

This handbook belongs to:

Instrument: _____ Orchestra: _____



MEMBER HANDBOOK

2009 - 2010

WELCOME!

The EPSYO is the El Paso Symphony's multi-ensemble youth orchestra system dedicated to advancing and inspiring the development of elementary through young professional musicians in the Greater El Paso, Juarez, and Southwest New Mexico areas by providing intensive training and unparalleled performance opportunities. The EPSYO is committed to creating and maintaining a professional and supportive environment in which members will achieve the highest level of artistic advancement and personal growth through a group musical experience, and which will supplement the education they receive in the schools.

MISSION STATEMENT

The El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras (**EPSYOs**) is committed to:

- advance and inspire the development of elementary through young professional musicians in the Greater El Paso, Juarez, and Southwest New Mexico areas by providing intensive orchestral training and unparalleled performance opportunities.
- create and maintain a professional and supportive environment in which members will achieve the highest level of artistic advancement and personal growth.
- amaze, entertain, and educate diverse audiences with thoughtful, innovative programming.

ELIGIBILITY

All students between 2nd grade and college undergraduate are eligible to apply for membership. Students in 2nd through 12th grade must be enrolled in their school's instrumental music program (if available). Students in college are strongly encouraged to be enrolled in their school's instrumental music program. Membership and placement will be determined by audition.

ORCHESTRAS and ENSEMBLES

El Paso Youth Orchestra (EPYO): Full orchestra for the most advanced string, wind, brass, and percussion players.

El Paso Youth Symphony (EPYS): Full orchestra for intermediate string, wind, brass, and percussion players.

El Paso Youth String Ensemble (EPYSE): Strings-only ensemble for advanced beginning and intermediate players with some orchestral experience.

El Paso Youth String Philharmonic (EPYSP): Strings-only ensemble for beginning players with limited orchestral experience.

El Paso Youth Wind Ensemble (EPYWE): Wind, brass, and percussion ensemble focusing on building ensemble skills .

El Paso Youth Flute Ensemble (EPYFE), El Paso Youth Clarinet Ensemble (EPYCE), El Paso Youth Brass Ensemble (EPYBE): Small ensembles for players who wish to supplement their ensemble skills in a chamber music - like atmosphere.

A

ABSENCE REQUEST 3
ATTENDANCE POLICY 2
AUDITION REQUIREMENTS 2

C

CONCERT DRESS 4
CONTACT INFO 7

D

DISMISSAL REASONS 4

E

ELIGIBILITY 1

F

FINANCIAL AID and SCHOLARSHIPS 6

H

HISTORY 7

M

MISSION STATEMENT 1
TUITION and FEES 6

O

OPPORTUNITIES 5
ORCHESTRAS and ENSEMBLES 1

P

PARENTS AUXILIARY 7
PLACEMENT and SEATING 2
PRIVATE LESSONS 3
PROBATION 3
PROPRIETARY INFORMATION 7

R

REHEARSAL and CONCERT LOCATIONS 7
RESPONSIBILITIES, PERSONAL
CONDUCT and MUSICAL
EXPECTATIONS 2

S

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION 4
SEASONS SUBSCRIPTIONS 5
STAFF 8

T

TICKET POLICY 5
TUITION and FEES 6

W

WITHDRAWALS and REFUNDS 6

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

To request an audition, applicants must fill out an application form available either online at the EPSYOs website, www.EPSYOs.org, or from their school music teacher. There is a \$5 non-refundable application fee that must accompany the application in order to guarantee an audition time. Auditions will be held each season in late May and early September (depending on openings). Auditions may include scales, solo pieces, sight-reading, and specific orchestral excerpts. Applicants are expected to arrive at least 10 minutes before their scheduled audition time, and auditions will last between 5 and 10 minutes. Please check the website for the most updated information including downloadable excerpts.

PLACEMENT and SEATING

Following auditions, acceptance and placement results will be sent via mail. Seating auditions will be held in early-September for all members. Specific audition material will be provided during the summer. Seating will be subject to change and/or rotated at the discretion of the Music Director or Staff Conductor. All decisions by the Music Director will be final.

