

YOUTH ORCHESTRAS IN MINNESOTA

by Faith Farr



Throughout Minnesota, we have thriving string programs in schools and private studios. Youth orchestras offer students additional experience in ensemble. Some cater to a particular geographic area; some challenge students with stiff audition requirements; all offer enjoyment, education, and camaraderie. What could be better for a student's self-esteem than to have friends with similar interests who have to practice too! All organizations form their ensembles for a September start, but most have a second term when students can also join. Call early in January to find out the second term deadlines for the ensemble that interests you. All organizations will welcome observers; call ahead and visit a rehearsal to see if this is the group for you. Many of these organizations provide scholarships or work-study to ensure that no qualified student will be turned away because of financial need. Inquire about financial aid when you inquire about registration.

This list is formed for the convenience of teachers and parents throughout the state. I hope you will find just the right ensemble to suit your student or child. The list is as complete as I could make it at press time, but I have probably left out many worthy ensembles. If you know of other ensembles that should be on this list, please contact Faith Farr, faith@farrpublications.com, and I will publish an addendum in the spring issue.

Allegro Youth Orchestras

Allegro Youth Orchestras offers 2 levels of string orchestra. Orchestra I is for students with 2–4 years of playing experience; Orchestra II is for students with 5–7 years of playing experience. There are 2 semesters per year, with a concert at the end of each semester. Rehearsals are on Tuesday evenings at Wayzata Community Church.

Contact director William Zimbleman, Allegro Orchestral Association, P.O. Box 189, Wayzata, MN 55391, 952-258-0394, allegroassociation@earthlink.net.

Arioso Youth Orchestra

The Arioso Youth Orchestra has four levels of string orchestra for middle school / junior high string students. Orchestra Level One is for students who have experience playing

their instruments but have not yet learned to note-read, or need to improve their note-reading skills. If studying the Suzuki repertoire, they will be toward the end of Book I. Orchestra Level Two is for students who have played in an orchestra and have been note-reading for one year. These students will be in the middle to end of Suzuki Book II, or its equivalent. Orchestra Level Three is for students who have played in an orchestra for at least two years. They will be in Suzuki Book III or its equivalent (bass players can be at the end of Book II). They will have had some experience with position study and may have been introduced to vibrato. Orchestra Level Four is formed from students who are more advanced. These students will consider themselves to be excellent note readers and will be proficient at shifting and vibrato. The students in this group will need to audition to participate and will have additional opportunities to perform in the community.

Rehearsals are on Tuesdays at Calvary Lutheran Church, 7520 Golden Valley Road in Golden Valley. Students perform in 2 concerts during the 2002-03 season.

Contact director Barbara Lamb, 952-941-2195, ariosoyouthorchestra@yahoo.com.

Cannon Valley Youth Orchestra

The Cannon Valley Youth Orchestra draws students in grades 4–12 from Faribault, Northfield, Cannon Falls, New Prague, Montgomery, Elko, Red Wing, Lakeville and Hampton.

Two orchestras make up the CVYO. The Haydn Orchestra is for students who have played their instrument for at least two years. Requirements are smooth solid tone production with a working knowledge of note reading on all strings in first position, basic bowing techniques and ability to play a one octave major and minor scale. For placement in the Mozart Orchestra, students should produce a solid tone, be able to comfortably read and play in 1st through 3rd position with vibrato, show a range of tonal and technical skills and a 2 octave major scale and 2 octave minor scale.

Rehearsals are on Monday evenings at Emmaus Baptist Church in Northfield. Jennifer Arco conducts both groups.

Contact board member Dora Barvir,

507-645-4311, vw@starband.net or CVYO website www.horsefeatherz.com/cvyo.

Crow River Area Youth Symphony

Based in Hutchinson, Minnesota, CRAYO's members come from within a 60 mile radius. There are 3 levels of orchestra.

The Symphony Orchestra is open to brass, percussion, string and woodwind musicians under the age of twenty-one. Beginning its fifth season, the Symphony Orchestra has grown to include over seventy members. The Symphony Orchestra performs high school and college material from classical to contemporary composers. The orchestra rehearses on Sunday afternoons at the Hutchinson Middle School.

The Chamber Orchestra is for students who aren't quite ready for the Symphony Orchestra or who cannot participate in Sunday rehearsals. Open to bass, cello, viola, and violin students, participants are recommended to be at the equivalent of Suzuki Book 3 and up. The Chamber Orchestra rehearses on Saturday mornings at the Hutchinson Middle School.

The String Ensemble is designed for string students at the equivalent of the Minuets in Suzuki Book 1 through Suzuki Book 2. Open to bass, cello, viola, and violin students, the String Ensemble also meets on Saturday mornings at the Hutchinson Middle School.

The CRAYO staff includes Dennis Tischhauser, Symphony Orchestra Director; Marie K. Nelson, Chamber Orchestra Director and Assistant Symphony Director; and Michael A. Crary, String Ensemble Director.

