

Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles Handbook 2009-2010

(7/24/09)

Welcome!

This handbook is designed to answer any questions you might have regarding the Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles Program. Please read it carefully, as it contains important information regarding membership, auditions, tuition, rehearsals and attendance.

JOHN WESLEY STRICKLER, Ph.D.
MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR
TOPEKA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

STEVEN ELISHA
CONDUCTOR, YOUTH ORCHESTRA

CAROLYN RICH VOTH
CONDUCTOR, YOUTH PHILHARMONIC

CAROLYN SANDQUIST
CONDUCTOR, DEBUT ORCHESTRA

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

STEVEN ELISHA, Youth Orchestra Conductor
Washburn Music Department: (785) 670-1523
Cell phone: (913) 579-5908
Mr.cello@excite.com or elarisduo@cox.net

CAROLYN RICH VOTH, Youth Philharmonic Conductor
Home: (785) 235-5406
tcvoth@networksplus.net

CAROLYN SANDQUIST, Debut Orchestra Conductor
Home: (785) 354-8848
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THE TOPEKA SYMPHONY YOUTH ENSEMBLES HISTORY

The Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra was formed in 1957, just 11 years after the Topeka Symphony Orchestra's first season. "Providing educational and performance opportunities for youth" has been an important priority of the Topeka Symphony Society since very early in its history. The Youth Orchestra was established to encourage talented young musicians to pursue their musical interests.

The Topeka Symphony Debut Orchestra was formed in 1998 to meet the needs of a growing number of young string instrument players. Two years later, the Youth Philharmonic was formed to serve primarily middle school aged string musicians. It is the preparatory orchestra for the Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra.

YOUR CONDUCTORS

Youth Orchestra

Steven Elisha was recognized by Janos Starker as a cellist "in the front ranks of his generation's musicians," Steven Elisha performs throughout the United States and internationally as a soloist and chamber musician.

Elisha's New York debut at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and premiere performance of *Cry of the Dove* (a cello concerto written by his sister, Adrienne Elisha) received critical acclaim. As an honorary member and returned guest of the Beijing Cello Society, he has extensively concertized and taught master classes in conservatories throughout mainland China. He has also performed and taught throughout Europe, Brazil, Israel, Norway, Taiwan and the United States. Dr. Elisha taught cello at the Bergen Conservatory (Norway), where he was interim Co-Principal of the Bergen Philharmonic, the University of Toledo, Connecticut College and Pittsburg State University.

Dr. Elisha holds a BM degree from Indiana University School of Music where he was a student of distinguished cellist Janos Starker, a MM degree from Yale University School of Music where he was a student of and Teaching Fellow for Aldo Parisot, and in 2007, a DMA degree from KU.

Currently, Dr. Elisha is Director of String Studies at Washburn University, Principal Cellist of the Topeka Symphony and Wichita Grand Opera, and Conductor of the Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra. He and his wife, Dr. Larisa Elisha, violinist are co-founders of the *Elaris Duo* and *Elaris Duo & Friends* Chamber Music Series. Dr. Elisha regularly gives master classes and workshops/residencies throughout the United States, including his innovative **Mr. Cello Stories** program for audiences of all ages. He performs regularly at the Sunflower Music Festival and other music festivals throughout the country. Dr. Elisha has recorded for Delos and Musical Heritage Society, including a Grammy-nominated MHS recording of New England piano trios.

The **Elaris Duo**, recently featured as soloists with Taiwan National Arts Orchestra in the famed National Hall, received the 2008 Kansas Governor's Arts Award in the category *Artist*. Their recent CD, *DUO VIRTUOSO*, will be released on MSR-Classics Recordings and featured in *Fanfare Magazine*. Other performances have included recitals at the Bergen International Festival, The Grieg Conservatory of Music (Norway) and solo appearances with the Gulf Coast, Sunflower Festival Chamber Orchestra, Topeka Symphony and Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestras.

Youth Philharmonic

Carolyn Rich Voth has taught music at all levels from pre-school through college. She currently serves as the director of the Topeka West High School and French Middle School Orchestras.

A performing cellist, Carolyn has been a member of the Topeka Symphony cello section for 19 years, serving as a section member, associate principal and principal player. She has also served as principal cellist of the Mid-Kansas Symphony Orchestra. She is a member of the Westwood Chamber Ensemble and performs as a soloist and chamber musician in Northeast Kansas.

Carolyn graduated from Bethel College with a degree in cello performance and music education. She has continued her education with courses from Kansas State, Emporia State, and Ohio State Universities. Former cello professors include Dr. David Littrell and Dr. Jay Decker. Carolyn is a member of the Music Educators National Conference, the American String Teachers Association and their Kansas chapters. She currently serves as a board member for the Kansas Strings Teachers Association.

Carolyn and her husband, Tim, are parents of three former Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles participants, Rachel, Michael and Andrew. Carolyn enjoys her many musical opportunities as well as reading, hiking and time with family and friends.

