



Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras Organization Handbook

2025-2026 Season



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Welcome!

Congratulations on your acceptance into the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras! We are glad that you have joined us. This is an excellent opportunity for you to study with professional musicians and perform in an orchestra. This program will help you progress as a musician, whatever your talent level or career aspirations.

The Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras' Mission

The Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras (WSYO & WSJYO) help young people develop their talent and realize their full potential through the experience of making music at a high level of excellence. However, participating in the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras is not just about the music. It also involves cooperating with others and working together in a professional context. These teamwork and leadership skills are essential cornerstones to becoming a thoughtful and successful adult.

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra's Mission

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra connects people of Windsor and Essex County through the power and passion of music. Through exceptional performance and education, we are an indispensable cultural asset within the Windsor-Essex community.

WSYO / WSJYO Values

Artistic Excellence

United by a passion for musical excellence and discovery, we seek to deliver outstanding performances for all audiences. We are committed to continually working toward the highest levels of musical achievement.

Building Community

We recognize the role music plays in building and uplifting our local community. We will seek out opportunities to build relationships that will strengthen our community connections and ensure a legacy for our organization.

Professional Conduct

We conduct ourselves with the highest integrity. We treat fellow members of our community, including our colleagues, family members, audience members, WSO personnel, and guest teachers with respect.



Important Contact Information

WSYOs Website: <https://www.windsorsymphony.com/learn-connect/youth-orchestra>

Member Portal password: WSYOrocks!

Geoffrey Larson

Windsor Symphony Orchestra Resident Conductor

Music Director of Youth and Community Orchestras

Email: glarson@windsorsymphony.com

Kelsey McCann

Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras Coordinator

Phone: 519-990-9343

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Windsor Symphony Office

121 University Avenue W

Windsor, ON N9A 5P4

Phone: 519-973-1238

Office Hours: 9:00am-5:00pm (Monday-Friday)

Website: www.windsorsymphony.com



Rehearsal / Performance Locations

CAPITOL THEATRE

Pentastar Stage

121 University Avenue, West

Windsor, ON N9A 5P4

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS

Armouries Building

353 Freedom Way

Windsor, ON N9A 3A7

Access the space through the southeast doors on Freedom Way.

Rehearsal Times

Unless otherwise noted, WSJYO rehearses on Sundays from **1:00-2:15 PM** and WSYO rehearses Sundays from **2:30-5:15 PM**. A break is taken midway through each WSYO rehearsal.

All rehearsals are open to teachers and family members, who are encouraged to attend and support the excellent work of the students in the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras.



2025-2026 Rehearsal Schedule

Date	Rehearsal Location
Sun, Sept. 7, 2025	PICNIC!! Jackson Park
Sun, Sept. 14	SoCA
Sun, Sept. 21	SoCA/Capitol Theatre (Attend WSO Masterworks)
Sun, Sept. 28	SoCA
Sun, Oct. 5	SoCA
Sun, Oct. 12	No Rehearsal - Thanksgiving
Sun, Oct. 19	SoCA
Sun, Oct. 26	SoCA
Sun, Nov. 2	SoCA
Sun, Nov. 9	SoCA
Sun, Nov. 16	SoCA
Sun, Nov. 23	SoCA
Sun, Nov. 30	Capitol Theatre - Dress Rehearsal (usual Sunday timing) CONCERT Start Time: 7pm
Sun, Jan. 11, 2026	SoCA
Sun, Jan. 18	SoCA
Sun, Jan. 25	SoCA/Capitol Theatre (Attend WSO Masterworks)
Sun, Feb. 1	Capitol Theatre
Sun, Feb. 8	SoCA
Wed, Feb. 11	Capitol Theatre (Side by Side by Side Dress Rehearsal, 7:00-9:30pm)
Thurs, Feb. 12	Capitol Theatre (Side by Side by Side with WSO, WSCO) CONCERT Start Time: 7:30pm
Sun, Feb. 15	SoCA
Sun, Feb. 22	SoCA
Sun, Mar. 1	Capitol Theatre
Sun, Mar. 8	SoCA
Sun, Mar. 15	No Rehearsal
Sun, Mar. 22	No Rehearsal
Sun, Mar. 29	SoCA



