



Rockford Symphony Youth Orchestra

HANDBOOK AND INFORMATION 19/20 SEASON

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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The Rockford Symphony Orchestra is the proud parent organization of the RSYO

COMMUNICATION

Email is the primary means of communication. Please check your email regularly!

Important season information is posted on the RSYO Current Members page of the Rockford Symphony Orchestra's website. You can access this page anytime at:

www.rockfordsymphony.com/rsyo-member-info

Contact information for conductor Linc Smesler and administrator Margo Stedman are listed on the front cover of this Handbook.

RSYO ENSEMBLES

SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA

The main ensemble consists of approximately 60 advanced young musicians, and performs standard symphonic repertoire. The orchestra has one concert per semester, with occasionally a repeat performance in collaboration with other ensembles. RSYO rehearses weekly on Sunday afternoons for twelve weeks per semester. The RSYO experience includes sectionals coached by RSO musicians, performances with student concerto competition winners, and side-by-side performances with RSO musicians.

HONORS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

A select group of the RSYO's most advanced students, membership is available only to current Full Orchestra members, and only by special invitation of the conductor. The Chamber Orchestra rehearses weekly and performs one concert per semester.

BRASS CHOIR

All brass players of the RSYO are automatically members of the Brass Choir, which rehearses separately from the full orchestra. Brass Choir takes place during the Fall semester and has additional performances of holiday music in December.

STERLING STRING QUARTET

Four exceptional string players are chosen each year to form the Sterling String Quartet. The Quartet receives separate coaching and performs as a representative of the RSYO at various venues throughout the Rockford area, including in the lobby of the Coronado Theater before RSO concerts. The Sterling String Quartet is named in honor of Bill and Marian Sterling whose gift to the RSO includes an annual contribution to fund coaching for the Quartet.

CHAMBER MUSIC PROGRAM

Open to all RSYO musicians. Each ensemble will receive six 1-hour coachings per semester by a member of the RSYO faculty. Ensembles must be willing to commit to rehearsing with their ensemble a minimum of 1 hour per week outside of their regular coaching.

REHEARSALS

LOCATION

Rockford Lutheran School (*unless otherwise noted*)
3411 N. Alpine Road
Rockford, IL 61114
Band/Orchestra room is located downstairs

ATTENDANCE

- Attendance is expected at all rehearsals and performances.
- Maximum of **three** excused absences per semester, for any reason, as long as no more than two occur consecutively.

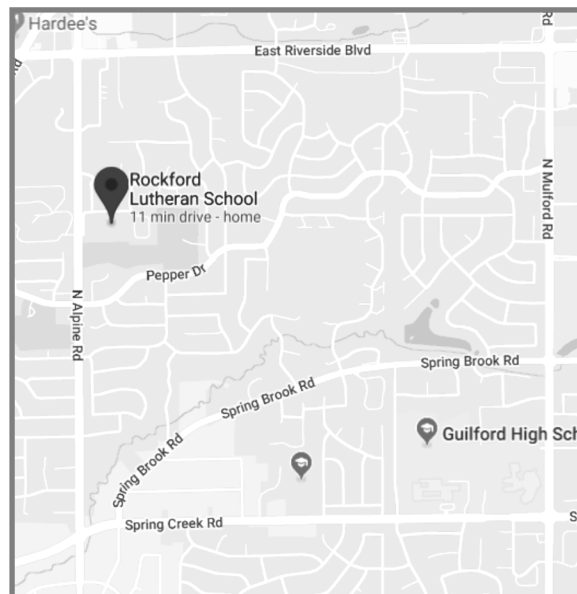
Members missing more than three rehearsals, or more than two consecutively, regardless of the reason, may be asked not to play the concert. Excessive absence is detrimental to the orchestra's performance.

Absence from the dress rehearsal will only be excused under extreme circumstances, and must be discussed in advance with the conductor. Unexcused absence at the dress rehearsal will result in the member being asked not to play the concert.

If a member is unable to attend a rehearsal, or becomes ill on the day of the performance, it is the member's responsibility to notify the conductor personally and as soon as possible!

PREPARATION AND EXPECTATIONS

- BE ON TIME
 - In your seat
 - Instrument out and tuned
 - Ready to play
 - AT START TIME
- COME PREPARED
 - Bring your music to each rehearsal
 - Have a pencil with you
 - Come having practiced and listened to recordings of the repertoire
- Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off during rehearsal.
- Food or gum in rehearsal is prohibited. Water bottles are OK.



