/Rehearsals

It is the responsibility of all PYSO members to be aware of all rehearsals, concert dates and times. Members should **arrive approximately 15 to 30 minutes early** to allow time to unpack and warm up. Five minutes prior to the start of rehearsal, each member must be seated, ready to tune.

The [PYSO Calendar](#) located under the “What’s Happening” tab on PYSO’s website includes the 2023-2024 season schedule and has the most up-to-date information for programs and activities. Weekly reminders also will be posted each Friday afternoon on the For Members’ page of the PYSO website. Last minute reminders, changes and/or cancellations will be sent out via **remind.com** as well as emailed to students and parents. **It is your responsibility to check the “For Members” page of PYSO’s website each week.** Additional announcements may be made at full orchestra rehearsals.

### Rehearsal Breaks

There will be at least one substantial break at every rehearsal. You may bring or purchase a snack or beverage, but please keep all food and drinks away from the facility stage, backstage and auditorium. Do not be late to rehearsal after break. You should be in your seats and tuned a few minutes before rehearsal begins again.

### Concert Attire

Orchestra concert dress should include black dress clothing from head to toe, such as:

- Black suit, **or**, black trousers and black sports coat **or** tuxedo pants/jacket with Black long sleeve button down shirt (**no white shirts**). Black leather dress shoes and solid black socks. Open collar, no tie.
- Black dress with sleeves or long black slacks or black skirt and solid black blouse with sleeves. Nothing strapless, nothing low cut. (Skirt and dress must cover the knees when seated.) Black shoes with closed toe & heel - no sandals. Jewelry must be minimal

Out of respect for your colleagues please **do not** wear any perfume or cologne to performances. Please refrain from wearing pins, medals, or other adornments.



### **Weather Emergency Cancellations/Schedule Changes**

In the event of a weather emergency, which necessitates the last-minute cancellation of a rehearsal, PYSO will email as well as utilize Remind.com about the cancellation. Members may also **call the PYSO office 412-392-4872** to check for an announcement. Every effort will be made to record an announcement as far in advance of the rehearsal as possible.

DO NOT ASSUME rehearsal cancellation based on Pittsburgh city schools or other area schools being closed.

### **Membership Dues**

Membership dues for the 2023-2024 season are \$700. An additional \$25 will be applied to the dues for the PYSO Parents' Association (please see PYSOPA section below for more information). More information about dues payments and payment plans can be found on the Membership Dues Invoice.

### **PYSO Scholarship Information**

The Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra Scholarship program provides financial assistance ranging from full to partial coverage of annual dues payments and other related membership expenses. Scholarships are determined based on financial need and/or merit, and distributions are based on the funding available each season. This program ensures that the financial barriers to participating are as limited as possible and students who are accepted to PYSO are able to participate without the burden of financial hardship.

### **Membership Dues Scholarships**

Any student may apply for scholarship assistance for membership dues by submitting the PYSO Membership Dues Scholarship. Scholarships for membership dues are available based on financial need and/or merit. Applications are reviewed, and allocations are determined, by members of the PYSO Staff and members of the Scholarship Committee of PYSO's Board of Directors

### **Undergraduate Music Fellowship Scholarships**

PYSO's Undergraduate Music Fellowship Scholarships are designed for advanced student musicians who are currently attending a college or university in the Pittsburgh tri-state area. Applicants must complete this application each season even if they have previously received a scholarship or Fellowship from PYSO.

### **Tour Scholarships (applicable only during a Tour season. There is no tour in 2023-24 season)**

It is a long-standing tradition that the PYSO international tour is an integral part of our season and as such all PYSO students involved during the "regular" season, in a year a tour is planned, are expected to participate in the tour. We believe that no student should be prevented from participating in a tour due to lack of finances. Scholarships and financial assistance are available to assist in covering the expense of the tour. Scholarships are both need based merit-based scholarships. Scholarship requests are evaluated by PYSO staff and the Scholarship Committee of PYSO's Board of Directors. Applications for all PYSO Scholarships are located on the [Scholarships and Competitions](#) page of the PYSO website.

### **PYSO Parents' Association (PYSOPA)**

The main responsibilities of the Parents' Association are: 1) to provide meals and/or snacks for students on concert days; 2) to raise funds to pay for these meals; and 3) to provide a yearbook for each PYSO Musician on the final concert of the season.

During seasons in which an international tour is planned, the PYSOPA, in collaboration with PYSO Staff, will endeavor to develop and implement fundraisers to assist in defraying tour expenses for the students.

The Association is comprised of three leadership positions (President, Treasurer and Secretary) that are filled by parent volunteers. There are usually three meetings a year.

Parents wishing to participate in the Parents' Association should contact a PYSO staff member by calling 412-392-4872 or emailing [info@pyso.org](mailto:info@pyso.org).

### **Travel & Parking**

Members are generally expected to provide their own transportation to rehearsals and concerts, including outreach concerts, unless otherwise notified.

Please do not park, drop-off, or pick-up students in the bike lanes outside of the Stage Door of Heinz Hall. It is a violation of City of Pittsburgh ordinance, and the police will issue tickets if they witness it.

In general, please be prepared to pay to park in downtown Pittsburgh or in other areas of the city where rehearsals or performances may occur. Free street parking may be available on weekends in designated areas. Carpooling and/or public transportation is recommended. The PYSO office is happy to provide you with names and contact information of members who live near you and may wish to carpool, too. Please allow for additional travel time for such things as:

- Sports and other stadium events
- Parades
- Races, Walks
- Construction and Detours
- Inclement weather

For traffic conditions, you may want to check with google maps or other map/navigation system.

We will make our best efforts to warn everyone in advance of unusual or special events that will impact travel and parking (e.g. Steeler's games, parades, marathon, etc.).

For real time parking conditions (space availability) for downtown Pittsburgh parking garages (Pittsburgh Parking Authority) go to <http://parkpgh.org/>. You'll also find information on rates that will vary from garage to garage.