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www.yocj.org

Student Handbook

Mission Statement

The mission of the Youth Orchestra of Central Jersey is to provide opportunities for talented young musicians in central New Jersey to participate in musical performance at a level beyond that which is traditionally offered by school bands and orchestras.

Orchestras and Ensembles

- String Preparatory Orchestra
- Pro Arte Orchestra
- Symphonic Orchestra
- Wind Symphony
- Brass Ensemble
- Brass Choir
- Saxophone Ensemble
- Saxophone Choir
- Woodwind Choir
- Woodwind Chamber Players
- Flute Choir
- Percussion Prep
- Percussion Ensemble

Seating and advancement are determined by seating auditions, individual performance, age and openings made available through attrition.

Membership

Requirements

In addition to taking private lessons, students must be members of their school orchestra or band in order to participate in YOCJ. Exceptions will be considered by the YOCJ directors only if students have an acceptable conflict precluding participation in the school music program, or if the school does not offer an instrumental music program. Membership is also open to homeschoolers.

Attendance

Every musician is important to the orchestra and regular attendance at rehearsals is required. All absences must be reported through the website at least 24 hours prior to the rehearsal time. Early notification allows the directors to plan their rehearsals efficiently and effectively. **A student may not miss more than three rehearsals per semester or it may affect the student's eligibility to perform that semester.**

Because of the importance of the dress rehearsal, scheduled on the Tuesday before the concert, students should make every effort to be present.

Performances at the following four concerts, in which your group is performing, are **MANDATORY**. (In addition, students are expected to attend the entire concert, not just the section in which they participate.)

Winter Small Ensemble and Large Ensemble Concert Spring Small Ensemble and Large Ensemble Concert

Students who miss a **MANDATORY** concert will be assessed a fee of \$50 which must be paid by the next rehearsal.

Expectations

Good attendance, appropriate behavior and serious commitment are necessary for the excellent performance of music. All students must behave responsibly and not endanger themselves, another student, or any musical instrument.

Music

All students are given music folders and music at the beginning of each semester. All music is the property of YOCJ and must be returned at the end of each concert or according to the instructions given by the conductor. Students are expected to keep music in good condition without tears, folds, ink or excessive pencil markings. Failure to do so will result in a replacement charge to the musician in the amount of \$10.00 per piece of damaged or lost music and in the amount of \$40 for damaged or lost music rented by YOCJ.

Disciplinary Action

At the discretion of the conductors, grounds for dismissal include the following:

- Failure to meet or maintain YOCJ requirements
- Failure to meet financial obligations
- Lack of musical preparation
- Excessive absences or an unexcused absence from a concert performance
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior or conduct reflecting unfavorably on YOCJ

Participation in YOCJ is at each person's own risk. YOCJ is not responsible for any injury to any student or instrument before, during or after any YOCJ event.

YOCJ is not responsible for any damage or loss of instruments, currency or personal property. Tuition shall not be refunded should any student decide to withdraw from YOCJ after the first two rehearsals of the season. If a student must withdraw from the orchestra within the first two rehearsals of the season, the Board will consider a refund of tuition after all music has been returned, less an administrative fee of \$50.00.

Concerts

YOCJ has two major Sunday concerts a year that involve all musicians: one the end of January and one the middle of May. Generally the SPO, PAO and Wind Symphony play at the 3:00 concert. The Symphony and the Saxophone Choir perform at the 7:00 concert with the Percussion Ensemble joining them for the May concert. In addition, the 7 p.m. concert in May features one or more senior soloists, selected by audition, who each perform a concerto with the Symphonic Orchestra.

The ensemble groups, including the Brass Choir, Brass Ensemble, Saxophone Ensemble, Woodwind Choir, Woodwind Chamber Players, Flute Choir, Percussion Prep and Percussion Ensemble, perform in a recital close to the mid-point of each semester.

In early May, YOCJ has an annual, all-day trip to Ocean City, NJ which includes a concert at the Music Pier to showcase our musicians as well as promote camaraderie.

Concert Seating Auditions

Seating auditions will be held for all wind, brass and string students in advance of concerts. Students should prepare with their private teachers. Concert seating will be determined by the student's performance at these auditions. Students who are absent for seating auditions may be able to reschedule or they will be seated at the discretion of the conductors.

Unacceptable Auditions

A student whose seating audition is deemed unacceptable must re-audition within two weeks. If the re-audition is still unacceptable, the student will not be permitted to play the concert and will be placed on probation for the following semester. If the re-audition is deemed acceptable, the student will be permitted to play in the concert, but will be placed on probation for the next semester. Students placed on probation must re-audition after the fourth week of the semester. They will play their music for the conductor(s), at which time the conductors will determine whether the student may continue as a member of YOCJ. If the probation audition is deemed acceptable, the student will remain in YOCJ and re-audition with the other students at the regular concert seating auditions. Students whose probation audition is deemed unacceptable will be dismissed from YOCJ. (Tuition will not be refunded for dismissed students.) Our goal is to teach the probationary musician acceptable standards of proper preparation for a YOCJ performance.

For Parents

Throughout the year, we will need help from all parents. Most jobs do not require any musical knowledge or experience. Assistance with rehearsal and concert set up and take down, seating auditions, ticket sales, chaperoning and concert preparation are among the tasks. If you have not already filled out a volunteer questionnaire and would like to help, please contact YOCJ on the “contact us” page of www.yocj.org. We appreciate any comments, suggestions or help parents have to offer.

A parent/student orientation meeting is held each year before the season begins. An additional parent meeting will be held each semester during rehearsals approximately one month prior to each concert.

Our volunteer Board of Trustees is composed of parents of current or former members of the orchestra. Please note that the organization employs no paid administrators and depends entirely on parental support to make this excellent orchestral training available at a reasonable cost to all qualified students. YOCJ is always looking for additional board members. If interested please contact YOCJ through the “contact us” page on the website: www.yocj.org. The YOCJ board meets at 7:00 p.m., usually on the second Sunday in each month.

Required Concert Attire

All groups EXCEPT Symphony and Saxophone Choir

Girls

- Solid, all-white opaque top with sleeves (no sleeveless tops and no bare midriffs)
- Long black opaque or fully lined skirt (no long or revealing slits), preferably ankle length but mid-calf is acceptable (skirt must be full enough so that it does not have to be pulled up to play the instrument)
- Black formal dress slacks may be worn. Pants must be full length (no cropped or tight pants)
- Black stockings/hosiery and black shoes (no sneakers or sandals)

Boys

- Solid, all-white long sleeve dress shirt
- Black bow tie
- Black dress slacks
- Black socks and black shoes (no sneakers or sandals)

Symphonic Orchestra & Saxophone Choir

Girls

- Same as above except all-black top with sleeves (no sleeveless tops and no bare midriffs)

Boys

- Tuxedo
- Solid, all-white long sleeve dress shirt
- Black bow tie
- Black dress slacks
- Black socks and black shoes (no sneakers or sandals)

Cancellations & Snow Closings

Please refer to the YOCJ homepage in the event of inclement weather. As a general rule, if the West Windsor-Plainsboro schools are closed or have an early dismissal, all evening rehearsals are cancelled.

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