



2026-27 HANDBOOK

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Mary Morton Parsons Education Fund
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To make a gift to the Richmond Symphony please visit
www.richmondsymphony.com/give

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RICHMOND
PERFORMING
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RICHMOND SYMPHONY SCHOOL OF MUSIC MISSION STATEMENT

The Richmond Symphony performs, teaches, and champions music to inspire and unite our communities.

To that end, the Richmond Symphony School of Music upholds four core values:

1.

To create lasting human connections, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and enrich human lives through the unique power of music.

2.

To provide access and service to all members of the community.

3.

To pursue excellence in performance and education.

4.

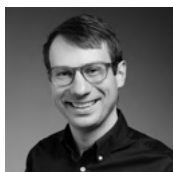
To ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion.

YOP ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



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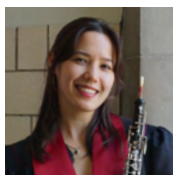
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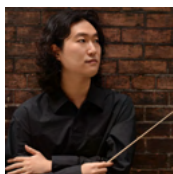
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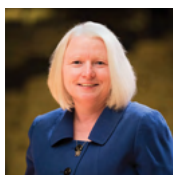
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YOP ARTISTIC STAFF



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Conductor, Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra
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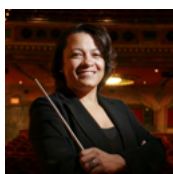
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Conductor, Youth Concert Orchestra
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Melissa Jones

Conductor, Camerata Strings
Orchestra Director, Collegiate School



Christie-Jo Adams

Conductor, String Sinfonietta
Coordinator for PreK-12 Arts Education,
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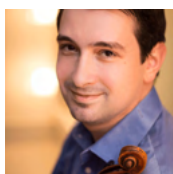
Dr. Justin Alexander

Director, Percussion Ensemble
Associate Professor of Music and Director of Percussion
Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University



Dana McComb

Honors Chamber Music Coach
Adjunct Instructor of Cello, Virginia Commonwealth University



Adrian Pinteá

Honors Chamber Music Coach
Associate Concertmaster, Richmond Symphony

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About the Youth Orchestra Program

The Richmond Symphony's flagship educational program, founded in 1962, consists of five ensembles providing beginning to advanced musical training. As the premier orchestral training program of central Virginia, students participate in weekly rehearsals, coaching and masterclasses by Richmond Symphony musicians, mentoring, and other musical and social activities. The Youth Orchestra Program (YOP) is open to violin, viola, cello, bass, flute/piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, harp, and percussion students in elementary through high school.



2

Community Guidelines

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of YOP are part of the Richmond Symphony community and serve as ambassadors for the organization. Students are expected to act in a professional manner while part of their classes or ensembles. Expectations of students include thorough preparation, good manners at all rehearsals, classes, and concerts, and respect for conductors, staff, parent representatives, volunteers, and rehearsal/concert facilities.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR OR VIOLENCE

No aggressive or violent behavior will be tolerated. If at any point a student becomes physically aggressive, creating safety concerns for others, the student will be removed from rehearsal/class by a staff member. A phone call will be made to a parent/guardian to pick the student up, and a meeting will be held to discuss the student's future participation in the Youth Orchestra Program. Any aggressive or violent behavior is grounds for immediate dismissal.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND WEAPONS

No alcohol, other intoxicating substances, controlled substances, tobacco, or weapons of any kind are allowed at YOP classes or rehearsals at any venue, including but not limited to the Dominion Energy Center and Richmond's First Baptist Church. Drug and alcohol use are grounds for dismissal from YOP. Possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon anywhere during a YOP event is cause for automatic dismissal from YOP.



PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

YOP is committed to providing student musicians an opportunity to advance their skills in a welcoming environment that will challenge and nurture their musical development. Parents/guardians are valued partners in their student's music education, and we ask that they abide by the following guidelines in supporting their musician's participation in YOP:

- Model positive, responsible behavior with regard to YOP commitments, and expect your student to do the same.
- Emphasize the importance of values like respect, preparedness, cooperation, and teamwork to ultimately foster musical improvement and enjoyment of the art form.
- Instill confidence in your student's musical ability by encouraging individual improvement rather than drawing comparisons to other student musicians.
- Support your student's individual ownership and responsibility for musical excellence through the use of respectful collaboration and communication with YOP staff, conductors, and peers.

Parents/guardians, conductors, YOP staff, and student musicians are considered members of a team dedicated to the musical development of the ensemble. Parents/guardians who do not abide by the values outlined above jeopardize their student's participation in YOP.

