

Musician's Handbook

2023- 2024



NEW WESTCHESTER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	WELCOME FROM MAESTRO STEVEN HUANG
3	OUR MISSION
4	PARTICIPATION
4	MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS
5	ATTENDANCE POLICY
6	ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC Music We Play Options for Playing Weekly Music Preparation
7	INSTRUMENTATION POLICY
8	REHEARSALS Time and Location Procedures Rehearsal Etiquette and Code of Conduct
10	PERFORMANCES AND REQUIREMENTS
11	CONDUCTOR BIO
12	SECTION LEADERS
13	BOARD OF DIRECTORS and KEY CONTACTS
13	OTHER KEY INFORMATION

WELCOME FROM OUR CONDUCTOR

What is an “amateur” orchestra? Never mind the word’s more negative connotations: “Amateur” is, literally, a lover, someone who undertakes an activity not for financial gain, but for pure joy. I am thrilled to serve as the Music Director and Conductor of New Westchester Symphony Orchestra, an amateur ensemble representing the very best of community engagement and civic identity.



Since my appointment in July 2021, I have striven to maintain a spirit of love and joy, through our common commitment to a great artistic goal: rehearsing and performing orchestral works. This means approaching our avocation with earnestness, but also with good humor and boundless charity. It means exploring not only the great masterpieces of the orchestral canon, such as Beethoven and Brahms, but also the unheard voices of lesser-known composers, from a diverse background. And finally, it means a dedication to heed the best angels of our nature as we represent our community, finding common cause regardless of whatever other differences we may have.

As a member of the New Westchester Symphony Orchestra, you have a great part to play in this noble venture. Come to rehearsals with an open mind, knowing that to make music together is to practice empathy. Take the challenge of learning challenging music seriously, and I, along with the rest of this community, will meet you wherever you are. And remember that no matter how many right notes or wrong notes, missed entrances or nailed ones, we are doing this because we love it.

OUR MISSION

The New Westchester Symphony Orchestra (“NewWSO”) offers amateur instrumental musicians in and around Westchester County an opportunity to build musicianship in a supportive, non-competitive setting while practicing and performing significant orchestral and ensemble works.

PARTICIPATION

NewWSO offers instrumentalists of all ages and abilities the opportunity to play the same repertoire as professional orchestras, but in a non-competitive and supportive environment. We welcome a wide range of musical backgrounds and training, from those renewing musical skills to those with advanced ability. Participants self-select participation is based upon personal ability.

Musicians under the age of 18 may participate with the written consent of their parent/guardian.



While playing music is our focus, the success of NewWSO is dependent on the contributions of our members. In addition to playing and paying dues, members of NewWSO should also understand that with becoming a member also comes other responsibilities. Some of these include being well-prepared every week by practicing and being accountable for attendance at rehearsals and performances. Members should also pay close attention to all communiques from the Board and from our liaison (see our [Board and Info](#) page) as well as checking our [web site](#) for rehearsal details and possible time/date/location changes.

Sometimes players are asked to contribute their time and talents outside of rehearsal. Throughout the season, Board members may ask members to help with various tasks, and everyone is encouraged to contribute their time to these activities. All members are also expected to fully participate in advertising and marketing our performances to family, friends, and their local community. In addition to sharing performance dates and times, we expect members to also represent NewWSO in their communities by helping to expand our membership and audience and by reaching out to possible contributors. Some examples of other ways to help are: legal counsel, graphic design, transportation, fundraising, ticketing and ushering for concerts, and communicating via social media to family, friends and community.

MEMBERSHIP

The NewWSO and its Music Director, Steven Huang, welcome musicians to join our rehearsals Wednesdays at the Westchester Community for Ethical Culture, 7 Saxon Woods Road, White Plains, NY, from 7:00pm-9:30pm. French horns, double reeds, and strings are particularly encouraged to join. A new musician is welcome to “come and play” with us as a Trial Member through one concert segment (all rehearsals up to a performance, and the performance). This gives you time to give NewWSO a try, see if it’s for you, and decide whether you would like to

make the commitment of becoming a member. During this trial membership, you will be exempt from dues through your first concert of that season.

The following are dues options for membership:



Annual Membership:

The annual suggested membership fee for 2023-2024 is \$350/year from September 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024. This includes weekly, year-round rehearsals (approx. 48 per year), performance opportunities, and occasionally, printed parts. Dues are payable in full or in 2, 3 or 4 installments when and as the musician can pay. If you are interested in a payment plan, please speak with the [President](#). The amount will be pro-rated for anyone who joins mid-year.

Monthly Rate

The monthly rate of \$45 a month is for musicians who wish to play with the ensemble monthly.

