

Mission Statement

The mission of the Tyler Youth Orchestra Inc. is to provide young East Texas musicians with high-quality orchestral instruction and significant opportunities for orchestral performance. Through its three major ensembles, the Tyler Youth Orchestra, the Tyler Academic Orchestra, and the Tyler Preparatory Orchestra, and various smaller ensembles, the Tyler Youth Orchestra Inc. accomplishes this mission by meeting the following objectives:

- Education – To expand members' knowledge of symphonic literature and to provide opportunities with professional musicians and music educators to develop technical and musical skills.
- Experience – To provide members with experiences involving high-level orchestral performance in a variety of groups and settings under the direction of inspiring leaders.
- Encouragement – To encourage the creative and personal development of members by nurturing self-confidence, discipline, dedication, and the ability to work harmoniously with others.
- Excellence – To instill in members a desire to achieve excellence in their skills and to challenge them to strive for the highest level of musical performance.
- Enrichment – To enrich the musical lives of members by promoting a love and appreciation of orchestral music and to enrich the musical and cultural life of the community through performance, community involvement, and education.
- Enjoyment – To help members experience the enjoyment that comes from personal and group achievements in a successful performance and interaction with others who share a passion for music.

History

Tyler Youth Orchestra Inc. began as a violin ensemble for 5th and 6th graders in 1955, reorganized as a string ensemble in 1975, and expanded to a full orchestra in 1979. The Tyler Preparatory Orchestra began in 1991 to provide musical enrichment and training for beginning string musicians. The Tyler Academic Orchestra for intermediate string musicians was started in 2006.

Groups of the Tyler Youth Orchestra

Tyler Youth Orchestra – Our flagship full orchestra consists of advanced string, woodwind, brass, and percussion players performing orchestral literature at the highest level. Open to all students by audition.

Tyler Academic Orchestra – Our middle orchestra consists of intermediate string, wind, brass, and percussion players. The focus is on developing instrumental technique, refined ensemble playing, and different musical styles. Open to all students by audition.

Tyler Preparatory Orchestra – This beginning-level string orchestra is designed for violin, viola, cello, and bass students with one or more years of playing experience. This orchestra emphasizes the fundamentals of string technique, ensemble playing, and music reading. Open to all students by audition.

Chamber Music - The Tyler Youth Orchestra also sponsors a chamber music program, open to all students throughout the organization. Depending on enrollment and student interests, players are organized into various string, woodwind, brass, and percussion ensembles.

Conductors

Ryan Ross – Tyler Youth Orchestra

Ryan Ross assumed his position with the Tyler Youth Orchestra in 2007. He holds a master of music degree in orchestral conducting from Texas Tech University and a bachelor's degree in music performance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He served as Assistant Conductor to the Texas Tech orchestra program and Cover Conductor for the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Ross' conducting teachers include Gary Lewis, Donald Schleicher, Gustav Meier, and Larry Rachleff.

Joanie Rathbun-Russell – Tyler Academic Orchestra

Joanie Rathbun-Russell has conducted the Tyler Academic Orchestra since its inception in 2006. She conducted the Tyler Preparatory Orchestra from 1994 to 2006. She also served as the conductor of the Longview Youth Orchestra for four years. Mrs. Russell is currently the Longview High School Orchestra Director. She has performed with the Longview Symphony Orchestra and the East Texas Symphonic Band. She has a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of North Texas in Denton.

Archie Jones – Tyler Preparatory Orchestra

Archie Jones is the conductor for the Tyler Preparatory Orchestra. He earned his BA from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. He is currently the Suzuki Instructor for Longview ISD and teaches cello, violin, viola, and bass to private students in Tyler and Longview. He began the Suzuki Strings program at Caldwell and All Saints in Tyler. Mr. Jones has been a member of symphony orchestras in Shreveport, Longview, Marshall and Natchitoches. He is also the Symphony Explorer lecturer for ETSO.

