

2025-2026

ENSEMBLE HANDBOOK



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EMPIRE STATE
YOUTH ORCHESTRA
ETIENNE ABELIN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

WELCOME TO ESYO!

WELCOME TO THE 2025-2026 ESYO SEASON!

This year, we celebrate our new theme: **RISE**

We are so excited to welcome you to another season of music, growth, and connection at Empire State Youth Orchestra. Whether you're returning or joining ESYO for the first time, you're now part of a vibrant community of young musicians who are ready to challenge themselves, lift each other up, and rise to new heights—on stage and off.

Over the coming months, you'll rehearse, perform, and collaborate with peers from across the region. You'll make new friends, explore new music, and experience the joy of playing at some of the Capital Region's most iconic venues. It's serious fun—and we're glad you're here.

By accepting your placement in an ESYO ensemble, you've made a commitment to show up, stay curious, and give it your best. This handbook outlines what you need to know: schedules, expectations, policies, and ways to make the most of your season. Please take a few moments to read it through.

If you have questions, reach out to your ensemble manager or contact Sue Lascoe, Operations Director: **slascoe@esyo.org**

Let's make it a season to remember. Let's rise together!

-The ESYO Team

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OVERVIEW

ESYO has provided outstanding music training and performance opportunities for young musicians from across New York's Capital Region and Western New England since 1979. Beginning with a single orchestra nearly forty years ago, ESYO has grown to include 14 performing ensembles, a youth chorale, and a free, community-based music program called CHIME. ESYO players are afforded exceptional learning opportunities with elite musicians, renowned conductors and passionate Teaching Artists. ESYO's performing ensembles engage in over 600 hours of rehearsal per season and, combined, offer more than 30 public performances each year. ESYO has received three prestigious awards for its adventurous programming from the American Society of Composers, Artists, and Publishers (ASCAP) and has had 8 international tours, including participation in the World Association for Symphonic Band Ensembles Festival in Hungary in 2018, and a tour to Asia sparked by an invitation to perform at the 2012 World Expo in South Korea.

MISSION

ESYO challenges and inspires young people to achieve excellence through music in a rigorous learning environment leading to high-level performance opportunities.

VISION

ESYO aspires to create tangible and lasting benefits for our community. Together we strive to:

- Facilitate skill development for the 21st century
- Nourish a new generation of leaders in the arts and society
- Inspire lifelong stewardship of our shared musical treasures
- Create a sustainable model to expand access to music education
- Promote the use of music as an agent of social change

SHARED VALUES

Our shared values drive our mission and help us realize our vision. We have a passion for:

- Musical excellence as a joyful pursuit and a pathway to personal growth
- Access to enriched musical education and experiences
- Service to youth as our primary customers
- Collaboration among our musicians and ensembles, with our supporting schools and community partners
- Community as an opportunity to engage, to grow and to give back.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT ESYO

ESYO is committed to creating a culture of inclusivity in all our spaces - whether we are in a rehearsal, performance, or online. In April 2020, ESYO established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force made up of young musicians, staff, and board members to ignite our commitment and journey towards ensuring ESYO is a place where all voices are heard, everyone feels welcomed, and our diversity is celebrated. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment regardless of able-ness, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, cultural background, national origin, citizenship, faith, ideology, or income.

Throughout the season, ESYO members and stakeholders will be presented with opportunities to engage in conversations and workshops around our commitment to inclusivity.

2025-2026 COVID VACCINE POLICY

ESYO members will no longer be subject to a COVID-19 vaccination requirement for the 2025-2026 season. Masks and vaccination against COVID-19 are still strongly recommended as the best protection against illness and the spread of infection.

FACULTY & STAFF

2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Heather Chan
Board Chair
Peter Lauricella
Vice Chair
Jon Lepel
Treasurer

Lin Polster
Secretary

Rajesh Ahuja
Amy Anderson
Vic Bernstein
Katherine Hart Crain

Rick Drake
Shannon Draucher
John Fatuzzo
Shari Lynn Fox
Rob Hamilton
Stefon Harris
Chris Jantson

Missy Nigro
Brian Quiara
Barry Richman
Brian Sacawa
Christopher Shiley

2025-2026 ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



Rebecca Calos
Executive Director



Lisa Stulmaker
Finance Director



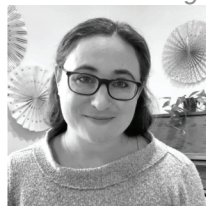
Sue Lascoe
*Operations Director
and Repertory
Orchestra Manager*



Andrea Restrepo
*Operations Manager,
Symphony Orchestra
& String Orchestra
Manager, and Librarian*



Amy Shake Ortiz
*CHIME Program &
Relationships Manager*



Zoe Auerbach
*Young Leaders and
CHIME Director*



David Bebe
*Associate Music Director
of CHIME & Chamber
Music*



Leah DeLira
Marketing Director



Mary Rose Petrozola
*Membership &
Communications
Coordinator*

2025-2026 CONDUCTING STAFF



Etienne Abelin
*Music Director
& Symphony
Orchestra*



Joseph Gumper
String Orchestra



Leo Milman
Concertino Strings



Alex Atchley
*Concertino
Percussion
Ensemble*



Mark Foster
*Youth Percussion
Ensemble*



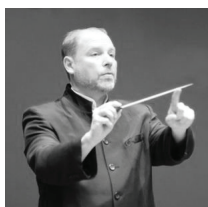
Dr. Rob Sanderl
*Youth
Percussion
Ensemble*



