



PENSACOLA SYMPHONY
YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Enrich – Uplift – Inspire



Parent and Member Handbook
2025-2026 Season

Information for Parents and Members

The information in this handbook will help you know and understand your role in making your experience and the experience of others in the Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra exceptional. We are dedicated to ensuring all members of the Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra have a rewarding and successful season of transformative music education opportunities and classical music performances.

Performing classical music repertoire at the highest level requires a commitment by members to always bring their best to rehearsals and performances. We ask that you make your participation in the Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra a top priority. When you do, your experience and the experience of all ensemble members will become an exquisite point in your life as a musician, ensemble performer, and community member.

For any questions about the material in this handbook, please contact Julie Martin Green, Music Education Administrator and Youth Orchestra Manager at education@pensacolasymphony.com or (850) 435-2533 x.103.

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Section 1: Welcome

Welcome

Welcome to the new year of the Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra, your exceptional classical music experience. This promises to be an exciting season of musical growth and performance excellence. Everyone at the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra looks forward to supporting you in your desire to learn and perform classical music at the highest level with other young musicians.

Congratulations on being accepted into the Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra!

Vision

To enrich, inspire, and uplift the lives of young musicians through exceptional and transformative classical music experiences.

Mission

As an integral affiliate of the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra, the Youth Orchestra will elevate the value provided to the greater Pensacola community by fostering multi-dimensional growth and development of young musicians. To meet this mission, the Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra will provide young musicians with opportunities to:

- Achieve a high artistic standard in orchestral performance through educationally rich and diverse concert programming,
- Build collaborative and lifelong connections with other students and professional musicians through the shared passion for music,
- Develop musicianship, confidence, and self-esteem through multiple performance experiences,
- Have a voice in the artistic and administrative processes and decisions,
- Deepen connections with the community through volunteer chamber music performances,
- Participate regardless of financial situation through financial aid, scholarships, and in-kind support.

Values

Members of the Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra will demonstrate leadership and service in our relationships with fellow students, family, and the community by exemplifying these values: Respect, Professionalism, Inclusivity, Integrity, Camaraderie, and Commitment to Excellence.

History

The Pensacola Youth Symphony Orchestra originally existed between 1955 and 1963 as an opportunity for young musicians to grow and develop their skills and talents and to become members of the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra. Movement towards re-establishing a youth orchestra with a focus of creating exceptional performance opportunities for young musicians under the PSO was promising in early 2020, but the need to continue providing excellence in classical music performance to the Pensacola community and work to symphony musicians during the pandemic became the priorities for the orchestra. We are more than excited to meet our goal of creating a new Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Daniel Stevens of Mississippi State University with a focus on serving students and the community as we approach our 100th season.

Contact Information

Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra

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Pensacola Symphony Orchestra

Peter Rubardt

Music Director and Conductor

Bret Barrow

Executive Director

Pensacola Symphony Orchestra Office

205 E. Zaragoza St.

Pensacola, Florida 32502

(850) 435-2533

Our Conductor

Dr. Daniel Stevens proudly serves with the faculty of Mississippi State University as Department Head, Professor of Music, and Artistic Director of the Starkville Symphony Orchestra. Under the MSU College of Education, the Department of Music celebrates a new state-of-the-art \$21 million music facility, an All-Steinway piano inventory nearing \$2 million, and the contributions of 50 esteemed faculty members that impact 1,000+ student musicians across campus.

He has founded two successful youth symphony programs (Tulsa Youth Symphony - Concert Orchestra and the Southwestern College Youth Symphonies) and was the Instrumental Director at Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio.

As a professional musician, Dr. Stevens had a 15-year career as violist with the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra. In 2010, Dr. Stevens performed in a Carnegie Hall debut through Distinguished Concerts International, New York. This acclaim led to an instrument sponsorship from K.C. Strings Violin Shop.

Section 2: General Information

Communication

The PSYO manager communicates with parents and members primarily through e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail account, we ask that you create a free account at one of the many free e-mail providers (Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.). Please update the PSYO manager with any changes to your email address.

Members may also join the PSYO25-26 class on the Remind app to communicate with the Youth Orchestra conductor, the PSYO manager, and other members of the youth orchestra. Invitations to join the class will be sent out by email in August.

Orchestra announcements and notes will be sent every Wednesday. Please be sure to read these in their entirety, as they contain important and time specific information.

Severe Weather

In the event of severe weather conditions that may prohibit meeting for rehearsals, the PSYO manager will send out an email and Remind message.

