



NORWALK **YOUTH** SYMPHONY

HANDBOOK
FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS
2021-2022



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ABOUT THE NORWALK YOUTH SYMPHONY

The purpose of the Norwalk Youth Symphony is to enrich the lives of young people within a musical community. We provide the finest possible training, practice and performance opportunities, enabling our students to learn, share and enjoy the power of music.

In partnership with parents, teachers and schools we:

- provide exposure to diverse orchestral styles under the guidance of musical professionals,
- identify and educate motivated students regardless of financial circumstance,
- foster a sense of achievement and self-esteem through a developmental approach, and
- promote self-discipline and teamwork through respect for artistic standards.

Founded in 1956, the NYS has expanded since that time to include over 250 musicians from more than 30 area towns each year. Its reputation has also grown. Many alumni have gone on to study professionally at music conservatories and colleges such as Juilliard, Eastman, Manhattan School of Music, Berklee College of Music, Hartt College of Music, Northwestern and the New England Conservatory. Graduates have also played in college orchestras at Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth, Wellesley, Ithaca, Brown, Princeton, University of California at Berkeley, Williams, MIT, Hamilton, Boston College, Columbia and others. One alumnus is a three-time Grammy Award winner. All NYS members gain an invaluable discipline and musical experience that instills a lifelong appreciation of music and the arts.

STRUCTURE - The Norwalk Youth Symphony is comprised of five ensembles representing four levels of youth orchestras. The five ensembles, each with its own highly qualified conductor, allow the individual to progress with young musicians of similar ability. NYS also offers a Brass Ensemble.

- **Prelude Orchestra:** An entry-level string orchestra that performs student works in order to develop skills in string technique, music theory, and ensemble performance.
- **Philharmonia Strings:** A string orchestra that provides a transition from Prelude Orchestra to the more difficult repertoire that is performed by the Concert Orchestra.
- **Philharmonia Orchestral Winds:** Young woodwind and brass players receive the special attention needed to develop their technique, sound, musicality, and orchestral ensemble playing. This ensemble performs orchestral arrangements and periodically performs with the Philharmonia Strings.
- **Concert Orchestra:** This full symphony orchestra provides experience in rehearsing and performing a wide range of shorter works from the Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary periods.
- **Principal Orchestra:** Our most advanced symphonic orchestra performs demanding orchestral classical, romantic, and 20th century repertoire such as full-length symphonies, symphonic poems, overtures, and concertos.

Membership and placement are by audition only. Each player, including a returning musician from the previous year, is auditioned every year by the conductors in late August and the beginning of September to ensure correct placement according to individual ability.

The Norwalk Youth Symphony is sponsored by the City of Norwalk.

CONDUCTORS

Jonathan Yates is the Music Director of the Norwalk Youth Symphony and the conductor of the Principal Orchestra. Jonathan has earned high praise as a conductor, solo pianist, and collaborative artist for his musicianship, intellect, and the remarkable variety of his musical endeavors. He made his professional orchestral conducting debut at 23, leading the National Symphony Orchestra in a Millennium Stages Concert. The following year he made his Carnegie Hall debut as a participant in the Isaac Stern Chamber Music Workshop. Jonathan also serves as Music Director of the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra, where he has been a driving force in reinvigorating the relationship between the symphony and its community.

He has collaborated as a pianist and conductor with many of the country's most respected musicians, including Midori, Kim Kashkashian, David Finckel, Charles Neidich, Ida Kavafian, Colin Carr, Gilbert Kalish, Paul Neubauer, Joseph Lin, and William Purvis; and the Avalon, Daedalus and Pacifica Quartets. He has been heard as a chamber musician at the 92nd Street Y, Miller Theater, Bargemusic and Merkin Hall, as well as at the Caramoor Festival and on the Ravinia Festival Rising Stars Series. As an ardent devotee of the music of our time, he has conducted new music concerts with the Argento Chamber Ensemble and the Knights, was the recipient of an ASCAP award for adventurous programming, and has given local and regional premieres of pre-eminent composers including Augusta Read Thomas, Huang Ruo, Zhou Long, Chester Biscardi, and Chen Yi.

