

Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles Handbook 2017-2018

(March 22, 2017)

Welcome!

This handbook is designed to answer any questions you might have regarding the Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles Program. Please read it carefully, as it contains important information regarding membership, auditions, tuition, rehearsals, and attendance.

DR. MARTHA PLACERES
CONDUCTOR, YOUTH ORCHESTRA

CAROLYN RICH VOTH
CONDUCTOR, YOUTH PHILHARMONIC

CAROLYN SANDQUIST
CONDUCTOR, DEBUT ORCHESTRA

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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THE TOPEKA SYMPHONY YOUTH ENSEMBLES HISTORY

The Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra was formed in 1957, just 11 years after the Topeka Symphony Orchestra's first season. Providing educational and performance opportunities for youth has been an important priority of the Topeka Symphony Society since very early in its history. The Youth Orchestra was established to encourage talented young musicians to pursue their musical interests.

The Topeka Symphony Debut Orchestra was formed in 1998 to meet the needs of a growing number of young string instrument players. Two years later, the Topeka Symphony Youth Philharmonic was formed to serve primarily middle school-aged string musicians. It is the preparatory orchestra for the Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra.

YOUTH ENSEMBLES CONDUCTORS

Youth Orchestra

Martha Placeres is the Director of Orchestras and Assistant Professor of Music in the Washburn University Department of Music. Originally from Mexico, Dr. Placeres has a Bachelors Degree in Violin Performance from the Puebla State Conservatory of Music, a Masters Degree in Music Education from the University of Texas at Brownsville, and a Doctorate in Orchestral Conducting from Texas Tech University.

As a music education advocate, Dr. Placeres created and developed the string and orchestra programs at the University of Texas at Brownsville where she taught instrumental conducting, violin and viola, as well as conducting the UTB Symphony and String Orchestras. She also was involved in bringing string education to the city of Brownsville by founding the UTB String Project which led to the creation of the Brownsville SMART Orchestra and Skinner Elementary String Project. An accomplished violinist, Dr. Placeres also is an experienced adjudicator and clinician for many competitions and music clinics.

Dr. Placeres received the "Woman of the Year in the Arts" award in the State of Puebla, Mexico in 2008. The Carmen Serdán Alatríste Award is presented only to women from Puebla who have an outstanding career and have contributed to the culture in the State.

As a conductor, Dr. Placeres has led the Puebla State Conservatory of Music Youth Symphony, the Puebla State Symphony Orchestra, the University of Tamaulipas Symphony Orchestra, the Texas Tech University Symphony and String Orchestras, and has been guest conductor of the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra in Decatur, Illinois.

Youth Philharmonic

Carolyn Rich Voth has taught music at all levels from pre-school through college. She currently serves as the director of the Topeka West High School, French Middle School and McEachron Elementary Orchestras.

A performing cellist, Carolyn has been a member of the Topeka Symphony cello section for over 20 years, serving as a section member, associate principal and principal player. She has also served as principal cellist of the Mid-Kansas Symphony Orchestra. She is a member of the Westwood Chamber Ensemble and performs as a soloist and chamber musician in Northeast Kansas.

Carolyn graduated from Bethel College with a degree in cello performance and music education. She has continued her education with courses from Kansas State, Emporia State, and Ohio State Universities. Former cello professors include Dr. David Littrell and Dr. Jay Decker. Carolyn is a member of the Music Educators National Conference, the American String Teachers Association and their Kansas chapters. She is a former board member for the Kansas Strings Teachers Association.

Carolyn and her husband, Tim, are parents of three former Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles participants, Rachel, Michael and Andrew. Carolyn enjoys her many musical opportunities as well as reading, hiking and time with family and friends.

Debut Orchestra

Carolyn Sandquist is a native Topekan. She received her Bachelor of Music degree with honors from Washburn University and was awarded the Highest Scholastic Average in Theta Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota that year. As a graduating student of Washburn University, Carolyn earned the Music Department Academic Achievement and the Community Service Awards. Mrs. Sandquist has conducted the orchestras and taught Suzuki group classes for the Topeka String Project. Carolyn taught strings in USD 501 for 9 years including high school, middle school and elementary school levels. She also taught five years at Topeka Collegiate School.

Mrs. Sandquist created her own private studio teaching group and private lessons for violin, viola and cello using the Suzuki Method. Carolyn is a registered teacher of Suzuki Violin for books 1-7 and Suzuki Cello for books 1-5. Her students range in age from 3 years old to adult. Her students perform often in the Topeka community as well as recitals throughout the year. Many of her students play in the Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles as well as their school orchestras. Many former students have gone on to excel in music and become music educators.