Orchestra Fees

A youth orchestra season that provides exceptional performance and educational experiences requires us to plan our budget in advance. For this reason, tuition and fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Audition fee: \$25, Due July 31, 2025

Tuition fee: \$400 per semester

Fall Semester Payment Schedule

Paid in Full: Due September 1, 2025 (\$10 discount on Full Price)

Installment #1 Due: September 1, 2025 (50% of tuition fee)

Installment #2 Due: October 1, 2025 (25% of tuition fee)

Installment #3 Due: November 1, 2025 (25% of tuition fee)

Spring Semester Payment Schedule

Paid in Full: Due January 15, 2026 (\$10 discount on Full Price)

Installment #1 Due: February 1, 2026 (50% of tuition fee)

Installment #2 Due: March 1, 2026 (25% of tuition fee)

Installment #3 Due: April 1, 2026 (25% of tuition fee)

Invoices for tuition will be sent by email on behalf of the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra from Quickbooks. Tuition payments may be paid via debit/credit card or check.

Financial Assistance

The Pensacola Symphony Orchestra believes in minimizing financial barriers to participation in our youth orchestra and increasing access to enhanced music education experiences for students in our community.

For the 2025 – 2026 Youth Orchestra, we are offering a sliding scale for tuition based upon a family's income and household size. Those requesting a reduced tuition fee on their registration form should be prepared to provide proof of income, such as a 1040 income tax return for 2024.

The Tuition Fee Scale may be found on our website at <https://pensacolasymphony.com/youth-ensembles/>. Questions may be directed to the PSYO manager at education@pensacolasymphony.com.

Section 3: Orchestra Policies

Chair Placement

Chair placement decisions are based on each student's membership or seating audition. Changes in placement may result from unexcused absences, tardies, misconduct, or at the discretion of the conductor.

Rehearsal Information

Because the PSYO strives to provide an exceptional music experience for all participants, orchestra members are expected to practice and prepare the concert material in advance of each rehearsal. Music rehearsal is a performance.

Rehearsals are held on Sundays from 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Locations:

University of West Florida
Center for Fine and Performing Arts
Building 82 – Parking Lot L
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514
[UWF Interactive Map](#)

First Baptist Church of Pensacola
500 N. Palafox St.
Pensacola, FL 32501
[FBC – Google Map](#)

Please see Section 6: 2025-2026 Season Schedule for the full rehearsal and performance schedule and locations.

Rehearsal Policies

These guidelines lead to an effective rehearsal experience for all. Members should let the PSYO manager know of any challenges in meeting these guidelines. Success in rehearsal leads to excellence on the stage.

Check-in

- Orchestra members are required to check in no later than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal start time.
- Orchestra members are required to be in their seats 5 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal start time.
- Percussionists are expected to arrive 45 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal start time. Percussionists are responsible for setting up and returning percussion equipment to the assigned storage area.

Stands and Chairs

At the end of each rehearsal, orchestra members are responsible for putting away their chairs and stands.

Preparation

Orchestra members are required to bring all sheet music for the upcoming concert to every rehearsal.

Orchestra members must bring a pencil, their instruments, and any support equipment (extra strings, mutes, rockstops, rosin, reeds, mouthpieces, mallets, etc.) to every rehearsal. It is the responsibility of members to relay all information from weekly announcements to their parent and/or guardian.

Instruments

The Pensacola Symphony Youth Orchestra does not provide instruments for members, except for percussion instruments. The PSYO recommends that parents instruments are insured from damage or loss, whether rented or owned. Furthermore, the PSYO is not responsible for any damages incurred before, during, or after rehearsals or performances.

Food and Drink

Food and/or gum may be eaten ONLY during the designated break time. Only water in a closed container is allowed in the rehearsal or concert hall.

Conduct

To create an environment of acceptance, inclusion, and professional growth, all members are expected to treat each other, the conductor, staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians with respect and courtesy. Any concerns about a member's conduct will be addressed with the member and the parent/guardian.

- Types of misconduct include, but are not limited to, bullying, disrespectful rehearsal behavior, excessive talking during rehearsal, and cell phone disturbances.
- Cell phones are to be turned off and stored during rehearsal. Cell phone use is allowed during the break, and phones must be turned off and stored by the end of break. If a student needs to be available for a phone call or text, the student should notify the PSYO manager and conductor. A volunteer will monitor the student's phone during rehearsal.

