

Greater Erie Youth Symphony Orchestra

Opening young minds one note at a time!

Introduction

Welcome to the most comprehensive orchestral teaching program for students in northwestern Pennsylvania. GEYSO was founded as an independent, non-profit organization in 1987 by Erie philanthropist Dr. George J. D'Angelo, in the belief that disciplined musical training enriches a child's education regardless of the career path he or she eventually chooses to follow. Young musicians trained in applied classical music learn to appreciate great music and go on to become lifelong supporters of the arts.

The mission of the Greater Erie Youth Symphony Orchestra is to provide young people, without regard to race, gender, religious belief or socio-economic status, the chance to study with the finest music teachers and conductors in the tri-state area, and to provide their parents an important opportunity to become involved in their children's artistic development.

Contained in our organization are multiple student ensembles of various skill levels, leading to our advanced Symphony Orchestra. Our students range in age from elementary school through college (21), and reside in various locations throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York.

This handbook is designed to help student musicians and their families understand the goals, objectives, policies and procedures of the Greater Erie Youth Symphony Orchestra. All members of GEYSO are required to read this handbook and abide by all of its policies. Parents or guardians of student musicians are asked to ensure that their child abide by these policies and meet the professional expectations of this organization.

GEYSO Ensembles:

Symphony Orchestra

The Symphony Orchestra is the highest performance level a student musician in GEYSO can attain. Students must audition for a position in the orchestra and are seated according to their ability. Once seated, their membership requires a commitment and dedication to a concentrated, consistent schedule of rehearsals and concerts. A variety of musical styles and repertoire will be explored. Three to four major performances are scheduled per year.

Audition requirements are available in the GEYSO office.

Rehearsals: Sundays from 1:00-5:00 p.m. in the Reed Union Building, Penn State Behrend.

Symphonic Winds

The Symphonic Winds ensemble is designed for brass, wind and percussion students that possess a high level of skill. Students must audition for a position in the Symphonic Winds, and are seated according to their ability. One of the major goals of student members of the

Symphonic Winds is the eventual placement in the Symphony Orchestra. Two major performances are scheduled each year as a prelude to the Symphony Orchestra. Audition requirements are available in the GEYSO office.

Rehearsals: Sundays from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in Erie Hall, Penn State Behrend.

Concert Winds

The Concert Winds ensemble is open to beginning and intermediate level brass, wind and percussion students. Auditions are not required for the Concert Winds. One of the major goals of student members of the Concert Winds is the eventual placement in the Symphonic

Winds with continuation into the Symphony Orchestra. Two major performances are scheduled each year as a prelude to the Symphony Orchestra.

Rehearsals: Sundays from 1:00-2:30 p.m. in Erie Hall, Penn State Behrend.

String Ensemble

The String ensemble is open to beginning and intermediate level string students. Auditions are not required. One of the major goals of student members of the String Ensemble is the eventual placement in the Symphony Orchestra. Two major performances are scheduled each year as a prelude to the Symphony Orchestra.

Rehearsals: Sundays from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in Reed Union Building, room 119, Penn State Behrend.

Allegro & Overture Strings Ensembles

These ensembles are designed for beginning string students, teaching music reading and basic string instrument skills.

Rehearsals: Saturdays, McDowell Intermediate High School. Allegro Strings from 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Overture Strings from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Membership policies

Student members of GEYSO are expected to:

- Practice their music regularly and attend ALL rehearsals and performances
- Represent GEYSO in a positive light through proper conduct in rehearsals and performances
- Commit to GEYSO for the full season, taking membership as an honor and responsibility

Attendance and Participation:

Only one (1) excused absence is permitted in any one semester; two (2) excused absences are permitted in the Symphony Orchestra per semester.

GEYSO members holding positions of leadership, such as principal players, are allowed only **one (1) excused absence** per performance cycle. Tardiness or leaving early is counted as one-half (1/2) an absence. If you expect to be absent, an absence form must be filled out and turned in to the Ensemble Director or Production Manager at least one week in advance for all absences. In the event of an emergency or sudden illness, please contact your Ensemble Director as soon as possible, and turn in an absence form at the next rehearsal.*

All GEYSO members are expected to participate in their ensemble groups by diligently practicing their music, and attend **all rehearsals and performances**. A successful ensemble is a group effort, which cannot perform to its highest standard without the cooperation of all of its members. In addition, it is hoped that all student musicians show their support of all other ensemble members by attending their performances when able.

**Note: If a member is absent for more than two rehearsals, he or she will be required to play for the Ensemble Director. If the Ensemble Director is not satisfied with the level of preparation or execution, the member may be reseated or prohibited from performing at the next concert.*

Auditions:

Auditions for the Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Winds are held during the first week of rehearsals. Audition requirements are available in the GEYSO office.

Rehearsals:

Rehearsals are held each Sunday at Penn State Behrend, unless otherwise announced. Master classes for the Symphony Orchestra are held once a month.

Rehearsal conduct:

- **Full attention** is to be given to the conductor. No talking or disruptive behavior while the conductor is on the stand.
- You are required to have a pencil with you at all rehearsals.
- Each player is issued a folder and music. It is the player's responsibility to take the folder and music home to practice and to bring the folder and music to every rehearsal.
- No member is allowed to leave the grounds during breaks.
- No food, drink or gum is allowed during rehearsal.
- At the conclusion of rehearsal, each student is expected to help break down the rehearsal area and return chairs and music stands to their proper places.
- All music contained in the folder is the personal responsibility of the player. It is each player's responsibility to report missing music to the librarian immediately. Players will be charged for lost copies.
- Check the GEYSO website frequently for scheduling changes and updates. Weather-related cancellations will be announced by a message placed on the GEYSO office voice mail (814-898-6243).