Genoveffe Vitale
*Repertory
Percussion
Ensemble*



**Dr. Robert
Hansbrough**
Wind Orchestra



David Beck
*ESYO Repertory
Orchestra*



Julie Taylor
*Concertino Wind
Choir*



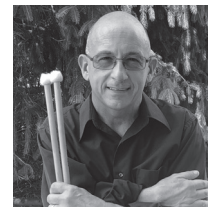
Scott Hopkins
*Concertino Brass
Choir*



Dr. Michael Lister
*Melodies Of
Christmas
Chorus*



Alyssa Verheyen
*Repertory Jazz
Orchestra*



Jim Iacketta
*Chamber
Percussion
Ensemble*



Dr. Peter Bellino
*Youth Jazz
Orchestra*



David Bebe
*CHIME
Orchestra*



ESYO CHIME, in partnership with the Schenectady City School District, invites all young musicians to pursue their musical talents through daily music instruction and outstanding music ensembles led by highly trained teaching artists.

ESYO'S TEAM OF TEACHING ARTISTS INCLUDES PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS, SKILLED MUSIC EDUCATORS, AND ESYO ALUMNI committed to empowering all youth to joyfully pursue musical excellence within a supportive and inspiring environment.

Learn more about ESYO's team of qualified Teaching Artists at esyo.org/about/our-team.

PROGRAM GUIDE

ESYO ENSEMBLES

ESYO's progressive program supports students in elementary through high school, growing with them as they expand their musical and personal capabilities. To learn more about each ensemble, visit esyo.org/programs/orchestras-ensembles.

Area	Progression of Ensemble Participation by Skill Level			
Strings	Concertino Strings	String Orchestra	Repertory Orchestra	Symphony Orchestra
Woodwind and Brass	Concertino Winds & Brass	Wind Orchestra	Repertory Orchestra, Wind Orchestra	Symphony Orchestra, Wind Orchestra
Percussion	Concertino Percussion	Chamber Percussion Ensemble	Repertory Orchestra, Wind Orchestra, Repertory Percussion Orchestra	Symphony Orchestra, Wind Orchestra, Repertory Percussion Orchestra
Jazz	Repertory Jazz Orchestra	Youth Jazz Orchestra		
Voice	Melodies Chorale			

ESYO CHIME

CHIME (Creating Harmony Inspiring Musical Excellence) is ESYO's free after school music program that operates in partnership with the Schenectady City School District to address fundamental inequities preventing universal access to high-level music opportunities. CHIME empowers youth to develop a strong sense of personal identity and community through ensemble-based music instruction. Central to CHIME is the conviction that access to outstanding musical ensembles, cultivated through an immersive, open and inspiring approach, is transformative and ought to be available to all. Instrumental offerings, grade levels served and hours vary by location.

YOUNG LEADERS

ESYO's Young Leader (YL) Program provides ESYO members the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the music world by engaging in leadership training, participating in workshops, and exploring various career paths in the arts. Young Leaders volunteer each month throughout the school year: assisting in ESYO programs, serving as ESYO ambassadors, and collaborating with their peers on community projects.

Applications for the 2025-26 Young Leader cohort open August 1, 2025. All 9th-12th grade ESYO students are eligible to apply.

To learn more about the ESYO Young Leader program, visit esyo.org/youngleaders.

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

All members of our performing ensembles and CHIME are invited to participate in supplemental instruction. Opportunities such as clinics, workshops, and Master Classes are offered at all levels and are designed to correlate with experiences in the rehearsal or practice room and support each member's musical growth. Information and registration for supplemental programming is shared via esyo.org/members, Google Classroom, email, and Newsletters.

CONCERTO COMPETITION

Symphony Orchestra, Youth Jazz Orchestra, and Youth Percussion Ensemble members in good standing are eligible to participate in the annual Lois Lyman Concerto Competition. The winner of the Symphony Orchestra Award is invited to be the guest soloist at a Symphony Orchestra concert, and the Repertory Orchestra Award winner is invited to perform at a Repertory Concert. Entries to the competition must be approved by the Music Director, in coordination with the Repertory Orchestra conductor, prior to registering online. Additional information can be found at esyo.org/programs/concerto-competition.

The Concerto Competition is named in memory of area violinist, teacher and ESYO Co-Founder, Lois Lyman. Past winners can be found at esyo.org/programs/concerto-competition.

MELODIES OF CHRISTMAS

Melodies of Christmas is an annual, televised holiday show featuring ESYO's Symphony Orchestra and Youth Chorale. Produced by CBS 6/Albany and sponsored by Freihofer's and Price Chopper to benefit the pediatric oncology program at Albany Medical Center, the four Melodies concerts attract a total audience of over 10,000 each year. The show is taped for broadcast on CBS 6/Albany (WRGB) on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. As of December 2022, ESYO has helped raise more than \$10 million for the program.

High School singers in grades 10-12 are eligible to audition for the Melodies of Christmas Chorale. Members of the Symphony Orchestra are not eligible, as their rehearsals take place at the same time as the Chorale. Melodies of Christmas Chorale auditions are held in late September, and rehearsals take place Wednesday evenings from October through the performances in mid-December.

