



**WICHITA FALLS
YOUTH SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

STUDENT HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO THE 2011-2012 SEASON!

INFORMATION FOR MUSICIANS AND FAMILIES

Welcome to a new year with the Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra! We look forward to the wonderful performances by our young musicians. The following handbook will guide you to what you need to know about playing in the Youth Symphony Orchestra and your involvement in making the program grow successfully.

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Section 1:

The Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra

Mission

The mission of the Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra is to provide music education opportunities that lead to exceptional group performances and a lifelong appreciation of music.

History

The Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra (YSO) was formed in 1992 by Gail Key to fulfill a community need to provide educational experiences for area students and to encourage performance and an appreciation of classical music. In 2004, the YSO moved into the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra offices at the Kemp Center for the Arts.

From the first season, the orchestra has maintained an average of forty to fifty student musicians, ranging in age from junior high to high school students. Occasionally, a particularly talented elementary-aged student will pass the audition. Members of the YSO come from all junior high and senior high schools in Wichita Falls, as well as surrounding towns in northern Texas and southern Oklahoma.

The group rehearses once a week during the school year and gives two showcase concerts each year, free of charge to the public. The YSO has also performed other community concerts, such as opening for the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra, playing in association with the Wichita Falls Ballet Theatre, and playing at the “Arts Alive” Home and Garden Festival, Wichita Falls Heritage Days, the Kell House Museum and in surrounding communities.

Ensemble opportunities are also available within the YSO. Past ensembles include brass ensemble, wind ensemble and string quartet.

Leadership

The Youth Symphony Orchestra is governed by a **Board of Directors**, individuals from the community who volunteer their time to oversee policy and raise money for the YSO. The current Board is as follows:

Gail Key, Honorary Chair

Jodie White, Chair

John Luig, Vice Chair

Vicki Wattigny, Treasurer

David Bomer

Nicki Bomer

Diane Hoskin

Charlotte Johnston

Diane Luig

Anita Marquardt

Dr. Carrie Norris

Mary Helen Schell

Lance Spruiell

Deb West

We also have **advisors** who contribute their expertise to our organization:

Dr. Candler Schaffer, Music Director/Conductor, Wichita Falls Symphony

Dr. Ruth Morrow, Chair of Music, Midwestern State University

William J. Niles, CPA

Dr. Dan White, Fine Arts Coordinator, WFISD

Staff

Ed Hefti, Conductor

Mr. Hefti, a freelance musician, is the high school jazz ensemble band director in the Iowa Park Independent School District. He also has served as an adjunct faculty member at Midwestern State University with duties including private saxophone lessons, assisting with the MSU Jazz Ensemble and teaching improvisation. In the past, he has worked as a music educator in Navasota, Texas and Magnolia, Texas, as minister of music at First Baptist Church in Archer City, and as interim music minister at Lamar Baptist Church in Wichita Falls and First Baptist Church in Iowa Park. Hefti has performed with numerous jazz artists and pop groups, such as Gregg Martinez and Rolling Thunder, Black Magic, Curtis Potter and the National Swing Band of Texas, the Four Tops, and the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. He has also opened shows for the Fabulous Thunderbirds and BTO.

Jessica Bess, Executive Director
Donna Janecka, Music Librarian

Correspondence should be directed to:

Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra

1300 Lamar – The Kemp Center for the Arts

Wichita Falls, TX 76301

Office Phone – 940-723-6202

Web Address: www.wfyouthsymphony.org

Email: jbess@wfyouthsymphony.org or wfyouthsymphony@gmail.com

Section 2:

The Upcoming Season

Rehearsals and Performances

Rehearsals

Rehearsals take place on Sunday afternoons from 2:00-4:00 at the Midwestern State University Fain Fine Arts Instrumental Music Hall in Wichita Falls, Texas. Additional rehearsals may be scheduled on concert weekends.

Please refer to the season schedule in Appendix A for specific dates. **It is YOUR responsibility to know this schedule and come prepared.** You will be notified by email in advance if a rehearsal time changes due to inclement weather or other circumstances.