Rehearsal Arrival and Departure

Members should enter the UWF rehearsal building from parking lot L. Parents/Guardians are welcome to stay for the duration of rehearsals and may sit quietly in the rehearsal hall. Unless excused by the conductor for the second half of rehearsal, all members must stay in the rehearsal building during the break. After rehearsal ends, members must leave the rehearsal facility or be picked up by parents/guardians within 15 minutes. Parents/guardians must notify the PSYO manager by phone if their child will be leaving rehearsal with someone other than the parent(s)/guardian(s) listed on the registration form and provide the name of that person. PSYO staff and volunteers are not permitted to transport members.

Attendance Policy

Achieving the highest excellence in performance requires that each member commit to attending all rehearsals. Because we understand that unavoidable conflicts may happen, members are allowed two absences per concert cycle. Members who have three absences during a given concert cycle may be asked to withdraw from that concert performance. Excessive absences could result in removal from the orchestra.

Dress Rehearsal Attendance

Members must perform at the dress rehearsal to be eligible to perform in the concert unless given special permission from the PSYO manager. Principal players may not miss either of the last two rehearsals. If a principal player misses one of the last two rehearsals, he/she/they may be moved from principal chair for the concert.

Concert Attendance

Members must contact the PSYO manager immediately in the event he/she/they have extenuating circumstances that prevent the member from participating in the concert.

Notification of an Absence

Illnesses and family emergencies that necessitate a student's absence must be reported by phone, text, or Remind app to the PSYO manager as soon as possible.

An intended absence must be reported to the PSYO manager by the member's parent/guardian by email no later than one week prior to the absence. If the absence is due to a mandatory school event, the member must also provide a signed note or an email from a district/homeschool email account from the school sponsor to the PSYO manager.

Any unreported absence will result in a conversation between the PSYO manager, member, and parent/guardian.

If a member is absent for any reason, it is his/her/their responsibility to contact to contact another orchestra member to learn about any important changes in the music that were made at the missed rehearsal. The PSYO manager will facilitate this communication if needed.

Tardiness

Members or the parent/guardian must notify the PSYO manager by phone, text, or Remind app if the member is going to arrive after the start time of rehearsal. Two or more occurrences of tardiness may result in a member being moved to the back of the section. In case of tardiness or absence, the conductor reserves the right to have members who are present move forward, in their respective section, when chairs are empty.

Withdrawal

Orchestra members are expected to make a full-season commitment. Parents/Guardians of members who withdraw from the PSYO must give the PSYO manager written notification.

Attire

Rehearsal Attire

Members should wear clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for school.

Dress Rehearsal Attire

Members are not required to wear concert attire for dress rehearsal.

Concert Attire

To present a professional and uniform appearance, members are required to follow the PSYO concert dress code. Deviation from the dress code will result in a member being removed from the concert.

- PSYO Ladies: Solid black dress or black blouse and full-length black skirt or pants. Solid black shoes. Skirts must pass the knees. Tops must have sleeves. Cellists must wear pants. No sparkles, metallic, or any non-black detailing.
- PSYO Gentlemen: Solid black suit, long sleeved white shirt, black shoes, black bow tie or black tie, and solid black socks.
- Hair clips and ties should be muted colors, such as black or brown.
- Students are welcome to wear their school concert attire if the attire meets the PSYO requirements above.

School Music Program Participation

PSYO members are required to participate in their school music programs. Homeschool students and students attending schools without band or orchestra programs are required to participate in a homeschool band or orchestra program. Parents/Guardians should contact the PSYO manager if a member is unable to participate in a school or homeschool program or drops from a school or homeschool program during the PSYO season. It is the intention of PSYO to provide members with opportunities for performance excellence, education, and camaraderie outside of school or other music organizations.

Private Study

Orchestra members are encouraged to have private music lessons. If a member is not currently taking private lessons and would like more information regarding private instruction, please ask the PSYO manager.

Concert Tickets

Information about purchasing tickets for the PSYO concerts will be made available to members during the season. For information about purchasing tickets for the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra concerts or dress rehearsals, please call the main office number at (850) 435-2533.

Videos and Photographs

PSO staff may video record and/or photograph rehearsals, performances, and special events for archival purposes. Photos may also be used in promotional material including press releases, event announcements, or through PSYO social media platforms. The photo/video release will be included on the registration form.

Section 4: Parent Opportunities

Opportunities to Serve

The PSYO's success depends on the generosity and dedication of its volunteers. Parents, guardians, and family members are welcome to volunteer for various roles during the season.

