

ILLINOIS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

Parent and Musician Handbook

2024-2025

Illinois Symphony Orchestra
Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras
501 West Elliot Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702

(217) 522-2838

www.ilsymphony.org

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This handbook is intended to offer guidance regarding participation in the Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras. To assist in an enriching and productive season, we encourage you to read this handbook in its entirety and use it as a resource for information. Please note that the information and schedules in this handbook are subject to change throughout the season. If significant changes are made, information will be updated on our website and/or an email notification will be sent to families.

MISSION STATEMENT

Illinois Symphony Orchestra Mission: *To inspire our audiences through exceptional live orchestral performances and programs.*

ISYO Program Purpose Statement: *The ISYO inspires young musicians through quality orchestral education, musical exploration, and enriching performance opportunities.*

ISYO OFFICES

Illinois Symphony Orchestra
Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras
501 West Elliot Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702

(217) 522-2838

Office Hours: By appointment only, contact ISYO by phone or email

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Jackie Mitra	Youth Orchestras and Community Education Programs Manager	jmitra@ilsymphony.org (217) 522-2838 Ext. 6
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ARTISTIC STAFF

Jake Woollen	Conductor Concert Orchestra Symphony Orchestra	jwoollen@ilsymphony.org (217) 522-2838 Ext. 7
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2024-2025 ISYO SEASON CALENDAR

(Subject to change, members will be updated for any TBD listings)

Date	Time	Location	Event
8/18/2024	10:00 am-8:00 pm	Grant Conservatory	Auditions for current ISYO musicians <u>wanting to move up to next ensemble & any musicians new to ISYO</u> Chair placements for SO & CO
8/20/2024	4:00-8:30 pm	Grant Conservatory	Auditions for current ISYO musicians <u>wanting to move up to next ensemble & any musicians new to ISYO</u> Chair placements for SO & CO
8/21/2024	4:00-8:30 pm	Grant Conservatory	Auditions for current ISYO musicians <u>wanting to move up to next ensemble & any musicians new to ISYO</u> Chair placements for SO & CO
8/25/2024	1:00-3:30 pm	Grant Conservatory	Symphony Orchestra (SO) Weekly Rehearsals Begin (Woollen)
8/25/2024	3:30-4:00 pm	Grant Conservatory	CO & SO Parent/Guardian and musician meeting (required)
8/25/2024	4:00-5:30 pm	Grant Conservatory	Concert Orchestra (CO) Weekly Rehearsals Begin (Woollen)
8/25/2024	6:00-8:30 pm	Washington Park	Season Kickoff potluck party! ALL ensembles and families are invited (optional)
8/27/2024	5:30-6:30 pm	Grant Conservatory	Community Junior Strings Rehearsals begin (Emmons) (other Junior Strings schedules are TBD and will be sent out individually)
8/27/2024	6:30-8:00pm	Grant Conservatory	Preparatory Orchestra (PO) Rehearsals begin (Emmons & Hsieh)
9/1-9/2/2024	-	-	NO REHEARSALS OR CLASSES: LABOR DAY WEEKEND
9/3/2024	6:45-7:30 pm	Grant Conservatory	Community Starter Strings classes begin (Emmons) (other Starter Strings schedules are TBD, host schools will notify families of presentations & parent meetings)
10/18/2024	6:00-9:30 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	ISYO @ ISO – Pizza Party and ISO Concert (open to Junior Strings/PO/CO/SO musicians)
10/20/2024	-	-	Concerto Competition registration deadline (open to CO & SO musicians)
11/7/2024	5:30 and/or 7:30-10:00 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	ISYO @ ISO – Backstage dinner with ISO musicians and ISO rehearsal visit (open to CO & SO musicians)
11/9/2024	12:00-1:30 pm	First Presbyterian Church, Springfield	ISYO Masterclass (optional, open to the public) – Information will be sent out to musicians & families
11/10/2024	10:30-12:30 pm	Grant Conservatory	Concerto Competition (open to CO & SO musicians)
11/19/2024	7:00-9:00 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	Dress rehearsal at UIS – Symphony Orchestra musicians only (with UISO)
11/24/2024	3:30-6:00 pm (plus ensemble soundcheck time)	UIS Performing Arts Center	Autumn Orchestra Festival Concert with UIS Orchestra – SO/CO/PO & Junior Strings Soundcheck times TBD 3:30 pm CALL TIME 4:00-6:00 pm CONCERT
11/27-11/29/2024	-	-	NO REHEARSALS OR CLASSES: THANKSGIVING BREAK
12/1/2024	Regular schedule	Grant Conservatory	CO & SO rehearsals as scheduled
12/8/2024	Regular schedule	Grant Conservatory	Dress rehearsal – CO & SO (required)