Jonathan received his Graduate Diploma in conducting from the Juilliard School, where he studied with James DePreist and Otto-Werner Mueller, and was the holder of the Bruno Walter Memorial Scholarship. He received his Master of Music from State University of New York, where he worked with Gilbert Kalish, and his Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, where he studied with Robert Levin. His past work includes serving as founding Music Director of Camerata Notturna, as Music Director of Music Mountain, and on the faculty of Sarah Lawrence College. He was recently named Director of Classical Series at 23Arts Windham Music and Jazz Fest. He descends from a family that has been on the forefront of the battles for the cultural and humanistic life of our country. His grandfather, U. S. Representative Sidney R. Yates, was the principal defender of the National Endowment for the Arts in his 48 years in Congress, and his father, the Honorable Stephen R. Yates, was the first judge in Illinois to approve same-sex adoption.

RUSSELL GER is a young Australian conductor based in New York. His repertoire spans orchestral, operatic, and choral music, which he has conducted across North America and his home country.

Mr. Ger was the 2014 recipient of the prestigious Brian Stacey Memorial Trust Award for Emerging Australian Conductors. This is one of the highest accolades a young conductor can receive. It resulted in his candidacy for the position of Assistant Conductor with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra as well as to an invitation to conduct the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in a special showcase later this year.

In 2013, Mr. Ger was selected as one of four Finalists from around the world for the prestigious *2nd International Chicago Symphony Orchestra Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprenticeship*. The audition took place before a panel of experts headed by the great mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, and Chicago Symphony music director Riccardo Muti.

Mr. Ger has toured North America with renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman, promoting a recording for Sony of Jewish art-music made in 2012. Performances took place at the Hollywood Bowl with members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic before an audience of 10,000, and at the Barclays Center arena in New York for an audience of 6,000. The tour also drew full-houses at the Boca Raton Arts Festival, Boston

Celebrity Series at Symphony Hall, Ravinia Festival in Chicago, Long Island, and Toronto. A PBS Special went to air and was nationally televised in late 2014.

One of the highlights of Mr. Ger's early career came in 2003 when he conducted the Finale from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the Sydney Opera House. On this occasion, he led a massed community chorus along with Sydney Symphony and Australian Opera-Ballet Orchestra members. The next year he repeated the performance at the Sydney Convention Center for an audience exceeding 3,000.

JESSICA MCNAMARA began her tenure with Norwalk Youth Symphony in 2007 as a sectional coach for violins and was appointed conductor of Philharmonia String Orchestra in 2009. She went to Providence College on a full scholarship and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Music Education. Jessica also holds a Masters Degree in Music Education from the Hartt School of Music.

Jessica taught middle school orchestra in the Westport public schools for 11 years and later went on to found the Ridgefield Suzuki School in Ridgefield, CT. Jessica and her colleagues at Ridgefield Suzuki School enjoy inspiring children as young as 3 years old to begin playing violin, viola, cello or piano and continue to make music an important part of their lives as they grow into adults. Jessica also conducts with the Fairfield County Summer String Orchestra and Band, a summer program she and her husband founded in 2009. Beginning with just one level and 50 students, the program has developed to a four-tiered organization for students in 3rd to 12th grades, with over 200 students participating.

BARRY ZHOU is a conductor and music educator proudly based in Connecticut. He received his Master's Degree in Music Education with a focus on Instrumental Conducting from the University of Hartford where he studied with Glen Adsit and Edward Cumming. He also holds a Bachelors in Music Education from Western Connecticut State University where he studied trumpet with Rich Clymer and conducting with Dr. Fernando Jimenez. He has a wealth of experience attending conducting workshops throughout the years, including having attended the Conductor's Institute at Bard College where he studied with reputable teachers such as Mark Gibson and Harold Farbermann.

Barry spends his teaching career taking part in a large variety of different musical engagements. He teaches throughout the day at East Elementary School in New Canaan, CT and is the music director for the East School Singers. In his summers, he helps continue Connecticut's long tradition of firehouse community bands by serving as Assistant Conductor for the Sound Beach Community Band based in Greenwich, CT. He also spent time working with many marching ensembles across the state including the Norwalk High School Bands, New Milford High School Bands, and the 7th Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps.

Dr. Rafael Videira holds degrees from the University of Oregon (Eugene, OR), the University of New Mexico (Albuquerque, NM), and Sao Paulo State University (Brazil). His professional musical experience ranges from teaching private and group lessons to Suzuki students to touring, performing and recording under the direction of conductors such as Kurt Masur and Helmuth Rilling. Dr. Videira's articles, method books and edited music have been published by the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA), the Yost Family Trust, and the Alto & Treble Publications.