FROST VALLEY REHEARSAL RETREAT (SYMPHONY & REPERTORY ORCHESTRAS ONLY)

Frost Valley is a required rehearsal retreat weekend on September 5-7 for musicians in ESYO's Symphony and Repertory Orchestras and is held at the Frost Valley YMCA Camp in the Catskill Mountains. The weekend consists of three (3) full orchestra rehearsals and two (2) sectional rehearsals – the equivalent of more than a month of weekly rehearsals. In addition to music training, Frost Valley gives orchestra members a chance to get to know each other and the ESYO staff.

Questions about attendance and alternative travel arrangements should be directed to Sue Lascoe, Operations Director & Repertory Orchestra Manager: slascoe@esyo.org.

Transportation provided leaving Brown School at **4:00pm** on **Friday, September 7, 2025** and returning at **3:00pm** on **Sunday, September 7, 2025**.

MEMBER EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

This section outlines the expectations of ESYO student musicians and policies that ensure a safe learning environment and make it possible for our ensembles to perform at an exceptional level.

A COMMITMENT TO MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

As a member of ESYO, your personal progress and success as a musician and the collective progress and success of your ensemble depend upon your **FULL** participation. By joining ESYO, you make a commitment not only to yourself but also to each of your fellow musicians to do the following:

Be present for all ensemble rehearsals or CHIME classes (in accordance with the attendance policy for your program). The challenging music and intensity of work in our rehearsals and classes means that each minute is valuable and important.

Read all emails from your Conductor and Operations Staff. Respond to the emails in a timely manner if asked!

Practice your ensemble music on a regular basis between rehearsals and achieve mastery of it well before a performance. The primary purpose of rehearsals is for musicians to grow together as an ensemble and to develop a clear, consistent, and cohesive approach to the music. Learn parts before rehearsal, not during rehearsal!

Study with a private teacher. Private study is essential for ensuring the continuing development of your musical skills and for meeting the technical challenges of your ensemble music. Be sure to share important solos or problematic passages with your private teacher so they can help you with these areas. CHIME members will receive individualized support during program hours. If you need help finding a private teacher, please visit our [online directory](#).

Participate in your school music program, if one is available to you. One ESYO rehearsal per week is not enough time to develop your ear, ensemble skills, and musicianship to the fullest. School programs offer not only opportunities for students to develop in these areas but also to develop their leadership skills. You are expected to participate in your school music program if one is available.

Be a good colleague and role model by being **on time, attentive, respectful**, and having **“serious fun”!**

PRINCIPAL PLAYERS RESPONSIBILITIES

Musicians seated as principal players in their ensemble are expected to take on additional responsibilities while in that role. These responsibilities include:

- Setting a good example of preparation, promptness, attentiveness, musicianship, and leadership for the section;
- Noting trouble spots in the music and bringing that to the attention of sectional coaches;
- Supporting the rehearsal discipline of the section;
- Assisting the conductor in realizing interpretive directions;
- Ensuring that all members of the section have a unified understanding of the music, making sure that bowings, breathings, fingerings, articulations and phrasings match;
- Communicating with the other section leaders and the conductor;
- Percussion Principal Players: Assign parts and coordinate instruments for rehearsals and concerts.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Start Time. You are expected to be in your seat and ready to play at least 10 minutes before the downbeat for rehearsals, warm-ups, and concerts. If your rehearsal starts at 7:00pm and you are “on time,” then you are in your seat and ready to go at 6:50pm! You are tardy if you arrive at the same time that rehearsal is starting.

Commitment. We are committed to providing you the opportunity to rehearse and perform with a full ensemble. This, in turn, requires your commitment to prepare, practice, and to be present. If you are absent, or not prepared, the entire ensemble is adversely impacted. **Please carefully review the absence policies outlined below.**

Conflicts (potential or known.) Please notify your manager or conductor immediately of any potential or actual conflicts prior to the first rehearsal and throughout the season.

Tardiness. Arriving late to rehearsal is disruptive and disrespectful to your ensemble. **Please carefully review the absence policies outlined below.**

IMPORTANT: All musicians MUST complete and submit a request form at least two weeks in advance of any planned absence or planned late arrival or planned early departure from a rehearsal. In the event of an unplanned absence due to an emergency or illness, musicians should contact their manager directly. With the exception of emergencies or illnesses, requests or notifications via email to your conductor/orchestra manager are **NOT acceptable forms of absence notices**. Should illness prevent a musician from attending a mandatory rehearsal or performance, or should there be repeated health-related absences, ESYO may request medical documentation.

Absence Policy for Symphony Orchestra. TWO excused absences are allowed per concert period. NO absences are allowed in the two weeks prior to the concert. NO absences are allowed from mandatory rehearsals, dress rehearsals, warm-ups or concerts. This includes college visits, proms, balls, sporting events, academic competition, dance studio or other social events.

Absence Policy for all other Ensembles. TWO excused absences are allowed per concert period. ONE excused absence is allowed during the three weeks prior to the concert. NO absences are allowed from mandatory rehearsals, dress rehearsals, warm-ups or concerts. This includes college visits, proms, balls, sporting events, academic competition, dance studio or other social events.