Reporting Time

Musicians should arrive at rehearsals on time, which means early enough to be seated and ready to begin at 2:00 p.m. If you arrive at 2:00 p.m., you are late!

Students will be placed on a rotating schedule to set up chairs and stands each week before rehearsal begins. When it is your assigned week on the setup crew, you must arrive by 1:30p.m.

**Please remember that we are guests at our rehearsal and concert locations. As such, it is our responsibility to leave these spaces clean and undamaged.*

Concert Weekends

The YSO will perform two public showcase concerts during the season. Concert weekends tend to be busy - a typical schedule is as follows:

Sunday	6:00 p.m.	Full Orchestra Dress Rehearsal
	7:00 p.m.	Snack and water break
	7:30 p.m.	Concert

Our concerts are held at Akin Auditorium at Midwestern State University, 3410 Taft Blvd in Wichita Falls on:

November 20, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

April 22, 2012 @ 7:30 p.m.

We will also perform with the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra at their Christmas Concert on **Saturday, December 10, 2011** at Memorial Auditorium in downtown Wichita Falls. The YSO may perform in small ensembles in the lobby prior to the concert, and will then join the WFSO in playing several pieces.

Members with other activities that may be in conflict with this schedule should plan early to make the necessary adjustments.

Our concerts are free admission and open to the public; however, we do encourage guests to make a donation. Please invite as many people as possible to the concert and help publicize the event. Concerts performed with the WFSO do charge admission and tickets can be purchased at the WFSO office.

Sectionals

Sectional rehearsals take place at each rehearsal in the middle of our time together, unless otherwise noted. It is important you are on time and prepared for these sectionals. The sectional/instrument coaches for the 2011-2012 season are as follows:

Violin 1:	Gina Menden
Violin 2:	Tammy Sparks
Viola:	Judy Pipes
Cello/Bass:	Anita Marquardt
Woodwinds:	Julie Faulkner
Brass:	Dr. Susan Harvey
Percussion:	Karen Brunker

Chair Auditions

Chair placement auditions will be held for some sections (primarily strings) during a rehearsal in September. Each coach will determine the music selection to be used in the audition and will make this announcement at the first or second rehearsal. Students are then expected to sit in chair order during the remaining rehearsals this season.

Ensemble Opportunities

In past years, there have been opportunities for ensembles in brass, winds, and strings. Based on the number of students who desire to play in a small group, ensembles will be formed in the first few weeks of the season. Coaches will schedule group rehearsals outside of weekly orchestra rehearsals. Ensemble members are expected to attend all rehearsals unless prior arrangements are made with the ensemble coach.

Ensembles play at many types of events, from weddings to special events to performing with the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra. Students are representing the YSO by playing at community events and should maintain appropriate conduct at all times. For more information on any of the ensembles, please see the Executive Director.

Ensemble Dress

As an Ensemble member, you are representing the best of the best the YSO has to offer. Concert Dress is often required for ensemble performances. Other performances may be more casual and students may wear their red YSO t-shirt with khaki pants.

Concert Dress

It is important that we both play and LOOK like a team. Please make sure that you wear the appropriate concert attire to ALL concerts.

Concert Uniform

Girls: Black skirts or black pants, white top, black dress shoes.

Guys: Black pants, white shirt, and black dress shoes.

Evaluations

The YSO will offer a program evaluation each season for students to provide feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The board and staff will use this information to identify areas of improvement and integrate student input into the YSO's strategic plan and goal-setting initiatives. When you receive an evaluation, please take the time to fill it out and return it to the YSO office. Remember, if we don't hear from you about how to improve our program, we cannot fix it.

Student Representation

Leadership

Students may be given an opportunity to sign up for the YSO student committee to serve as the leadership of the orchestra. These students will be an example to the membership of the YSO and will assist with student communications, generating ideas for future YSO activities, and other various functions. Students will act as liaisons to the YSO board and will meet periodically for discussion and planning during the concert season.