Weekly Rate (Drop-In)

\$15.00 is payable by musicians who wish to play with the ensemble but do not wish to commit to annual or monthly membership. *Full-time conservatory or college students pay 1/2 of the fees. High school students are free.* Musicians who cannot pay the set fees should speak to any board member and may contribute whatever they can, as we do not want lack of funds to prevent musicians from playing with us. Those who contribute more than the posted rates will have the extra portion treated as a tax-deductible donation and receipts are available. All contributions are welcome!

NewWSO accepts PayPal, Zelle, cash, check, and credit cards.

New Westchester Symphony Orchestra, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Although the orchestra is “*Come and Play*” in nature, members are encouraged to attend as many rehearsals and performances as possible to be well prepared to perform in concert. In the event that you know of a future absence, or if something comes up and you cannot attend rehearsal, or if you will be late, please communicate with our Conductor [Steven Huang](#), our Orchestra Liaison, [Waters Armstrong](#), and your [section leader](#) as soon as possible. For our group to have musical coverage of all parts, if our administration is aware of upcoming

absences or even a weekly absence, we will try to make up coverage ahead of time, so all parts are covered.

NewWSO cares deeply about the well-being of all members. If extenuating circumstances (for example illness, financial difficulties, family emergencies, etc.) result in extended absences, the policy still holds to inform the conductor, the orchestra liaison, and your section leader. Weather-related cancellations will be announced via email and posted on the [web site](#) as soon as possible. Always check your email and the web site for any last-minute changes to our rehearsal schedule.

ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

Music We Play

The foundation of NewWSO repertoire is original orchestrations of public domain classics from centuries past and available music from the present. While every effort is made to choose music that involves as many instruments as possible, there will be pieces where the composer



did not create a part for certain instruments either by choice, because the part written is for the same instrument in a different key, or because the instrument did not exist during the life of the composer. Non-traditional orchestral instruments such as accordion, saxophone, and others are welcome, but some initiative on the part of the players of certain instruments may be required.

NewWSO musicians play copies of the music that the composer wrote - we do not play modified parts. Beyond that, players are responsible for adapting the parts for their instrument, a practice common among orchestral players; the conductor can provide guidance.

Options For Playing

NewWSO is well-populated in certain sections and less in others. For example, if there are no trumpet parts to a particular piece, the trumpet player is welcome to try his/her hand at percussion. Non-transposing instruments in C such as flute and trombone can easily play the parts of other non-transposing instruments such as violin, cello/bass, or bassoon.



Transposing instruments, such as trumpet and clarinet in Bb, may choose to transpose their parts from existing parts or they may choose to remain *tacet* (silent) for that piece.

Another option for transposing instrument players would be to purchase a second, inexpensive instrument such as a clarinet in C or A or trumpet in D, which would allow them to play the parts as written.

A final and slightly adventurous option which is also open to everyone, would be to try a *new* instrument, whether a part exists or not. We encourage creativity and a “can-do” attitude when it comes to making music. If you are interested in playing more than one instrument, email the [conductor](#) to discuss which would be the most appropriate part or instrument to play.

Weekly Music Preparation

Members should bring every piece of music in the current repertoire to each rehearsal. With sufficient notice, extra copies of parts are available from our librarian, [Nancy Eisenman](#). Members are responsible for checking the [rehearsal schedule](#) online in advance of rehearsal day.



The organization of our weekly rehearsals is always posted in the [details](#) section of the Rehearsal Schedule section of our [web site](#). However, last-minute changes may occur and will be made at the discretion of the conductor. Members are responsible for checking the rehearsal schedule online in advance of rehearsal day and double-check the schedule on Wednesdays for last minute changes. We expect all musicians to properly prepare their music by practicing their parts every week. If we are all properly prepared, we can grow and learn every week and that is how we make progress and become “performance ready”. Listen to recordings as you practice at home to hear your part, your entrances and performances and concepts of the work by professional musicians and orchestras. You can even attempt to play along with a recording.

INSTRUMENTATION POLICY

At present, the Flute, Clarinet and Trumpet sections are full.

A waitlist will be maintained and consulted if a spot opens in one of the closed sections. There is a possibility that we will call musicians from the waitlist to substitute if a regular member will be out for an extended period. Your substitution may be either for your chosen

instrument's section, or to play another instrument's part in your key. Please refer to "[Options for Playing](#)" in the [ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC](#) section above.

REHEARSALS

Time and location

NewWSO rehearses about 48 weeks a year on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM at the Westchester Community for Ethical Culture, 7 Saxon Woods Road, White Plains, NY. There are no rehearsals the last two weeks of December, the weeks of (*see note below) Labor Day, July 4th, and the week of Memorial Day. Listen to our announcements during



rehearsals and pay attention to the details on our rehearsal schedule web page. Rehearsal during the week of Thanksgiving is held on the *Monday* of that week.