EXCEPTION TO THE ABSENCE POLICY - School Music Events. All mandatory credit bearing school music performances, such as concerts, special events, and in some cases playing in the pit orchestra, take precedence over ESYO commitments. ***ESYO musicians must speak with their conductor and clear any conflicts before auditioning for a school pit orchestra or spring musical, or before accepting an invitation to play in the pit.***

Consequences ESYO recognizes that critical school or family events may conflict with rehearsals and that illnesses occur. Compliance with ESYO's school music participation policy may also cause students to miss rehearsals. Incurring one to two additional absences exceeding the allowed ones, arriving late or leaving early often, or one to two unexcused absences **will result in a discussion with the conductor who will determine an appropriate consequence.** Consequences may include a request to submit additional preparedness videos, a member not being allowed to perform in a concert, being reseated, or being dismissed from the ensemble. In certain circumstances, a fine may be levied to cover the cost of hiring a replacement musician. Incurring three or more additional absences exceeding the allowed ones, three or more unexcused absences, and absences from concerts will result in a student being placed on probation. A panel including the conductor, executive director, and another selected conductor will determine consequences and consider a student's appeal if they choose to submit one.

It is your responsibility to pay attention to how many absences you have taken! You can check your attendance record with your ensemble manager.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Reasonable standards of behavior and dress are expected while rehearsing, performing, or participating in any event or activity associated with ESYO. No set of rules can cover every possible situation. The list below, along with common courtesy and respect, offers a guide to appropriate behavior.

General behavior

- Demonstrate appropriate, respectful, and safe behavior with ESYO staff, sectional coaches, and fellow students
- Put trash in the appropriate containers. Please help keep our rehearsal spaces clean!

- Members are responsible for their own instruments. Do not leave instruments or bows unattended where they might be damaged accidentally. Do not leave your instrument on your chair during breaks. Instruments should be safely put into cases during breaks or when not needed. All instruments should be insured; most homeowner's or renter's insurance policies can include a rider to cover instruments.
- The use of tobacco, alcohol or any illegal substances is strictly forbidden in and around program sites at all times. Also, students are forbidden from vaping or bringing a weapon of any kind (e.g. knife, firearm) to a program site. Violations of this policy are grounds for suspension or expulsion.

STUDENT INDEPENDENCE POLICY

To support the growth and development of all ESYO musicians, students are expected to rehearse and perform independently during all rehearsals and performances.

Parents and guardians are welcome to observe in designated areas during rehearsal times, but may not sit with their child or participate in the rehearsal space unless specifically invited by ESYO staff for a particular event or need. This policy helps foster independence, focus, and confidence in our young musicians, and ensures a productive learning environment for all students. If you believe your child may require special accommodations, please contact ESYO's Operations Director prior to the start of the season

Rehearsal etiquette

- During rehearsals, we invite you to sit on the front of your chairs, be emotionally and physically present, take risks - and be ready to connect and musically breathe with your peers!
- Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off during rehearsals!
- Restroom usage: Please use the restrooms before the rehearsal or at the break. Students may not leave the rehearsal for any reason (other than for absolute emergencies) while it is in progress.
- Please do not bring food or drink into rehearsal spaces. A water bottle is the only exception.
- Listen carefully to instructions from your conductor, teaching artist, or manager. Do not talk while your conductor, teaching artist, or manager is speaking.
- Talk among musicians should be kept to a minimum, and should deal directly with issues related to the music at hand.

- Books, homework, and other off-task materials are not to be brought into the rehearsal area – being attentive and engaged even when you are not playing is an important part of being in an ensemble. You will learn important things about the music and how to improve your skills by observing your colleagues rehearsing.

Bullying and Harassment Policy

ESYO strives to provide a safe, secure and respectful environment for all students. Bullying has a harmful social, physical, psychological and academic impact on bullies, victims and bystanders. Therefore, ESYO has defined an explicit policy banning bullying at its program sites and at any ESYO sponsored activity.

- Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, humiliation, intimidation, harm or social exclusion.
- Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic or family status.
- Bullying behavior can be: 1. Physical (e.g. assault, hitting or punching, kicking, theft, threatening behavior) 2. Verbal (e.g. threatening or intimidating language, teasing or name-calling, racist remarks) 3. Indirect (e.g. spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the internet – also known as cyber-bullying)

Youth or adults in ESYO experiencing or observing such behavior should report it immediately. Incident reports are confidential and can be completed by sending a detailed account of the incident to memberconcerns@esyo.org. All reports will be investigated to ensure that ESYO continues to be a safe learning environment.

MUSIC DISTRIBUTION & COLLECTION

Music for Symphony, Repertory, String Orchestra, Concertino Strings, and Youth Jazz members will be available to download via your ensemble's Google Classroom in August or early September. Members will receive a notification as soon as their music is posted, and are expected to begin preparing their parts prior to the start of the season. All members will also receive printed copies of their music at their first rehearsal.

Music folders are provided to each ESYO musician, courtesy of John Keal Music. It is the musician's responsibility to take good care of their music.

Music will be collected at the end of each concert period per the instructions of the manager or conductor.

PART ASSIGNMENTS FOR BRASS & WOODWINDS

Symphony & Repertory Orchestra: Brass and woodwind players' part assignments are made based on the results of the June auditions.

Wind Orchestra: Brass and woodwind players will be heard by their conductor in September to determine part assignments. Players will be recorded mid-season for their conductor to evaluate seating assignments.

PART ASSIGNMENTS FOR PERCUSSION

Symphony & Repertory Orchestra: Principal timpani and principal percussion seats are assigned based on the results of June auditions.