Mrs. Sandquist has played in the Topeka Symphony for over 30 years. She currently plays in the viola section, but in the past has also played violin and cello in the Symphony. She is the second violinist, founding member and manager of the Studio String Quartet and the Sandquist Family Quartet. Mrs. Sandquist is an active member in her church, enjoys traveling and loves photographing her two sons. Mrs. Sandquist's family received the Kansas Federation of Music Club Family of the Year, 2012.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Any musician 21 years of age and younger may audition for one of the three Youth Ensembles. To be a member of one of these ensembles, a student who plays a string instrument agrees to play in his or her school orchestra, if available and a student who plays a wind, brass or percussion instrument agrees to play in his or her school band, if available. This requirement may be waived by the school conductor if there are extenuating circumstances. A signed letter from the appropriate school conductor excusing the student from the school orchestra or band must be sent to the Topeka Symphony office prior to the first Youth Ensemble Rehearsal.

A musician whose school does not have a music program for his/her instrument, or who is home schooled, is strongly encouraged to participate in other musical ensembles.

AUDITIONS

An audition is required each season to participate in the Youth Orchestra, Youth Philharmonic, and Debut Orchestra. Auditions will determine the orchestra to which each musician will be assigned. Acceptance is based on musical ability and minimum requirements for each ensemble (see "Ensemble Requirements"). In order to provide the best educational opportunity for each musician, placement will be determined by skill level and instrumental balance of each orchestra. Conductors reserve the right to reseat students throughout the year. All students auditioning will be notified of their acceptance prior to the first rehearsals. Special auditions may be held at the conductor's discretion to fill vacant positions during the season or at the semester break. If a student would like to be considered for participation in an ensemble in which they were not originally placed, a re-audition may be requested at the end of the first semester.

ENSEMBLE REQUIREMENTS*

***Conductors reserve the right to place students in appropriate ensembles.**

Youth Orchestra

Grades 9 and up

Audition Music Skills: Be able to play: A) the audition excerpts and scales that can be found at the link listed below*; B) a three-octave scale of your choice; and C) sight read

*Audition excerpts may be found at:
www.topekasymphony.org/pages/youth_ensembles.html

Youth Philharmonic

Grades 6 – 12

Audition Music Skills: Be able to play: A) the audition excerpts and scales that can be found at the link listed below*; B) a short (no more than 2 minutes) excerpt of a work demonstrating your current performance level; and C) sight read

*Audition excerpts may be found at:
www.topekasymphony.org/pages/youth_ensembles.html

Debut Orchestra

Grades 4 – 8

Audition Music Skills: Be able to play: A) the audition excerpts and scales that can be found at the link listed below*; B) a 1 to 3 minute solo; and C) sight read

*Audition excerpts may be found at:
www.topekasymphony.org/pages/youth_ensembles.html

TUITION

Once a musician has been accepted into one of the orchestras, there is a non-refundable tuition fee of \$75 for each student per year for the Debut Orchestra or \$95 for each student per year for the Youth Philharmonic and Youth Orchestra, which includes music purchase and rental costs. The Topeka Symphony will bill each family for the tuition payment. Tuition assistance is available. Contact Kathy Maag at the Topeka Symphony office for more information.

Tuition covers only a small fraction of the costs of operating the Youth Ensembles, which are funded from the Topeka Symphony Society's operating budget. We encourage all members' families to support the Topeka Symphony Orchestra through season ticket purchases, as well as by making contributions to the Symphony's Annual Fund or by joining the Symphony League. For more information, call (785) 232-2032.

REHEARSAL AND CONCERT SCHEDULE

Ensembles rehearse Tuesdays on the following schedule:

Youth Orchestra: 6:15 p.m.- 8:15 p.m. White Concert Hall Stage

Youth Philharmonic: 6:15 p.m.- 7:45 p.m. Instrumental Room (Room 134), Garvey Fine Arts Center

Debut Orchestra: 5:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m. University United Methodist Church (17th & College)

Fall 2017

Rehearsals: Tuesdays

September 5, 12, 19, 26

October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

November 7

Pre-Concert Rehearsal: Sunday, November 12, White Concert Hall – time to be announced

ALL ENSEMBLES CONCERT: 3:00 p.m., Sunday, November 12, 2017, White Concert Hall

Spring 2018

Rehearsals: Tuesdays

January 9, 16, 23, 30

February 6, 13, 20, 27

March 6

Pre-Concert Rehearsals: Saturday and Sunday, March 10 & 11, White Concert Hall – time to be announced

ALL ENSEMBLES CONCERT: 3:00 p.m., Sunday, March 11, 2018, White Concert Hall

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Musicians are expected to bring their music to rehearsals and arrive at least 15 minutes early and be in their seats **5 minutes** prior to the start of rehearsal—**warmed up and ready to play at the scheduled start time**. Musicians must bring their own pencils. Parents should be punctual in picking up their students following rehearsals. It is the policy of the Topeka Symphony to not leave any student unattended.

