

**A S O Y E**  
**H A N D B O O K**  
**2023-2024**

**Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Youth Ensembles**

**Prelude Orchestra**  
**Academy Orchestra**  
**Youth Orchestra (ASYO)**

**Website:** <https://www.arkansassymphony.org/education/youthorchestras>

[Facebook Page: Arkansas Symphony Youth Ensembles](#)

*July 2023*

*Welcome to another exciting year for the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Youth Ensembles. Whether in Prelude, Academy or Youth Orchestra, all of the students should be ready to make great new friends, and have unforgettable memories to share at this time next year. Along the way, each group will make music at the highest level, led by our excellent staff of conductors including Tom McDonald, Gabriel Bruce and our ASO Concertmasters Drew Irvin and Kiril Laskarov.*

*Many of the top members of the ASOYE, some of whom will be pursuing a career in music, have played in three ASO Youth Ensembles. There are a number of alums of the ASOYE who now, a number of years later, play in the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. One of the great perks students in our program receive is that they can take advantage of all the experience around them and easily stay informed, attend performances of the older groups, and the Arkansas Symphony itself.*

*One of the highlights will be the January Side-By-Side Concert on stage at Robinson Center Music Hall, where all 3 ASOYE orchestras will play on one program. I look forward to seeing the members of all three orchestras, their families, and the entire Arkansas Symphony Orchestra either on stage or in the audience!*

*Let's get ready to make beautiful music!*

*Geoffrey Robson  
Music Director, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra*

## ASOYE

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As a member of the ASOYE (Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Youth Ensembles) you will have numerous opportunities to develop your talents in an atmosphere of musical excellence. We hope you will find it to be a most rewarding and enjoyable experience musically, socially, emotionally and intellectually. Like professional musicians, you will be expected to be present and on time for all rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and performances. The commitment is a major one, but the benefits can be enormous. We are sure you will find the investment of your time and talent very worthwhile.

***Participation in the ASOYE Program is for students ages 8-20 who are attending school. Please note that the upper age limit for Youth Orchestra participation is now 20 years of age, which means we will accept applications from college woodwind, brass and percussion players.***

Parents and students: Please read the material in this handbook carefully (even if you are an ASOYE veteran). Keep it handy and accessible. You will find it a useful resource throughout the year. Feel free to call the ASOYE offices at (501) 666-1761, ext. 116 for clarification and elaboration of any of the policies listed in this handbook.

## REGISTRATION

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It is imperative that each student is registered by no later than **July 30<sup>th</sup>** of each year. An application may be completed online. It will automatically be forwarded to Durham Hill at the ASO offices. No need to mail in an application.

<https://www.arkansassymphony.org/asoye-online-registration>

## COMMUNICATION

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It is very important that the ASOYE office and the Attendance Parents for each ensemble have current, up-to-date information on each student through the online registration database. Any deviation from what is printed in the Handbook is communicated directly by e-mail. Rehearsal schedules are posted online and updated as needed. **If you are not receiving frequent e-mails from your Attendance Parent, then something is wrong.** Please notify them of any changes or problems with your e-mail.

**YOUTH ORCHESTRA CONTACTS:**

**Attendance:** Sara Batcheller [asyoyouth@gmail.com](mailto:asyoyouth@gmail.com)  
(501) 472-5167

**Assistant:** Elba Sharp [elbsharp@hotmail.com](mailto:elbsharp@hotmail.com)  
(501) 920-8987

**Librarian:** Andrea Dixon [Andreawdixon@gmail.com](mailto:Andreawdixon@gmail.com)  
(501) 940-8604

**Conductor** Gabriel Bruce [gbruce7041@pcsd.org](mailto:gbruce7041@pcsd.org)  
(501) 339-3262

**ACADEMY ORCHESTRA CONTACTS:**

**Attendance:** Annmarie SanSevero [academy@arkansassymphony.org](mailto:academy@arkansassymphony.org)  
(501) 442-6237

**Asst./Librarian** Libby Lee [libby\\_lee@comcast.net](mailto:libby_lee@comcast.net)  
(501) 786-0295

**Conductor:** Tom McDonald [Tommcdonald5506@comcast.net](mailto:Tommcdonald5506@comcast.net)  
(501) 580-5601

**PRELUDE ORCHESTRA CONTACTS:**

**Attendance:** Lei Wang [leiwanglr@gmail.com](mailto:leiwanglr@gmail.com)

**Conductor:** Kiril Laskarov [laskarov@hotmail.com](mailto:laskarov@hotmail.com)  
(501) 944-6557

**Conductor:** Drew Irvin [drewirvin@gmail.com](mailto:drewirvin@gmail.com)  
(501) 960-0396

**ASO Director of Education:**

**Beth Robison**

[brobison@arkansassymphony.org](mailto:brobison@arkansassymphony.org)