12/8/2024	6:00-7:00 pm	Grant Conservatory	Chamber Music Concert 5:30 pm – CALL TIME 6:00 pm - CONCERT
12/13/2024	4:00-4:30 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	Side-by-side Rehearsal with ISO – SO only
12/13/2024	6:45-9:30 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	Side-by side Holiday Pops Concert with ISO – SO musicians only 7:00 pm CALL TIME/7:30-9:30 pm CONCERT
12/15/2024	3:30-5:30 pm (plus ensemble soundcheck time)	Sacred Heart-Griffin High School (1200 W. Washington Springfield, IL 62702)	Holiday Concert - Symphony/Concert/Preparatory Orchestras Soundcheck times TBD 3:30 pm – CALL TIME 4:00-5:30 pm – CONCERT
12/21/2024-1/4/2025	-	-	NO REHEARSALS: WINTER BREAK
1/5/2025	-	All Scheduled Sites	Regular Rehearsal & Class Schedule Resumes for ALL Ensembles, unless school sites are closed
1/18/2025	12:00-1:30 pm	First Presbyterian Church, Springfield	ISYO Masterclass (optional, open to the public) – Information will be sent out to musicians & families
1/25/2025	Group 1: 1:00 pm Group 2: 3:00 pm Group 3: 5:00 pm	Grant Conservatory	Starter Strings Showcase – all Starter Strings ensembles School group assignments TBD (information will be sent out to families)
2/6/2025	5:30 and/or 7:30-10:00 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	ISYO @ ISO – Backstage dinner with ISO musicians and ISO rehearsal visit (open to CO & SO musicians)
2/16/2025	Regular schedule	Grant Conservatory	Dress rehearsal – CO & SO
2/23/2025	3:30-5:30 pm (Plus ensemble soundcheck time)	TBD	Concerto Competition Concert – PO, CO, & SO 1:30-2:30 pm – SO Soundcheck 2:30-3:00 pm – CO Soundcheck 3:00-3:30 pm – PO Soundcheck 3:30 pm CALL TIME 4:00-5:30 pm CONCERT
3/7/2025	7:30-9:30 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	Starter Strings at the Symphony event – attending the ISO Family Pops concert (information will be sent out to families)
3/15-3/30/2025	-	-	Practice-A-Thon (information will be sent out)
3/15-3/22/2025	-	-	NO REHEARSALS: SPRING BREAK
4/5/2025	12:00-1:30 pm	First Presbyterian Church, Springfield	ISYO Masterclass (optional, open to the public) – Information will be sent out to musicians & families
4/12/2025 (tentative)	TBD	-	St. Louis Symphony Orchestra trip (open to SO & CO musicians, other ensembles as space allows)
4/22/2025	6:45-9:00 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	Dress Rehearsal at UIS – SO musicians only (with UISO)
4/27/2025	3:30-6:30 pm (As well as ensemble soundcheck times)	UIS Performing Arts Center	Spring Showcase Concert with UIS Orchestra - All Ensembles 1:00-1:45 pm – UISO/SO Soundcheck 1:45-2:15 pm - CO Soundcheck 2:15-2:45 pm - PO Soundcheck 2:45-3:30 pm – Starter Strings and JS Soundcheck 3:30 pm CALL TIME 4:00-6:30 pm CONCERT

