



Colorado Youth Symphony Orchestras  
428 Elati Street  
Denver, CO 80204  
[cysomichelle@gmail.com](mailto:cysomichelle@gmail.com)

# 2023 – 2024

# MEMBER HANDBOOK

Welcome to CYSO! Your agreement to join us is a commitment to your conductors, the organization, your colleagues in the orchestra and the music you will prepare throughout the year.

## ABOUT CYSO

The CYSO was founded in 1984 by the University of Denver to provide an orchestral musical experience for children and young people. We have grown from two small groups to four ensembles consisting of 115 musicians. Virtually everyone can find a place in CYSO. For the past 17 years, CYSO has extended educational outreach programs to underserved public schools in Denver, Aurora, and Adams County. CYSO is a non-profit organization.

## OUR MISSION

CYSO provides access to musical understanding, fostering social growth, self-esteem, and a lifelong love of music for all aspiring musicians.

## OUR GOALS

To develop musical skills and literacy while learning a sense of ensemble.

To emphasize social and emotional growth appropriate to the students' age levels by focusing on group cooperation rather than individual competition.

To include youth of all ability levels and varied social and economic backgrounds from the Denver metropolitan area.

To support and enhance school instrumental music programs by requiring CYSO members' participation in such programs where they exist.

To advocate the creation of instrumental music programs where they do not exist.

To bring to CYSO participants an understanding and appreciation of fine orchestral literature consistent with the age and skill levels of the different ensembles.

# CYSO REHEARSALS

ALL REHEARSALS ARE HELD ON MONDAY NIGHTS

Rehearsal Location: Colorado Academy  
3800 Pierce Street  
Denver, CO 80235

The orchestral program involves students of all ages and musical abilities. The ensemble programs include students from beginners to more advanced musicians.

## ***PHILHARMONIA***

***Alex Vittal***

This group introduces wind instruments into a string ensemble. Students work on full orchestra repertoire as well as strings-only compositions. This is an excellent starting point for full orchestra experience.

## ***SYMPHONY***

***Angie Dombrowski***

A full symphony orchestra composed of our most skilled musicians. The Symphony works on the most advanced orchestra literature available.

## ***WIND ENSEMBLE***

***Dr. Grant Larson***

Winds and brass from both the Philharmonia and the Symphony combine each week for a one-hour rehearsal from 7:30-8:30. Fundamentals of winds and brass playing are emphasized in this wind ensemble.

## ***SPECTRUM STRING ENSEMBLE***

***Angie Dombrowski***

This small conductor-less ensemble includes some of the most advanced players from our Symphony orchestra and is coached by Angie Dombrowski. The group performs frequently in locations including the lobbies for Colorado Ballet, Colorado Symphony, Opera Colorado, as well as the State Capitol, art galleries, and other locations. In 2019 the SPECTRUM String Ensemble traveled to Prague and participated in the Prague Multicultural Music Festival. Students learn and perform a large range of repertoire such as Grieg's Holberg Suite, Mozart Divertimento, K. 136, and Nielsen's Suite for Strings. Rehearsals are scheduled generally once a month, often on Sunday nights.

**All students are responsible for setting up their chair and stand and putting them away after rehearsal!**

# DONATIONS

Ticket sales and dues pay only a small portion of the cost it takes to run CYSO. Donations from members, their families and friends, or their businesses or companies and the public play a major role in keeping CYSO stable. All donations are tax-deductible. **WE NEED AND WELCOME YOUR DONATIONS!** PLEASE MAKE YOUR DONATION ONLINE AT: [coloradoyouthsymphony.org](http://coloradoyouthsymphony.org)

# MEMBERSHIP POLICY

By accepting a position offered to you by the CYSO, you are making a commitment to membership in the orchestra for the entire 2023-2024 season.

Once the season begins with performance assessment tests in September. No refunds are given for any portion of tuition. If the orchestra member is dismissed or withdraws from the orchestra, he/she/they will not be eligible for any tuition or fee refund.