Auditions are not required for String Ensemble or Chamber Orchestra. The website contains detailed information about the audition requirements for the Symphony Orchestra.

Contact: Crow River Area Youth Orchestra, c/o Hutchinson Community Education, 900 Harrington Street SW, Hutchinson, MN 55350, 320-587-7108,

info@crayouthorchestra.org, or on the web at www.crayouthorchestra.org.

Duluth-Superior Youth Orchestras

The Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra sponsors 3 youth ensembles intended to complement the students' school music programs. Members of the group are expected to be active in their school music ensembles and to study privately, if possible. The Sinfonia is a string orchestra intended for younger students committed to improving their musical skills. The Concert Orchestra is a preparatory orchestra comprised of membership leading to the Youth Symphony and introducing students to full orchestra literature. It is open to high school and middle school strings, winds, brass, and percussion. The Youth Symphony is a full symphony orchestra whose membership includes many of the finest young instrumentalists in the greater Twin Ports area. The Youth Symphony explores the standards of full orchestral literature. It is open to strings, winds, brass, and percussion.

Rehearsals are on Monday nights at the College of St. Scholastica.

Contact Andrew Berryhill, manager, DSSO, 218-733-7576, aberryhill@dssso.com, www.dssso.com/youth.

Eden Prairie String Academy

The Eden Prairie String Academy orchestras provide beginning lessons for students with no prior experience on violin, viola, cello and bass, and challenging literature for the experienced string students.

There are 5 levels of string orchestras. Harmonia and Preludio include group lessons as well as orchestra. Harmonia is a beginning string instrument experience for students with no previous experience. Preludio is a string orchestra for students at the beginner to intermediate levels. Harmonia and Preludio rehearse on Mondays at St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie

Intermezzo and Divertimento are auditioned orchestras. Intermezzo is for students who demonstrate a rudimentary understanding of note and rhythmic reading, play a 1 octave scale, and understand half-steps and key signatures. Divertimento is for students who read music, play a 2 octave major scale, can play in position (3rd position violin/viola and 4th position cellos) and play various bowing styles. Intermezzo and Divertimento rehearse on Sunday afternoons at Prairie Lutheran Church.

Concertino is an auditioned orchestra

for advanced students. This orchestra performs from the standard string orchestra literature and gives dedicated students a chance to solo with the orchestra. The Concertino has many performing opportunities throughout the year. Concertino rehearses on Mondays at St. Andrews Lutheran.

Contact director Michelle Persian, Eden Prairie String Academy, 10663 Lee Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55347, epstringacademy@aol.com, www.epstringacademy.org.

Excelsior Youth Symphonic Strings

Founded this past September, the Excelsior Youth Symphonic Strings provides a beginning and intermediate level string orchestra for students in elementary and middle school. For many students, this is their first orchestra experience; the minimum requirement is that students must have played one year and know note reading.

Rehearsals are on Mondays after school at Trinity Episcopal Church in Excelsior. This year, String Symphony is for all students; Chamber Orchestra is for the more advanced students from Strings who stay for an additional rehearsal. Next year, EYSS hopes to have 2 separate groups. There are 3 sessions per year. Fall and winter are 10 weeks each; spring session is 6 weeks and is devoted to chamber music. There is a parents concert at the end of each session plus at least 1 community concert.

Contact director Kristina Lantz, 952-470-6820.

Fargo Moorhead Area Youth Symphonies

The Fargo Moorhead Area Youth Symphonies has two ensembles. The Concert Strings is for students in 6th-8th grade, and the Symphony is for high school students.

Contact Teresa Detmer, executive director, 218-287-1289.

Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies

Every September through May, seven GTCYS orchestras rehearse and present several concerts to a variety of audiences throughout the greater Twin Cities area. These orchestras, in order of increasing technical proficiency, are the Philharmonia, Sinfonia, Repertory Northeast and West, Concert Orchestra, Philharmonic and Symphony. Admission to all orchestras is based on competitive annual auditions.

Rehearsals are on Sunday afternoons, and Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evenings depending on the orchestra. Con-

ductors of the orchestra include the finest educators in the area. Concerts are held at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis and other superb venues.

Currently under the leadership of Marlene Pauley, interim artistic director, and Chris Cochrane, Executive Director, GTCYS is one of the largest and oldest youth orchestra organizations in the country. Contact the GTCYS office, 528 Hennepin Avenue, Suite 404, Minneapolis MN 55403-1810, 612-870-7611, mail@gtcys.org, www.gtcys.org.

Mankato Area Youth Symphony Orchestra

The Mankato Area Youth Symphony Orchestra has two levels of orchestra. Members of MAYSO, directed by Adrian Lo, are from the "Big Nine" area and are usually in senior high school. The North Star Strings, directed by Marilyn Bos, have members who are generally in middle and junior high school grades. Both groups are assisted by Tom Nuessmeier. There are 3-4 performances per year.