Other Projects

Throughout the year, the YSO may have various projects that will involve student participation and input. We will ask for student volunteers for specific projects – if you have a skill you would like to share with the YSO, please let us know! Some previous and/or current areas of need are:

- T-shirt Design for YSO members
- Graphic Design for print marketing materials
- Music library organization
- Video recording

Apprentice Program

This program gives exceptional members of the YSO a chance to benefit from mentoring by a professional musician and the experience of performing with a professional orchestra. The Apprentice Program will be supervised by the YSO Music Director/Conductor, and the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra Music Director/Conductor, Dr. Candler Schaffer.

The apprentices within the YSO will be selected by audition during rehearsal on October 9th to play in either the Christmas Concert on December 10th or the WFSO concert on February 11th. These apprentices will be assigned to appropriate “mentors”, musicians of the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra and will receive six hours of private instruction from their mentors. During these lessons the focus will be YSO or WFSO music literature.

At the conclusion of each semester session, the apprentice will perform with the mentor at one WFSO concert (December Christmas Concert for fall apprentices; February concert for spring apprentices); the student will be able to perform side-by-side with their mentor.

Section 3: Student Musician Requirements

Attendance

Every player has a responsibility to attend all rehearsals and practice consistently at home.

- “Rehearsals” are for growing as a group and addressing group musical issues.
“Practice” is what occurs at home before rehearsal!
- Regular attendance at rehearsals and consistent practice of assigned music at home are crucial if our orchestra is to perform at our very best.
- When you join the Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra you are making a commitment to your fellow musicians to work together and create a quality orchestra.

Attendance Log

Members must sign-in on the attendance log at the beginning of each rehearsal.

Absences, Tardiness and Early Departure

The Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra is committed to providing superior music education and performance experience to all YSO students. Absences, tardiness or early departure distracts from the student-learning environment, disrupts the individual student's learning process and impacts the performance level of the entire orchestra. Each student musician needs to attend all rehearsals, to arrive promptly, and to remain throughout. Perfect attendance is the recommended goal.

YSO recognizes, however, that occasional absences may be necessary due to unavoidable situations. Students are given **two absences per semester** without penalty. If more absences are incurred, the coaching staff will determine whether or not a student will be allowed to perform in a concert.

If you are going to be absent:

- Notify Jessica of any future conflicts by calling the YSO office at (940) 723-6202 or emailing jbess@wfyouthsymphony.org.
- If you are sick or have an emergency situation arise, email jbess@wfyouthsymphony.org or notify your section coach.

Dress Rehearsals:

Dress rehearsals are the only time you will be able to rehearse in the performance space so you feel more prepared going into a concert. All musicians are required to attend dress rehearsals.

While at rehearsals...

- Students should always act in a respectful way toward the leaders and parents around them.
- Members are expected to help maintain the cleanliness of their surroundings.
- And, of course, you are expected to behave in a friendly manner toward your peers!

We are all here to grow and develop as musicians, but we are also here to enjoy our time together. Please help to make this a good experience for everyone! Your cooperation with these policies will help us all make great music. If you have any questions, call the Executive Director.

Fees

Each student of the orchestra must pay tuition of \$120.00 for the season. This non-refundable fee will be collected in two installments. Checks should be payable to "Youth Symphony Orchestra". We are more than happy to work with those for whom this fee might be a hardship.

	<u>1st Installment</u>	<u>2nd Installment</u>
2010-2011 Members	8/15/2011	11/13/2011
2011-2012 New Members	9/18/2011	11/13/2011
New Members - Spring only	2/5/2012 (only one installment – fee is \$60)	

Audition Information

Auditions for new students will be held prior to each semester, and during the first rehearsal of a semester. Once you have successfully auditioned and played with the YSO, you will NOT be asked to audition again. You are invited to participate in YSO through the duration of your schooling.

Dates of auditions for this season:

August 28, 2011 from 2-4pm

September 11, 2011 from 1:30-2pm

January 8, 2012 from 2-4pm

January 15, 2012 from 1:30-2pm

Students are asked to prepare:

- A short solo piece without an accompanist (UIL or All-Region Band selection is appropriate)
- 2 two-octave scales
- A short sight reading piece will be given at the end of the audition

Please be an advocate for YSO and promote the organization to your friends at school! If you know anyone who would be a great addition to YSO, we would be happy to contact them to provide more information.