Consider how you may best serve the orchestra and volunteer for one of the following positions: (these are options)

Rehearsal Chaperone – Assist the PSYO manager with setting up the rehearsal space, welcoming students, and monitoring the rehearsal and break spaces. Rehearsal chaperones are asked to commit to a minimum of 5 rehearsals per semester and are required to complete a Level 2 background check (fingerprinting). The cost of the background check will be covered by the PSO.

Concert Volunteer – Assist the PSYO manager in organizing and overseeing “front of house” concert activities, including ticket sales and ushering.

Marketing Support – Help the PSYO promote concerts by placing PSYO promotional materials in places you frequent. Share PSYO social media posts.

Other – Attend a Board of Directors meeting, Advisory Council meeting, or PSO Guild meeting to share how the PSYO is making a difference for your child and community.

Please contact Julie Martin Green if you would like to volunteer in any capacity.

education@pensacolasymphony.com or (850) 435-2533 x.103

Section 5: Member Opportunities

Small Ensembles

Members are welcome to create small ensembles and perform in the community; however, this participation is voluntary. If you are interested in performing in small groups, please inform the PSYO manager. Small ensembles may be offered opportunities to play throughout the Pensacola community in collaboration with the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra's Beyond the Stage program.

Member Volunteering

Members who need volunteer hours for school, a club, or your resumé, should contact the PSYO manager to ask about opportunities to work with the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra or Youth Orchestra. Opportunities may include handing out programs at PSO concerts, performing with PSO members for community engagements, or helping with the PSYO music library. Members are responsible for ensuring that PSO volunteer activities qualify for school or club volunteer hours prior to scheduling any such activity. Documentation of volunteer hours is available from the PSYO manager upon the member's request.

Section 6: PSYO 2025-2026 Season Schedule

UWF

University of West Florida
Center for Fine and Performing Arts
Building 82 – Parking Lot L
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514

[UWF Interactive Map](#)

FBC

First Baptist Church of Pensacola
500 N. Palafox St.
Pensacola, FL 32501

[FBC – Google Map](#)

Fall Rehearsal and Performance Schedule

Sept. 7, 2025	12pm – 1:30pm	Violin Seating Auditions	UWF – Rolfs Music Hall
	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal and Viola Seating Auditions	UWF – Rehearsal Hall and Rolfs Music Hall
	4pm – 5pm	Cello/Bass Seating Auditions	UWF – Rolfs Music Hall
Sept. 14, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Sept. 21, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Sept. 28, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Oct. 5, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Oct. 12, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Sectionals	FBC
Oct. 19, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Oct. 26, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Nov. 2, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Sectionals	FBC
Nov. 9, 2025	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	FBC - Sanctuary
Nov. 16, 2025	2pm	CALL	FBC - Sanctuary
	3pm	CONCERT	

Spring Rehearsal and Performance Schedule

Feb. 1, 2026	12pm – 1:30pm	Violin Seating Auditions	UWF – Rolfs Music Hall
	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal and Viola Seating Auditions	UWF – Rehearsal Hall and Rolfs Music Hall
	4pm – 5pm	Cello/Bass Seating Auditions	UWF – Rolfs Music Hall
Feb. 8, 2026	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Feb. 15, 2026	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Feb. 22, 2026	2pm – 4pm	Sectionals	FBC
March 1, 2026	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	FBC
March 8, 2026	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Mainstage Theater
March 15, 2026	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
March 22, 2026	2pm – 4pm	Sectionals	FBC
March 29, 2026	2pm – 4pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Mainstage Theater
April 5, 2026	2pm – 4pm	NO REHEARSAL - Easter	NO REHEARSAL - Easter
April 12, 2026	2pm	CALL	UWF – Mainstage Theater
	3pm	CONCERT	

PENSACOLA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 100TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

Youth orchestra members will be selected to perform side-by-side with the PSO for the 100th season celebration concert. Youth orchestra members will be provided with information about tickets for this performance during the spring semester.

Saenger Theatre Pensacola

118 S. Palafox St, Pensacola, FL 32502

Pensacola Symphony Orchestra 100 th Anniversary Gala – Rehearsal and Performance			
Sunday, April 19, 2026	6pm – 8pm	Rehearsal	UWF – Rehearsal Hall
Friday, April 24, 2026	7pm	CALL	Saenger Theater
	7:15pm – 7:45pm	Rehearse YO piece on stage	
	8pm – 9pm	Rehearse with PSO on stage	
Saturday, April 25, 2026	2:15pm	CALL for DRESS REHEARSAL	Saenger Theater
	2:45pm	YO in rehearsal	
	4:15pm – 4:45pm	Rehearse YO piece on stage	
	8pm	CALL for CONCERT	