Student images are used to promote a wide range of CYSO programs and activities; however, the use of images is strictly controlled to protect student privacy and to promote student safety. If you do not permit photos of your child to be used by the CYSO for the aforementioned purposes, you must contact our office and make your request in writing.

# 2023/2024 TUITION AND FEES

**TUITION FOR ALL ORCHESTRAS: \$875** (includes \$175 non-refundable deposit + t-shirt/uniform fee)

Payment plans are available upon request. Please contact our accounts manager, Cedra Kuehn, at [cysocedra@gmail.com](mailto:cysocedra@gmail.com). Scholarships are available to qualifying families. Please email the CYSO office ([cysomichelle@gmail.com](mailto:cysomichelle@gmail.com)) for details concerning scholarships.

# BEHAVIORAL CONDUCT

It is the goal of CYSO to create an atmosphere in which student musicians can thrive and further develop their training and musicality. It is also a goal to create an orchestra that consists of students who desire to thrive in such an atmosphere. Behavioral misconduct by students is not in line with these goals. Therefore, CYSO has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the issue. Any actions deemed by the Executive Director as inappropriate may result in that member being expelled from CYSO. CYSO has a zero tolerance policy regarding hate speech, violence, or discrimination of any kind. If any of these behaviors are exhibited, the student will be dismissed immediately. **Any disrespect shown to a CYSO administrator or staff member will result in possible dismissal from the CYSO organization.**

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

The CYSO conducting staff will offer any assistance it can in resolving scheduling conflicts or in reaching a compromise that is acceptable to both parties. You must provide your conductor with one week's notice to attempt to work out a resolution, and remember that compromise requires flexibility from all parties involved. CYSO conducting staff will discuss absences only with the orchestra member and his/her parent or guardian.

Absences due to illness or emergency must be reported to the conductor of the student's assigned orchestra *in advance of* the beginning of the missed rehearsal. Conductor emails can be found on our website

ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE AND PERFORMANCE IN THE STUDENT'S ASSIGNED CYSO ORCHESTRA SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE CONDUCTOR OF THE STUDENT'S ASSIGNED ORCHESTRA. PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE CYSO OFFICE CONCERNING ABSENCES. YOU MUST EMAIL YOUR CONDUCTOR!

## REHEARSAL INFORMATION

CYSO WILL TOLERATE NO CELL PHONE USE DURING REHEARSALS OR CONCERTS.

Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings at **Colorado Academy Schotter's Music Building, located at 3800 W. Pierce St, Denver CO.**

- **Philharmonia** rehearses from 6:30pm to 8:30pm.  
(Strings only from 7:30-8:30. Winds go to Wind Ensemble rehearsal during this time)
- **Symphony** rehearses from 6:30pm to 8:30 pm.  
(Strings only from 7:30-8:30. Winds go to Wind Ensemble rehearsal during this time)
- **Wind Ensemble** rehearses from 7:45-8:30 pm

Snow Days are rare. Rehearsals are only canceled under extreme conditions. **If anything is changed or canceled, it will be on the website and you will receive an email from the CYSO office.** Because members come from all along the Front Range, driving conditions vary enormously, and families and members must judge what is safe for their circumstances. If you choose not to attend a rehearsal due to bad weather, **you must communicate with your conductor, NOT the CYSO office.**

**Parents are responsible for knowing the schedule—check the website weekly.** Please bring your music, music stand, and a pencil to every rehearsal. You should arrive early enough to sign-in on the attendance sheet, set up, and warm up (you should give yourself at least 15 minutes).

Music is available on our website. **Students have the responsibility of downloading and printing the music from the website—music will not be sent out via email, nor will CYSO staff bring music to rehearsal. All students must print and bring their music to each rehearsal.** Please be especially aware of this fact when we start new music. Any questions regarding the music must be directed to Kirby Brayman, librarian, at [cysokirby@gmail.com](mailto:cysokirby@gmail.com).

