

a program of the  
INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



**metropolitan youth orchestra**

# **FAMILY HANDBOOK 2024-2025**

## Contact Information

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Attn: Metropolitan Youth Orchestra

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Indianapolis, IN 46204

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Website: [www.indianapolissymphony.org/education/myo](http://www.indianapolissymphony.org/education/myo)

Facebook: [MetropolitanYouthOrchestra](https://www.facebook.com/MetropolitanYouthOrchestra)

Instagram: [@MYO\\_Indy](https://www.instagram.com/MYO_Indy)

Hashtags: [#MyOrchestra](https://www.instagram.com/hashtag/MyOrchestra) [#MyFamily](https://www.instagram.com/hashtag/MyFamily) [#MyFuture](https://www.instagram.com/hashtag/MyFuture) [#MYOIndy](https://www.instagram.com/hashtag/MYOIndy)

Tuition Payments: [myo@indianapolissymphony.org](mailto:myo@indianapolissymphony.org)

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# MYO Staff

Krystle Ford\*+  
Jordan Nelson+  
Betty Perry (1948 - 2022)

Director  
Interim Director 2024-2025  
MYO Founder & Artistic Director Emeritus

# Teachers

Jeremy Anderson  
Tyler Baker  
Mitchell Ballester^  
Sarah Binford\*\*\*  
Chrestien Bottoms\*+  
Aren Bucci\*+

Nealita Callahan  
Susan Chan^  
Shannon Crow\*\*\*  
Jennifer Farquhar\*^  
Kati Harrison\*  
James Highbaugh+

Lisa Kim\*  
Eric Lakanen\*  
Genevieve Miedema+  
Pasha Miller+  
Sean Patee-Huff  
Chloe Payack

\*5-9 years of service  
\*\*10-19 years of service  
\*\*\*20+ years of service

+MYO Alum  
^ISO Musician (current, retired, or sub)

# About The ISO

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra is a professional orchestra that performs at the Hilbert Circle Theater. The ISO presents a variety of programming for audiences across Indiana. The mission of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra is to inspire, entertain, educate and challenge through innovative programs and symphonic music performed at the highest artistic level.

# MYO Mission & Goals

MYO is a youth and family development program of the Indianapolis Symphony's Learning Community. MYO uses string music instruction to teach life skills, discourage at-risk behaviors, and keep young people committed to staying in school. We serve students from kindergarten to high school seniors and teach violin, viola, cello, and bass musicianship. MYO is an enrichment program, not a replacement for music instruction at school.

MYO believes that by developing the musician both individually and as a part of an ensemble, we strengthen the child in ways that are far-reaching into other aspects of his or her life. Therefore, our program is designed to provide two weekly experiences to each child - a private or semi-private lesson and an orchestra experience. Both experiences are mandatory for all MYO students. No exceptions.

The most critical component of the program is parental involvement. We believe that teaching the family as a whole provides the best support for each child and builds a stronger community. The primary way we do this is by having the adults in the child's life learn an instrument alongside him or her. We have a strong family contingent (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) rehearsing with the orchestra every week. Parents are expected to stay highly involved by:

- Attending lessons and orchestra rehearsals
- Reiterating techniques at home during practice sessions
- Practicing every day

*D Ensembles: Parents and guardians are expected to attend orchestra rehearsals with at least one parent playing alongside the student. Students in this age group and developmental stage need more personal attention and assistance. It is important that adults in the child's life fully understand what the child is expected to learn (and how to do it).*

*Orchestra A, B & C: Your children still need you! Please attend rehearsals, help with stands and chairs, and volunteer for the weekly dinners. The support you give as a MYO community member in this way shows our children that the adults in their lives are there for them, even as they learn and grow to be independent of us.*

## Student Expectations

Students are expected to come prepared for all rehearsals and lessons. This includes practicing music outside of rehearsals, bringing all necessary materials indicated on the supply list (pencils, rockstops, folders with music, shoulder rests, etc.) and making sure fingernails are clipped. Additionally, students are expected to follow the MYO behavior code explained in our policies and procedures.