Sun, Apr. 5, 2026	No Rehearsal
Sun, Apr. 13	SoCA
Sun, Apr. 19	SoCA
Sun, Apr. 26	Capitol Theatre - Dress Rehearsal (usual Sunday timing)
	CONCERT Start Time: 7pm

Tuition Fees for 2025-2026

WSYO: \$430 + HST = \$485.90

WSJYO: \$230 + HST = \$259.90

Two children in WSYO: \$645 total (half price for second child) + HST = \$728.85

Two children in WSJYO: \$345 (half price for second child) + HST = \$389.85

One child in each ensemble: \$545 total (half price for the WSJYO child) + HST = \$615.85

WSYO/WSJYO Tuition is non-refundable after October 31, 2025, unless under extraordinary circumstances. Decisions on refunds are at the sole discretion of the WSO/WSYO administration.

If you would like to pay in installments, please contact Rebecca Ng at
education@windsorsymphony.com.



Auditions

Auditions for seating placement in both orchestras are held during the late spring. Rolling placement auditions for students new to the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras are held on Sundays prior to rehearsals in September and October. The Music Director will hear additional placement auditions by request on a case by case basis.

Ensemble Placement and Seating

There are two ensembles in the WSO's youth orchestra family: the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Windsor Symphony Junior Youth Orchestra. The Music Director will seat students in each ensemble after hearing their audition. In rare cases, the Music Director reserves the right to make seating adjustments at the halfway point of the season.

WSYO

Intended for musicians aged 13 to 22 or those who have reached a skill level equivalent to Suzuki Book 5, the WSYO includes all families of instruments: strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. The WSYO performs standard orchestral repertoire of all eras.

WSJYO

WSJYO is an orchestra of flexible instrumentation for musicians beginning at age 9 or those who have reached a skill level equivalent to Suzuki Book 2 or higher. Though the WSJYO is primarily a string ensemble, all instruments are welcome and accommodated.



Responsibilities and Conduct

Arriving to Rehearsal

Please arrive at each rehearsal **at least ten minutes early**, in order to find your seat, warm up, and tune. Tuning and warming up your instrument on your own before the full ensemble tuning process is a vital step that you must take prior to each rehearsal's designated start time. At the end of each rehearsal break, please take a moment to tune your instrument individually, before the full ensemble tunes together.

Private Study

The Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras build on each student's private musical training with large ensemble experience. All members are required to take regular private lessons on their instrument, and are encouraged to work on youth orchestra music with their private teacher. Members are also encouraged to continue their participation in school music programs.

Music

Students are issued physical parts in their orchestra folders and digital parts via an online link. It is the responsibility of each student to safeguard their parts in their folder, bringing all music to each rehearsal and performance and ensuring that they take all materials home with them. Most music will be photocopies which students may keep or recycle. If a student is given an original part (larger than 8.5x11 in. size), it is the student's responsibility to return it in good condition after the final performance.

Conduct and Behavior

As a part of the WSO organization, membership in the WSYOs requires that all participants agree to abide by the following guidelines.

- Students will be respectful of other members of the orchestra, and members of the WSO organization and community.
- Students will support and encourage their peers, contributing to a positive rehearsal and performance environment.
- Illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, and smoking are not allowed.
- Students will abide by all safety regulations of buildings or sites that are used by the WSYOs and will cooperate with all WSYO and WSO staff and personnel on site.
- Theft or willful damage to property or equipment belonging to others is a serious offence. Parents will be held responsible for the cost of repairs/replacement.



