



METROPOLITAN YOUTH
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS
OF ATLANTA

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Mission Statement

The Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta (MYSO) is dedicated to providing exceptional music-making in a supportive environment fostering creativity and camaraderie, to instill a life-long love of music in its members.

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*** Please sign and return this document to MYSO Operations Manager by the first rehearsal. Scanned and emailed copies are preferable, however, hard copies may be submitted during check in for the first rehearsal.*

Welcome to the 2025 - 2026 season of the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta. We are excited about the season ahead which will include guest conductors Soon Hee Newbold and Naima Burrs and a commission by Deborah Baker Monday, and much more!

Many of our staff remain the same this season with our conductors, Dr. Cathie Hudnall and Carl Rieke, Megan Williams (Executive Director) and Barrie Herman (Operations Manager) .

Our chamber music program is open to all MYSO members, and we will have coaches available for woodwind, brass, and string ensembles.

Financial Aid (student need based) and Tuition Scholarships (based on instrumentation needs of the orchestras) will once again be available for students. Completed applications for both of these are due by ***August 17, 2025***; application forms are on the MYSO website.

Please feel free to reach out to MYSO staff if you have questions or concerns.

Looking forward to having you with us this season!

The MYSO Team

The MYSO Team

Board of Directors

Kim Johnson, Chair
Patrick Kinsella, Vice Chair
Donnell Francis
Michael Snell
Jason Bastow
Luis Falcon
Stephanie Voss
Jason Lichtstein

Artistic Staff

Cathie Hudnall, Artistic Director and Symphony
Conductor Carl Rieke, Philharmonia Conductor

Administrative Staff

Megan Williams, Executive Director
Barrie Herman, Operations Manager
Brittany Salkill, Website Administrator

Contact Information

Email: info@mysoatlanta.org

Website: www.mysoatlanta.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mysoatlanta

Absences: send email in advance to info@mysoatlanta.org

Remind101 Text and Email Messages

Much of our member communication will be sent through the Remind app.
Please sign up to be a part of the message group by using one of the following methods:

To sign up by text: text @mysoparent to the number 81010

For CutTime access (email/text announcements)

You will receive a smart link to log on to CutTime

Staff Contact Information

Dr. Cathie Hudnall, Symphony Conductor

chudnall@mysoatlanta.org

Carl Rieke, Philharmonia Conductor

info@mysoatlanta.org

Barrie Herman, Operations Manager

Barrie@mysoatlanta.org

Brittany Salkill, Website Administrator

Brittany@mysoatlanta.org

Rehearsal Location and Weekly Schedule

Drew Charter Jr Sr Academy
300 Eva Davis Way
Atlanta, GA 30317

Sinfonietta Orchestra

1:45PM- 2:45PM (Sundays)

Philharmonia Orchestra

3:00PM-5:15PM (Sundays)

Symphony Orchestra

3:00PM-5:30PM (Sundays)

MYSO HISTORY

MYSO is a non-profit [501(c)(3)] Georgia corporation that serves the entire metropolitan Atlanta area and its surrounding communities.

MYSO was co-founded in 1989 by Dr. James Middleton and Mrs. Julia Waugh. Initially composed of thirteen string musicians from two Gwinnett County schools, MYSO presented its debut concert on May 5, 1991. MYSO's first symphony concert, incorporating winds, was presented on May 3, 1992. In 1994 Mr. Dave Cady became President of the Board of Directors and Dr. Marilyn Seelman was appointed Music Director. In January 1995, MYSO expanded into a full orchestra. In 1997, following Mr. Cady's untimely death, MYSO created the Dave Cady Memorial Scholarship Fund, supporting students' musical enrichment, in his honor.

Another string orchestra was added approximately 10 years later. In 2016, that group was expanded into a second full symphonic orchestra, the Philharmonia. Carle Rieke has conducted that group for many years.

In 2014, after over 20 years of service, Dr. Marilyn Seelman retired as Music Director of MYSO and in 2018 Dr. Cathie Hudnall became the new Artistic Director and Conductor of the MYSO Symphony. Also in 2018, a new chamber music program was added to MYSO's offerings. Our relationship with Drew Charter School, which is our primary rehearsal space, has expanded to engage several faculty members and students. We will continue our relationship with GSU faculty for sectionals and side-by-side rehearsals.

