



**Gemini Youth Orchestras
2023-2024 Season
Member Handbook**

Revised September, 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Gemini Youth Orchestras (“GYO”) is a four-ensemble instrumental music program dedicated to providing an engaging and rigorous artistic environment for pre-college musicians. Our staff, composed entirely of conservatory-trained veteran musicians and educators, is devoted to encouraging the whole musician, developing the individual and collective ensemble ability of the students, and elevating their musical understanding in the context of ensemble playing.

This handbook is designed to provide our members with guidelines, policies, and procedures that will help you get the most out of your GYO experience. Please read the handbook carefully. All GYO members are expected to abide by the policies and procedures outlined herein to remain in good standing in the program.

Gemini’s student musicians come from public, private, and parochial schools across Long Island. Musicians are auditioned and accepted into the program regardless of financial circumstances. A limited number of scholarships are available and will be awarded to students based on demonstrated need and merit.

Tuition provides only part of the revenue for Gemini. Ticket sales, individual donations, corporate and business contributions, foundation and government grants, and special fundraising projects provide the balance.

Membership in all groups is determined by audition. Students are not re-auditioned each year unless they wish to be considered for participation in a different group; however, they are required to continue their private instrumental studies throughout each year to maintain membership. NYSSMA scores referenced in the descriptions below are only a guideline, and not a guarantee of placement.

The GYO program consists of the following ensembles:

Gemini Repertory Orchestra

Gemini Repertory Orchestra is designed to introduce string students to the fundamentals of ensemble playing. Repertory Orchestra provides musicians with the foundation for a lifetime of music making and success in future Gemini orchestras.

Gemini String Orchestra

Gemini String Orchestra introduces students to string ensemble playing. Musicians performing at NYSSMA levels III-V receive intensive technical instruction and prepare for the GYO symphonic orchestras. Literature is selected primarily from original editions, although in some cases arrangements are performed.

Gemini Youth Symphony

Gemini Youth Symphony is a full symphonic orchestra open to the most advanced students in GYO. The Youth Symphony performs a wide variety of repertoire across a multitude of eras and styles, with particular focus on the large symphonic repertoire of the 19th and 20th centuries. While NYSSMA scores are not a factor in admission to Gemini Youth Symphony, students wishing to audition should play at a Level VI/All-State

equivalent.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Gemini Youth Orchestras is a registered business name of The Training Orchestra, Inc., a New York not-for-profit corporation qualified as a charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations to GYO (not including tuition and tickets) are deductible as charitable contributions for most taxpayers (consult your tax advisor for more information).

GYO is governed by a Board of Directors, a volunteer group elected each June for the succeeding fiscal year beginning July 1. The Board consists of parents of current and former GYO musicians, along with music educators, business leaders, community representatives, and friends. The Board meets monthly. The Board sets forth general policy and procedures, approves the budget, raises funds, and provides services to the performing groups. An Advisory Board, a non-voting body consisting of members of the arts, education and business communities, is available to assist the Board of Directors.

Parent committees and volunteers provide invaluable support to the organization in areas including fundraising, hospitality, rehearsal and concert operations, and special projects. Parent participation is critical to the survival and success of Gemini and is strongly encouraged.

The administration of the GYO program is carried out by the Executive Director, who is responsible for management and scheduling of rehearsals, auditions, and concerts, and is liaison with other music organizations, and dealing with student problems and issues. The Executive Director is assisted by parent and student volunteers who serve as orchestra managers, rehearsal and concert staff, and assist with mailings and related tasks. The administrative staff of GYO, unlike most youth orchestras, is composed entirely of volunteers, enabling us to devote our entire budget to music operations.

The artistic staff provides the musical vision for GYO and is responsible for approval of repertoire for all GYO groups and for special projects, such as educational outreach and workshops.