**(501) 666-1761 Ext. 116**

**Youth Ensembles Manager:**

**Durham Hill**

[dhill@arkansassymphony.org](mailto:dhill@arkansassymphony.org)

**(501) 666-1761 Ext. 111**

## **T U I T I O N**

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Tuition per school year is due by October 1. Tuition is \$300 per year.

You may **pay online** or by check, **payable to ASOYE** to:

P. O. Box 7328, Little Rock, AR 72217

A student is not allowed to enroll if tuition remains unpaid from a previous semester.

Tuition is non-refundable if the student withdraws for any reason.

## **S C H O L A R S H I P S**

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The ASOYE has worked hard to establish and develop scholarship funds to ensure that no qualified student shall be denied membership because of an inability to pay the full tuition fee.

Applications are available on the Youth Orchestra section of the ASO website and will automatically be sent to Barbara Burroughs at the Arkansas Symphony.

Please complete online application no later than October 1. Scholarships do not carry over from year to year. A new application must be completed each year.

## REHEARSALS

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The rehearsal schedules for all ensembles will be posted on the ASO website:

<https://www.arkansassymphony.org/education/youth-orchestras>

## REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE

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Prelude, Academy, and Youth Orchestra members are expected to be **in their seat and ready to play at least 15 minutes prior to rehearsal**. If you are on time, you are late. It is imperative not to miss tuning together, and not to be a distraction to others by arriving late.

You should have your instrument and all proper accessories including mutes, rockstops, extra strings, reeds, percussion mallets and a pencil with an eraser, as well as your music in the proper folder. Do not rely on your stand partner for music.

- Bring your music, instrument, accessories, and pencil.
- Be early!
- Be attentive! If your conductor is speaking, you should not be.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Sit with feet flat on floor.
- No one is excused early from any rehearsal.
- No hats shall be worn during rehearsals.
- No chewing gum.
- Breaks are scheduled for getting water, using facilities, etc. Do not leave your seat during rehearsal unless an emergency.
- Parents, pick up your children promptly at the end of rehearsal.

Consequences for repeatedly being late or being absent, or displaying inappropriate etiquette, may be one or more of the following: 1) Re-seating within the section 2) Loss of solo opportunities 3) Restriction from participating in master classes or the ensemble concerts 4) Removal from the orchestra.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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**Attendance at all rehearsals, dress rehearsals and concerts is REQUIRED.** Any extenuating circumstances that affect attendance should be discussed in a timely manner with your Music Director and/or Attendance Parent.

All participating students must follow the ASOYE rehearsal schedule regardless of individual school schedules, such as school vacations and holidays. Please refer to our ASOYE schedules before making travel or vacation plans and/or work schedule for older students. In most cases, special considerations can be made with employers and other school ensembles. You are responsible to notify your Attendance Parent of any conflicts that affect your attendance.

**Maximum allowable absences for each orchestra, per concert cycle are:**

### **Attendance for Prelude Orchestra**

Students in the Prelude Orchestra will be allowed a maximum of 3 absences the first semester (prior to Mid-Winter Concert) and 2 absences prior to the spring concert in May. Those students missing more than the allowed maximum will not be allowed to play the concert for that semester. Absences due to school orchestra competition or state competition are excused.

### **Attendance for Academy Orchestra**

Academy Orchestra string students will be allowed a maximum of 3 absences for the first semester (prior to the Mid-Winter Concert) and a maximum of 3 absences prior to the spring concert in May. Woodwinds, Brass and Percussion players will be allowed a maximum of 2 absences for the first semester and 2 absences the second semester. Those students missing more than the allowed maximum will not be allowed to play the concert for that semester.

### **Attendance for Youth Orchestra**

Students will be allowed five (5) absences for the 2023-2024 season. All concerts are required and are not included in this attendance policy. Missing a required event may result in re-seating, suspension or removal from the ASYO for the remainder of 20232024 season at the discretion of the conductor and the ASOYE administrative staff.