Debut Orchestra

Carolyn Sandquist is a native Topekan. She received her Bachelor of Music degree with honors from Washburn University and was awarded the Highest Scholastic Average in Theta Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota that year. As a graduating student of Washburn University, Carolyn earned the Music Department Academic Achievement and the Community Service Awards. Mrs. Sandquist has conducted the orchestras and taught Suzuki group classes for the Topeka String Project. Carolyn taught strings in USD 501 for 9 years including high school, middle school and elementary school levels. She also taught five years at Topeka Collegiate School.

Mrs. Sandquist created her own private studio teaching group and private lessons for violin, viola and cello using the Suzuki Method. Carolyn is a registered teacher of Suzuki Violin for books 1-7 and Suzuki Cello for books 1-5. Her students range in age from 3 years old to adult. Her students perform often in the Topeka community as well as recitals throughout the year. Many of her students play in the Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles as well as their school orchestras. Many former students have gone on to excel in music and become music educators.

Mrs. Sandquist has played in the Topeka Symphony for over 30 years. She currently plays in the viola section, but in the past has also played violin and cello in the Symphony. She is the second violinist, founding member and manager of the Studio String Quartet. Mrs. Sandquist is an active member in her church, plays tennis, enjoys traveling and loves photographing her two young boys.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Any musician 21 years of age and younger may audition for one of the three Youth Ensembles. To be a member of one of these ensembles, a student who plays a string instrument agrees to play in his or her school orchestra, if available, and a student who plays a wind, brass or percussion instrument agrees to play in his or her school band, if available. This requirement may be waived by the school conductor if there are extenuating circumstances. A signed letter from the appropriate school conductor excusing the student from the school orchestra or band must be sent to the Topeka Symphony office prior to the first Youth Ensemble Rehearsal.

A musician whose school does not have a music program for his/her instrument is strongly encouraged to participate in other musical ensembles.

AUDITIONS

An audition is required each season to participate in the Youth Orchestra, Youth Philharmonic, and Debut Orchestra. Auditions will determine to which orchestra each musician will be assigned. Acceptance is based on musical ability and minimum requirements for each ensemble. (See "Ensemble Requirements") In order to provide the best educational opportunity for each musician, placement will be determined by skill level and instrumental balance of each orchestra. Conductors reserve the right to re-seat students throughout the year. All students auditioning will be notified of their acceptance prior to the first rehearsals. Special auditions may be held at the conductor's discretion to fill vacant positions during the season or at the semester break. If a student would like to be considered for participation in an ensemble in which they were not originally placed, a re-audition may be requested at the end of the first semester.

ENSEMBLE REQUIREMENTS*

*Conductors reserve the right to place students in appropriate ensembles

Youth Orchestra

Age: 13 and up

Grade: 8th grade and up

Audition Music Skills: Be able to play A) at least a 2 Octave Major and Minor (Melodic Minor) scale up to and including 4 sharps and 4 flats, B) a prepared solo, and C) sight read

Principal Positions: Students in Youth Orchestra who wish to audition for principal can request an audition excerpt prior to the audition

Youth Philharmonic

Age: 11-18

Grade: 6th through 12th grade

Audition Music Skills: Be able to play A) at least a 1 Octave Major scale up to and including 2 sharps and 2 flats, B) a 2-3 minute prepared solo C) sight read

Debut Orchestra

Age: Up to age 12

Grade: No grade requirement – See minimum requirement below

Audition Music Skills: Be able to play A) up to a 2 minute solo and B) sight read

Minimum requirement: 1 year participation in school strings class or ability to read and play notes on all four strings of their instrument (first position).

TUITION

Once a musician has been accepted into one of the orchestras, there is a non-refundable tuition fee of \$75 for each student per year, which includes music charges and rental. The Topeka Symphony will bill each family for the tuition payment. Tuition assistance is available. Contact Kathy Maag at the Topeka Symphony office for more information.

Tuition covers only a small fraction of the costs of operating the Youth Ensembles, which are funded from the Topeka Symphony Society's operating budget. We encourage all members' families to support the Topeka Symphony Orchestra through season ticket purchases, as well as by making contributions to the Symphony's Endowment Fund, Annual Fund or by joining the Symphony League. For more information, call (785) 232-2032.