Arriving at rehearsal on time and with the proper equipment is only the first step. The CYSO has relatively few rehearsals per concert segment, so it is imperative that members use their own time to learn and practice their parts. Expect to spend all the time you need each week preparing your part for the upcoming rehearsal, and work out technical problems with your private teacher in advance so that Monday rehearsals can be a time for shaping interpretation with the whole ensemble. Players who appear to be inadequately prepared on a regular basis may be reseated or dismissed from the orchestra. This decision will be made by the conductor. Decisions of the conductors are final.

## ORCHESTRA AUDITIONS AND CHAIR TESTS

**Orchestra Auditions:** Auditions are formally held each spring by video and throughout the year for new applicants. Members re-audition for their seats yearly in May. Notification of acceptance is made by email. Auditions take place via video and consist of a short 2-3 minute selection of your choice. Auditions are unaccompanied. Memorization is not required.

Prospective players may audition year-round via video.

**Chair Tests:** These auditions are submitted via video once a year in September and usually consist of music that is being prepared by the orchestra. If a student does not submit a video, they will be seated at the back of their section. The conductor has the right to move a student anywhere in the section they feel is appropriate. The decision of the conductor is final. There are no exceptions. **ALL CYSO STUDENTS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN CHAIR TESTS!**

**Note:** Seating changes in any section may be made by the conductor at any time! All decisions are final and may not be appealed.

## CONCERTS

The CYSO will perform various concerts throughout the season (see 2023-24 schedule on the website). Please be on time to all dress rehearsals and concert calls. This information will be sent to you by email and or posted on the website. Parents and students are responsible for checking the website weekly.

### CONCERT DRESS

**Philharmonia Option 1:** Black dress or black skirt, or black slacks with philharmonia designated cami with a black sweater or jacket.

**Philharmonia Option 2:** Black slacks with philharmonia designated tie, black long sleeve shirt, black socks, and black shoes.

**Symphony Option 1:** Black dress or black skirt, or black slacks with symphony designated cami with a black sweater or jacket.

**Symphony Option 2:** Black slacks with symphony designated tie, black long sleeve shirt, black socks, and black shoes.

### POPS Concert and Denver Nuggets performance:

Every ensemble will perform at the 2024 CYSO POPS CONCERT. Everyone is expected to wear your 2023-2024 CYSO t-shirt, jeans or shorts, and comfortable shoes. Everyone is required to purchase the 2023-2024 season t-shirt. This cost is included in your tuition price.

### CONCERT TICKETS

Concert tickets are sold before each CYSO concert. Please arrive at the venue (concert hall) thirty minutes before concert time to purchase your tickets. **CYSO only accepts online payment or credit cards (Visa and Mastercard) for tickets – no cash. Ticket prices are subject to change. Information regarding concert ticket prices can be found on the CYSO website's Concert Tickets tab.** CYSO concerts held at Metro are subject to change and ticket prices according to the policies of the Metropolitan State University box office. CYSO has no power over the Metro box office.

## MEDIA RELEASE

It is possible that images of orchestra members may be taken by the news media or by an in-house photographer. By signing the Agreements of Membership form you are giving permission for the Colorado Youth Symphony Orchestras to use your image/photograph in any official publication or recordings of CYSO. This includes, but is not limited to, multimedia productions such as television, video, web sites, brochures, etc. and you release all rights to the aforementioned photograph/image. You also understand that you will not be compensated monetarily or in any other manner for the use of the image.

## PARENT-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The Executive Director and her assistant are your main contacts for all administrative details. **All schedule conflicts, special circumstances, absences, music questions, chair placement, etc. should be discussed with the conductor.** Conductor emails can be found on our website.

## IMPORTANT

Please add the following e-mail addresses to your personal address book:

[cysomichelle@gmail.com](mailto:cysomichelle@gmail.com) (Executive Director)

[cysocedra@gmail.com](mailto:cysocedra@gmail.com) (Accounts Manager)

[cysokirby@gmail.com](mailto:cysokirby@gmail.com) (Assistants to the Executive Director and Librarian)

[alexvittal@gmail.com](mailto:alexvittal@gmail.com) (Philharmonia Conductor)

[cysoangie@gmail.com](mailto:cysoangie@gmail.com) (Symphony Conductor)

[grantblarson@gmail.com](mailto:grantblarson@gmail.com) (Wind Ensemble Conductor)

Email is the primary communication method used with our CYSO families. In order to ensure that you will receive all of our many important communications, please make sure we are all in your address book so our messages do not go to your junk/spam folder.