For the months of July and August, we prepare for a (probable) August performance and sight-read new material every week. Rehearsals will focus on works for our (possible) performance, but we also take time to sight read the new material every week. We get a chance to run through major Orchestra works just to "play through" without having to practice the piece for performance-level learning. These are OPEN rehearsals - even for those sections that are closed.

* The scheduling of the Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day holiday week's rehearsal will be determined a week or two before the holiday by the conductor.

Procedures



All members should arrive to rehearsal tuned and ready to play by 7:00 PM. We take one 10–15-minute break. Rehearsal ends promptly at 9:30 PM at which time members are requested to pack up, clean up their own area, stack chairs and vacate promptly. If you have a special situation regarding rehearsals that needs to be discussed with the administration, please reach out to one of the Board members or [Steven](#) prior to rehearsal, during the break, or after rehearsal. An email to any one of the administrators ([see pg. 15](#)) will also suffice. Time-sensitive announcements will be made at the beginning of rehearsal commencing at 7:00pm followed by tuning as directed by the concertmaster. Please take the time to tune individually and warm up on your own *prior* to our 7:00pm start.

Seating may be assigned but changes infrequently. The only permanent seat is that of the concertmaster.

While a [rehearsal schedule](#) is posted on our web site, last-minute changes may occur at the discretion of the conductor. Please check the web site from time-to-time on rehearsal-Wednesdays.

Etiquette and Code of Conduct

Due to the short amount of time we have together to rehearse each week, all members are to strictly abide by the following to ensure productivity:

- Come prepared: study your music, arrive on time, bring your music, bring your stand, bring a pencil, bring a light (if needed).
- Never wear *perfumes or scents* of any kind to rehearsals or performances.
- Cell phone usage during rehearsals should be avoided. Please silence your phone during practice. Emergencies occur so if you must take a call, excuse yourself and speak quietly in the lobby or outside.
- Players should be tuned and ready to play at 7:00 PM. From approximately 6:45pm - 7:00pm each player should assemble, warm up and tune her/his instrument, and later when the concertmaster calls for tuning, fine tune with the orchestra.
- Maintain silence during general tuning. A quick, general tuning is led by the conductor or concertmaster and isn't effective unless every person in the room *plays only when asked to play*. All instruments will tune to concert pitch standard A440.
- When you are not playing, please sit quietly.
- Talk during designated times only; we encourage talking and socializing before and after rehearsal, and during the break. Please refrain from talking during rehearsal itself.
- Listen as the conductor announces the piece about to be rehearsed and keep your music folder organized. The conductor posts the [rehearsal schedule](#) on the [web site](#) each week. Some pieces have multiple titles so be aware of how each is referenced and make your own notes on your music as needed. Put your music in rehearsal order as directed in weekly rehearsal details.
- Please maintain quiet during rehearsals of other sections or if the conductor is talking with the ensemble. Fidgeting, talking or playing while the conductor rehearses another section makes communicating with that section difficult. Study your part as you follow along with the section being rehearsed, but please, *do not talk or play* on your own.



- Talking makes listening for all the other people around you impossible. Even if it's related to the music - when people around you want to listen to the conductor (as everyone should) your talking is EXTREMELY disruptive. Don't do it.
- Don't tap your foot. A toe tap in your shoe is fine; a foot tap is noisy and can be both visually distracting and distracting to your fellow musicians sitting nearby.
- Don't count out loud, do not silently mouth counting the numbers, do not count on your fingers and do not personally conduct through your rest.
- If you have a question during rehearsal, raise your hand (or ask your section leader at an appropriate time). Questions of a musical nature should be asked of the conductor or concertmaster. If there is no time to ask your question during rehearsal, wait for the break.
- Be supportive of your fellow musicians no matter what their age or ability. Remember that this is a *judgment-free environment* in which we can all make music freely while building musicianship.
- Music-related issues concerning other members should be privately communicated to the President or conductor.
- Personal issues between members should be handled outside the context of NewWSO.

PERFORMANCES AND ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Performances are an important way for NewWSO to share its mission with the community. While attendance at performances is not required, we encourage all members to perform as often as possible to improve musicianship. Performances are divided into three types with different rehearsal requirements for each.

Major Public Performance These are the Spring, Fall and possibly Summer concerts which are free to the public. The December Messiah sing-along Holiday concert is also free to the public. Musicians must attend three of the final four rehearsals prior to a Major Public Performance to participate in the concert(s).

Minor Public Performance Any concert that is in a public venue e.g., public library or community center, is considered a minor public performance and is free to the public.



Musicians must attend the dress rehearsal prior to the performance to participate.

