



WESTERN
CONNECTICUT
YOUTH
ORCHESTRA

Handbook 2024-25

wctyo.org

CONTACT INFORMATION

Website: wctyo.org

Email: wcyo@wctyo.org

Telephone: 203.894.8786

Mailing Address: WCYO, P. O. Box 964, Ridgefield, CT 06877

Office Location

77 Danbury Road, Ridgefield, CT

(in the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra office)

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra is to educate and inspire young musicians through the study and performance of classical and contemporary musical works, participation in enrichment activities, and engagement with the community.

Our program provides an opportunity to develop artistry and technique, as well as profound understanding and appreciation of instrumental music. Our members are challenged not only to perform at the highest level, but also to build character, creativity, and self-esteem, with music as their guide.

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM & PRIVATE STUDY

It is the policy of the Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra that members participate in their school music program and pursue private study of their instrument.

ELIGIBILITY, AUDITIONS & SEATING

Membership in the WCYO organization is by audition. Students in grades 4 through 12 may audition for a WCYO ensemble. Students will be placed in either the Symphony Orchestra. The WCYO Music Director and String Orchestra Conductor will decide in which ensemble to place auditioning students based upon musical ability. Students will be assigned to sections and seats by the Music Director and Conductor. Seating decisions are based on assessment of musical ability, leadership skills and arrangement best suited to achieve optimal musical results for the ensemble.

COMMITMENT & CONDUCT

Membership in the WCYO organization is an honor and a privilege. Musicians chosen by audition to play in a WCYO ensemble are expected to make participation a priority. Instrumentation and balance within the ensembles are established at the time of auditions and must be maintained through regular attendance by all musicians.

Musicians must at all times conduct themselves respectfully toward their leaders, their fellow musicians, their instruments and the rehearsal and concert venues. Musicians who fail to conduct themselves appropriately may be dismissed from the WCYO. (See Code of Conduct Form.)

ATTENDANCE

If the WCYO ensembles are to achieve the highest possible level of performance, preparation of the music and attendance at all rehearsals and concerts during the season is crucial for all musicians. Absences seriously hinder the musical development during a season. Tardiness is also extremely disruptive to the rehearsal process. Therefore, please plan to attend rehearsal each week, on time.

Should a musician need to miss a rehearsal, the following attendance policy applies:

Musicians will be excused for mandatory school concerts and allowed up to two (2) absences, regardless of reason, per concert cycle, without penalty. Additional absences will result in exclusion of the musician from performing at the concert of that concert cycle. Any musician with three (3) absences during a concert cycle may be required to re-audition for his/her position in the WCYO. Three (3) tardy arrivals constitute an absence.

Absences should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director via email at wcyo@wctyo.org as soon as the musician is aware of the need for the absence. The Executive Director will notify the conductor(s).

REHEARSALS

Musicians should arrive at the rehearsal venue 15 minutes prior to the designated start time in order to unpack and be ready to begin rehearsal on time. Musicians should ensure that their instrument is in good working order and that they have adequate accessories (strings, reeds, swabs, etc.). Musicians should bring their music and a sharpened pencil to each rehearsal. On occasion, musicians may be asked to bring a music stand to rehearsal. At the end of each rehearsal, musicians are expected to help straighten the rehearsal space.

At the discretion of the Music Director or Conductor, there may be a brief break taken during the course of a rehearsal. However, at no time is food allowed on the stage or in the rehearsal rooms. Musicians are welcome to bring water bottles onto the stage or into the rehearsal rooms, but no other beverages are permitted.

Students are responsible for their instruments and music as well as any other personal items brought to rehearsals. The WCYO does not maintain a lost-and-found.

A detailed rehearsal schedule, including the location of each week's rehearsal, is posted on the WCYO website at wctyo.org under the Members tab. Generally, rehearsals take place on Thursday evenings, with exceptions made for religious and school holidays and rehearsal venue conflicts.

Musicians will be notified via email blast of any changes in the rehearsal schedule.

MUSIC

Music for each ensemble is posted on the WCYO website under the Members tab. Each ensemble has its own music page. Music remains posted throughout each concert cycle. Musicians are responsible for downloading and printing their own music. If musicians lose their music or need additional copies, they are expected to print replacement music. All musicians should bring their music to rehearsal each week. The password for the ensemble pages is: **wcyo** (all lower case).

CONCERT ATTIRE (Concert Black)

Black dress OR black skirt and black blouse OR black long-sleeved dress shirt and black dress pants. Black socks (if needed) and black dress shoes. Black belt (if worn).

NO black sneakers, slits in skirts or pants, spaghetti straps, strapless tops, exposed midriffs, shiny hair ornaments, excessive makeup or perfume. Dresses or skirts MUST fall below the knee when sitting.

RETREATS/TRIPS/SPECIAL PERFORMANCES

Retreats, trips and special performances are arranged at the discretion of the WCYO Music Director and/or Conductor, the Executive Director, the Board of Directors, and with the support of WCYO parents.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

The WCYO organization depends upon the support of its active and committed parent community. Throughout the year, there are opportunities for parents to assist the WCYO organization and the individual ensembles. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, assistance at concerts and special events, publicity and fundraising,

TUITION & FEES

Application Fee:

There is a non-refundable fee of \$40 due upon submission of an application for an audition.

Annual Tuition:

Symphony Orchestra - \$850

String Orchestra - \$750

Tuition is due upon acceptance into a WCYO ensemble and no later than July 15 for June auditions and within 15 days of acceptance at other times during the year. Tuition is non-refundable after September 30. Note: Additional fees may be required in the case of events such as the annual retreat, trips or special performances.

Financial Assistance:

An application for need-based financial assistance is available on the website under the Auditions tab. Financial assistance applications are due by July 15 for June acceptances or within 15 days of acceptance at other times during the year.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra, Inc. is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, and therefore donations to the organization are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

CHARLES IVES MUSIC FESTIVAL at the WCYO

The mission of the Charles Ives Music Festival is to honor the legacy of Charles Ives by bringing American music to the Fairfield County area. CIMF concerts regularly feature dynamic and unique artists performing the works of Charles Ives, the music of 20th and 21st-century American composers, and music that transcends the traditional boundaries of classical music to incorporate other styles of music. CIMF also provides interactive educational events, centered around the exploration of chamber music, for both children and adults in our community.

The CIMF Winter/Spring Chamber Music Intensive is a 12-week chamber music program for advanced WCYO musicians eligible by recommendation of the WCYO Music Director and/or the CIMF Artistic Director. Ensembles are student led, with coaching from CIMF Artist-Faculty and guest instructors.

Participation in the CIMF summer programs (Chamber Music Intensive and Chamber & Orchestra Performance Program) offers aspiring musicians the opportunity to perform side-by-side with world class Artist-Faculty in chamber music groups and in the CIMF Orchestra. CIMF Artist-Faculty hold positions in major American Orchestras, lead chamber ensembles, and perform on Broadway.

In addition to the educational programs, CIMF Artist Concerts are a professional series performed by CIMF Artist-Faculty and guest artists. Concerts are held in the summer during the two-week festival and periodically during the school year. Concerts are held at a variety of venues and are open to the public. WCYO musicians are admitted free of charge to all CIMF concerts.