Ethan Branch, horn, is the RSYO Intern and is available during rehearsals to help with sheet music issues and to facilitate communication with the RSO Office.

CONCERT DRESS

Personal appearance should be neat and professional.

Young men are expected to wear:

- Black suit jacket
- White shirt
- Long dark tie
- Black slacks (with dark belt)
- Black calf-length socks
- Black shoes

Young women are expected to wear:

- Full-length black dress, or knee-length skirt (no mini-skirts), or dress slacks (not jeans).
- Black top with long or 3/4 length sleeves. *Tank tops, halters, camisoles, and spaghetti straps are **not** appropriate.*
- Legs should not be bare; dark hosiery and black shoes (no sandals) are required.
- Use discretion with jewelry and make-up.



These are all appropriate options for ladies.



SKIRT TOO SHORT!

CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of the RSYO are representatives of the organization, and the behavior of each individual reflects upon the whole. At all RSYO events, including rehearsals and sectionals, members will be expected to act in a professional manner and to show respect and consideration for others. A successful RSYO experience requires a cohesive group wherein each individual accepts and follows the same standards of behavior. Disruptive or distracting behavior during rehearsals, events, or performances is detrimental to the ensemble.

There will be no use of drugs, no smoking, and no drinking alcoholic beverages at any time during RSYO activities. Members may not participate in any RSYO activities under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Members who do not observe the Code of Conduct or are suspected to be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol are subject to appropriate disciplinary action including: conference with parents, removal from an RSYO activity, and expulsion from membership.

PARTICIPATION IN OTHER MUSICAL ACTIVITIES

The RSYO strongly encourages members to participate in other musical activities outside of the orchestra. Here are the most basic expectations:

- Participate in a band or orchestra program at school, or if homeschooled, in another music education program.
- Receive private instruction on the instrument they are playing in the orchestra.
- Attend RSO Classics Series concerts (members and their parents receive complimentary tickets.)
- Listen to classical music and attend concerts of all kinds.

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

RSYO musicians are occasionally asked to perform for Rockford Symphony Orchestra events. All ensembles can expect to have several performance engagements at important RSO events throughout the year. Small ensembles may be asked to assist with recruitment trips at the end of the season.

CONCERTO COMPETITION

The RSO/RVC Concerto Competition is held at Rock Valley College. The winner receives a cash prize and the opportunity to perform on the spring concert of the RSYO. **This year's competition will be held on October 26, 2019.** Information and applications are available on the RSO website at:

www.rockfordsymphony.com/concerto-competition

SIDE BY SIDE

RSYO Musicians have the opportunity to audition to perform onstage side-by-side RSO musicians for the RSO's Annual Youth Concert. RSYO musicians must audition separately and be invited to participate in this performance. Auditions will be held early in 2020 for the Youth Concert that will take place on **Tuesday, April 28, 2020** in the morning. RSYO Musicians are expected to prepare their music on their own and attend rehearsals for the performance in the morning before the performance.

AUDITIONS

Members of RSYO need to re-audition each spring for the next season. Membership and seating is not guaranteed from one year to the next, and requires continued high level of performance and demonstrated commitment to the orchestra. With that being said, students are rarely removed from the orchestra and re-auditions should be seen as a time to meet with the conductor one-on-one and share goals for the upcoming season, as well as get feedback on areas for growth.

FUNDRAISING

The true cost of participation in the RSYO is well over \$600 per member for symphonic orchestra alone. To make up the difference, fundraising activities are essential. In addition to providing needed income, fundraising allows the RSYO to expand support within the community and to generate greater awareness of the RSYO's activities.

Fundraising activities vary with each season and goals are set with concert venue and production expenses in mind. If goals are not reached, additional fundraising activities may be necessary to balance the budget. **It is expected that each family participates in fundraising, unless choosing to opt-out by making an "opt-out" payment of \$100.**

TRIVIA NIGHT

Each year RSYO hosts a Trivia Night with Silent Auction to raise funds for RSYO. All families that don't pay the fundraising opt-out are expected to participate in some way. Specifics on Trivia Night are on the following page. **Trivia Night will be on February 22, 2020.**

APPLEBEE'S FUNDRAISER

Each year RSYO students take over Applebee's and serve a pancake breakfast. Each family that does not pay the fundraising opt-out is responsible for selling 5 tickets at \$5 each. **This event will be held on September 28, 2019.**

AMAZON SMILE

While shopping through Amazon, consider using Smile.Amazon.Com and designating **Rockford Symphony Orchestras Inc.** as your charity. A percentage of each eligible item you purchase on Amazon will be donated to the Rockford Symphony Orchestra and benefit RSYO.