He has been a string educator for over a decade and is passionate about teaching the next generations about the importance of music and the joys that it brings to each person's life. Dr. Videira has conducted many Student-level and Community Orchestras in the Southwest and Pacific Northwest before moving to Connecticut, where he teaches at the Suzuki Music Schools of Westport & Orange. He believes that every young musician is capable of reaching a high level of proficiency in music and aims to push his students to achieve their best performances through hard-work and fun while playing music with their friends.

POLICIES FOR NYS MEMBERS

PLACEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

The primary outcome of the auditions is assignment to one of the five Norwalk Youth Symphony orchestras. Acceptance and placement decisions are at the sole discretion of the conductors' considerable professional judgment and are final. Orchestra placements will be posted on the NYS web site during the week preceding the first rehearsal. Orchestra placement as well as seating assignments will be posted in the lobby at the first rehearsal.

SEATING ASSIGNMENT

The audition is also important as an aid to the conductors in determining seating assignments. Seating in an orchestra is not determined by ranking. Rather, it is done in the best interests of the individual musicians and the orchestra as a whole. String players will NOT necessarily be seated according to ranked ability but by the conductor in such a way as to best benefit the orchestra. Changes in strings seating may be made throughout the year. This may involve rotation back and forth between the first and second violin sections.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

NYS members are expected to participate and remain in good standing in their school's instrumental programs, where they exist. Conflicts that prevent participation should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director as soon as possible. Good standing is determined by the school program. Those not participating will be asked to discuss the matter with the NYS Board's Executive Committee.

PRIVATE STUDY

It is expected that all members will pursue private study on their orchestral instruments. Limited scholarship assistance for private lessons is available.

INSURANCE:

The Norwalk Youth Symphony's insurance policies do not cover instruments owned by individual members. Please check your own household coverage.

MUSIC:

Each player is responsible for the care of his/her music and for bringing it (in its binder) to all rehearsals. Music is distributed at the beginning of each concert period. There is a \$5 fee to replace music after the second rehearsal for each concert.

REHEARSAL/CONCERT ETIQUETTE

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices is not permitted during rehearsals or concerts. Anyone found using one will have their cell phone/electronic device confiscated until the end of rehearsal or concert. Consequences for habitual cell phone use, disruptive behavior, etc., may include being placed on probation, being seated at the back of a section, or other actions that may be appropriate.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Norwalk Youth Symphony admits students of any race and does not discriminate on the basis of race or sex in administering its educational programs, admission or placement policies, scholarships or other programs.

TUITION AND FEES, 2021-2022 SEASON

	Principal	Concert	Phil/Prelude
TUITION	\$775	\$725	\$675
4 SEASON TICKETS	\$150	\$150	\$150
SNACK FEE	\$30	\$30	\$30
MUSIC FEE	\$25	\$25	\$25
Total	\$980	\$930	\$880

Families with more than one member purchase only one set of season tickets.

Chamber Ensembles (2 semesters 10 coachings each semester)
NYS Musician \$300 semester Non NYS musician \$350 per semester

Theory (2 semesters 10 classes each semester)
NYS Musician \$200 per semester Non Musician \$250

PAYMENT

NYS offers two payment options:

Option I: **Full payment at the first rehearsal.**

Option II: **Three equal payments** due September 15th, October 15th, November 15th.

Members who withdraw or become ineligible to participate in NYS will not receive a refund.

Please contact the office for scholarship applications and to discuss payment arrangements.

Scholarship applications are due September 15th.

**CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO NORWALK YOUTH SYMPHONY
CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS MAY BE MADE WITH MASTERCARD, VISA or DISCOVER**

There will be a convenience fee of 2% added to each credit card payment.

ATTENDANCE

REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE

When joining the program, we ask that students make a commitment to the program and its rehearsal schedule and avoid scheduling other activities during the scheduled orchestra rehearsals and performances. Attending rehearsals strengthens the group as an ensemble and enhances the student's experience. Although we expect students to commit to attending every rehearsal, we know that there are conflicts that are unavoidable. Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) absences during each concert rehearsal period. Please note that there are mandatory rehearsals for each concert period. These dates are noted in the rehearsal schedule. Absences at mandatory rehearsals may result in the musician not performing in the concert or dismissal from the program. Extraordinary circumstances will be reviewed by the Executive Committee.