Private Performance Any concert for a small, private organization is considered a private performance, e.g., assisted living communities, hospitals, etc. These are free to the public. Musicians must attend the rehearsal prior to the performance.

If you have a situation that prevents you from fulfilling rehearsal requirements, please contact the [conductor](#) directly to discuss options.

Unless otherwise noted, dress for all performances is concert black (no jackets required). Bring your music, music stand and light (if necessary) to all performances. For outdoor performances bring music clips or clothespins to hold your music. And please, *no perfumes or scents* of any kind.

Arrive early or by the time specified by the conductor. Allow time to set up your music, your stand, warm up and tune your instrument prior to the general tuning. Pre-concert rehearsal times will be communicated well before the concert.

All musicians are expected to fully participate in advertising and marketing our performances to family, friends, and the local community.

New Westchester Symphony Orchestra, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

CONDUCTOR BIO

Maestro Steven Huang was thrilled to join as Music Director and Conductor of the New Westchester Symphony Orchestra in July 2021. He has conducted orchestras and operas across the country and throughout the world. At the age of twenty-one, he served as Music Director of the Bach Society Orchestra of Harvard University, where he received his undergraduate degree. While at Harvard, Mr. Huang also directed the Lowell House Opera (the oldest continuously running opera company in New England). Most recently, he successfully concluded a sixteen-year appointment as Associate Professor and Director of Orchestras at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, where he brought the program to new achievements, including earning competitive accolades and awards from Ohio Music Educators Association and Columbus Roundtable Awards, through over 200 performances, including symphonic concerts, opera, musical theater, and Halloween pops. Widely respected as a music educator and conducting pedagogue, Mr. Huang is the founder and director of International Conducting Masterclasses, Inc., which has trained scores of conductors over the last two decades. As a recipient of a Fulbright scholarship in 2003, Mr. Huang studied with Dumitru Goia in Bucharest, Romania, in the conducting tradition of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He is currently working on a book about the St. Petersburg Conservatory school and its notable pedagogue, Maestro Nicolai



Malkony (CA). He is featured as a recurring guest conductor of the Ohio Valley Symphony since 2018.

Mr. Huang has collaborated with orchestras around the world, including California, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Massachusetts, West Virginia, Ohio, Haiti, Moldova, and Romania. He has held the position of Music Director of the University of Chicago Chamber Orchestra, the Central Illinois Youth Symphony, the Gilbert and Sullivan Players of Chicago, and the Bradley University Orchestra. He has served as guest conductor with multiple appearances with Brasov Philharmonic (Romania) and the National Philharmonic of Moldova. In America, he has guest conducted professional ensembles such as the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, the Lake Shore Symphony (IL), and the Four Seasons Symphony.

SECTION LEADERS

Concertmaster	Joanna Giordano
Oboe	Christine Scott-Deutsch
Flute/piccolo	Carolyn Frugis
Clarinet	Nancy Eisenman
Bassoon	
French Horn	
Trumpet	Ira Spier
Trombone	Robert Boydston
Tuba	
1 st Violin	Joanna Giordano Concertmaster
2 nd Violin	Rosemary Williams
3 rd Violin	
Cello	Nikki Allison
Bass	Ayman Elgamal



Board of Director and Important Contacts

[Steven Huang](#)

Musical Director/Conductor
Ex-officio

[Joanna Giordano](#)

Concertmaster

[Dan Schiavetta](#)

President

Term Ends 01/2025

[Waters Armstrong](#)

Vice President &

Orchestral Liaison & Librarian

Term 01/2025

[Dan Prener](#)

Treasurer

Term ends 01/2025

[Elizabeth Klippert](#)

Secretary

Term ends 03/2023

[William Schaeffer](#)

Orchestral/Event Manager

Term ends 03/2023

[Jack Binder](#)

Director

Term ends 03/2023

[Sue Pastore](#)

Director

Term ends 03/2023

[Barbara Chase](#)

Outreach

Term ends 03/2023

[Robbin Levy](#)

Accountant

Honorary Members

Robert Boydston Past President,
Ex officio, White Plains

[Ayman Elgamal](#)

Director

Key Information

[NewWSO web site](#) newsymphony.org

[NewWSO email address](#) newwestsymphorch@gmail.com

(For general correspondence or for questions and/or suggestions)

[NewWSO YouTube channel](#)

NewWSO Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/newsymphony.org>

NewWSO Mailing address:
New Westchester Symphony Orchestra
PO Box 157
White Plains, NY 10602

Inquiries from the community or press should be directed to the [Musical Director/Conductor](#)
If a physical address for official purposes is required, please make an inquiry to our [general email](#) for the best address to use. Do not use the street address for Westchester Community for Ethical Culture.



COME & PLAY!