2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ricardo Garcia, President
Scott Tarantino, Vice President
Christine Tarantino, Secretary
Stephen Lee, Treasurer

Barbara Emigholz
Nora Lee
Dina Shingleton
Donald Smith

Artistic Staff

Justin Bischof, Gemini Youth Symphony
Andrew Perea, String & Repertory Orchestras

Administration

Susan DelGiorno, Executive Director
Joanne Garcia, Comptroller

COMMUNICATIONS

Whenever possible, we try to communicate with students and their families by e-mail and via the website, www.gyo.org. We need an up-to-date e-mail address for every student and parent or guardian throughout the season. Students and parents should be sure to check their email at least DAILY, as this may be the only timely communication of important announcements.

Any member who does not have access to email on a regular basis should advise the Executive Director so that other means of communication can be arranged. The Executive Director may be reached at director@gyo.org.

Our mailing address is: Gemini Youth Orchestras, PO Box 705, Melville, NY 11747-0705.

THE AUDITION PROCESS**Auditions for Membership**

GYO members are selected on the basis of audition only. Yearly entrance auditions are scheduled in May or June, with additional auditions in August or September. All audition dates will be announced on our website. Interested students should email director@gyo.org.

Each applicant must fill out an audition request form, provide their most recently completed NYSSMA score and level (if applicable), and be prepared to supply a copy of their NYSSMA evaluation or teacher recommendation, if requested. Applicants will be notified of results by email. Individual auditions may be scheduled during the year if there are openings in the performing groups.

Auditions are adjudicated by qualified conductors or musicians. Adjudicators may ask students to play additional sections from the requested practice repertoire beyond the subsection announced, as well as scales or other pieces not expressly mentioned. It is the hope that, regardless of the result of an audition, an adjudicator's comments will help the student in determining areas in which he or she may need work. There is a \$25.00 fee charged for new member auditions, as well as inter-orchestra auditions.

Musician Qualifications

All musicians are expected to have private teachers with whom review of Gemini music selections will occur regularly. This is necessary to improve technique between rehearsals and to facilitate work on any musical problems that students may encounter. Students are required to practice their parts with their private teachers. Inadequate preparation for rehearsal may result in suspension of membership. If there is a hardship involved, please email the Executive

Director prior to orientation for that academic year.

All GYO participants are required to participate in their school's curricular music program, if such a program is available. School music programs are the lifeblood of the arts on Long Island, and GYO and its members support school programs including festivals such as NYSCAME, NMEA, SCMEA, LISFA and NYSSMA. GYO is intended to enhance and supplement, not to replace these school programs. We make every effort to avoid time conflicts with school programs. Participation in extracurricular school music programs is generally encouraged but not required.

The following qualifications are the minimum scoring recommendations* for each group, and are subject to conductor discretion:

Repertory Orchestra: NYSSMA Level 3, scoring "Excellent" or better, at the discretion of the Conductor

String Orchestra: Completed NYSSMA Level 4–5, scoring "Excellent" or better

Concert Winds: Completed NYSSMA Level 3-6. Please contact the Director for inquiries

Symphony: Completed NYSSMA Level 5, 6 or All-State, scoring an "A+"

**NYSSMA scores do not guarantee acceptance or ensemble placement, nor do they preclude students who do not fit into the above mentioned NYSSMA rubric from applying. Admission is subject to availability of an opening in the group, and approval of the audition staff.*

Audition Preparation

- Music: NYSSMA solo or other appropriate solo of comparable level. Students should choose a solo with which they are comfortable and confident. Selections do not need to come from the NYSSMA catalog.
- Sight-reading: All students should be prepared to sight-read.
- Scales: All students should be prepared to perform scales appropriate to his/her NYSSMA level. Additionally, those string players auditioning for Philharmonia should be prepared to play a three-octave scale. String players auditioning for Symphony should be prepared to play at least two (2) three-octave scales, demonstrating a variety of bow strokes, bowings, tempi and dynamics at the request of the conductor. Bass players auditioning for Symphony will be required to perform two-octave scales.
- Brass and woodwind players will also be expected to demonstrate the ability to transpose when applicable. (Symphony applicants only)

Ensemble placement is based on technical ability, intonation, rhythmic accuracy, general musicianship, maturity, and stylistic understanding.