RESPONSIBILITIES, PERSONAL CONDUCT and MUSICAL EXPECTATIONS

In order to create a professional and productive learning environment for everyone, EPSYOs members are expected to:

- practice regularly and come prepared to rehearsals each week. Members are encouraged to bring their orchestra music to their private teachers for additional help.
- arrive to rehearsals at least fifteen minutes early to unpack, warm-up, and tune. Members should be seated and ready to play at the designated rehearsal time.
- bring all EPSYOs music and a pencil to rehearsals. Members are responsible for their own music and folder, and lost music may result in a replacement fee. It is important always to have a pencil with an eraser to mark music. Music should never be marked in pen or ink!
- provide their own instrument (except for some percussion instruments) and keep them well maintained. Members must bring their instruments and any other necessary items (mutes, rosin, shoulder rests, strings, mallets...) to rehearsal each week.
- show respect for themselves, EPSYOs staff and volunteers, and other members of the orchestra. Members should not talk, act, or dress in a disruptive manner. Any disruptive, rude, or illegal behavior will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the program.
- be respectful of the rehearsal space and leave the space the way it was found.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance will be taken at rehearsal each week. Since attending rehearsals is the backbone of thorough preparation and good performance, a strong attendance policy is necessary for the strength of the EPSYOs. Attendance at rehearsals and concerts does not only affect the preparation of that individual member, but also affects all the members of that ensemble. It is important that members take attendance seriously and place EPSYOs at the top of the priority list. It is understandable that there will be occasional conflicts that must take precedence over EPSYOs events.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each rehearsal. Members will be considered late if not ready to play once the ensemble conductor has started rehearsal. Two (2) instances of lateness will be counted as one unexcused absence. Leaving a rehearsal early without the approval of EPSYOs will be counted the same as lateness.

PROBATION

1) If a member has more than one unexcused absence in a concert series, that member will immediately be placed on probation, which means that member's participation will come under review and any further unexcused absences or lateness could lead to being forbidden from performing the concert and possibly even to dismissal from the EPSYOs. 2) If any member has more than three (3) absences of any kind in a concert period they will automatically be placed on probation; further absences will likely lead to that member's being forbidden from playing that concert.

All attendance decisions will be made at the discretion of the EPSYOs Music Director, Staff, Board, and Attendance Committee, which will consist of at least one parent and one student along with the EPSYOs General Manager and Administrative Director. There will be no tuition refunds as a result of an attendance-related dismissal, and members will still be responsible for paying remaining tuition balances.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

To receive permission for an excused absence, members must fill out an Absence Request Form online at the EPSYOs website or send in a written request to the EPSYOs Office at least one (1) week prior to the expected absence, although it is encouraged to submit requests as early as possible. Acceptable excuses include, but are not limited to: previously scheduled music-related school activities, religious worship, and unavoidable family emergencies. Questionable requests will be reviewed by the EPSYOs Attendance Committee in consultation with the Music Director and EPSYOs staff, and members will be given written notification confirming the outcome of their request.

Sometimes, there will be conflicts that come up within the one-week notification period. While these absences may not be excused, except in the case of family emergency or sickness, an explanation within the one-week period will alleviate the penalty. A decision will be made as to whether it will count as an excused or unexcused absence by the EPSYOs Music Director, staff, and Attendance Committee.

To request an emergency absence on the day of rehearsal, members or parents must call the EPSYOs phone at 915-525-8978 and leave a message. Emails will not be accepted the day of rehearsal.

Dress rehearsals and concerts are mandatory! Absence from a dress rehearsal may result in exclusion from the concert at the discretion of the Attendance Committee in consultation with the Music Director and EPSYOs staff.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Although not required, private lessons are strongly recommended. Members are encouraged to bring their orchestra music to their private teachers for extra help outside of EPSYOs rehearsals. For recommendations of private teachers, please feel free to contact the EPSYOs Office.

EPSYOs ARTISTIC STAFF

Andres Moran, Music Director/ EPYO Conductor
Benjamin Vickers, EPYS Conductor
Christopher Noel, EPYSE Conductor
Donna Loomis, EPYSP Conductor
Rachel Montellano, EPYWE Conductor
Sander Schiller, EPYBE Conductor
Stephanie Otero, EPYCE Conductor
Joy Zalkind, EPYFE Conductor

EPSYOs ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Lesley Chen, General Manager, lesley@epsyos.org
Christina Caraveo, Administrative Director, christina@epsyos.org
Daniella M. Briseno, Orchestra Manager, daniella@epsyos.org
Linda Fischer, Finance Manager, linda@EPSO.org