It is very important to understand that orchestra members are making a commitment to the group for the entire season. Attendance at ALL rehearsals and concerts is required. A musician should weigh all other personal and school commitments and be prepared to give the Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles priority in the event of any conflicts. Attendance is recorded at each rehearsal. If, for any reason, a member must be absent, your conductor must be notified as far in advance as possible, and your conductor will determine if your absence will be excused (i.e., for illness, bad weather, school-related conflicts). After any unexcused absence or four excused absences, the orchestra member's position will be re-evaluated. To contact your conductor, please refer to **Important Telephone Numbers** on page 1.

PRACTICE AND PREPARATION

Members are expected to come to rehearsals prepared and with their music and instruments in order. The music played by the orchestras includes challenging pieces from the standard orchestral repertoire. Therefore, musicians should anticipate that it will be necessary to spend time outside of rehearsals practicing the music in order to be prepared for rehearsals and performances.

MUSIC STANDS

Debut Orchestra members need to bring a music stand to each rehearsal. A collapsible wire stand is sufficient. Make sure your name is on your stand.

CARE OF MUSIC

Music is provided to members for practice and study and must be returned in good condition after each concert. If an original part is damaged or not returned, the member will be charged for the replacement cost.

CONCERT ATTIRE

Youth Orchestra: Boys: Solid black tuxedo or suit, white shirt, black bow tie, black socks and black shoes.

Girls: Ankle-length solid black dress, ankle-length black skirt or full-length black slacks (no black jeans), black tops with sleeves and a modest neckline, and black dress shoes.

Youth Philharmonic & Debut Orchestra: Boys: Solid black slacks, long-sleeved white button-down shirt, dark tie, black socks and black shoes. **Girls:** Ankle-length solid black skirt or full-length slacks (no black jeans), white blouse with sleeves and a modest neckline and black dress shoes.

Concert attire is black and white only! No other colored object is to be worn during concerts.

SMALL ENSEMBLE OPPORTUNITIES

Small groups of instrumentalists may be asked to represent the Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles and perform for various community functions. Performances will be scheduled at the discretion of the conductors and the Topeka Symphony office.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles welcome volunteers who help with monitoring rehearsals, fundraising, marking and distributing music, marketing and promotional needs, helping with concerts and organizing performance opportunities. If you would like to be a part of this wonderful volunteer group, please call the Topeka Symphony office at (785) 232-2032.

IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER

Every effort will be made to notify schools and the news media should inclement weather require cancellation of a Youth Ensemble rehearsal or concert. Please check your local radio and TV stations and advise your students to pay special attention to school announcements. You may also call the Symphony office at (785) 232-2032 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, WE WILL NOT MAKE INDIVIDUAL PHONE CALLS TO YOUTH ENSEMBLE MEMBERS ANNOUNCING CANCELLATIONS OF REHEARSALS OR CONCERTS.

THE SYMPHONY BOARD

Policies governing the activities of the Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Youth Philharmonic and the Debut Orchestra are established by the Board of Directors of the Topeka Symphony Society.

The Topeka Symphony Society Board of Directors has an Education and Youth Committee, which includes parent representation from each of the three Youth Ensembles. The committee chair and the members assist with auditions, notifications, rehearsals, music librarian duties and help with the smooth operation and success of the Youth Ensembles in many other ways.

YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION

Each year since 1953, the Topeka Symphony has sponsored the Young Artist Competition to give high school students the opportunity to perform with the Topeka Symphony Orchestra. Out of four areas of competition - keyboard, strings, wind and percussion instruments, and voice – one student is chosen to perform with the Symphony. In addition, the winner in each category is awarded a scholarship. For more information, contact the Symphony office.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

No person is excluded from participation in any of our sponsored groups because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, handicap, gender, or sexual orientation. No musician will be excluded from membership in the Youth Orchestra, Youth Philharmonic or Debut Orchestra based on an inability to pay tuition fees.

YOUR SUGGESTIONS ARE WELCOME!

We appreciate the talent, time, hard work, and dedication that our Youth Ensemble members and their families give to the organization. We want to continue our mission of providing ever-improving educational and performance opportunities for youth. Your suggestions and help are always encouraged.