Also, be sure to check the website frequently. Our website is [coloradoyouthsymphony.org](http://coloradoyouthsymphony.org). **Every question can be answered on the website or in this handbook.**

## COLORADO YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Colorado Youth Symphony Orchestras (CYSO) admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, gender, age and religion to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students of CYSO. Colorado Youth Symphony Orchestras does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, gender, age, religion or any legally protected status in administration of its admission, educational and personnel policies, scholarship and financial aid programs, and other CYSO-administered programs and activities.

## STAFF

**Conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, Angie Dombrowski** is an avid performer and educator in the Denver area. She can be seen performing around Denver with various organizations including Central City Opera, Colorado Ballet, Opera Colorado, and as a frequent substitute musician with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra. Angie maintains a large private violin studio and enjoys working as a string specialist at various schools in the Jefferson County school district.

**Conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Alex Vittal** is a native of Phoenix, AZ and earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Viola Performance from Arizona State University (2008) and Master of Music degree in Viola Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Colorado–Boulder (2010). As a violist, Mr. Vittal satisfies his varied musical tastes by performing orchestral music as a member of the Steamboat Symphony Orchestra, opera with Opera Steamboat, traditional Argentine tango music with Zero Hour, string quartets with the Highland Square Ensemble, and Baroque music on period instruments with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. He is also the executive director and a violist with Sphere Ensemble, a 14 member string ensemble that performs great music from every genre. He has written over 50 arrangements for Sphere of music from Bach to Prince.

Mr. Vittal is also a dedicated teacher, active both as a private viola and violin teacher, a chamber music coach, and a teacher/conductor of group classes for beginner and intermediate string players. Dedicated to social justice through music education, Mr. Vittal has spent 10 years working with underserved elementary and middle school students as a Teaching Artist with El Sistema Colorado. In August 2018, he had the distinct honor of conducting Yo-Yo Ma, performing Bach's *Air* alongside students from El Sistema, in the This Is Home community block party, as part of Ma's 36-city Bach Cello Suites tour.

**Conductor of the Wind Ensemble, Grant Larson** is an active recitalist and proponent of new music. He is a saxophonist who has premiered many new compositions for saxophone at regional and national conventions. He is the soprano saxophonist with the Colorado-based Chautauqua Saxophone Quartet and has performed with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, the Colorado Music Festival Orchestra, the Chippewa Valley Symphony Orchestra, and the Fargo/Moorhead Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Larson holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Saxophone Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He also holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Colorado and a Bachelor of Music from Concordia College. Dr. Larson is equally comfortable in both classical and jazz settings. His new album, *Terrane*, released under the Dazzle Recordings label (Denver, CO), features nine of Larson's original jazz compositions. Dr. Larson has studied saxophone with Tom Myer, Peter Sommer, Russell Peterson, Ron Wray, and oboe with Jennifer Peterson. He has served on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Concordia College and the Boulder Arts Academy.

**Executive Director Michelle Orman** is in her 17th full season with CYSO. Her primary responsibilities are fundraising, managing the budget and finances, managing staff and overseeing administrative and orchestra operations. Michelle is also a highly sought-after performer. She is principal clarinetist with the Colorado Ballet Orchestra, Opera Colorado, and 2<sup>nd</sup> clarinet/acting principal with the Boulder Philharmonic orchestra. She frequently performs with the Colorado Symphony, and the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in Fort Worth, Texas. She has been working with youth orchestras since 1980 and also has an active clarinet studio.

**Assistant to the Executive Director: Kirby Brayman**

**Accounts Manager: Cedra Kuehn**