



Topeka Symphony Orchestra

[www.topekasymphony.org](http://www.topekasymphony.org)  
785-232-2032



Topeka Symphony Orchestra

## **Youth Ensembles HANDBOOK**

Youth Orchestra

Youth Philharmonic

Debut Orchestra

**2018 - 2019**

**A handbook for members and parents**

Martha Placeres, Youth Orchestra Conductor  
Carolyn Rich Voth, Youth Philharmonic Conductor  
Carolyn Sandquist, Debut Orchestra Conductor

# 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.

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office: 785-670-1887  
[martha.placeres@washburn.edu](mailto:martha.placeres@washburn.edu)

CAROLYN RICH VOTH, Youth Philharmonic Conductor  
Home: 785-235-5406  
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[voth.strings@gmail.com](mailto:voth.strings@gmail.com)

CAROLYN SANDQUIST, Debut Orchestra Conductor  
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## Youth Philharmonic - Carolyn Rich Voth



**Carolyn Rich Voth** has taught music at all levels from pre-school through college. She recently retired from teaching strings and orchestras in the Topeka public schools. Carolyn has been a member of the Topeka Symphony cello section for more than 20 years and has served as principal cellist of the Mid-Kansas Symphony Orchestra. She also performs as a soloist and chamber musician in Northeast Kansas. Mrs. Voth 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. She is a former board member for the Kansas Strings Teachers Association. During the summer of 2015, Mrs. Voth was able to study conducting with Dr. Mark Laycock and Dr. Jeffrey Grogan thanks to the generosity of the Topeka Symphony League.

## Debut Orchestra - Carolyn Sandquist



**Carolyn Sandquist** is a native Topekan. She received her Bachelor of Music degree with honors from Washburn University. Carolyn taught strings in USD 501 for nine years including high school, middle school, and elementary school levels. She also taught five years at Topeka Collegiate School. Carolyn created a private studio teaching group and private lessons for violin, viola, and cello using the Suzuki Method. Her students range in age from three years to adult. Many former students have gone on to excel in music and become music educators. Mrs. Sandquist played in the Topeka Symphony for over 30 years. She is the second violinist, founding member and manager of the Studio String Quartet and the Sandquist Family Quartet.

## **Youth Orchestra - Dr. Martha Placeres**



Martha Placeres is the Director of Orchestras and Assistant Professor of Music at 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 program 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 BSMART Orchestra and Skinner Elementary String Project.

Dr. Placeres has been featured with different orchestras in the U.S., Mexico, and Austria, including Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra, Puebla State Symphony Orchestra, Puebla State Conservatory of Music Symphony and Wind Ensemble, University of Tamaulipas Symphony Orchestra, Texas Tech University Symphony and String Orchestras, and Lustenau Symphony Orchestra. Recently, she was invited to conduct the “Binational Youth Symphony Orchestra Germany-Mexico.”

Since 2014 she is the Executive Director of the Orchestra and Band Conducting Symposium in Puebla, where she teaches orchestral conducting to band and orchestra conductors and students from all major music schools in the region. She is constantly invited to present workshops for several schools in the Topeka-Kansas City area, Texas Rio Grande Valley, and Mexico. In the summer 2016, she taught a Beginning Conducting Workshop for the Puebla State Conservatory of Music and a Conducting Clinic for the USD 501 (Topeka) School District. As a certified member of the Texas Music Adjudicators Association (TMEAA) and Kansas State High School Adjudicators Association (KSHSAA), she is a regular adjudicator for Solo and Ensemble, and Concert Sight Reading contests.

Dr. Placeres was given an Award in November 2008 as “Woman of the Year in the Arts” in the State of Puebla, Mexico and in October 2016 the Royal Decree of the City of Cholula in Puebla for her outstanding performance with the “Binational Youth Symphony Orchestra Germany-Mexico” tour.

## **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.

## **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” on page 4.) 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**

**Note: 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](http://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](http://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](http://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 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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## 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.

## 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.

## REHEARSAL AND CONCERT SCHEDULE

Ensembles rehearse Tuesday evenings 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

**\* Due to potential scheduling conflicts with Washburn University, some rehearsals may be held at different locations. Musicians and their families will be notified well in advance of any change in rehearsal location.**

## Fall 2018

Rehearsals: September 4, 11, 18, 25; October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30;  
November 6

Pre-Concert Dress Rehearsal: Sunday, November 11, White Concert Hall – time to be announced

**ALL ENSEMBLES CONCERT:** 3:00 p.m., Sunday, November 11, 2018

## Spring 2019

**Rehearsal and Concert Dates to be announced.**

## 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. After three (3) absences, the musician's membership and participation in the ensemble will be re-evaluated. Attendance at the Dress Rehearsal prior to the concert is mandatory. If a student misses Dress Rehearsal, he or she will not be allowed to perform at the concert. 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). To contact your conductor, please refer to Important Telephone Numbers and email addresses on page 2.