SCHNUCKS ESCRIP

If you have a My Schnucks card (also used for gas rebate program) you can register it as part of the EScript program and designate the Rockford Symphony Youth Orchestra as your charity. Each time you shop at Schnucks, a percentage will be donated to benefit RSYO.

RSYO BOOSTERS

All parents are considered members of the RSYO Boosters. The primary responsibility of the Boosters is to promote and fundraise for RSYO.

Boosters direct all fundraising activities associated with RSYO, plan post-concert receptions, the Annual Awards Dinner, and assist with logistical help for concerts and Camp RSYO.

Parent volunteers are essential to coordinating RSYO activities under the direction of the RSO staff who are responsible for administering the program.

TRIVIA NIGHT

All parents are needed to help make Trivia night a success! **The 19/20 Season Trivia Night will take place on Saturday, February 22, 2020 at the Riverfront Museum Park.**

On Trivia Night, teams of up to 8 people will register to play Trivia (RSYO Parents and friends can sign up to play). Dinner is included with registration and there is a silent auction for participants to bid on. RSYO families donate baked goods for dessert (they can be store bought!). This event typically raises around \$3,000 for RSYO.

There are a few key areas where we need specific volunteers to commit:

Event Planning

- Theme and decorations - OPTIONAL
- Compiling trivia questions – this could also include finding one or multiple people to write them.
- Plan/solicit dinner
- Soliciting bake sale items from RSYO parents
- Find a Trivia Emcee

Silent Auction

- Item solicitation – ALL PARENTS! Ideally we would have approximately 30-35 Auction packages. You could donate part of a package, or a whole package. When thinking about what you might contribute, think outside the box! Do you have access to a special one-of-a-kind experience? A tour somewhere? Access to an expert? Often times experiences are more valuable than items! However, some suggested items are:
 - Spa baskets – massage certificates, lotions, nail polish, etc
 - Kitchen baskets – small appliance with accessories
 - Games – a basket with a board game and free passes to go bowling as a family
 - Gift certificates to stores, restaurants, etc
 - Special experiences – horseback riding/plane rides/behind-the-scenes tour/boat rides
- Organizing packages – we need parents to come to the office and organize all donated items that aren't in full packages into packages that we can sell
- Setting up all the packages the night of the event – presenting them in a pleasing way

Event Night!

- Event Set Up
- Team check-in
- Auction check out
- Serving food

Item solicitation forms are available to download on the RSYO Current Members page of the website.

TUITION

Tuition is due by the first rehearsal of each semester. This fee covers over 58% of orchestra expenses including the conductor, music, sectional rehearsals coaches, and the librarian.

Invoices are sent by the RSO Office. RSO staff handles all payments. **Do not send tuition payments to rehearsal, as an RSO administrative staff member will not be there to collect the payment. Tuition may be paid online or mailed to the RSO office.**

Prompt payment of tuition is vital to the smooth function of the RSYO. Your tuition invoice will have a due date on it, and a notification of the late fees that will be assessed if you fail to pay on time. Non-payment may result in members being asked not to play the concert.

Multiple-payment arrangements are possible. However, these arrangements must be made in advance by contacting Margo Stedman at 815.972.2939.

TUITION BENEFITS

RSYO members and two family members may receive up to 3 free tickets to all Rockford Symphony Orchestra Classics concerts. To request a ticket, fill out the online form (link on the RSYO Members Info page) or call the RSO box office at 815.965.0049 by noon on the Friday before a performance. *Seating is subject to availability.* One hour before each Classics concert, RSO Music Director Steven Larsen gives a pre-concert lecture.

If you reserve tickets and do not show up for 2 or more concerts without notifying the RSO office in advance of the performance, this benefit may be revoked.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

A limited amount of tuition assistance is available. To inquire about tuition assistance, download the form from rockfordsymphony.com/rsyo-member-info

TUITION REFERRAL DISCOUNT

A one-time \$50 rebate (\$25 per semester) can be earned for referring a musician who successfully auditions for the RSYO and who has not participated during the previous season.