Notable Performances include:

- Carnegie Hall 2019
- Georgia Music Educators Conference in Savannah
- 51st Annual Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago
- Spivey Hall
- Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC
- E-Trade Half-time Show of Super Bowl XXXIV
- 55th Anniversary of the United Nations
- Gala performances with Cecil Welch (lead trumpeter and soloist for Henry Mancini) and the Irerra Brothers
- Carnegie Hall
- Honolulu, Hawaii, Pearl Harbor Performance on D-Day Anniversary
- Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai China
- Costa Rica
- European Tour, including Budapest, Vienna and Prague
- Disney Entertainment, Millennium Orchestra

Membership and Attendance Policies

Code of Conduct

Members of MYSO perform locally and tour as a group. All participating musicians are representatives of the organization, and the behavior and dress of each musician reflects upon the entire group. It is essential to respect the rights and property of others. Each student is expected to use good manners, display common courtesy, and show consideration for others. MYSO strictly enforces a zero-tolerance policy with regards to the use of drugs and alcohol, smoking, any other illegal activities, and any form of harassment towards students and staff.

School Participation

Participation in a school music program is required, providing one exists.

Music

It is the musician's responsibility to maintain the music provided to them by MYSO. If the musician habitually arrives at rehearsal without his or her music and requests extra parts, music will no longer be provided. Music you print out from a digital document does not have to be returned.

Attendance Policy

Concerts

MYSO students are expected to make a yearlong commitment to participate in all MYSO concerts. *If you know at the beginning of the season that you have a conflict with our concert schedule, you should not accept a position with MYSO for the season.*

Rehearsals

It is imperative that each member of the orchestra makes every effort to attend every rehearsal for each concert cycle. This continuity will enable the orchestra to develop and produce a musical product of the highest caliber. At virtual sessions, musician attendance will be noted by staff. For in-person activities, musicians will be required to sign the attendance form at the beginning of each rehearsal. No parent, sibling, or other musician will be allowed to sign in for another person.

MYSO has an absence policy that allows no more than six (6) absences for the entire season, and no more than two (2) per concert cycle (see rehearsal/concert schedule). If a musician is absent more than (2) times in one concert cycle, they will not perform in the subsequent concert.

Notice of Advanced Absence:

Any member who will be absent from a rehearsal should advise the Operations Manager *in advance* by email sent to: info@mysoatlanta.org

*****Excessive Absences:

After the 3rd absence, the musician will be asked to demonstrate that extenuating circumstances resulted in his/her excessive absences. It is the responsibility of the musician to keep track of their absences. No notification of excessive absences will be given to the musician. Continued or excessive absence may lead to dismissal from MYSO. If there are extenuating circumstances that resulted in the absenteeism, a written appeal may be made to the Executive Director. The Executive Director and Music Director will review the appeal, and their ruling on the appeal will be final.

Tardiness:

Arriving late to rehearsal is disruptive and disrespectful to the conductor and fellow musicians. Please make every effort to arrive at rehearsal on time. You should be tuned and ready to play BEFORE the rehearsal start time. Leaving rehearsal before dismissal is also disruptive and is not allowed. The Artistic Director must be informed before rehearsal of any situation in which a student must leave early.

Note: A musician will be marked tardy if he/she arrives ten (10) minutes after the posted rehearsal start time. Two (2) times being tardy and/or leaving a rehearsal early will equal one (1) absence.

Words To Live By For Every EMPLOYED Musician

If the musician arrives at 2:45 for a 3:00 rehearsal, they are ON TIME.

If the musician arrives at 3:00, they are LATE and
if they arrive at 3:15 they are FIRED!

Materials for Rehearsal

Each musician is responsible for the following items at in-person rehearsals:

1. Instrument in good playing condition. Percussionists need to bring sticks and mallets.
2. Music folder with all MYSO music inside. DO NOT depend on your stand partner.
3. Pencil with erasers to make markings on your music.
4. Accessories such as rosin, shoulder rest, mutes, endpins, extra strings, extra reeds, valve oil, bass stool, etc.
5. **NO PHONES ARE ALLOWED IN REHEARSAL AND SHOULD BE EITHER TURNED OFF OR IN SILENT MODE.** Failure to obey this rule may result in disciplinary action.

Tuition

Membership in MYSO is for the entire season and tuition is non-refundable. Tuition payments are due IN FULL by **September 7, 2025** and can be paid through the CutTime database program (preferred) or by check mailed to: MYSO, PO Box 14163, Atlanta, GA 30324. (Mailed checks must ARRIVE by the deadline.) Exceptions to the tuition deadline must be approved in advance by the Executive Director.