Rehearsals start promptly at the time indicated on the schedule. Musicians should be fully warmed up and in their seats with their instruments tuned prior to the start of rehearsal. Excessive tardiness, at the discretion of the conductor, may affect seating placement or removal from the orchestra.

CONCERT ATTENDANCE

Concert attendance is mandatory. Absence from a concert may result in dismissal from the Orchestra for the season. Extraordinary circumstances will be reviewed by the Executive Director and the Executive Committee. Absence from the May concert may result in the inability to participate in the following season, subject to review by the Executive Director and the Executive Committee.

COMMUNICATION/ABSENCES

Due to the large number of musicians in the Orchestra, we ask that all communications regarding attendance be reported on our website or via email directed to the Executive Director. Please do not phone or text your absence information, as we need to have a record of the absence.

SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURE:

If bad weather causes a rehearsal cancellation, a message will be posted on our web site and Facebook page. A message will be left on the office phone and cell phone and this information will be sent to Connecticut and Westchester News 12. Please remember that NYS members come from over two dozen different communities, some of which have more severe weather problems than others. If a rehearsal is not cancelled and you have concerns about your child's safety in traveling to Norwalk, we urge you to use your best judgment. Such absences will not count as one of the two allowed absences of the concert period. Please submit an absence online if you decide not to send your child.

CONCERT BEHAVIOR

It is the tradition at NYS concerts that those members who are not performing sit in the audience while their peers play. This gives them a chance to hear the other orchestras and to get a sense of the continuity that the organization provides through its graded orchestra system. **As a courtesy to their fellow performers, all musicians are expected to remain until the final group on the program has finished its performance.**

There is a standard of behavior expected of those in the audience that is as follows:

- Musicians are expected to sit quietly in their seats.
- There is to be absolutely no talking during a performance.
- No one is to leave the auditorium except during breaks between orchestras and then only singly or in the company of **one** other musician.
- The same courteous attention should be paid to those on the stage as one would expect to receive when it is his or her turn to play.
- It goes without saying that horseplay and other such inappropriate behavior is not acceptable.
- Musicians' cell phones and other electronic devices are not to be brought into the auditorium.
- Parents, please discuss this important matter with your child before the concert. We all want the concerts to be special, so it would really be unfortunate if a few members marred the impression that our fine performances create for our audiences.

NYS CONCERT DRESS

WHY WE HAVE A DRESS CODE FOR PERFORMANCES

A dress code enables the orchestra to match visually the artistic unity and professionalism that it strives to convey musically in performance. If you have any questions about an article of clothing or need help in acquiring an item, please contact the Executive Director Sara. Review your performance dress well in advance so you don't find yourself unprepared the day of the performance.

All Orchestras

Required: Black shoes and black socks/stockings

No sneakers, sandals, jeans, leggings or tight fitting pants.

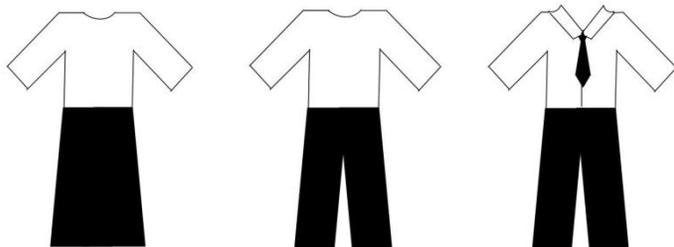
No bare arms, midriffs, legs or feet.

Prelude & Philharmonia Orchestras

Long sleeved solid white shirt/top

Plain black slacks/full black skirt

Long conservative dark tie (Boys)



Concert and Principal Orchestras

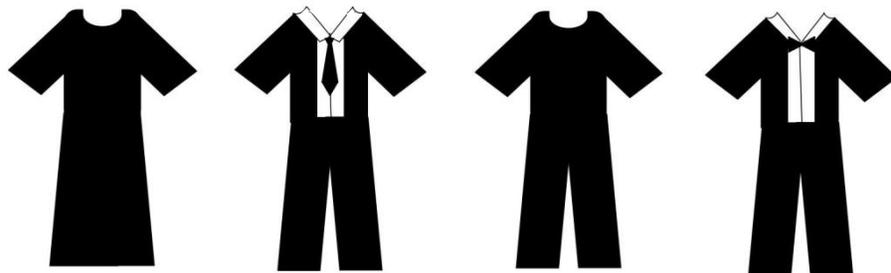
Long solid black dress, ankle length skirt or black dress pants (Girls)