Rehearsal Information

Day and Time

Rehearsals are held on Thursday evenings throughout the school year, and concerts are typically held on Sunday afternoons. The TPO rehearses from 5:00 to 6:00PM. The TAO

rehearses from 5:45 to 7:00PM, and the TYO rehearses from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Musicians are expected to arrive fifteen minutes early in order to be tuned, warmed up, and ready to go for the first downbeat at the start time. If musicians arrive late they must check in with the manager and then wait by the entrance until the conductor instructs them to be seated. Finally, musicians should be picked up promptly, no later than ten minutes after rehearsal is scheduled to end. Younger students should not leave the building until their ride is outside waiting for them.

Location

TPO/TAO/TYO rehearsals are held at Tyler Junior College in the Wise Cultural Arts Center, 2nd floor. The WCA is across from the Tyler Art Museum at 1300 S. Mahon, Tyler, TX 75701. We are guests in the TJC facilities, and our members are expected to behave accordingly. Please show respect to TJC property and facilities at all times. Food and beverages are not allowed in classrooms, and at the end of rehearsal our personal belongings and trash must be removed.

Attendance

Musicians are expected to attend every rehearsal, dress rehearsal, and concert in which their orchestra is performing. Please notify the TYO manager and your conductor of any expected absences as soon as possible when they come up during the year. Absences may be excused if sufficient notice is given and the absence is due to school or religious obligations, or in case of illness or emergency. Unexcused absences may result in chairing penalties or elimination from participating in a concert.

Absence from a dress rehearsal or performance may be cause for dismissal from the orchestra. If principal players miss either of the last two rehearsals, they should not expect to maintain a chair position in the concert. In cases of dismissal, no tuition refund will be made, and all scholarships will be withdrawn.

Conduct and Dress Code at TYO Rehearsals and Events

Behavior off the stage is as important as it is on the stage, and each musician's behavior should reflect that person's commitment to excellence. **Behavior throughout the season does affect scholarship requests.** Consequently, all members should observe the following guidelines at rehearsals, performances, and in any situation in which they represent the Tyler Youth Orchestra Inc. Every member is expected to maintain a mannerly and respectful demeanor, showing respect to all conductors, staff, adults, and fellow students.

- Attend all rehearsals and performances.
- Arrive early and be in your seat tuned and ready to go at start time. Also come prepared with your instrument, music, spare parts (strings, reeds), mute, pencil, and anything else you will need to rehearse and perform successfully.
- Wear appropriate clothing to rehearsals and concert dress to all performances. No t-shirts with inappropriate writing. No halter tops, tank tops, tube tops or short shorts. No bare midriffs.

- Behave respectfully, politely, and maturely at rehearsals, performances and other orchestra events.
- Except for breaks, musicians are expected to stay seated for the duration of the rehearsal. Departure during a rehearsal is disruptive to other members and should be avoided.
- No food or drink is allowed in rehearsal halls, sectional rooms or performance venues.
- Cell phones must be turned off and not used for talking or texting during rehearsal or concerts.
- Loud or raucous behavior will not be tolerated and is grounds for dismissal from the orchestra.
- Younger students should not leave the building until their parents arrives.
- No public displays of affection.

Musicians who disregard good behavior may be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the conductor or orchestra manager. A disciplinary letter will be given to the student and parent to inform them of an offense. The second offense may result in the following consequences: sitting out of rehearsals or performance, loss of chair position, loss of scholarship monies, and ultimately, dismissal.