5/2/2025	6:00-9:30 pm	UIS Performing Arts Center	ISYO @ ISO – Pizza Party and ISO Concert (open to Junior Strings/PO/CO/SO musicians)
5/3/2025	10:00am-1:00pm	Grant Conservatory	Auditions for current ISYO musicians <u>wanting to move up to next ensemble and any musicians new to ISYO</u>
5/4/2025	10:00am-12:00pm	Grant Conservatory	Auditions for current ISYO musicians <u>wanting to move up to next ensemble and any musicians new to ISYO</u>
5/6/2025	5:30-8:00 pm	Grant Conservatory	Auditions for current ISYO musicians <u>wanting to move up to next ensemble and any musicians new to ISYO</u>
5/11/2025	Regular schedule	Grant Conservatory	SO & CO dress rehearsal
5/18/2025	6:00-8:30 pm	Washington Park	End of season potluck party – ALL ensembles and families are invited (optional)
5/18/2025	3:30-5:30 pm (As well as ensemble soundchecks)	Sacred Heart-Griffin High School 1200 W. Washington Springfield, IL 62702	Season Send-Off Concert – PO, CO, SO, & Chamber Groups Soundchecks TBD 3:30 pm - CALL TIME 4:00-5:30 pm - CONCERT
5/19-5/23/2025	-	-	Final Week of Starter Strings & Junior Strings classes
5/30-6/1/2025 (tentative)	-	-	Heart of Illinois Festival 2025 (open to interested CO & SO musicians)
TBD	TBD	TBD	Summer Strings Camp (information will be sent out)

For questions regarding the calendar, please contact ISYO & Education Programs Manager Jackie Mitra at jmitra@ilsymphony.org or at (217) 522-2838 Ext. 6.

Ensemble key:

SO – Symphony Orchestra
CO – Concert Orchestra
PO – Preparatory Orchestra
JS – Junior Strings
SS – Starter Strings

School days off, emergency closures, and cancellations:

School days off: Families who have musicians in ISYO classes that are on-site in schools should follow their individual school calendars regarding school days off. Sometimes school breaks may be different than the ISYO calendar, so please follow your school calendar first and communicate with your instructor regarding any dates that may differ.

Inclement weather/class cancellations: If a school closes due to weather or another emergency, ISYO classes that take place in that school will not be held that day. Occasionally, schools have a late start due to cold, in which case there would be no morning ISYO classes. If school is cancelled early due to the weather, there will be no after-school ISYO classes. If a school is open, but it is not possible for your instructor to travel to your class due to the weather or an emergency, we will notify the school as soon as possible regarding the need to cancel a class.

Ensembles held at Grant Conservatory: We will monitor any weather situation and make any determinations regarding cancellations. If an ensemble held at Grant Conservatory is cancelled, families will be notified by email at least two hours before the cancellation.

ENSEMBLE BENCHMARKS

For complete and up-to-date descriptions of each ensemble, visit our website: www.ilsymphony.org. The following are approximate playing proficiency levels necessary for placement into each of the respective ensembles:

Starter Strings

Musicians with no prior playing experience. During their first year of instruction, musicians should master the first half of “Sound Innovations for Strings: Book 1.”

Junior Strings

Musicians in Junior Strings will continue to work through Book 1 of Sound Innovations for Strings. At a minimum, musicians should be able to hold their instrument and bow correctly, play a D major scale, be able to play in tune by placing fingers correctly on the finger tapes, be able to produce a good tone, and accurately perform basic rhythms. Musicians are encouraged to study privately and should be working through “Suzuki Book 1” or musical literature that is of an equivalent level.

Preparatory Orchestra

Preparatory Orchestra musicians should have, at a minimum, completed and mastered all of the skills covered in “Sound Innovations for Strings: Book 1.” Musicians are expected to demonstrate proper posture, position, and bow grip. They should be able to name and read notes on all 4 strings in first position from Book 1 and be able to apply the correct finger patterns to play pieces and scales in the keys of D, G, and C major. Musicians should be able to count and perform simple rhythms, which include whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 meters. They should be able to play the following bowing articulations: legato, détaché, staccato, 2 & 3 note slurs, and hooked bowings. Musicians should consistently demonstrate accurate intonation, rhythm, articulations, bowings, and continue developing good tone quality. Musicians are strongly encouraged to study privately and should be working through “Suzuki Book 1” and “Suzuki Book 2” or musical literature that is of an equivalent level.