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

The Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra Program is very proud to support in-school music education. Our policy states that every YOP musician must participate in their respective school band or orchestra program if class instruction is offered on their instrument during the school day. If a legitimate scheduling conflict prevents the student from enrolling in his or her school ensemble, verification of their past/intended enrollment in the school music program must be confirmed by their band or orchestra teacher. If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact YOP staff at education@richmondsymphony.com.



REFUNDS & WITHDRAWAL/DROPPING OUT

All YOP students are expected to make a full commitment through the length of their respective ensemble's season. If you must drop out at any point, please email education@richmondsymphony.com at least two weeks in advance. A full refund is available if the student gives notice to withdraw before the third rehearsal. After this point, no refund will be granted if there is a need to withdraw. As a courtesy, please inform your teacher/conductor of your withdrawal. Students who withdraw from YOP mid-year forfeit their seat in their ensemble and will need to audition during the annual auditions to regain entrance into the program.

PHOTO/VIDEO WAIVER

The Youth Orchestra Program will occasionally hire a photographer or videographer to document rehearsals, dress rehearsals and/or concerts. These photos/videos may be used in publicity items (website, social media, programs, ads, etc.) pertaining to YOP programming. Last names and personal information will not be associated with images. To opt out, please email education@richmondsymphony.com.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Our Youth Orchestra Program has an active social media presence! Follow us on [Instagram](#) (@richmondsymphonysom) and [Facebook](#) (Richmond Symphony School of Music) to see peeks behind the scenes, student spotlights, performance videos, and more, as well as other news about the Richmond Symphony School of Music.



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Financials

TUITION

Tuition for the 2026–27 season (August 2026–May 2027):

RSYO: \$725

YCO: \$625

Camerata: \$560

Sinfonietta: \$485

Percussion Ensemble: \$725

TUITION PAYMENT DEADLINE

Tuition must be paid by the third week of rehearsal. Students will be placed on probation if payments or payment arrangements are not made by this deadline. Students may be removed from the program if payment or payment arrangement is not made by the fifth week of rehearsal.

FINANCIAL AID

We believe every student should have the opportunity to participate in our programs. Need-based financial assistance is available for families for whom tuition would otherwise be a barrier. In addition to need-based assistance, YOP provides discounts on tuition to families with multiple children in the program and payment plans upon request. To learn more or request assistance, please email education@richmondsymphony.com.

The YOP tuition assistance program is supported by the Music Education Scholarship Fund of the Richmond Symphony Endowment.

RICHMOND SYMPHONY TICKETS AND SPECIAL OFFERS

Students 18 and under qualify for a Child ticket. Child tickets are FREE for most Symphony Series concerts during the current Richmond Symphony season. Visit the Richmond Symphony website and select the concert you are interested in. There will be a drop-down menu where you can choose the "Child" price code. This will change your balance for this ticket to \$0.00.

Additional special offers for Richmond Symphony concerts and events will be sent via email.

4 YOP Membership

YOP ORIENTATION

A virtual Youth Orchestra Program orientation will be held online at the start of the season for all parents/guardians and students in the YOP. This meeting will cover important policies and calendar items. This season's orientation will take place on Wednesday, August 19, 2026—more information will be sent via email closer to the start of season.

ATTENDANCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

One of the guiding philosophies of the Youth Orchestra Program is that personal responsibility is as important as musical excellence. By accepting membership into YOP, our musicians acknowledge a serious commitment to musical training and make YOP participation a high priority. YOP conductors prepare rehearsal schedules and concert programs based on full and punctual attendance from every musician.

Students should carefully review their schedules and try to work out conflicts well in advance to try to avoid an absence. As soon as you are aware of an absence, early departure, or late arrival, please complete the online Absence Notification Form by clicking [here](https://linktr.ee/richmondssymphonyyop) (linktr.ee/richmondssymphonyyop) and scrolling to "Youth Orchestra Program." Official notice of absences, tardy, early dismissal, etc. must be submitted through the Absence Notification Form.

SINFONIETTA, CAMERATA, AND YCO:

Fall concert cycle (August–November): Students are allowed no more than two (2) non-consecutive absences, regardless of reason.

Spring concert cycle (December–May): Students are allowed no more than three (3) non-consecutive absences, regardless of reason.

RSYO:

Students are allowed two (2) absences per concert cycle.

If a student needs to miss an additional rehearsal during the concert cycle, permission will need to be received from the conductor. Absences will not be marked as excused or unexcused but simply as an absence. The reason for the absence is not the issue; it is the absence itself.