STRING SEATING ASSIGNMENTS & PREPAREDNESS REVIEWS

All seating is at the discretion of the conductor, who will seat players in an order that will result in a strong and balanced section. With the exception of principal seats, a player's seat assignment may be in the front, middle, or back, regardless of the musician's ability or performance during the preparedness review.

Symphony, Repertory and String Orchestra string players will participate in Preparedness Reviews throughout the season. These reviews are held to ensure each player is adequately prepared to perform at the concert, and to identify any challenges a player might be experiencing. If a member is not adequately prepared, they will be asked to play for their conductor at a subsequent rehearsal, and in certain cases, may not be permitted to perform in the concert. Receiving a poor Preparedness Review more than once may jeopardize a member's continued participation in ESYO.

PRACTICE/PRIVATE LESSONS/MUSIC QUESTIONS

All ESYO musicians are expected to take regularly scheduled private music lessons on their primary instrument to support the level of playing in their ESYO ensemble. If you need help finding a private teacher, please visit our online directory.

It is expected that all students practice their ESYO music regularly and are well prepared with their individual parts prior to rehearsal.

SCHOOL MUSIC PARTICIPATION

ESYO believes that the future of music education depends on the effort put forward today in school music programs. ESYO is an enriching supplement and not a replacement.

ESYO musicians are leaders in their school music programs and in other extracurricular ensembles in which they participate.

All ESYO Members are **expected to participate in their school music ensemble**, such as orchestra, band, or chorus, if one exists. **ESYO will make every effort to ensure this expectation is fulfilled.** Please be sure to contact your guidance counselor to resolve any scheduling conflicts that might prevent participation in your school orchestra or band, prior to the start of the school year. ESYO musicians must speak with their conductor and clear any conflicts before auditioning for a school pit orchestra or spring musical. Additionally, mandatory, music-related school events always take precedence over ESYO events.

ANNUAL AUDITIONS

All current members must audition in early June to be considered for placement in the upcoming season.

CONCERT DRESS

Concert attire should reflect the formal performance atmosphere, and follow the specifications detailed below. Please be sure to prepare your concert clothing well in advance to avoid being improperly attired for the performance.

SYMPHONY & REPERTORY ORCHESTRAS, JAZZ ORCHESTRAS,
AND PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES

All musicians wear all black.



Long-sleeve (at least 3/4 length), solid black dress shirt with collar



Black socks or tights and black dress shoes



Ankle or floor-length, long-sleeve black dress



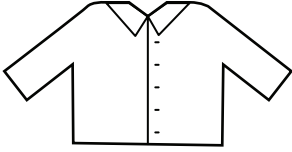
Ankle or floor-length black skirt



Black dress pant

WIND ORCHESTRA, STRING ORCHESTRA, AND
CONCERTINO STRINGS

All musicians wear black and white.



White blouse or dress shirt



Ankle or floor-length
black skirt



Solid (opaque) black
stockings, tights, or black
socks, and black dress shoes
(flats or low heel)



Long black dress pant

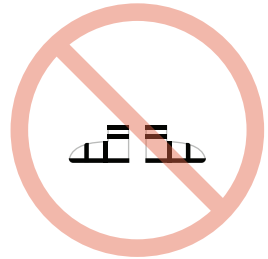
WHAT NOT TO WEAR



Leggings, jeggings, jeans,
or other casual fitted
pants or active wear



Socks or tights shorter
than mid-calf height,
and/or bare legs or feet



Open toe shoes or sandals

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN ESYO

For students to benefit from everything ESYO offers, we need you to assist with your child's participation in the following ways:

- Read all emails and materials from ESYO. Respond in a timely manner when requested
- Plan for your family to attend each of your child's ESYO concerts
- Ensure prompt arrival at rehearsals and concerts and pick-up at the end
 - › Students should arrive only 10 minutes prior to the published start time for rehearsals
 - › Students must be picked up directly following the end of a rehearsal or performance
- Support full attendance of your child at all rehearsals and events by avoiding conflicts between family plans and ESYO activities whenever possible
- Support your child's private lessons, practice routine, and participation in school music activities
- Introduce people to ESYO, including parents of prospective students, and help grow our community by bringing friends to your child's concerts
- Speak to ESYO staff members regarding any concerns surrounding your child's participation. The sooner we are aware of your concerns, the better chance we have of resolving them successfully

TUITION RATES, PAYMENT PLANS, & TUITION ASSISTANCE

TUITION RATES

Rates published here are for the 2025-2026 season. Please read the following, and then for all tuition related questions, please contact Lisa Stulmaker, Finance Director, at lstulmaker@esyo.org.

Ensemble	Rate
Symphony Orchestra	\$1900+*
Repertory Orchestra	\$1500+
Wind Orchestra	\$1000
String Orchestra	\$900
Youth Jazz Orchestra	\$900
Repertory Jazz Orchestra	\$900
Youth Percussion Ensemble	\$1000
Repertory Percussion Ensemble	\$825
Chamber Percussion Ensemble	\$875
Chamber Music Program	\$250
Concertino Strings	\$875

* Includes Carnegie Hall performance +Includes Frost Valley weekend retreat

DISCOUNTS

The combined tuition for students enrolled in more than one full-season performing ensemble is discounted by 25% at time of payment. For example, a student enrolling in Youth Jazz and Symphony Orchestra will pay \$2,100, which reflects a 25% discount on the total cost of both groups, namely \$2,800. Should a student withdraw from one ensemble during the refund period, the full cost of the second ensemble will be assessed. Discounted tuition is eligible for the 10-payment plan.