## Overview

### Ensembles:

Orchestra A | High School Students

Orchestra B | High School Students

Orchestra C | Upper Elementary and Middle School Students

Orchestra D | K - Middle School Beginners (Debut, Primo & Secundo)

### Rehearsal Schedule

Orchestra A | Thursdays 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Orchestra B | Tuesdays 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Orchestra C | Saturdays 10:30am - 12:30pm

Orchestra D - Debut 1 & 2 | Saturdays 9am - 10am

Orchestra D - Dolce Primo 1 & 2 | Saturdays 10:30am - 11:30am

Orchestra D - Dolce Secundo | Saturdays 12pm - 1:30pm

Chamber Ensemble | Saturdays 1pm - 3pm

**\*\*Times are subject to change.**

## Location

All rehearsals, lessons, and recitals take place at Broadway United Methodist Church (BUMC) located at 609 E. 29th Street except for Saturday rehearsals and lessons which take place at Butler University's Lilly Hall. Some lessons may take place at partner sites depending on the teacher. Parking is available at BUMC. Please enter and exit through the main doors on 29th Street. Performances are held at public venues throughout Indianapolis, including Hilbert Circle Theatre, home of the Indianapolis Symphony.

# Registration & Membership

MYO has a long-standing tradition of commitment to families who are otherwise unable to access programs like this. Families of ALL income levels and backgrounds are invited to apply. First priority will be for returning members and siblings of returning members. New applicants through our partners and low-income families from the greater Indianapolis area will receive top priority as well. All other applicants will be admitted as space is available. Registration for returning students takes place during the spring. Please make sure you watch for the application to renew online. Failure to renew can result in membership suspension or termination. If offered, students are asked to support their school's music program by participating in a school music ensemble.

## Tuition Payments & Need-Based Scholarships

Tuition is \$250 for the year per student. Payment is due before the start of the season. Families with multiple children must adhere to any payment plan schedules. Failure to pay will result in member suspension or termination. Scholarship applications are available on the MYO registration page and are due August 1st. **Scholarships do not carry over from year to year. You must submit a new application each season.** Tuition is not prorated and is non-refundable. If a family leaves before the end of the season any remaining balance will still be due.

# Policies & Procedures

## Check-In

Young students are not permitted to enter or exit the building without a parent. Students in Orchestra A, B, or C must have a parent come inside the building to pick them up. Waiting outside on the curb for your ride is strictly prohibited. Parents must complete a release form online if the student is driving or riding with another family.

## Instruments

A limited number of MYO instruments are available upon request for students and parents. If you can rent or purchase an instrument or receive one through your school, you should utilize those resources before making a request. Priority is given to parents and those on scholarship. A fee will be charged for broken instruments. All MYO instruments will be collected at the end of every season.

## Inclement Weather

Notifications of any MYO cancellation will be sent by phone via the Remind App or forwarded to WTHR, FOX59, or WIBC.

## Personal Belongings

BUMC personnel and the ISO/MYO staff are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Take responsibility for your personal belongings and keep them safe at all times.

## Phones

MYO rehearsals and lessons are a NO PHONE ZONE. Students will be asked to leave their devices in the cell phone pockets located in the rehearsal room. Participating parents should limit phone use during rehearsal to urgent communication only. We expect parents of younger students to be fully present and engaged during lessons.

## Shared Spaces

Families are welcome to use shared spaces (hallways, atriums, and other designated areas) to relax between activities. However, our priority is on musical instruction, and if additional practice or rehearsal space is needed, we may ask families in those areas to either move to another area or keep noise to a minimum to not disrupt the learning taking place.

## Teachers and Staff

Teachers are not permitted to teach in their homes or the homes of their students. Teachers and staff are not permitted to provide transportation to students at any time.

## Volunteering

We ask all families to volunteer for MYO in some capacity. Invitations to volunteer at events are usually sent via email. Weekly orchestras also need parent volunteers to help with attendance and dinners.

# Behavior Code

MYO is not a “drop off” program. We expect children and their parents to take responsibility for their behavior while in any MYO venue. Please remember that you are responsible for supervising your child. Don’t assume that someone else is watching your child for you.