Concert Orchestra

Concert Orchestra musicians should have completed and mastered all the skills covered in level 2 “Sound Innovations for String Orchestra/Band” or “Essential Elements for Strings/Band.” Students should demonstrate correct posture, position, and bow grip (strings). All students should be able to play pieces and scales in the keys of C, G, D, A, F, and Bb major. String students should be actively learning 3rd position and beyond. In addition to understanding basic rhythms, musicians should be able to play the following advanced rhythms: dotted quarter, sixteenth, dotted eighth, and triplet note and rest patterns in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, and mixed meter rhythms along with simple syncopation. Musicians are expected to consistently demonstrate accurate intonation, rhythms, articulations, bowings, dynamics, and play with a good tone. Musicians are strongly encouraged to study privately, and string students should be working through “Suzuki Book 3” and “Suzuki Book 4” or literature that is of an equivalent level.

Symphony Orchestra

Musicians should be comfortable playing multi-octave scales and repertoire in concert keys up to 4 sharps and 4 flats. Woodwinds and brass players should have a well-developed range and advanced technical abilities (multiple tongue articulations, advanced breath and sound quality control, etc.). String players should be comfortable shifting and using vibrato, as well as using a variety of bow strokes (détaché, spiccato, martelé, etc.). Percussionists will be expected to utilize timpani, auxiliary, and mallet techniques.

MEMBERSHIP POLICIES

Membership in ISYO ensembles is open to students in grades 1-12. Musicians must meet the benchmarks for a given ensemble and qualify in the audition process, if applicable.

Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras members spend a significant amount of time and energy in weekly rehearsals as well as individual practice and preparation at home. By accepting membership into Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras, each musician is expected to attend all rehearsals, performances, and special events in which their ensemble participates.

TUITION

Tuition fees help offset the costs of administration, artistic direction, venue and rehearsal space rentals, sheet music, and more. Full tuition payment or payment plan enrollment is due prior to the beginning of rehearsals. If you would like to request financial assistance options for tuition, please email Jackie Mitra at jmitra@ilsymphony.org. Tuition will not be refunded if your child withdraws or is dismissed from the program. Tuition will not be prorated for missed rehearsals or withdrawal from the program.

Tuition fees are as follows:

- Starter Strings - \$200
- Junior Strings - \$250
- Preparatory Orchestra - \$250
- Concert Orchestra - \$300
- Symphony Orchestra - \$350

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Music is sent out digitally and through a shared drive. Musicians are responsible for bringing their folder, music and/or any required method books to each rehearsal. Original sheet music for use in Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras ensembles is issued to musicians on loan and members are responsible for the care, maintenance and return of sheet music. Members will be charged replacement costs for any lost or damaged piece of original music. Method books are not provided by ISYO and will need to be purchased by families. Required method books for the season are as follows:

Starter Strings

- Sound Innovations for Strings – Book 1

Junior Strings

- Sound Innovations for Strings - Book 1 (2nd half)

Preparatory Orchestra

- Sound Innovations for Strings - Book 2

AUDITIONS

The Conductor will conduct auditions, with assistance from qualified adjudicators of their choosing. Please note the following about auditions:

- Format: scales, prepared solos, and sight reading
- No accompaniment is allowed during the audition
- Auditions will be private
- Applicants will be informed of their acceptance and orchestral placement shortly following the auditions

Auditions to join ISYO or to audition up to a higher-level ensemble will take place in both May and August. Potential new members may also contact the ISYO office to schedule an audition at any time throughout the orchestra season at (217) 522-2838 Ext. 6 or at jmitra@ilsymphony.org.

