



2021-2022

STUDENT HANDBOOK



PHILOSOPHY & GOALS

The Great Falls Symphony's Youth Orchestra Program endeavors to promote the appreciation of the performing arts in the community and to further the tradition of playing orchestral music.

The Youth Orchestra Program strives to:

- Foster a lifelong love of music in talented young musicians while developing their character, commitment to excellence, and leadership skills.
- Form ensembles of musical depth, balance, and variety which will afford optimum musical experiences to each student at his/her ability and technical advancement.
- Provide artistic, aesthetic, educational, and social experiences of the highest level to musically talented youth.
- Establish and maintain meaningful relationships with the public schools and civic music organizations.

ENSEMBLES

The Great Falls Youth Orchestra Program provides two ensemble experiences - Sinfonia (an intermediate strings-only orchestra) and the Youth Orchestra (an advanced orchestra with strings, winds, and percussion). Both ensembles require students to audition for placement and rehearse weekly on Sundays from September to November and January to March. Two concerts are scheduled at the end of each semester. [Audition materials](#) and a [complete schedule](#) can be accessed on the Great Falls Youth Orchestra website.

Sinfonia

Sinfonia is a strings-only orchestra for intermediate string players. This group practices the fundamentals of large ensemble playing while focusing on the mastery of listening, following, and leadership. Students need to have studied their instruments for at least two years and are required to participate in their school orchestra program (if available). Private lessons are highly recommended, but not required for Sinfonia participation.

Conductor: Sarah Schaeffer

Rehearsals: Sundays from 2:30 - 3:30 pm at the Mansfield Theater

Youth Orchestra

Youth Orchestra consists of advanced string, woodwind, brass, and percussion students in north-central Montana. Audition requirements are similar to the Montana All-State auditions. Students are *required* to take music lessons and participate in their school band or orchestra program (if available). A list of private teachers can be found on the orchestra website.

Conductor: Grant Harville

Rehearsals: Sundays from 4:00 – 6:00 pm at the Mansfield Theater

Tuition

Sinfonia

Tuition is \$85 per semester or \$150 for the whole year if paid before October 31st.

Youth Orchestra

Tuition is \$110 per semester or \$200 for the whole year if paid before October 31st.

Please make checks payable to the "Great Falls Symphony" or "GFSA."

Tuition Waivers

A limited number of Tuition Waivers are available each semester. Students must submit an application at the beginning of each semester in September and January. Students receiving tuition waivers are required to take on additional responsibilities assigned by the Education Programs Manager. [Application Forms](#) can be downloaded from the Youth Orchestra website.

CONCERTS

Concerts are held at the end of each semester on stage at the Mansfield Theater. Each member receives a voucher redeemable for two comp tickets to each concert. Vouchers are handed out a couple weeks prior to each concert. Cookie receptions follow each concert upstairs in the Gibson Room of the Civic Center. The upcoming concerts for the season are:

- 3pm Saturday, November 14, 2021 (Musicians arrive at 1:30pm)
- 3pm Sunday, March 27, 2022 (Musicians arrive at 1:30pm)

Concert Dress Code

Symphony dress code helps unify the look of the orchestra and is part of the tradition of playing in a symphony. The following dress code is **required**. Please be sure you meet this requirement *before* the concert. If you need help securing an item, please contact the Education Program Manager, Angela Costley at (406) 453-4102 or (406) 868-7773.

Youth Orchestra WOMEN: “Concert Black”

- Black **floor length** skirt OR black dress pants
- Black blouse:
Sleeve length: 3/4 or full length
No low necklines
No sequins
- Black hosiery or socks
- Black dress shoes (no boots or sneakers)

Youth Orchestra MEN: “Concert Black”

- Full black tuxedo (black suit may be substituted)
- White shirt
- Black bow tie
- Black over-the-calf socks (no ankle socks)
- Black dress shoes (no boots or sneakers)

Sinfonia WOMEN

- Black **floor length** skirt OR black dress pants
- White blouse:
Sleeve length: 3/4 or full length
No low necklines
No Sequins
- Black hosiery or socks
- Black dress shoes (no boots or sneakers)

Sinfonia MEN

- Black pants
- Long sleeve white shirt
- Black over-the-calf socks (no ankles socks)
- Black dress shoes (no boots or sneakers)

MUSICIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Attendance

Attendance is required at all rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and concerts. Two unexcused absences or more than three excused absences are cause for dismissal from the orchestra. If you must miss a rehearsal, you are required to notify the Great Falls Symphony’s Education Programs Manager, Angela Costley as early as possible. Please call (406) 868-7773 or email angela@gfsymphony.org. Please do not contact the music directors.

- Excused absences include sickness, death in the family, religious activities, required school events, and family vacations.
- Two unexcused **tardy** infractions are recorded as one unexcused absence. You are considered tardy if you are not in your seat when announcements are given.

- Failure to appear for any concert without a justifiable excuse will result in the automatic dismissal from the orchestra for the next semester.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals take place every Sunday at the Mansfield Theater for the Performing Arts (Civic Center). Occasionally we rehearse in a different location due to conflicts with scheduling in the hall. Always check the schedule for alternate locations.

The following guidelines should be followed:

- Please arrive 15 minutes early to unpack, warm up, and greet your colleagues.
- Enter and exit through the south side of the Civic Center. (Entrance Door 'D')
- Bring all music, mutes, etc. as well as a pencil to every rehearsal. No food, drink, or guests at rehearsal. Parents may sit in the audience during rehearsal.

Conduct

All members must display courtesy and exhibit upstanding behavior at any and all events related to the Great Falls Youth Orchestra Program. If a student's behavior becomes disruptive, they will receive a verbal warning. If behavior continues, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Practice

The Great Falls Youth Orchestra Program strives for high standards of musical excellence, and we hope our musicians consider membership an honor and a privilege. Musicians should be musically prepared for rehearsals. This means pieces should be practiced in advance. Rehearsals are for learning to play together and polishing the ensemble's sound. Figuring out musical elements such as rhythm, fingerings and bowings is for your personal practice at home. In fairness to their fellow musicians, members are expected to show improvement from rehearsal to rehearsal. If it becomes evident practice is not occurring, one warning will be given to the student. The second occurrence will result in dismissal from the program.

Music and Folders

Music used by the orchestra is purchased, rented, and/or borrowed. Therefore, all music must be handled with care. Members will be charged \$15.00 fee if the assigned music folder is not returned by the end of the season. Notations on music may be made lightly and only with a pencil. Members are required to pay a \$5.00 replacement fee for EACH piece of damaged or lost music.

Contact

For all questions related to Sinfonia and Youth Orchestra, contact the **GFSA Education Programs Manager, Angela Costley** at 406-868-7773 or email angela@gfsymphony.org.