Disrespectful behavior towards others in the MYO community (staff, teachers, guests of MYO, peers, etc.) is NOT acceptable. This includes backtalking, name-calling, threats, and all forms of bullying including online harassment. Parents are expected to be respectful of other parents, staff, and volunteers at all times. If an adult is showing disrespect and the situation becomes unpleasant, please alert the staff on site.

Your child should come to each lesson and orchestra rehearsal prepared. All students should arrive at least 15 minutes early to set up stands and chairs, tune, and warm up. The lesson or rehearsal does not serve as practice time. Students are expected to practice at home regularly and bring their music, journal, pencil, instrument, and any required accessories (rosin, shoulder rest, rockstop, etc.).

Alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs, and firearms are prohibited for MYO students at all MYO functions.

Students must remain in the designated areas of each venue only. No wandering.

**Violation of the behavior code by a child OR parent may result in immediate termination from the program.**

# Communication

With over 100 families in the program, MYO must utilize an effective and efficient method of communication. We expect all families to check their email or phone for updates from MYO as it is your responsibility to stay informed! All major announcements or changes will come from the MYO email: MYO@indianapolissymphony.org. Updates and reminders will be sent by text via the Remind App. Please do not opt out of our communication methods. We send many important messages regarding rehearsals, events, registration, and other announcements.

The website is home to required paperwork (i.e. photo release) and the calendar - essentially information that doesn’t change throughout the season. If your home address, phone number, or email address changes, please notify us as soon as possible.

# Attendance Policy

A guiding philosophy of the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra is that professional responsibility is critical to musical excellence and the development of personal accountability. Supporting MYO students as a team of influence in their lives, our parent-teacher team is a unique gift to our students. We must recognize the importance of consistency, respect for time, and the value of commitment to help each student be prepared for a successful future.

Remember that modeling the behavior you want to see is an important demonstration to your child. Get up on Saturday mornings with plenty of time to leave for MYO rehearsal and communicate early with your teacher or administrator if a scheduling conflict arises. Plan school assignments, projects, and activities accordingly. Missing rehearsals to complete homework is not acceptable.

## Lessons

Private and semi-private lessons are a REQUIREMENT of all MYO students and are each student's best opportunity for personal growth.

Please note that all MYO students must study with an MYO instructor-NO EXCEPTIONS. We expect that each student will attend every scheduled lesson (24 for the season). In case of absence:

Contact your lesson teacher directly in the manner that you and your teacher agree upon (email, phone, text, etc.) at least 24 hours in advance. Do NOT call the MYO attendance hotline.

Tardiness will count as a half-absence.

Students are eligible to receive one make-up lesson per semester for a lesson canceled at least 24 hours in advance by the student and his or her family.

There are no makeups for individuals who miss semi-private lessons.

MYO hires teachers who are professional performers, and sometimes they may need to reschedule a lesson due to other professional commitments. Our teachers will provide your family with advance notice whenever it is necessary to cancel. If a teacher cancels a lesson, the missed lesson does not reflect negatively on the student. The teacher will arrange to make it up at a time that is convenient for your family and fits into the teacher's schedule.

## Orchestra Rehearsals & Concerts

Absences from rehearsals are detrimental to the orchestra's progress as a team and counterproductive to your child's personal growth as a valued member of this team. Please compare your school/activity schedules for conflicts with the MYO program as soon as you receive them. Notify the MYO office of specific conflicts no later than September 15 for fall/winter activities and January 15 for spring activities.

## Notification Procedure for Absences

Contact MYO Administration by emailing [myo@indianapolissymphony.org](mailto:myo@indianapolissymphony.org) or calling the attendance hotline (317-721-2667) and leaving a message. Email is preferred. Notifications should be sent at least 1 week in advance.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each rehearsal or at the check-in desk at the concert.

*There are no makeups for orchestra rehearsals.*

*Absences: Students are allowed no more than 3 absences for the season (including illness, scheduling conflicts, sports, etc.). Due to the large variance in school vacation schedules, we cannot guarantee that MYO breaks will line up with your family's school break schedule.*

We have a commitment to our students' participation in their school music programs and will allow greater leniency in this area only. However, we reserve the right to address significant numbers of conflicts related to this area. Severe illness or other extenuating circumstances will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Please communicate these circumstances with us as soon as possible. If a parent has a conflict (work, class, etc.) that will require a student to be late on a regular basis, contact us as soon as possible so we can work with you to find a solution.