REHEARSAL AND CONCERT SCHEDULE

Ensembles will rehearse Tuesdays on the following schedule:

Youth Orchestra: 6:15 p.m. – 8:15 p.m. White Concert Hall Stage

Youth Philharmonic: 6:15 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. Band Room

Debut Orchestra: 4:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. White Concert Hall Stage

Fall 2009

Rehearsals: Tuesdays

September 8, 15, 22, 29

October 6, 13, 20, 27

November 3, 10, 17

Youth Orchestra Only--Additional Rehearsal: Saturday, Nov. 14, 10am-1pm

Youth Orchestra Only--Dress Rehearsal: Sunday, Nov. 22, 10am–12pm

Performance for all Ensembles: 2 p.m., Sunday, November 22, 2009, White Concert Hall

Spring 2010

Rehearsals: Tuesdays

January 5, 12, 19, 26

February 2, 9, 16, 23

March 2

Youth Orchestra Only--Additional Rehearsal: Sunday, Feb. 28, 12:30-3:30pm

Youth Orchestra Only--Dress Rehearsal: Sunday, March 7, 10am–12pm

Performance for all Ensembles: 2 p.m., Sunday, March 7, 2010, White Concert Hall

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Musicians are expected to bring their music to rehearsals and arrive early enough to set up their chairs and be in their seats **5 minutes** prior to the start of rehearsal — **ready to play at the scheduled start time**. Musicians should bring their own pencils.

It is very important to understand that orchestra members are making a commitment to the group for the entire season. Attendance at ALL rehearsals and concerts is required. A musician should weigh all other personal and school commitments and be prepared to give the Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles priority in the event of any conflicts. Attendance is recorded at each rehearsal. If, for any reason, a member must be absent, your conductor must be notified as far in advance as possible, and your absence will be excused (i.e., for illness, bad weather, scheduled music-related school conflicts). After any unexcused absence or four excused absences, the orchestra member's position will be re-evaluated.

To contact your conductor, please refer to the contact information in this handbook under **Important Telephone Numbers** on page 1.

PRACTICE AND PREPARATION

Members are expected to come to rehearsals prepared and with their music and instruments in order. The music played by the orchestras includes challenging pieces from the standard orchestral repertoire. Therefore, musicians should anticipate that it will be necessary to spend considerable time practicing in order to be prepared for rehearsals and performances.

CARE OF MUSIC

Music is provided to members for practice and study purposes. **It must be returned in good condition after each semester's concert.** If an original part is damaged, lost or for any other reason not returned, the member will be charged for the replacement cost.

CONCERT ATTIRE

Youth Orchestra: **Boys:** Black tuxedo or suit, white shirt, black bow tie, black shoes and black socks **Girls:** ankle-length black dress, black skirt or black slacks (full-length, no black jeans), long-sleeved black tops, and black dress shoes.

Youth Philharmonic & Debut Orchestra: **Boys:** Black slacks, long-sleeved white shirt, dark tie, black shoes and black socks. **Girls:** Black skirt (ankle-length) or slacks (full-length, no black jeans), long-sleeved white blouse with modest neckline, and black dress shoes.

SMALL ENSEMBLE OPPORTUNITIES

Small groups of instrumentalists may be asked to represent the TSO Youth Ensembles and perform for various community functions. Performances will be scheduled at the discretion of the conductors and the Topeka Symphony office. The Youth Orchestra small ensemble is the "Sinfonietta".

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Topeka Symphony Youth Ensembles welcomes volunteers who help with monitoring rehearsals, fundraising, marking and distributing music, marketing and promotional needs, helping with concerts and organizing performance opportunities. If you would like to be a part of this wonderful volunteer group, please call the Topeka Symphony office at 785-232-2032

IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER

Every effort will be made to notify schools and the news media should inclement weather require cancellation of a youth ensemble rehearsal or concert. Please check your local radio and TV stations and advise your students to pay special attention to school announcements. You may also call the Symphony office at 785-232-2032 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, WE WILL NOT MAKE INDIVIDUAL PHONE CALLS TO YOUTH ENSEMBLE MEMBERS ANNOUNCING CANCELLATIONS OF REHEARSALS OR CONCERTS.

THE SYMPHONY BOARD

Policies governing the activities of the Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Debut Orchestra and the Youth Philharmonic are established by the Board of Directors of the Topeka Symphony Society.

The Topeka Symphony Society Board of Directors has an Education and Youth Committee, which includes parent representation from each of the three youth ensembles. The committee chair and the members assist with auditions, notifications, rehearsals, music librarian duties and help with the smooth operation and success of the youth ensembles in many other ways.

YOUTH TALENT AUDITIONS

Each year since 1953, the Topeka Symphony has sponsored Youth Talent Auditions to give high school students the opportunity to perform with the Topeka Symphony Orchestra. Out of four areas of competition — keyboard, strings, wind and percussion instruments, and voice — one student is chosen to perform with the Symphony. The first runner-up appears with the Youth Orchestra at its spring concert. In addition, the winner in each category is awarded a scholarship. For more information, contact the Symphony office.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

No person is excluded from participation in any of our sponsored groups because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, handicap, gender or sexual orientation. No musician will be excluded from membership in the Youth Orchestra, Youth Philharmonic or Debut Orchestra based on an inability to pay tuition fees.

YOUR SUGGESTIONS ARE WELCOME!

We appreciate the talent, time, hard work and dedication that our Youth Ensemble members and their families give to the organization. We want to continue our mission of providing ever improving educational and performance opportunities for youth. Your suggestions and help are always encouraged.