Inter-Orchestra Auditions

Returning Gemini members who wish to transfer to a different ensemble must:

- A. Meet all minimum requirements for acceptance to that group
- B. Have the permission and agreement of their current group's conductor
- C. Schedule an inter-orchestra audition during the spring or at another time (by permission of the Executive Director and conductor only)
- D. Submit a copy of their current NYSSMA evaluation, if requested

Changes from one group to another are at the discretion of the conducting staff and are subject

to availability of positions.

Please note that an accompanist is not necessary for GYO auditions.

POLICIES FOR ORCHESTRA MEMBER

Attendance/Absences

All Gemini members are permitted TWO (2) rehearsal absences (only one of which may be an unexcused absence) per concert series, not to exceed FIVE (5) total absences per school year. Excused absences are absences by reason of conflict with school music programs (see below) or illness. All other absences are considered unexcused.

Absences must be reported by completion of the attendance form located at <https://forms.gle/AMRUMNwmijXsH5ka6> or by email to director@gyo.org.

- A student exceeding the permitted absences for a concert series may not be allowed to participate in that concert, may be required to play unseated, or may be asked to re-audition at the discretion of the conductor. Extended absence may subject the student to dismissal from the program with no tuition refund. Exceptions may be granted for extended illness.
- Mandatory school music conflicts include ONLY dress rehearsals and concerts for school music groups, and rehearsals and concerts for sanctioned festivals including NMEA, SCMEA, LISFA, NYSSMA, All-County, All-State, All-Eastern and All-National events. Students should provide documentation of their participation and the dates of these events as soon as they know them.
- *Chronic lateness may be grounds for dismissal.*
- A student is expected to attend rehearsal even if his/her instrument is lost or broken. Replacement instruments can usually be rented from a music store.
- Students are expected to remain for the entire rehearsal unless excused by the conductor or the Executive Director.
- A student who is temporarily injured and is unable to play is still expected to attend rehearsal, unless excused by the conductor.
- Involvement in school musicals, including pit bands, is a voluntary activity. Absences for this reason are considered unexcused.
- If a student knows that he or she will miss more than two rehearsals in any concert series, he or she should advise the Executive Director in advance of that concert series so that appropriate arrangements for concert personnel can be made.
- *Dress rehearsal, concert and soundcheck attendance are mandatory.* Failure to sign in for a concert may be considered an unexcused absence and subject the student to dismissal from GYO without tuition refund. Students are excused from concerts only for illness or a documented mandatory school music conflict. Mandatory school music conflicts must be communicated with the conductor or the Executive Director at least two months prior to the concert date. Any other concert absence may result in dismissal from the program with no tuition refund. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to report all absences.

Leave of Absence

A request for a leave of absence for personal reasons must be made in writing in advance of the forthcoming concert series. The letter should explain the reason for the leave and the expected duration. Permission for leave status will be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director. A student will not be granted a tuition refund.

Instruments and Equipment

Required Materials, Care, and Maintenance: Members are required to provide their own instruments and a portable music stand. Instruments should be in excellent condition so that musicians can perform at their peak levels. Music stands should be brought to all rehearsals. If there is a hardship involved with respect to an instrument, please contact the Executive Director.

String players must rehair bows when necessary (or at the request of the conductor) and bring extra strings, a mute, and rosin to each rehearsal. Cello and bass players should also bring a floor stop and/or a stool if needed. Concert Winds and Symphony members are expected to tune their own instruments. Wind players must bring extra reeds of professional quality to every rehearsal.

Gemini Youth Orchestras is not responsible for the care and safekeeping of instruments owned or rented by participants. Students must take great care when transporting instruments to and from rehearsals and concerts, when moving instruments around the stage and rehearsal areas, and when leaving instruments during breaks. Instruments should not be left on seats, music stands, or in areas where they can be dropped or damaged. We recommend that students purchase their own insurance policies for valuable instruments.