**Please notify the ASYO Attendance Parent by e-mail at [asyoyouth@gmail.com](mailto:asyoyouth@gmail.com) as soon as an unavoidable absence becomes apparent.**

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY (to apply only when the normal rehearsals are outside)**

In the event of inclement weather (excluding tornados), smaller sectionals will be held inside. At least two hours prior to the normally scheduled start time students will be informed of their newly scheduled sectional rehearsal time, or notified of the rehearsal cancellation.

## **SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

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All ASOYE members attending a junior or senior high school are ***required*** to participate in their school's instrumental music program.

**It is critical that Youth Orchestra members participate in their school Band and Orchestra Programs. Our student participation in these school ensembles strengthens the school's music program, and as a result strengthens music programs district and statewide. Part of the ASO's mission is to promote music education throughout Arkansas. Critical to this effort is our students' participation in those programs that DO exist in order to perpetuate their existence and make them stronger.**

Be advised that all ASOYE attendance policies apply regardless of extra-curricular involvement or commitment to a school music program. Each ASOYE member is solely responsible for managing his or her schedule and negotiating terms of involvement with other ensembles.



## PERFORMANCES

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**ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO REMAIN IN ATTENDANCE FOR ALL COMBINED PERFORMANCES OF YOUTH ORCHESTRA.**

**Fall Concert (all groups)**

Thursday, November 16, 2023, Location TBD

**Mid-Winter Concert/Side by Side (all groups)**

Sunday, January 21, 2024 – 6:45 p.m., Robinson Center Music Hall

**Spring Residency Concert (all groups)                  Saturday,**

April 27, 2024, 1 p.m. Location TBD

**Hot Springs/Hot Springs Village Concert (Academy and Youth Orchestras) Sunday,**  
April 28, 2024, 3 p.m. Woodlands Auditorium

## CONCERT DRESS

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The following dress code applies to all ASOYE Orchestras –Prelude, Academy, and Youth:

**All Ensembles: Black ankle-length or floor length dress; or black dress blouse with ankle length to floor-length black skirt or with black dress pants; black dress shoes with black hosiery. Black Dress blouses may be worn under black dress jackets. No leggings, stirrup pants, tights, jeans or casual pants may be worn.**

**Academy and Youth Orchestra: Black Suit consisting of matching suit pants and suit jacket, black dress shirt, black necktie, black dress shoes, full calf-length black socks.**

**Prelude Orchestra: Black slacks with black button-front shirt, black shoes, black socks. Necktie not required.**

## CONCERT ETIQUETTE – ALL ASOYE CONCERTS

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**ALL** members of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Youth Ensembles – Prelude, Academy and Youth – will be **REQUIRED** to stay for the **ENTIRE** performance of any concert of the combined groups. Each group will be designated a place in the hall, where the conductor and their fellow students may sit together for the performances.

## AUDITIONS

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**All audition requirements, including application and \$20 audition fee, for each ensemble, are outlined on the ASO Youth Ensembles portion of the ASO website and under the Youth Ensembles Facebook page.** Once a student has auditioned, they will be informed of their status and student should download the ASOYE Handbook and pay tuition.

Auditions are held twice yearly in January and May/June. January auditions are for those strings for the Prelude, Academy or Youth Orchestras, and for woodwind, brass and percussion students wishing to enter the Academy and Youth Orchestras. To ensure the continuity of the program within each group, students are not allowed to move from one orchestra to another mid-year. **Woodwinds and Brass members will be required to re-audition each year to remain in the group.**

## CHAIR AUDITIONS

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Each orchestra has their own process for doing chair auditions within each section. It is up to the conductor of each orchestra to determine if, when and how they will conduct chair auditions within their group.

## YOUTH ORCHESTRA CHAIR AUDITIONS ONLY

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**Youth Orchestra** seating process is outlined below:

Seating within the ASYO is determined by several factors. In September, each STRING PLAYER will take a chair audition. This is an opportunity for students to demonstrate how well they can prepare a few short excerpts of orchestral music. Chair audition excerpts will be made available at the annual retreat; they are excerpts from music to be performed.

Factors that are considered in determining ALL seating (woodwinds, brass and strings) include:

- Musical needs of the entire ensemble (what will make us sound best)
- Physical requirements of each piece performed
- Experience as a player
- Consistency of performance at rehearsals and concerts
- Equitable distribution of opportunities
- Seniority
- Attendance
- Leadership skills
- Auditions
- Consistent level of preparedness (last but certainly not least)

**Principal chairs** are the 1<sup>st</sup> chair within each section. These positions will rotate throughout the year. If a wind section does not rotate for a year, it is likely that members are building experience through consistency. All students should expect and be willing to sit in different seats over the course of the year. String seating generally rotates on a per concert basis, whereas wind seating may alternate on a single program. Wind part assignments generally are made for each piece of music.