Long sleeved solid black top (Girls)

Black suit and white shirt (Boys)

Long solid dark tie (Concert Boys)

Black bow tie (Principal Boys)



ENRICHMENT

SMALL ENSEMBLES

In 2017 NYS introduced a **brass ensemble**. The ensemble will practice and perform music of many genres; from music written for brass ensembles to arrangements of pop music, classical music, jazz, holiday music and much more. This is a great opportunity for young brass players to develop and showcase their skills.

CONCERTO COMPETITION

The NYS sponsors a Concerto Competition every year for members of the Principal Orchestra. All who wish to do so may audition in January for this event. **MUSIC TO BE PERFORMED AT THE COMPETITION MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE PRINCIPAL ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR NO LATER THAN THE FIRST REHEARSAL IN NOVEMBER.** This insures that (a) the work being prepared is playable by the orchestra and (b) the music will not have to be rented. The winner will play a movement of a concerto with the orchestra at the Winter concert.

SECTIONAL REHEARSALS

Professional musicians and teachers are brought to rehearsals a minimum of two times during each concert period to work specifically with different sections of all five orchestras. Such sessions are invaluable in helping to prepare each member of the NYS for performance at concerts and in producing a unified sound within sections. The dates of these sectionals are listed in the NYS 2016-17 schedule.

TRAVEL ABROAD

In the summer of 2008 NYS embarked on its first performance trip overseas. Members of the Concert and Principal Orchestras traveled to Prague, Budapest, Vienna and Salzburg. Since 2008 NYS has traveled biannually. Past tours include touring the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Spain, Italy, Germany and Portugal/Spain in 2018. In June of 2021 we will travel and perform in Italy.

MASTER CLASSES

From time to time we hold master classes, where participants in our program may perform in public for a guest instructor, who then coaches the students. Both audience members and performers can learn a great deal from these “open lessons.”

ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

In order to enhance the performing experience for its musicians, the Norwalk Youth Symphony arranges for performances in such places as Carnegie Hall and Tanglewood. Concert Orchestra performs with INTEMPO and Principal Orchestra performs with the Norwalk Symphony each spring. These are considered to be an integral part of the musical education the NYS offers and participation is mandatory.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community Service concerts enhance the performance experience for NYS musicians, while thanking the community for the support it (and its musicians) receive. Therefore, there are occasions when the NYS orchestras and chamber music participants perform benefit concerts in the area. These are also mandatory activities.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

The Youth Committee is the representative voice of all orchestras of the NYS. Its purpose is to listen to the concerns and suggestions of orchestra members and to help make participation in the NYS a more rewarding experience. The committee meets once a month with a parent advisor who reports back to the Board of Directors as the Committee's messenger. Thus an opportunity for open communication between the orchestras and the Board is provided, and the Board receives information that helps it to run the NYS in a way that will ensure a positive musical experience for all members.

PARENT ENSEMBLE:

The most valuable contribution parents can make is to support their student's obligation to attend all rehearsals and to encourage them to prepare the music thoroughly. However, we also need parent assistance for many other things. Please volunteer your time and talent by joining our PARENT ENSEMBLE. A sign-up form is enclosed in this folder. In addition, each family is expected to assist once with the afternoon snack that is served to the musicians at every major rehearsal. Parents must sign up for snack duty at the first rehearsal of the season. Parents are also expected to volunteer at one concert each year.

Norwalk Youth Symphony
Sara Watkins Executive Director
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Norwalk, CT 06851
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Web page: www.norwalkyouthsymphony.org

YOUTH COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION FORM

All are encouraged to participate in the Youth Committee. If you are interested in participating, please fill out the attached form and return at the first rehearsal.

I am interested in being a representative from my orchestra to the Youth Committee.

Name _____ Age _____

Orchestra _____

Telephone number _____ Email _____

Instrument _____

I have served on the Youth Committee for _____ years.

This will be my first year on the Youth Committee