GEYSO Concerto Competition

The GEYSO Concerto Competition offers students the opportunity to perform with the Symphony Orchestra in the Fall of 2006.* The 1st place winner of the Concerto Competition will receive a \$1000 Scholarship towards music study at a college or university of their choice.

Students will receive a competition brochure/application in the fall of 2005.

Applications are due on February 26, 2006. Auditions will take place in March/April.

** Only GEYSO members are allowed to enter the competition.*

Private instruction:

Private lessons are required for all members of the Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Winds. These lessons must be taken from members of our faculty or by instructors recommended by our faculty. Financial aid is available to aid in the cost of lessons. While private lessons are not required for members of the other ensembles, it is encouraged.

School conflicts:

All student members of GEYSO are strongly encouraged to be active members of their school's music programs. GEYSO rehearsals and performances are scheduled to avoid interference with most school music program events. If a conflict arises, students may be excused from GEYSO rehearsals and/or performances for scheduled school performances. In these situations, it is the responsibility of the GEYSO student to turn in an absence form as soon as they are aware of the conflict.

Concert attire:

Unless otherwise instructed by the ensemble conductor or executive director, all concerts will be performed in concert dress, as follows:

- Ladies: Long black dress, ankle length, or black dress pants with black blouse (NO mini-skirt); black hosiery and shoes (NO sneakers). Hair shall be worn away from the face; any hair adornments worn shall NOT be distracting to other ensemble members or the audience.
- Gentlemen: Black suit or tuxedo, white shirt, black bow tie, black socks and shoes (NO sneakers).

Media/Video Opportunities:

Members of GEYSO, rehearsals, and performances will be recorded and broadcasted through television and radio throughout the entire season.

Travel

Members of GEYSO will have the opportunity to travel and perform nationally, internationally, and in our local schools and community.

Financial and Parent obligations

Fees

A non-refundable fee of \$25 is required for every member, whether they are regular students, scholars, or receiving financial aid. This fee does not apply to the total tuition cost. *Your child will not be registered without the payment of this fee.*

Tuition rates are as follows:

- *Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Winds*: \$250 for first child; \$200 for second child; \$175 for consecutive children
- *Concert Winds and String Ensemble*: \$100 for first child; \$75 for second child; \$50 for consecutive children

- Tuition rates are appropriately adjusted for members that join GEYSO mid-season.
- If a payment plan is necessary, arrangements can be made with the executive director.
- Tuition is generally non-refundable, with the exception of extraordinary circumstances that may be discussed with the executive director

Financial aid:

The Greater Erie Youth Symphony Organization and its Board of Directors are committed to providing scholarships to those music students in need of financial assistance. Forms are available in the GEYSO office and are reviewed by the Scholarship Aid Committee.

GEYSO offers scholarship aid in two forms: private music instruction, and tuition aid. Students and families can apply for either type of scholarship, or both, if their need dictates. Financial aid recipients must abide by the following policies:

- Students who receive scholarship aid for private music instruction are required to receive their music lessons from instructors approved by GEYSO.
- Students who receive scholarship aid agree to limit their performances to school and/or GEYSO concerts only.
- Those families who receive financial scholarship aid from GEYSO may be asked to assist the organization through their service in various ways.
- Parents of students receiving any type financial aid must be active members of the GEYSO Parents' Guild by attendance at membership meetings, participation in committee work and fund-raising activities.
- Any and all scholarship money received from GEYSO is contingent upon the student and their family abiding by these requirements. Failure to adhere to these requirements shall result in the termination of scholarship aid.

Students receiving the achievement-based Scholar awards are recommended by the Music Director after consultation with the assistant conductors. Each candidate must audition and, if selected for consideration, will be approved by the Board of Directors.

GEYSO Parents Guild:

The Parents Guild is an active and essential organization that works closely with the administration and board of directors of GEYSO. It is comprised of the parents and guardians of GEYSO students, and provides support to all GEYSO members through a variety of activities.

The leadership of the Guild is maintained by parents. Prior experience is not necessary, only enthusiasm and a willingness to support the children. Some of the activities led by the Guild include:

- Post-rehearsal pizza parties for students

- Chaperone activities on concert dates
- Organization of short-term travel to concerts in other cities (for students and their families)
- General fund-raising activities (i.e., musician's auction, annual flower sale, candy bar sales, etc.)
- Assistance before/during/after concerts (i.e., refreshment sales, lunch for musicians, fund-raising, ushering)

Membership in the Parents Guild is contingent upon your child's membership in GEYSO. There are no fees or dues required to belong, but participation is essential in order to enable our young people continue in their pursuit of musical excellence and personal growth. *Remember, your example is the loudest lesson they will ever hear.* For additional details about GEYSO Parents Guild, contact the GEYSO office at (814) 898-6243.

**The administrative office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.,
and Sundays during rehearsals.**

Phone: (814) 898-6243

Fax: (814) 898-6285

Mailing address:

GEYSO

Penn State Behrend

5091 Station Road

Erie, PA 16563