Etiquette

- Take great care to ensure the safety of your instrument and equipment, and that of your peers.
- Bring all parts in your folder and a pencil with an eraser to each rehearsal.
- Come to rehearsal with your part prepared to the best of your ability. Using a metronome, prepare your part at the tempo of assigned metronome markings. Practicing your part at home prior to rehearsal is critical to a positive and rewarding experience not just for you, but your peers as well.
- Strings: please ensure that you have rosin, a spare set of strings, and a mute at all rehearsals and performances.
- Woodwinds, Brass, and Percussion: please ensure you bring all necessary equipment for your instrument to each rehearsal and performance. Depending on the instrument, examples include a minimum of three good reeds, cork grease, brass mutes, and valve oil.
- Work together in a collaborative and respectful manner with the Music Director, guest coaches, and section principals to strive for growth and musical excellence.
- Listen to recordings of the repertoire to familiarize yourself with the music you are playing. Make use of specific example recordings and videos when provided.
- Be encouraging towards your fellow musicians.
- Ask questions, and grow your musical curiosity!

Tuning

The Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestras tune to 441 Hz, the same pitch center as the Windsor Symphony Orchestra.

Tuning at Home and Before Rehearsal

If you have a smartphone, a simple online search will yield a variety of good options for a tuner app, many of them free. Purchasing and owning a physical tuner, such as a KORG model, is also highly recommended. Using a physical tuner and metronome during your practice is a good way to keep your session free from phone distraction! Tuning your instrument carefully and accurately before home practice and ensemble rehearsal is a critical first step to playing music. Please ask your private teacher for advice on your instrument's particular needs.



Attendance Policy

Timely attendance at each rehearsal and performance is mandatory. If you cannot attend or must arrive late, please notify the Music Director a minimum of 24 hours before the rehearsal. Attendance is recorded at each rehearsal by a designated WSO staff member. If you miss more than two rehearsals or the dress rehearsal it may jeopardize your inclusion for the concert performance. Exceptional circumstances will be treated with understanding and on a case by case basis. If you fall sick, we ask you to communicate this to us, and to remain at home and recuperate.

Student Drop Off and Pick Up Policy

To ensure the safety of the students, the designated drop off and pick up location will be the STAGE doors of the Capitol Theatre on University Ave. Students should be picked up no later than 15 minutes after the rehearsal time. There is no guarantee that staff or volunteers will be available after that time.

*If your family has custodial arrangements that we should be aware of, please email education@windsorsymphony.com. Your information will be kept in the strictest confidence.

Concert Dress Code

WSYO

Men – All black, with black dress shoes.

Women – Long or $\frac{3}{4}$ -length black dress or skirt or long formal black dress pants with black blouse (long or $\frac{3}{4}$ -sleeved, covered shoulders). Black dress shoes and black stockings.

WSJYO

White dress shirts / blouse (long sleeves), black pants or long skirt, black dress shoes and black stockings.



Further Opportunities

Endangered Instruments

Students who would like to try **oboe, bassoon, French horn, cello, and double bass** have a special opportunity through the WSYO's Endangered Instruments Program. The WSO will work to secure an instrument for participating students, and free instruction is offered on select Sundays before WSYO rehearsal. These are instruments of great beauty and power, and we encourage you to discover them! Please contact Music Director Geoffrey Larson at glarson@windsorsymphony.com for further details.

Student Librarian

The WSYO Student Librarian will be appointed by the Music Director at the start of every new season. The Student Librarian is responsible for assisting the WSO Librarian and the Music Director in preparing and distributing parts to all students at the start of each concert cycle, and helping with any issues that may arise with parts during the rehearsal process. A scholarship opportunity is available for the Student Librarian. For more information, please contact the Music Director.

Chamber Music Ensembles

Opportunities for students in both WSJYO and WSYO to perform chamber music abound throughout the year. Performing in a chamber music ensemble of between two and eight players is a great way to hone your musical skills, connect with friends, and increase your performance experience. Students can request to be placed in a chamber music ensemble with a repertoire recommendation, or create one of their own and choose their own repertoire. Please contact the Music Director for more information.



Student / Parent Agreement

I have read and understand the information set forth in the WSYOs 2025-2026 Handbook. I will uphold my responsibilities as a member of WSYO/WSJYO to the best of my abilities.

Student Name (Print)

Parent or Guardian Name (Print)

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Contact Information

Home address

Phone number

Email address

*If your family has custodial arrangements that we should be aware of, please email kmccann@windsorsymphony.com. Your information will be kept in the strictest confidence.