Instrument Loan

In cases of unusual instrumentation for a piece being performed or serious financial hardship, GYO may be able to provide members with instruments that are loaned to the program. A loan agreement must be signed by the member and a parent or guardian, who will be responsible for the care and safekeeping of the instrument.

Code of Conduct

As we create quality musical and educational experiences for each member of the GYO musical community, the safety and well-being of the students in our care is our top priority. As such, it is a reasonable expectation that we require proper standards of behavior at all times and will notify parents of any departures from these standards.

Disruptive, disrespectful, or inattentive behavior at rehearsals, concerts, and any other GYO event is grounds for dismissal. ALCOHOL, DRUGS, SMOKING, AND ANY ACTIVITY LEGAL OR ILLEGAL THAT PLACES MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY IN HARM'S WAY ARE PROHIBITED BY GYO AND WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL. FOR EVERYONE'S SAFETY AND SECURITY, WE REQUIRE ALL STUDENTS TO REMAIN INSIDE THE BUILDING DURING REHEARSALS AND BREAKS.

- Standard classroom rules of respect apply towards conductors, GYO staff, visiting guests, and all participating musicians. Watch and listen carefully throughout the rehearsal.
- NO CELL PHONES MAY BE USED DURING REHEARSAL, EITHER FOR CALLS OR TEXTING.

Cell phones should be powered down or left with personal items offstage.

- No talking, horseplay, or disruptive behavior is permitted during rehearsals.
- Students should only consume food or drink outside of the rehearsal room and are responsible for disposal in proper receptacles. **FOOD IS PERMITTED IN REHEARSAL VENUES ONLY WITH PERMISSION OF STAFF.**
- Students should assist when possible in setting up and taking down chairs and music stands in rehearsal areas.
- Do not leave the immediate area of the building during breaks.
- Return to rehearsal promptly after the break.
- Students may leave early only with permission of the conductor or the Executive Director.

Registration Forms

All members of our musical community, both new and returning, are required to fill out registration forms (either written or online) prior to the first rehearsal. A form will only be considered complete if the emergency contact and medical information is present. For the safety of all, *students will not be allowed to participate until their registration forms are completed in their entirety.*

Preparation

An important part of the training of any young musician is the discipline and teamwork required for group musical success. Musicians are expected to practice Gemini music, at home and with their private teacher, in preparation for rehearsals. Failure to prepare for rehearsals degrades the performance of the entire ensemble and may subject the student to re-seating, re-auditioning, or dismissal from the orchestra.

Sheet Music

- Music will generally be distributed no later than the first rehearsal for each concert series.
- In some cases, GYO will provide PDF copies of practice parts for students, which should be downloaded, printed, and practiced prior to the first rehearsal. This requires Acrobat Reader, which is a free download. If any student lacks the capability to download and copy parts, he or she should notify the Executive Director BEFORE the start of the season. Please keep the PDF files on your computer in case of lost or damaged music.
- Any music distributed for performance, including photocopied and original music, must be returned intact after each concert. Student printed PDFs are the property of the student.
- Each musician is to bring his or her own music to every rehearsal so directions from the conductor can be marked in every part.
- Music may be marked only with a #2 lead pencil.
- Members will be charged for the cost of replacing any lost or damaged original music, including music torn, rolled up or cut, and music marked with anything but a #2 pencil.

Seating and Evaluation

Placement Auditions: Admission to Gemini Youth Orchestras is by audition only and is at the sole discretion of the auditioning staff. Admission to GYO may be denied based on any number of factors, including technical or other musical deficiencies, but also by reason of unavailability

of positions within our groups. Musicians are placed in a group based on the quality of their auditions, which are generally held in late spring and early September. Members are expected to perform in their assigned group for the entire year; there are no mid-year promotions except in unusual circumstances and must be ascertained first by the artistic staff and then approved by the Executive Director.