EPSYOs BOARD of TRUSTEES

David Everett, Chairman
Kacy Spivak, Treasurer
Kristin Haugland, Secretary
Ellen Goodman, Parent Auxiliary Liason
Bonnie Gunn
Gary Larcenaire
Jill Leavitt
Jeff Minor
John Moye
Wilma Salzman

EPSO STAFF

Sarah Ioannides, Music Director
Ruth Ellen Jacobson, Executive Director
Linda Fischer, Business Manager
Rosemary Flores, Operations Manager
Diana de la Torre, Ticket Manager
Bonnie Escobar, Director of Fund Management

PARENT AUXILIARY

All parents are welcome and encouraged to join the Parents Auxiliary. The Parents Auxiliary is an important and driving force for EPSYOs, and its support and dedication will play a key role in the success of the program. Responsibilities of the Parents Auxiliary will include, but not be limited to:

- Fundraising
- Program advertising
- Volunteering on concert days
- Merchandise
- Social activities and events
- Ticket sales
- Outreach
- Attendance Committees
- Disciplinary Committee

Meetings will be held at announced times determined by the Auxiliary Chairs.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

The EPSYOs name, logos, and photos, are the sole property of EPSYOs and shall not be used or recreated in any manner by any person without written authorization from EPSYOs.

REHEARSAL and CONCERT LOCATIONS

Jefferson High School: 4700 Alameda Ave.

Chavez Theatre: 1 Civic Center Plaza (back stage door is off San Antonio St.)

Plaza Theatre: 125 Pioneer Plaza (back stage door is off Main St.)

CONTACT US

Office address: 4150 Rio Bravo, Suite 127, El Paso, TX 79902

Mailing address: P.O. Box 180, El Paso, TX 79942

Phone: (915) 525 - 8978

Fax: (915) 525 - 8988

Email: info@epsyos.org

EPSYOs HISTORY

The El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras (EPSYOs) was founded by then Music Director, Benjamin Loeb in the fall of 2005 as an educational program of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra to serve the Region's Best Young Musicians. EPSYOs members are drawn from every school district in El Paso County, Las Cruces and Alamogordo, New Mexico, Juarez, Mexico and El Paso Community College, New Mexico State University, and University of Texas at El Paso. During the 2006 - 2007 season, the EPSYOs was nationally recognized by being awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Learning in the Arts Grant. The EPSYOs also receives state and local support from the Texas Commission on the Arts and the City of El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs Department.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

The EPSYOs is designed to supplement, not replace, school music programs. All EPSYOs members in 2nd through 12th grade must participate in and be a member of good standing with their school instrumental ensemble program, and failure to do so may result in dismissal from EPSYOs. The EPSYOs will work closely with local teachers to ensure this requirement is fulfilled. While EPSYOs will do its best to avoid conflicts with the school music programs, all music-related school activities take precedence over EPSYOs rehearsals, and excused absences will be granted if the forms are submitted in a timely fashion. Although not required, the EPSYOs highly recommends all college members to be enrolled in their school's instrumental ensemble program.

REASONS FOR DISMISSAL

- Failure to participate in school orchestra or band (excludes college members). Dismissal from school or music program will also be viewed as failure to participate in the school's music program.
- Not meeting the musical demands of the orchestra by showing up to rehearsals unprepared.
- Too many unexcused absences.
- Participating in any rude, disruptive, or illegal activity during any EPSYOs-related rehearsal, concert, or event.
- Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to any space used for EPSYOs-related rehearsals, concerts, and events.
- Intentionally attempting to steal any EPSYOs property or property in any space used by EPSYOs-related rehearsals, concerts or events.
- Causing or attempting to cause physical or emotional injury to any person involved in EPSYOs, including employees of any space used during EPSYOs-related rehearsals, concerts, or events.
- Possessing, handling, or transmitting any illegal substances or weapons during EPSYOs-related rehearsals, concerts, or events.
- Violating any local, state, or federal laws.

If a member is determined to have engaged in prohibited activities during any EPSYOs-related rehearsal, concert, or event, then:

- the member will be sent home at the expense of the parent/guardian
- the parent/guardian will be financially responsible for any damages or expenses that may result from the member's behavior
- EPSYOs will inform local law enforcement if necessary

Any case involving the potential dismissal of a student will be reviewed by the Music Director, EPSYOs Staff, EPSYOs Board and EPSYOs Disciplinary Committee. All decisions will be final, and refunds will not be given.