**Concertmaster position** will also likely rotate during the year. A violinist must take the concertmaster audition, however, to be considered for the concertmaster position. This will occur on the same day as chair auditions, but are by sign-up. There will be additional audition excerpts. Members of the Violin 2 section may take the concertmaster audition by preparing the added concertmaster excerpts and the regular violin 2 excerpts. All students who sign up for a concertmaster audition must also take a regular chair audition the same day.

## ASO CONCERTS

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### FAMILY TICKETS TO ASO CONCERTS

The ASO offers, exclusively to Youth Ensembles parents, a **\$10 Family Pass** (maximum of 10 members) to any family wishing to attend a Sunday afternoon concert as a family. Just call the ASO Box Office at 501-666-1761 Ext. 100, or come to the Box Office at Robinson Center Music Hall to get your “Family Ticket”. This offer is a per concert opportunity and is good for only Sunday afternoon ASO concerts. Subscriptions are not offered as part of the Family Pass Program.

### ASO ENTERGY KIDS TICKETS

All children Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> grade, may attend any Sunday afternoon concert FREE, with a paid adult ticket. College Student discount tickets are also available for \$10 for any ASO Masterworks, Pops or Chamber Music Series Concert during the season. All Youth Ensembles students are also allowed **Free Tickets** for any Saturday evening Masterworks concert.

All tickets may be reserved by calling the ASO Box Office at (501-666-1761 ext. 100). Students may also show up to the Box Office the day of the concert. Plenty of seats are usually available the day of. A brochure of all ASO performances can be obtained at the ASO Box Office or by calling (501) 666-1761. Ext. 100.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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**MENTORING PROGRAM** String players in the Youth Orchestra are encouraged to sign up as a mentor for students in the Prelude Orchestra. This requires attending and participating in a minimum of two Prelude Orchestra Rehearsals per semester. Student shall be responsible for signing in with the Orchestra Conductor and participating, per their instruction. Volunteer letters can be provided by the ASO Education Department after confirmation of all hours participating. All rehearsal schedules are posted on the ASO website under Education/Community/YouthOrchestras.

**CONCERT VOLUNTEERS** Students in the Academy and Youth Orchestra are encouraged to volunteer to serve as ushers or helpers at ASO Concerts.

### ASO CONCERT CONVERSATIONS

One hour prior to each ASO Masterworks Concert on Saturdays and Sundays (6:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. respectively), our conductor will provide an informative, educational, and entertaining preview of the concert repertoire. Many times the guest artist will also discuss their portion of the concert. This is a “not to be missed” part of the concert for all ASOYE students who attend the Masterworks Concerts. Bring your entire class, band, or orchestra!

## CHILD SAFETY POLICY

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**The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra is committed to providing a safe and protective environment for children participating in ASO programs. The ASO will not tolerate abuse, neglect, or harassment of any child by staff members, volunteers or other children.**

### DEFINITIONS:

**Abuse, neglect or harassment** – any act or failure to act that results in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation.

**Suspected abuse, neglect or harassment** – involves observation of a child that results in the observer having an uneasy feeling or concern that the child has been or is subject to an act or failure to act that could result in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation.

**Responsibilities to parents** – The ASO will provide a safe and protective environment for all children participating in ASO programs. Parents may visit ASO programs in which their children are participating at any time and are encouraged to visit with the ASOYE Manager about any concerns they might have concerning their child’s participation in the ASOYE.

If a parent or volunteer feels that a child has been placed in imminent risk as per the definitions outlined above, they should inform both the Director of Education and the Executive Director of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Society. If the complaint involves either of the above-named individuals, the parent or volunteer may go directly to the ASO Board Chair.

Your complaint will be promptly investigated. You will be advised of the findings and conclusions. All ASO employees and volunteers are expected to cooperate fully in such investigations. To the extent feasible, all internal investigations and/or actions taken to resolve complaints of abuse, neglect or harassment, shall be confidential.

Please help us make your child’s musical experience a positive one and support each conductor not only in his efforts to help your child grow musically, but in strength of character as well.