Section 4: Parent Information

Volunteer Needs

The YSO is comprised of two part-time administrative staff members and a volunteer corps who help the organization execute many important details throughout the season. We could NOT exist without volunteer support, and that includes the many parents who step up and help in various ways.

We request that each parent sign up for at least one activity on the list of volunteer opportunities (see Appendix B). Depending on the area in which you wish to participate, you will be contacted by either the Executive Director or the Parent Liaison to arrange the details.

Parent Liaison

Mary Helen Schell is our parent liaison this season and is available to answer questions about the program and direct your concerns to the appropriate party. She will be in touch with you throughout the year to keep the communication lines open.

Mary Helen's contact information:

Home: (940) 592-9174

Cell: (940) 782-0586

Email: maryhschell@hotmail.com

Volunteer Activities

- Concert Greeter
- Rehearsal Parent
- School Liaison
- Planning student events/receptions
- Fundraising
- Selling program ads
- Other – if you have a special expertise or interest in helping with graphic design, photography, video recording, etc, please notify the YSO office to make arrangements.

Rehearsal Attendance

You are welcome to stay during the YSO rehearsals if you wish to listen. Please be mindful that this is a learning environment, requiring all visitors to be as quiet as possible.

Program Ads

Each year we produce a professional concert program for both the fall and spring concerts. Parents are given the opportunity to purchase a small “text-only” ad for \$15 to offer words of support and encouragement to your child or to the entire orchestra.

Advertising forms will be distributed at a future rehearsal for you to sign up. The form will also be posted on the website for you to download from home.

Section 5: Other Information

Photography

Please be aware that from time to time photographs will be taken of the Youth Symphony Orchestra, which may, at the Executive Director’s discretion, be used for publicity in print media and on the Internet. Names of students will not be used.

Professional Concerts

Observation of a professional orchestra is valuable for developing student musicians. We are very fortunate to have an excellent Symphony Orchestra in our city. Members of the Youth Symphony Orchestra are strongly encouraged to attend concerts of the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra. The WFSO is offering YSO members heavily discounted tickets to all season concerts (excluding the Christmas Concert) for \$5.00 each (with student ID) and reduced price family member tickets for \$10.00 each. **This family ticket pricing is for YSO families only!** Tickets must be purchased in advance at the WFSO office (1300 Lamar – Kemp Center for the Arts).

Communications

Much of the communication between the office and YSO students will be by **email**. Please check your email frequently for information. Our **website** (www.wfyouthsymphony.org) includes a student page with downloadable documents and rehearsal schedules. It is your responsibility to read all information pertaining to rehearsals, concerts, and fundraisers. If you are unable to receive email communication, please notify the Executive Director to make alternative arrangements.

We are also on **Facebook!** Please “like” the Wichita Falls Youth Symphony Orchestra and make sure you allow status updates to be seen when you log onto your account. We will be posting pertinent information on Facebook about auditions, ensembles, concerts, and other items of interest so that you can easily keep tabs on our whereabouts.

Attendance at Fundraisers

In order to raise money for our yearly budget, the YSO will venture into various fundraisers throughout the year. Past fundraisers include a booth at the Home and Garden Festival, manning a table to sell CD's of featured artists at Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra concerts, providing an ensemble for the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra's yearly Encore Dinner, selling tickets to the Home and Garden Festival, and a Spaghetti Luncheon. The Board of Directors and staff of the YSO are aware you are asked to sell many things for your school functions; therefore we try to find unique ways to raise money without you having to sell merchandise.

This year we have a fundraising luncheon scheduled for **February 26, 2012** at The Forum (the old Women's Forum). Students will be asked to sell several tickets to the luncheon as well as play as a group during the event. More information will become available later this semester and we will request that each family help in some way to ensure this event is a huge success!

YSO fundraisers require mandatory attendance from students! The fundraisers are for you and our group and your presence is vital! Please be prepared and willing to sign up freely to help when called upon.