Payments MUST include the student's name in the notes section of the check or PayPal in order to ensure timely credit to a student's account.

Concert Information

MYSO performs three formal concerts a year. Students are expected to perform at all MYSO concerts. The MYSO website contains the season schedule and other information on upcoming events. Any MYSO member who determines he/she will be unavailable for any of the scheduled concerts must contact the Operations Manager immediately by email at info@mysoatlanta.org.

Concert Dress Code

The goal of the orchestra concert dress policy is to present a unified appearance to the audience. Any member who comes to a performance in unacceptable attire will not be allowed to perform.

Gentlemen in Symphony: Concert Dress: black tuxedo trousers, black jacket or tux jacket, black cummerbund, white tuxedo shirt, and black bow tie, black dress shoes with LONG black socks. No sneakers, white socks, or tennis shoes are permitted.

Gentlemen in Philharmonia: Concert Black: black trousers, black bow (or straight) tie, black shirt, black dress shoes with LONG black socks. No jacket required. No sneakers, white socks, or tennis shoes are permitted.

Gentlemen in Sinfonietta: Concert Black: black trousers, black bow (or straight) tie, black shirt, black dress shoes with LONG black socks. No jacket required. No sneakers, white socks, or tennis shoes are permitted.

Ladies in all performing groups: long black dress, long black skirt, or black dress slacks; no side, front or back slits, no capri length pants, no jeans. Pants or skirts must be at least ankle length when seated; no skin-tight pants, tights or leggings; black dress top with long sleeves or three-quarter length sleeve. Black dress shoes; no heels, no sneakers.

Section Seating

Preliminary seating will be assigned at the first rehearsal. However, students may be given new seating assignments at any time during the season and the Conductor's decision is final.

Financial Aid

A limited amount of financial aid is available for qualifying musicians based on demonstrated financial need. Requests for financial aid must be submitted to the Executive Director for consideration no later than **August 17, 2025** Financial Aid forms are available on the MYSO website. Be sure to include all required forms and information in ONE email. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Tuition Scholarships

A limited number of tuition scholarships will be awarded, by invitation only, based on the needs of the orchestra ensembles to make sure all orchestra sections are fully staffed. Tuition Scholarship forms are available on the MYSO website and must be submitted by **August 17, 2025** for consideration.



2025 – 2026 MYSO Student / Guardian Pledge Due 9/7/25

I/We _____ have read the 2025-2026 MYSO Handbook and understand the contents. Additionally, I/we agree to adhere to the policies set forth in the handbook, most notably, the code of conduct and attendance policies. **I/We understand that I/we are responsible for paying all required fees by the deadline dates unless other arrangements have been made, in advance, with the Executive Director.** Failure to pay required fees could result in a student's dismissal from MYSO. **I/We understand that by signing below, I/we are granting permission for my student, listed above, to participate in all MYSO sanctioned activities, and in addition, I agree to assist my student with adhering to the policies set forth in this handbook.**

Student Printed Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ | Date: __ / __ / ____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ | Date: __ / __ / ____

Please sign and return to MYSO Operations Manager by the first rehearsal. Scanned and emailed copies sent to info@mysoatlanta.org.



MYSO Atlanta 2025 – 2026 Photo Release Form Due 9/7/25

I hereby grant the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta permission to use my likeness in photographs, videos, and other digital media (“Photos”) in any and all of its publications, including web- based publications. Additionally, I waive any right to any payment of consideration, royalties or other compensation that could arise or be related to the use of any Photos.

I understand and agree that all Photos will become the property of Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta and will not be returned.

I hereby irrevocably authorize the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish, or distribute these Photos for any lawful purpose. In addition, I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product wherein my likeness appears. I hereby hold harmless, release, and forever discharge the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestras of Atlanta from all claims, demands, and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have in any way related to MYSO’s use of Photos.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE PHOTO RELEASE. I AFFIRM THAT I AM AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE, OR, IF I AM UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE, I HAVE OBTAINED THE REQUIRED CONSENT OF A PARENT/GUARDIAN, AS EVIDENCED BY THE SIGNATURES BELOW.

Student Printed Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ | Date: __ / __ / ____

If under 18, a parent/guardian must also sign below:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ | Date: __ / __ / ____

Please sign and return to MYSO Operations Manager by the first rehearsal. Scanned and emailed copies sent to info@mysoatlanta.org are preferable, however, hard copies may be submitted during check in for the first rehearsal.