CONCERT DRESS

Ladies: Black full-length skirt or pants with black stockings and black dress shoes (no sandals, sneakers or boots); pants must be formal (no jeans or spandex) and loose fitting; white top (with sleeves).

Gentlemen: Black dress slacks, black socks, black dress shoes (no sneakers or boots); white long-sleeved button-down shirt, no tie.

TICKET POLICY

EPSYOs concerts are all general admission (GA) seating. Students, seniors, and military will receive a discount on all GA tickets. GA tickets will be available through the El Paso Symphony Office (915) 532 - 3776, at rehearsals preceding the concert, and also at the door the day of the concert. Seating is subject to availability.

It is the responsibility of each member to sell tickets to help ensure the EPSYOs has an audience it deserves.

Season Subscriptions: Season subscriptions will be available up to one week before the first concert of the season. Subscriptions include all concerts, excluding any special events.

EPSYOs OPPORTUNITIES

Members accepted into EPSYOs will have the opportunity to participate in many unique and exciting events; these may include chamber music, master classes and clinics, and concerts with internationally renowned musicians, as well as local retreats, and national and international tours. It is expected that EPSYOs members will attend all events, if possible. For all El Paso Symphony (EPSO) Classical Series Concerts, EPSYOs members will have the opportunity to receive one (1) complimentary ticket and purchase up to four (4) more tickets at a reduced price. EPSYOs members will receive tickets on the floor subject to availability (a value normally worth \$28 - \$37 each). EPSYOs members will receive an ID card which they must present at the Plaza Box Office the day of the concert. Family members and friends will not be able to use the ID without the EPSYOs member present. Tickets will only be available the day of the concert, and are subject to availability. EPSYOs members will only be allowed to attend one concert per week (i.e. either Friday or Saturday). Please check the EPSO website for all Classical Series Concert dates (www.epso.org). Members should contact the EPSYOs Office immediately if they lose their ID.

The EPSYOs Concerto Competition, open to both EPSYOs members and non-EPSYOs members, is held every January. One Grand Prize winner will perform with the El Paso Symphony on the Side-by-Side Concert in the Plaza Theatre and up to two EPSYOs Prize winners will perform with the EPYO on the Season Finale concert. See the website for rules and an application form.

TUITION and FEES

All fees must be paid in full by the first rehearsal, or according to individual financial arrangement. Fees can be paid by check, cash, or credit card. Checks should be made out to "EPSYOs" and mailed to the EPSYOs office, P.O. Box 180, El Paso, TX 79942. Credit card payments can be taken online through our website, www.EPSYOS.org, or over the phone by contacting the Finance Manager, at (915) 532 - 3776.

WITHDRAWALS and REFUNDS

Both the Application Fee and Deposit/Administrative Fee are non-refundable. Withdrawal requests must be made in writing to the EPSYOs General Manager and Music Director who will determine the refund amount based on the date the request is made:

- Before the first rehearsal: 100% tuition refund
- Before the fourth rehearsal: 50% tuition refund
- After the fourth rehearsal: No refunds

If a member who has arranged a payment plan or has been awarded financial aid or a scholarship withdraws from the program during the year, the member may be responsible for paying the remaining balance of their tuition or financial aid reward.

FINANCIAL AID and SCHOLARSHIPS

All students accepted into EPSYOs will be eligible for need-based Financial Aid. No student accepted into EPSYOs will be excluded from the program because of financial need. All members that receive financial aid or scholarships are expected to maintain excellent attendance and participate for the full year.

Requests for financial assistance must be made in writing using the Financial Aid Application or Scholarship Application Form, and by including supporting documentation. Please check the website for deadlines and to download the application forms. If your financial situation changes during the year, you may request special financial aid consideration at that time.

College students will be eligible for a 50% Advanced Study Scholarship. Please contact the EPSYOs Office for more information.

There will be merit-based, full-tuition Leadership Scholarships for at least 5 college students (high school seniors may also apply if space is available). They will be expected to hold leadership positions in the EPYO, to serve as weekly assistants to the various orchestras and EPSYOs Administration, and to participate in outreach among other responsibilities. Leadership Scholars must perform with their school's orchestra and are expected to maintain excellent attendance, participate in every concert, and uphold and project all EPSYOs principals and attitudes. Leadership Scholars who are unable to adhere to the requirements of the honor may lose the scholarship and be responsible for paying the remainder of the tuition.