Seating Policy

Seating auditions will generally take place at the start of the academic year and at additional times as the conductors deem necessary. The conductors' seating decisions are made at their sole discretion and may be based on a number of factors. Conductors may consult with other members of the artistic staff about seating decisions, but this is at their discretion and not required.

Conductors may rotate musicians as frequently or infrequently as they choose based on their professional assessment of what arrangement best serves the collective needs of the ensemble, as well as the individual student's optimal growth as an orchestral player.

The conductors' decisions with regard to seating placements are final.

An Important Note About Seating

The adventure of playing in an elite youth orchestra program is one of personal development. Seating is only one measure of this process, and we do not think it is the most important one. As mentioned above, string positioning is important to the overall sound and blend of an orchestra, while wind seating enables players to perform parts best gauged to their abilities. However, the most important aspects of the orchestra experience are training and self-improvement, to be a member of a group striving for excellence, and to enjoy the challenge. Every member of our orchestra is equally important to us, and everyone should be measured by his or her own progress. Outside interference in the seating process undermines the values and professionalism being taught at Gemini and can be destructive to the morale of the students, the ensembles, and the entire program.

REHEARSALS

Location

All groups will rehearse on Monday evenings at Long Island School for the Gifted in S Huntington located at 165 Pidgeon Hill Rd, Huntington Station, NY 11746. Rehearsal evenings or locations may vary when school buildings are closed due to weather or school holidays, and locations may change when the building is unavailable because of school activities. See the Master Rehearsal Schedule (available online at www.gyo.org) for specific times and dates.

General Rehearsal Schedule

Gemini Repertory Orchestra: 4:20pm – 5:20pm
Gemini String Orchestra: 5:30pm – 7:00pm
Gemini Youth Symphony: 7:10pm – 9:15pm

Arrival and Preparation

Students should arrive fifteen minutes before the start of rehearsal to sign in, warm up and tune

their instruments. They should bring any necessary accessories, a pencil for marking music (NO pens or ink), and a folding music stand. Any student who does not sign in will be considered absent without an excuse.

Cancellation of Rehearsals

Cancellations for inclement weather or other emergencies will be at the discretion of the Executive Director or the Board President. Every effort will be made to notify members via the web site and/or email of any cancellation. Please do not call GYO personnel at home. Please be sure we have an up-to-date email address for you at all times and check your email frequently.

Parking

GYO members, families and their guests are required to observe and remain responsible for staying educated about any and all parking regulations in force at the time of their visit.

CONCERTS

Information, Policies, and Notices

Concert information will be made available through email several weeks in advance of the concert (and earlier whenever possible). Dress rehearsals for all groups take place the Friday of a given concert week unless otherwise indicated by the conductor.

Concert and sound check attendance is mandatory. Failure to sign in for a concert will be considered an unexcused absence.

Students are expected to be present throughout the concert in which they perform. In many cases, seats will be available so that students may watch the other groups perform. Gemini is a team. A show of support and appreciation for other groups is a vital part of the GYO program. No videotaping is allowed at concerts. It can distract the musicians and disturb other audience members. Certain venues strictly prohibit videotaping and audience members may be asked to leave if they violate the policies of the concert hall.

Concert Attire

Symphony and Concert Winds: boys must wear a tuxedo jacket, black tuxedo pants, white shirt, black bow tie, black socks and black dress shoes.

String and Repertory Orchestras: boys may substitute a black jacket and black pants for the tuxedo jacket and pants. For Alice Tully Hall, tuxedos will be required for boys in all groups.

All groups: girls must wear either a long black skirt or black dress pants with black long or $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeved blouse, or a black long-sleeved full-length dress; black stockings and black dress shoes. NO tight pants, black jeans, white socks, tank tops or short skirts permitted.