PAYMENT PLANS & TUITION ASSISTANCE

ESYO is committed to ensuring that all musicians who successfully audition for an ensemble are able to participate, regardless of financial considerations. Payment plans are available. Musicians may apply for need-based tuition assistance by completing and submitting an application. Applications are due by August 1st, and are available online at esyo.org/members/financial-assistance-policy.

ESYO gratefully acknowledges the contributions of The Harmony in Music Scholarship established by the Kolodziej and Resta Family, The Helen Cha-Pyo Baton & Scholarship Fund, The Accelerator Scholarships, and the Richard Albagli Scholarship Fund, all of which support our 2025 -26 tuition assistance awards.

PAYMENT PLAN OPTIONS

Option A: 1 Payment Plan

Balance of all tuition paid in full at time of registration.
Payment Options: Check, ACH and credit card* **Check and ACH payments must be done by contacting lstulmaker@esyo.org.**

Option B: 10 Payment Plan

A \$200 deposit is paid at the time of registration.
10% paid each month August - May. An automatic payment must be set up with Lisa Stulmaker to complete your registration even if you were on this plan last season. Please note that there is a \$50 fee for the 10 Payment Plan option.
Payment Options: check, ACH, credit card*

** Processing fees will be added to all online payments when processed.*

REFUND POLICY

If you have to resign from ESYO and withdraw from your ensemble, tuition will be refunded under the following policy.

If your tuition is paid in full:

Date of Withdrawal	Refund Amount
Before the first rehearsal	Full tuition paid**
Before November 1	50% tuition paid**
After November 1	No refund

If you are on an ESYO payment plan:

DATE OF WITHDRAWAL	REFUND AMOUNT
BEFORE THE FIRST REHEARSAL	FULL TUITION PAID TO DATE**
AFTER THE FIRST REHEARSAL	NO REFUND

*** Amount refunded will be less \$200 non-refundable commitment deposit*

If you are suspended or dismissed from ESYO for any reason there is no refund.

MEMBER REGISTRATION

ONLINE REGISTRATION

After receiving an invitation to join an ESYO ensemble (based on your audition result) you must complete four steps to confirm your membership:

1. Read the ESYO Membership Handbook;
2. Complete the online registration form by July 15;
3. Complete the Consent Forms by July 15;
4. Pay the tuition, enroll in a payment plan, or submit a Tuition Assistance form by August 1.

CONTACTS & COMMUNICATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

45 MacArthur Drive, Schenectady
12302

Office Phone Number: 518.382.7581

Rebecca Calos

Executive Director
rcalos@esyo.org

Lisa Stulmaker

Finance Director
lstulmaker@esyo.org

Sue Lascoe

*Operations Director & Repertory
Orchestra Manager*
slascoe@esyo.org

Andrea Restrepo

*Operations Manager, Symphony
Orchestra and String Orchestra
Manager, & Librarian*
arestrepo@esyo.org

Amy Shake Ortiz

*CHIME Program & Relationships
Manager*
ashakeortiz@esyo.org

Zoe Auerbach

CHIME and Young Leader Director
zauerbach@esyo.org

David Bebe

*Associate Music Director of CHIME &
Chamber Music*
dbebe@esyo.org

Leah DeLira

Marketing Director
ldelira@esyo.org

Mary Rose Petrozola

*Membership & Communications
Coordinator*
mpetrozola@esyo.org

CONDUCTORS & ORCHESTRA MANAGERS

Symphony Orchestra

Etienne Abelin

Conductor

eabelin@esyo.org

Andrea Restrepo

Manager

arestrepo@esyo.org

Repertory Orchestra

David Beck

Conductor

dbeck@esyo.org

Sue Lascoe

Manager

slascoe@esyo.org

String Orchestra

Joseph Gumpfer

Conductor

jgumpfer@esyo.org

Andrea Restrepo

Manager

arestrepo@esyo.org

Wind Orchestra

Dr. Robert Hansbrough

Conductor

bhansbrough@esyo.org

Manager

esyowinds@esyo.org

Repertory Jazz Orchestra

Alyssa Falk Verheyn

Conductor

afalkverheyn@esyo.org

Sue Lascoe

Manager

slascoe@esyo.org

Youth Jazz Orchestra

Dr. Peter Bellino

Conductor

pbellino@esyo.org

Sue Lascoe

Manager

slascoe@esyo.org

Youth Percussion Ensemble

Dr. Rob Sanderl

Conductor

rsanderl@esyo.edu

Mark Foster

Conductor

mfoster@esyo.com

Repertory Percussion Ensemble

Genoveffa Vitale

Conductor

gvitale@esyo.org

Chamber Percussion Ensemble

Jim Iacketta

Conductor

jiacketta@esyo.org

Beth Antonio

Percussion Ensembles Coordinator

bantonio@esyo.org

Concertino Strings

Leo Milman

Conductor

lmilman@esyo.org

Manager

concertinostrings@esyo.org

CHIME Orchestra

Dr. David Bebe

Conductor

dbebe@esyo.org

EMAIL

Email is our primary means of communication. Please be sure that ESYO has your most current email address, and **please do not unsubscribe!** ESYO emails will contain information pertinent to your specific ensemble, newsworthy notes and updates, as well as information from other arts organizations including offers of discounts/free tickets. If you are not receiving regular emails, contact your ensemble manager or email info@esy.org.