Tuition, Expenses, and Financial Aid

Tuition and expenses for the Tyler Youth Orchestra Inc. are designed to be affordable to every young musician who is committed to excelling as an orchestral or ensemble performer. Annual tuition covers only a small portion of the cost of Tyler Youth Orchestra, Inc. Grants, fundraisers, donations, and many volunteers cover the remainder of the cost of membership. Tuition rates are as follows:

- TYO - \$250.00
- TAO - \$200.00
- TPO - \$150.00

Unless prior arrangements have been made with the orchestra manager and TYO Treasurer, **tuition must be mailed to the TYO no later than two weeks after the start date of rehearsals and must be accompanied by a signed participation contract.** No payments will be received in person by the manager. Payments must be mailed in. If full payment cannot be made at the outset, you may request the treasurer (Dan Griffith at DGriffith@henrypeters.com) to make payment in two installments. If the contract or tuition is not received in a timely manner, students will not be allowed to participate in rehearsals or concerts.

Scholarships

It is the desire of Tyler Youth Orchestra Inc. to assist any musician with financial needs who also possesses the desire, time, talent and commitment necessary for active participation in TYO, TAO, or TPO. A limited amount of financial aid is available for tuition scholarships. Additionally, scholarships are regularly available by application for private lessons and for summer music camps.

We require that tuition scholarship applications be returned postmarked no later than one week after the student's first scheduled rehearsal with orchestra. All applications must be submitted by mail and cannot be accepted in person by the manager. When an award is announced, the treasurer will apply the award to any balance of tuition due (if two installments were arranged) or reimburse the student for tuition already paid if no balance is due, as appropriate. Scholarship opportunities for those auditioning later in the season are limited by available funds and will be addressed on an individual basis.

Behavior and attendance throughout the season does affect scholarship requests.

We also ask parents of those requesting scholarships to consider how they can volunteer their time to help the organization.

Weather

Tyler Youth Orchestra Inc. will generally follow TISD and TJC policies with regard to canceling rehearsals due to inclement weather. If either TISD or TJC dismisses school, then rehearsals or performances will also be cancelled. However, because our conductors travel from other cities, they have the option to cancel rehearsals and/or concerts if the weather makes it hazardous for them to travel.

Concert Dress

Gentlemen

***TYO Gentlemen** wear a black tuxedo, white wing-tip shirt, black socks, black shoes and black bow tie.

***TAO and TPO Gentlemen** wear black pants, white shirt, black socks, black shoes, and a colored (not black), long tie.

Ladies

***TYO Ladies** wear the Ball Skirt and Round Neck Top ordered from Concert Black. Cellists have the option of wearing the Palazzo Pant from Concert Black instead of the Ball Skirt. The Grace Community School Orchestra dress is also acceptable, and JSL members may wear the JSL dress **with a black sweater worn over it**. With any of these outfits, we require that you wear black hose and dress black shoes.

***TAO Ladies** wear the Ball Skirt and Round Neck Top ordered from Concert Black. Cellists have the option of wearing the Palazzo Pant from Concert Black instead of the Ball Skirt. The Grace Community School Orchestra dress is also acceptable. With any of these outfits, we require that you wear black hose and dress black shoes.

***TPO Ladies** may choose their own black dress or black skirt with white blouse, as long as the outfit fits the following guidelines. These must be worn with black hose and dress black shoes.

The following guidelines apply for all three orchestras:

- **No low necklines or strapless dresses, no short skirts, no sleeveless or spaghetti strap blouses or dresses.**
- **Please keep jewelry to a minimum.**
- **You must wear black hose and dress black shoes. Black knee-high hose will be provided for you if you come to a concert without black hose on.**

Concert Dress Ordering Information

The above-mentioned Ball Skirt, Round Neck Top, and Palazzo Pant can be ordered from Concert Black at www.concertblack.com. We will place a Concert Black group order for a discounted rate in September—there will be information on that at the first TYO Patron's meeting. There may also be outgrown skirts and tops for sale by individual orchestra members.

Casual Dress for both Ladies and Gentlemen

Occasionally TYO or an ensemble of TYO students will perform in a more casual venue. (*This would not include our four regular season concerts.*) On these occasions, the conductor may specify casual dress, which is the TYO t-shirt worn with khaki pants (or skirt) and closed-toe shoes.

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