Contact Adrian Lo, 507-934-4649, alo@blc.edu.

Minnesota Youth Symphonies

Minnesota Youth Symphonies is comprised of four orchestras according to ability: Strings (intermediate level: Patricia Kelly, conductor); Philharmonic (advanced intermediate level: James Bartsch, conductor); Repertory (advanced level: Claudette Laureano, conductor); Symphony (collegiate level: Manny Laureano, conductor). Admission is by rigorous audition; details for the requirements of each orchestra can be found on the MYS website. In addition to the four conductors, the artistic staff includes Susan Bennefeld (instructor, Andersen String Studio Program), Terry Burk (Instructor, Music Education, Theory & Composition); Paul Grustans (brass and woodwind coach); Dave Pojar (percussion assistant) and Jerry Shelton (instructor, Summer Pops Orchestra).

All four MYS orchestras have three sectionals each season, once each trimester, with members of the Minnesota Orchestra. The orchestras give three major concerts per season at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, as well as chamber ensemble, compositions and solo competition performances throughout the season.

Rehearsals are on Saturday mornings at Highland Park Junior and Senior High School in St. Paul. Contact the Minnesota

Youth Symphonies office, 790 Cleveland Ave S., Suite 203, St. Paul Minnesota, 55116, 651-699-5811, mys@qwest.net, www.users.qwest.net/~mys.

St. Joseph School of Music

St. Joseph School of Music offers two levels of orchestra conducted by William Hinkie. Students need not take lessons at St. Joseph's to take part. The Chamber Orchestra rehearses on Friday nights. The required level is Suzuki Book 4 and up, knowledge of four sharps and four flats and their relative minors, two octaves or higher, 3rd position for violin and viola, 4th for cellos and bass. Pre-Orchestra meets on Saturdays at lunch time. The required level is Suzuki Book 2, knowledge up to two sharps and one flat and their relative minors, one octave. Cellos and basses are always needed in both groups.

Contact Sister Rose Immacula, St. Joseph School of Music, 651-690-4364.

South of the River Youth Orchestra

The South of the River Youth Orchestra offers 4 levels of orchestra which rehearse on Mondays at Scott Highlands Middle School in Apple Valley. Beginner Strings is for students with less than 1 year playing experience. Simply Strings is for students with 1–2 years playing experience. The Philharmonic is for string students with at least three years playing experience and includes woodwinds and brass. The Youth Symphony is for advanced strings, wood-

winds, brass, percussion. There are 3 sessions per year, lasting 10 weeks each.

Contact director Susan Jacobson, 651-423-6585.

South East Minnesota Youth Orchestra

SEMYO was founded by members of the Rochester community who saw a need for orchestral training of the highest quality for elementary and secondary school musicians in the greater southeastern Minnesota area. SEMYO is open to any young musician, elementary through twelfth grade, who plays an orchestral instrument. Placement is by audition only.

There are three levels of orchestra. Chamber Strings is open to string players with a minimum of 1-2 years of playing experience. The orchestra will cover the fundamentals of ensemble playing. Philharmonic Orchestra is a full orchestra geared towards the advanced intermediate player. Literature includes arranged and original works. Concert Orchestra is a full orchestral experience for advanced players. Literature includes original works of diverse styles which will challenge students.

Rehearsals are on Saturday mornings. Directors are Adam Lange-Pearson and Mark Scheitel. The website includes detailed information on audition requirements for each level of orchestra.

Contact, Cathy Ashton, 1001 14th St. NW Suite 450, Rochester, MN 55901, 507-282-1718, semyo@rconnect.com, www.semyo.org.

Spiritoso

St. Cloud State University sponsors the Spiritoso youth orchestra. Contact director Pablo Mahave-Veglia at 320-255-3223.

Woodbury Youth Orchestra

The Woodbury Youth Orchestra consists of four groups/ensembles. A beginner group is for those interested in starting a string instrument. The Da Capo serves those who are relative string beginners and have played approximately 1-2 years. Chamber Strings is a string orchestra that focuses on the basics of ensemble playing, note reading, and following a conductor. This group is for advanced beginner to intermediate level players. Symphony Orchestra is for advanced intermediate/advanced players. This ensemble explores the sounds of the full orchestra. Rehearsals for this ensemble consist of sectionals, as well as full orchestra. In addition, small chamber ensembles comprised of advanced level players may be formed from Symphony players.

Rehearsals are held at Woodbury Junior High on Monday evenings. All ensembles are involved in at least two concerts a year.

Contact director Patricia Anderson, 651-255-6772, or the WYO website www.sowashco.com/orchestra/program.html.

Faith Farr teaches cello at MacPhail Center for the Arts and her home studio. She has edited this magazine since 1997. ♪