GOOGLE CLASSROOM

Google Classroom is the official virtual rehearsal room for ESYO. You will be registered in your ensemble's Google Classroom using the Gmail address from your registration form. Google Classroom is more than just a virtual rehearsal room, it is an important hub for all ESYO ensemble communication. Ensemble news, notes, schedules, and announcements will be published in your Google Classroom.

ESYO.ORG

Visit the member-only section of the website to download ensemble schedules, member newsletters, alerts, surveys, and required forms. The website is the best way to get access to the most up-to-date information 24/7.

TEXT MESSAGE NOTIFICATIONS

We request your cell number after acceptance into an ensemble along with your permission to communicate via text. **This method of communication will only be used to get information out quickly to a large group of ESYO families (i.e. last minute cancellations, etc.).** Please see the Consent Forms for additional information.

CARPOOL LIST

Looking to carpool to your rehearsal? Contact your ensemble manager for assistance with carpool arrangements.

WHO TO CONTACT

ABSENCES, REHEARSAL & CONCERT SCHEDULES, CONCERT DRESS CODE

Ensemble	Email
Symphony Orchestra	arestrepo@esyo.org
Repertory Orchestra	slascoe@esyo.org
Wind Orchestra	esyowinds@esyo.org
String Orchestra	arestrepo@esyo.org
Youth Jazz Orchestra	slascoe@esyo.org
Repertory Jazz Orchestra	slascoe@esyo.org
Youth Percussion Ensemble	mfoster@esyo.org, rsanderl@esyo.org
Repertory Percussion Ensemble	gvitale@esyo.org
Chamber Percussion Ensemble	jiacketta@esyo.org
Concertino Strings	concertinostrings@esyo.org

REHEARSAL/CONCERT CANCELLATIONS

Rehearsal and concert cancellations due to weather or other emergencies will be posted on our website esyo.org, Google Classroom, our Facebook, and, if time permits, the School Closings Network carried by most television outlets in our region. You will also receive an email notification and text notification if you opt-in.

Please plan to stay home if driving conditions are unsafe where you live even if the rehearsal has not been cancelled. Simply notify your manager or conductor by submitting the absence form found on esyo.org/members. *This will not be counted as an absence.*

REHEARSAL & CONCERT SCHEDULES

Detailed schedules for all ESYO ensembles for both rehearsals and concerts can be found online in the Member Portal. Please check your ensemble's schedule for conflicts and **inform your manager and/or conductor about these conflicts as soon as possible by submitting the Absence Request form found at [esyo.org/members](https://www.esyo.org/members)**. Directions to rehearsal and concert venues can be found online.

REHEARSAL LOCATIONS AND TIMES

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Sundays,
1:00 - 4:00pm (Strings)
2:00 - 5:00pm (Woodwinds,
Brass, Persussion)
Brown School, Schenectady

REPERTORY ORCHESTRA

Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:30pm
Brown School, Schenectady

WIND ORCHESTRA

Sundays, 5:30 - 8:00pm
Brown School, Schenectady

STRING ORCHESTRA

Mondays, 6:30 - 8:30pm
Brown School, Schenectady

YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Mondays, 6:30 - 8:30pm,
Brown School, Schenectady

YOUTH PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Sundays, 5:30 - 8:00pm
Brown School, Schenectady

CHAMBER PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Sundays, 1:00 - 3:00pm
Brown School, Schenectady

CONCERTINO STRINGS

Sundays, 2:30 - 4:00pm
Glen Eddy, Schenectady

REPERTORY JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Mondays, 6:30 - 8:30pm
Brown School, Schenectady

REPERTORY PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Sundays, 3:15 - 5:15pm
Brown School, Schenectady

MELODIES OF CHRISTMAS CHORALE

mid Oct.-mid Nov.
Wednesdays, 6:30pm-9:30pm
mid Nov.-mid Dec.
Sundays, 2:00pm-5:00pm
Brown School, Schenectady

CONCERT TICKETS & SPECIAL OFFERS

ACCESS ESYO | PAY WHAT YOU CAN

It has never been easier to get tickets to an ESYO performance. With Access ESYO you can purchase concert tickets for as little as \$1 per seat. With ESYO's online "pay what you can" ticketing system you can pay \$1, \$10, or \$20 per ticket. Whatever you decide to pay, we hope you will do your best to support our youths' performances!

PAY IT FORWARD

ACCESS ESYO is sustained through an ongoing "pay it forward" campaign. Consider paying it forward by making an additional donation to our ACCESS ESYO ticket bank. Your donation will provide a ticket to members of the community who may not be able to purchase a ticket to an ESYO performance.

BUILDING AUDIENCE

With ACCESS ESYO, there are no barriers to attending our concerts. Please invite your private music teacher, your school teacher and your friends to attend your performances! Music Teachers are invited to email info@esyo.org for complimentary tickets.

PURCHASING TICKETS

The following methods are available for purchasing tickets to ESYO produced concerts:

1. Online at esyo.org/tickets
2. By phone at 518-382-7581
3. In person at the concert venue beginning one hour prior to performances

RESTRICTIONS

ACCESS ESYO tickets are not available for non-ESYO produced events, such as Melodies of Christmas and performances at Carnegie Hall or Tanglewood.