If a student reaches their maximum amount of absences for the concert cycle, they will receive a warning from the YOP Team. If a student is absent from a dress rehearsal, or if absences continue after the warning, participation in the upcoming concert will be at the discretion of the conductor and may require an additional audition of the musician's part and/or a meeting with the student and parent/guardian. Absences due to extenuating circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

SEATING AUDITIONS

Seating auditions may take place at the Camerata, YCO, and RSYO levels. Seating auditions can take place on a regular rehearsal day or virtually. Audition excerpts will consist of pieces from the upcoming concert cycle and will be made available to students no earlier than 3 weeks in advance of the scheduled audition. A make-up audition date will be available before the audition date only. No students will be heard after the scheduled audition date.

Student musicians will be evaluated on musicality (phrasing, dynamics, etc.), rhythmic & note accuracy, preparedness, fluency, and intonation in the seating audition. Other factors including weekly attendance, professionalism, preparedness and student leadership also play a role in final decisions regarding musician seating. Please note that seating assignments are not “permanent”—the conductor may find it necessary to alter seating at any point during the concert cycle.

Seating auditions are a useful tool for the conductor to track the progress of each student in the ensemble. Students are encouraged to approach their conductor with questions about the audition and/or feedback.

TARDINESS/EARLY DEPARTURE

Musicians are marked tardy if they are not in their seat, tuned, with their music and a pencil on the stand by the beginning of the rehearsal or sectional. Arriving late or leaving early is counted as one half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of an absence.

STUDENT PREPAREDNESS

If it appears to a conductor that a student is struggling or unprepared for a concert, the student may be asked to play privately for the conductor. At the conductor’s discretion, students may be asked to not perform in the concert if the student’s progress is not comparable to the rest of the orchestra, or if the repertoire is beyond the student’s technical ability.

PROBATION, CONSULTATIONS, AND LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in YOP is an earned privilege. All YOP members and parents should be aware that repeated absences, tardiness, or serious and/or continued policy violations are all grounds for review from YOP. If behavioral issues or more than the allotted number of absences arise per concert cycle, a student may be placed on probation. This will result in a consultation between the member in question, their parent(s)/guardian(s), the orchestra conductor, and Richmond Symphony staff members. Failure to address the issues outlined in the consultation could result in dismissal from the program.

AUDITIONS

Annual auditions for new membership take place in June and on an as-needed basis in November. The only opportunity for current members to audition for a more advanced ensemble is in June. Please visit our website for more information regarding audition requirements or contact the YOP Team directly at education@richmondsymphony.com.

Please refer to the Richmond Symphony School of Music website (www.richmondsymphonysom.com) throughout the year for date postings and audition requirements for both current and new students. Requirements typically include scales and prepared solo(s).

Following the audition, each student will receive an email within two to four weeks outlining the results of the audition. Registration materials will be emailed in mid-summer.



REHEARSALS AND SECTIONALS

Students are expected to arrive at rehearsal at least 15 minutes early and sign in with a parent representative or staff member. Musicians not signed in will be marked absent. Students should be in their seats and ready to rehearse at least 10 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal, and are expected to remain on location for the full duration of rehearsal until dismissal unless otherwise communicated with the Richmond Symphony staff member on site. Please reference the YOP calendar, given to students at their first rehearsal, for a complete and up-to-date schedule of rehearsals, sectionals, and other events. Calendars may also be found digitally by clicking [here](https://linktr.ee/richmondsymphonyyop) (linktr.ee/richmondsymphonyyop).

REHEARSAL LOCATIONS & TIMES FOR THE 2026–27 SEASON

String Sinfonietta:

WHEN: Mondays from 5:00–6:30pm

WHERE: Richmond's First Baptist Church

2709 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220

Camerata Strings:

WHEN: Mondays from 5:00–6:45pm

WHERE: Richmond's First Baptist Church

2709 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220

Youth Concert Orchestra (YCO):

WHEN: Mondays from 5:00–7:00pm

WHERE: Mooney Hall at Dominion Energy Center

612 E. Grace Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra (RSYO):

WHEN: Tuesdays from 5:00–7:30pm

WHERE: Mooney Hall at Dominion Energy Center

612 E. Grace Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Percussion Ensemble:

WHEN: Primary rehearsal time: Sundays from 3:00–5:00pm

WHERE: VCU Percussion Studio

922 Park Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220

Additional rehearsals with RSYO and YCO as scheduled (see calendar for details)

RSYO Honors Chamber Ensembles:

WHEN: Mondays from 5:00–7:00pm

WHERE: Richmond's First Baptist Church

2709 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220

WHAT TO BRING TO REHEARSAL

It is very important for every student to come prepared to rehearsal. Students are responsible for bringing their instrument, music stand (labeled with your name), pencil, water bottle, and music. The use of cell phones for any purpose beyond supporting work in rehearsal is prohibited (e.g. for use as a metronome, tuner, or recording device, etc.).