## **ABSENCES FROM PERFORMANCES ARE NOT PERMITTED.**

Tardiness: We ask that you actively demonstrate respect for your fellow orchestra members and your teachers. This means being prepared, bringing everything you need, and arriving early. Tardiness for an orchestra player includes not being in your seat for the downbeat - the time rehearsal begins - or not being ready to rehearse at the start of rehearsal. If a student is still unpacking, tuning, or getting music out at the start of rehearsal, he or she may be counted as tardy. This especially pertains to older students in Orchestra A, B, and C! Tardiness and leaving early will be counted as a half absence. Remember that there are only 3 absences permitted for the year.

Our goal is for MYO students to feel comfortable in the world around them where expectations must be met (or better, exceeded) and respect should be both given and earned through their actions.

***Consequence for being absent more than 3 times:***

The student may be asked to demonstrate his or her competency of the orchestra music. Parent(s) and student may be called in for a conference with MYO teachers to discuss the family's commitment to MYO and ongoing participation. If the 3rd absence is reached a second time (missing 25% of orchestra rehearsals), the student's membership will be suspended immediately and is unlikely to be renewed.

***Consequence for missing a dress rehearsal:***

In the case of a missed dress rehearsal, the student will not be allowed to perform in the concert. A conference will take place to discuss the student's commitment and ongoing participation in MYO. Students who miss a dress rehearsal are expected to attend the concert as a volunteer and audience member.

***Consequence for missing an orchestra concert or solo recital (with or without notification):***

The student's membership will be suspended until we can meet with the parent(s) and student. Note: Any student who is unable to attend orchestra or participate in any MYO event because of his or her religious beliefs will be excused from such activities. The family should communicate any absences related to religious observations with their lesson teacher and the administrator at the beginning of the season.

## Fundraising Activities

There may be fundraisers organized by MYO, the ISO's development department, or the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Association (ISOA). All MYO students will be required to participate in fundraisers throughout the season.

**Donations**

Although the ISO does a fair amount of fundraising on behalf of MYO, we are always in need of donations to help subsidize the cost of membership. The actual cost of the program is around \$2,500 per student. Please visit the ISO home page or MYO webpage to donate.

Second Helpings - a local non-profit that rescues food, prepares meals, and offers culinary training - provides dinners to our families before Orchestra A and B rehearsals on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as Saturdays at noon after Orchestra D rehearsal. We always need disposable plates, forks, napkins, and bowls, as well as beverages. Please consider donating these items by bringing them directly to the church.

Donated recital and concert attire will also be accepted. Please look out for emails this season regarding clothing donations.

Instrument donations are always welcome. We accept violins, violas, cellos, and basses in good working condition. Donors who need a tax donation form will need to obtain an appraisal from an instrument shop.

Visit the webpage below for more info on donations:

<https://www.indianapolissymphony.org/learn/myo/support/>

# Assessment

While MYO does not hold auditions for entry into the program, auditions and adjudications are held periodically throughout the year. Seating auditions for Orchestra A, B, and C may be held either publicly in the rehearsal or privately.

Adjudications are held to formally assess the current ability levels of all students. The results are used only to provide feedback, establish benchmarks, and measure progress for each child. Mock interviews are held in the spring for all orchestra members who receive recommendations from their teacher or conductor to move from Orchestra C to B or Orchestra B to A. These students will be required to create a resume and dress in formal business attire for the interview. Orchestra D members invited to move to Orchestra C will simply be notified. No interview is necessary.

# Practicing & Student Progress

Parents can help our student musicians practice by doing all of the following:

- Keep the student's practice area quiet and calm. Much like studying, practicing an instrument is mostly mental.
- Make sure the student's practice area allows them to sit or stand in the same position used during rehearsals or lessons.
- Try to help your child have a regular practice time, preferably when you are home to hear them practice or practice with them!
- Set up a time every week for your child to perform music for you or your family and friends.
- Have your child explain what his or her plan is for the next practice session.
- Ask about upcoming MYO events and what the musician is excited about!

**LET'S HAVE A GREAT YEAR!**