TICKETS FOR MELODIES CONCERTS

Tickets for the Melodies concerts are sold to Chorale and Symphony Orchestra and families during the month of October before they go on sale to the general public. Information about ticket sales is posted in the rehearsal newsletter.

AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS

BARRY RICHMAN CAREERS IN MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP *ESTABLISHED BY ESYO FOUNDER BARRY RICHMAN*

This \$1000 scholarship is awarded at the end of each season to a graduating senior from any ESYO ensemble who best exemplifies the values and goals of ESYO, serves as role model to their peers, has made outstanding musical contributions, and plans a career in music. A recommendation from the applicant's music teacher is required. The winner is announced at Encore Stage in June 2026. Application information will be announced in the spring.

THE HELEN CHA-PYO BATON AWARD

This \$1500 award is given each spring to a senior who embodies former Music Director Helen Cha-Pyo's passionate commitment to music as a means to uplift and enrich the community.

NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID

THE HARMONY IN MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP *ESTABLISHED BY THE KOLODZIEJ AND RESTA FAMILY*


This scholarship supports the musical aspirations of talented young players who demonstrate financial need. In recognition of the challenge faced by larger families to afford enriching opportunities for all their children equally, this award favors applicants seeking to enroll more than one child in Empire State Youth Orchestra. Any eligible ESYO musician may apply through the general Financial Aid form.

THE RICHARD ALBAGLI SCHOLARSHIPS *ESTABLISHED BY THE CHANG, HARRIS, AND PROVANCHER FAMILIES*

These scholarships honor Richard Albagli's more than thirty years of service to ESYO as percussion conductor, his deep commitment to music education and his compassion for others. These awards favor percussion applicants. Any eligible ESYO musician may apply through the general Financial Aid form.

THE HELEN CHA-PYO SCHOLARSHIP FUND

This scholarship provides private music instruction and quality instruments for those musicians demonstrating financial need, specifically targeting CHIME students who have successfully matriculated into competitive ESYO performing groups, but require additional support to achieve at the highest



level. Any eligible ESYO musician may apply through the general Financial Aid form.

THE ACCELERATOR SCHOLARSHIPS

These need-based scholarships honor Roger Hannay's unwavering desire to help those in need who are also willing to help themselves. These awards favor returning ESYO musicians who have been accepted into a more advanced ensemble and who reflect Roger's grit, determination, and dedication to hard work.

FUNDRAISING EXPECTATIONS

ESYO is committed to providing accessible and affordable musical experiences for all qualified youth; as a result, tuition fees cover only 40% of the full cost of our programming. We actively fundraise and solicit funds from granting organizations to generate the remaining revenue we need to provide outstanding experiences for our musicians. We expect all ESYO families to participate in our fundraising efforts.

PARTICIPATION

There are many ways you can participate in fundraising.

Ways families can participate:

- Contribute to our Annual Appeal;
- Advocate for ESYO, encourage others to attend performances or to consider auditioning;
- Secure an Employer Match for your contribution;
- Inquire about volunteer opportunities with ESYO.

PLAYATHON: OUR SIGNATURE FUNDRAISER

All of ESYO's performing groups participate in this day-long fundraising marathon at Crossgates Mall in March. **Every member is expected to raise at least \$150 in donations before the event through a variety of methods including peer-to-peer online fundraising.** Instructions and information will be provided to each member four weeks prior to Playathon.

Do you have questions about fundraising or Playathon? Email Amy Shake Ortiz, Relationships Manager at ashakeortiz@esyo.org.

VOLUNTEERING

ESYO has a small, dedicated staff that works hard to meet all of the operational needs of our ensembles. With such a small staff we rely on the invaluable assistance of our amazing volunteers. We hope you will consider joining our Volunteer Team this season!

Throughout the year, we have many opportunities for volunteering. Lots of help is needed for Playathon, which involves all of our ensembles, and Melodies of Christmas, which involves only the Symphony Orchestra. Beyond that, we need parents to sell tickets “at the door,” serve as parent liaisons (between conductor and parents), hall monitors during rehearsals, and help moving larger instruments for concerts. We also frequently need your help to stuff envelopes, or pitch in at special events. We ask that you consider volunteering for at least one event per year. With that help, we can be sure and offer our musicians the best experience possible!

BOX OFFICE VOLUNTEERS & CONCERT USHERS

Do you want to learn the ins and outs of working and running a box office? Do you enjoy greeting people and helping them find their seat? As ESYO returns to in-person concerts with live audiences, we need volunteers to work at select ESYO-sponsored performances.

TICKET AGENTS

Provide friendly customer service to ESYO patrons and families. Sell tickets at dress rehearsals and at the door before ESYO-sponsored concerts. Verify successful purchase for ticket holders who, for whatever reason, may not have their physical ticket to be admitted. Sell ESYO merchandise at all ESYO-sponsored concerts & events.

CONCERT USHERS

Warmly welcome and greet all ESYO patrons and families as they enter the concert hall. Set up ESYO concert signage, distribute program books, and assist patrons with downloading the new digital program book, tear/scan ticket stubs, assist patrons with finding answers to questions, and help patrons find merchandise tables, restrooms, concession stands, etc.



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EMPIRE STATE
YOUTH ORCHESTRA
ETIENNE ABELIN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

ESYO.ORG | 518.382.7581 | INFO@ESYO.ORG