SNACK

Each rehearsal, students are given 10-15 minutes to enjoy a snack break. We will purchase snacks to start off our supply, but we ask for each family to contribute individually-wrapped, **nut-free** snacks at one rehearsal per year. The large snack packs found in bulk (~40 snacks per pack) are great for YOP! To sign up to bring snacks, click [here](https://linktr.ee/richmondsymphonyyop) (linktr.ee/richmondsymphonyyop) and scroll to "Snack Sign-Up." Please be sure to sign up for a rehearsal at which you will provide snacks.

LOST MUSIC

We expect students to be responsible with the music that is provided to them. Please notify the YOP team (education@richmondsymphony.com) if music is lost so that replacement materials are ready before or at the start of rehearsal.

TRANSPORTATION

Students must arrange for their own transportation to and from rehearsals and concerts. Families who opt in for the carpool option when registering will receive access to a carpool list sorted by school. Families are to make their own carpool arrangements.

Students must be picked up immediately following each rehearsal. Repeated failure to pick up students in a timely fashion may result in a consultation between parents and YOP staff.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If there is inclement weather, a decision to delay or cancel rehearsal will be made as early as possible. Every family should make their own decision regarding attendance based on their local road conditions and the safety issues. Announcements to delay or cancel a rehearsal will be communicated to all students and families by email and posted on YOP social media channels.

FACILITY RULES

Remember, we are guests! Each facility and its staff must receive the utmost respect from YOP students and parents. If any misbehavior is reported, a warning email will be sent to the student's parents or guardians. Food, beverages (with the exception of a water bottle), and gum are not allowed at rehearsal unless provided by the parent representatives. Wandering around the facility, except in designated rehearsal areas, is not permitted.

PARKING

RICHMOND'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

There is free and ample parking available for YOP rehearsals at Richmond's First Baptist Church. This parking lot is located at the entrance of the church on N. Mulberry Street between Park Avenue and Monument Avenue.

DOMINION ENERGY CENTER

Our recommended deck for students to park in is the Second Presbyterian Parking Deck (5 N. 5th Street, Richmond, VA 23219). The evening rate to park in this deck is \$7; this rate takes effect starting at 4:00pm. Street parking may also be found in the area—if opting to park on the street, please pay close attention to signs and ensure that you pay any applicable parking fees.

Carpool drop-off and pick-up will be available at the Dominion Energy Center for families wishing to avoid the expense of parking. Parent representatives, YOP staff, and building security will be present and visible to provide peace of mind regarding student safety.



5 Concerts

DRESS REHEARSAL AND CONCERT ATTENDANCE

Dress rehearsal and concert attendance is mandatory. Missing a dress rehearsal and/or concert may jeopardize your membership in YOP or result in the need to re-audition for subsequent seasons. Please review the concert schedule before committing to YOP. If you foresee a conflict, please notify the YOP Team immediately at education@richmondsymphony.com. Requests to be excused from a concert need to be submitted in writing and signed by the student and parent/guardian. A response will be sent via email. If a dress rehearsal is missed for any reason, the student's participation in the concert is at the discretion of the conductor.

CONCERT DETAILS

A concert worksheet will be sent home with the musician prior to each concert. The concert worksheet will include dress rehearsal time/location, concert attire, directions and parking information and any other details pertaining to the performance. Concert worksheets will also be sent via email prior to the concert.

CONCERT DATES

Please reference the YOP calendar, given to students at their first rehearsal, for a complete and up-to-date schedule of concerts and events.



CONCERT ATTIRE

A concert dress code is enforced so that the audience will stay focused on the music during the performance and will not be distracted by individuals in the ensemble. If a musician comes to a concert in unacceptable attire, they will not be allowed on stage until dressed appropriately.

RSYO & YCO

OPTION 1:

- Black dress pants or floor-length skirt
- Black top (no tank tops; shoulders must be covered)
- Black dress shoes (closed toe)
- Black tights or trouser socks
- Jewelry should be limited and modest, and should not impede movement

OPTION 2:

- Black tuxedo
- Black tuxedo bow tie
- White tuxedo shirt
- Black dress shoes
- Black socks
- Jewelry should be limited and modest, and should not impede movement

CAMERATA AND SINFONIETTA

- Black dress pants or floor length skirt
- White top (no tank tops; shoulders must be covered)
- Black dress shoes (closed toe)
- Black tights or trouser socks
- Optional: Long black necktie
- Jewelry should be limited and modest, and should not impede movement