Students who arrive improperly dressed will not be allowed to perform. Note that outdoor or announced informal concerts will not require formal concert attire. Attire for these events will be announced.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Concerto Competition

The annual Concerto Competition will take place in the late winter or early spring. Qualifications, procedures and rules for eligibility will be made available in the fall with the beginning of the new school year.

Masterclasses

Information about masterclasses with eminent performing artists will be announced to our membership as soon as details are available.

TUITION & FEES

- All tuition payments are due as announced prior to the following season to secure student positions. Your cooperation in paying in a timely manner is greatly appreciated.
- Wind, brass and percussion students who are accepted for the Philharmonia or Youth Symphony as well as Concert Winds need only pay the tuition for the orchestra to which they are assigned. The tuition for the Concert Winds ensemble is waived. Other musicians who successfully audition for multiple ensembles or are granted additional opportunities on an as-needed basis may be eligible for a similar tuition waiver at the discretion of the Artistic Staff.
- If you have difficulty making payment in a timely manner, please contact the Executive Director.
- Scholarships may be available for students who need financial assistance in order to participate in the program. When you receive your invoice, please advise the Executive Director that you wish to apply for a scholarship. The procedure is simple and confidential. The GYO Board of Directors determines eligibility for and amount of scholarships. All scholarships are determined annually and do not renew.
- There will be a \$20.00 fee for any returned checks.
- Family discount: two participating students from a single family will each receive a 10% tuition discount. Families with three or more students will receive a 25% discount on tuition for each child.
- Tuition discounts may not be combined. Only one discount per family may be claimed.
- Tuition deposits and/or tuition are non-refundable after registration except in cases of prolonged illness.

2023-2024 Tuition Rates

Repertory Orchestra - \$330

String Orchestra - \$575

Youth Symphony - \$655

Fees

Auditions \$25.00

Returned check \$20.00

Tickets

Ticket prices and purchase procedures are determined by concert venue and the GYO Board of Directors.

Donations

GYO is a recognized charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations to GYO are tax-deductible as allowed by law. The Friends of Gemini program allows our families and friends a convenient way to support GYO at any level they can afford. Friends of Gemini are acknowledged in concert programs when possible. All donors are recognized in GYO programs.

Booster: \$25 - 49
Supporter: \$50 - 99
Patron: \$100 - 249
Benefactor: \$250 - 399
Founder: \$400 - 599
Angel: \$600 - 999
Conductor's Circle: \$1000 - up

Donations may also be made to sponsor a scholarship, to fund a music chair, to honor a special person or to mark a memorable achievement. Contact the Executive Director or Board President to discuss special donations.

To become a Friend of Gemini, please send your contribution to the address below. Be sure to tell us how you wish to be listed in the program. (Checks should be made payable to Gemini Youth Orchestras, and mailed to Gemini Youth Orchestras, Attention: Friends of Gemini, PO Box 705, Melville, NY 11747-0705.

CONSENT TO USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES & OTHER MEDIA

Participation in the Gemini Youth Orchestras grants our organization unrestricted license to use any recordings, images and/or videos for educational and promotional purposes via social media and any other distribution channels, both now and in the future. Registration as a student and attendance at or participation in concerts, classes and other Gemini Youth Orchestra activities constitutes agreement between GYO and students, their families, and any guests regarding the above policy.

Gemini respects the privacy of individualized (less than three students present) student photos or music performances, and these will not be reproduced nor will student names be published where parents have contacted GYO as such. The exception to our three-student policy would be students performing solos or small groups, or receiving other forms of recognition at GYO events. In such cases, those students and families understand that their likeness and performance may be used in the same capacity as group images.

The responsibility to limit exposure of any student via such recordings, images, and/or videos lies solely with the student and the family. Such students should not accept solos, nor should they participate in chamber or small performance groups. They may also request 'interior' seating in rehearsals and concerts.

This policy does not apply to photos or recordings taken and published by parents or media organizations outside the control of GYO. In particular, photographs taken and published of any

student participating in activities to which the general public is given open access, such as concerts and open rehearsals is not restricted by this policy.