ENSEMBLE PLACEMENT AND SEATING

Ensemble and seating assignments are made at the discretion of the ensemble conductors, whose decisions are final. ISYO encourages all musicians to take pride in their playing, learning, and contributions to the orchestra in all ensembles and seating assignments.

The ensemble conductors consider these factors when making seating assignments:

- Audition evaluations
- The best educational setting for individual members
- The need for strength and balance within the sections and among the orchestras
- The student's maturity and leadership ability

The ensemble conductors will assign all principal seats (strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion). The ensemble conductors may rotate seating for educational purposes at any rehearsal and may change seating assignments at any time during the year. Any questions regarding seating should be addressed to the Conductor.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Membership in ISYO is a serious commitment. Just as in other team activities (sports, theater, clubs, etc.), attendance is essential for both individuals and the ensemble as a whole. An individual absence affects the entire ensemble. Together, we are more than the sum of our parts. Members are expected to adhere to the following attendance policies in order to help the entire organization grow and reach its fullest potential.

Rehearsal Absences

It is expected that all members attend all rehearsals in a concert cycle to be appropriately prepared for the concert. ISYO reserves the right to address excessive absences with musicians and/or their parent or guardian.

Reporting an Absence

All absences should be reported through the Absence Report Form on our website, www.ilsymphony.org, and be reported as soon as possible. For an absence to be considered "excused", it should be submitted no later than 24 hours prior to rehearsal. In cases of illness or emergency, absences should be submitted no later than 12:00 pm the day of rehearsal. Please report any known upcoming absences at the beginning of the concert cycle. All absences should be reported through the Absence Report Form on our website, www.ilsymphony.org.

Dress Rehearsal and Concert Attendance

Attendance at dress rehearsals and concerts is mandatory except for an emergency. In the event of an emergency, please notify us as soon as possible email to jmitra@ilsymphony.org. At the discretion of the Conductor, an unexcused absence from a dress rehearsal may result in exclusion from the concert.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Reasonable standards of behavior are expected while rehearsing, performing, or participating in any event in connection with Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras. Please demonstrate appropriate, respectful behavior toward ISYO staff, fellow musicians, visiting artists, instruments, and at all performance and rehearsal venues.

The ensemble conductor sets expectations for rehearsal and concert behavior. Failure to abide by the requirements will result in the following steps:

1. The ensemble conductor or Programs Manager will speak to the musician and parents concerning the problem.
2. If the problem persists, ISYO may decide to temporarily suspend participation.
3. Continued or extreme problematic or disruptive behavior may lead to the dismissal of the musician from the organization. If a musician is dismissed, tuition is nonrefundable.

PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE

In order to maintain a uniform look throughout our ensembles, we have adopted the following concert dress guidelines. Concerts occasionally include alternate dress requirements or options, but musicians will be notified of this in advance.

Starter Strings, Junior Strings, Preparatory Orchestra, and Concert Orchestra:

White, button-down dress shirt, polo shirt, or blouse

Black dress pants or solid black long skirt no higher than mid-calf and slit below the knee (belts should be black, if worn)

Black closed-toe dress shoes with black calf-length socks or hosiery

No exercise or dance clothing, deep necklines, denim, t-shirts, or sweaters

Symphony Orchestra:

Options for top:

Solid black suit jacket with black dress shirt, solid black button-down shirt, solid black blouse (long or ½ length sleeves) *If wearing a button-down dress shirt, please include a long red or black (solid or pattern) tie

Options for bottom:

Black dress pants, slacks, or solid black long skirt no higher than mid-calf and slit below the knee (belts should be black, if worn)

Other options:

Solid black long dress no higher than mid-calf and slit below the knee

Black closed-toe dress shoes with black calf-length socks or hosiery

No exercise or dance clothing, deep necklines, denim, t-shirts, or sweaters

PRIVATE LESSONS

Musicians of all levels in Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras are strongly encouraged to take private lessons on their orchestral instrument. With a wide variety of ages and ability levels in the orchestra and with the limited

amount of rehearsal time each week, private lessons are the best way to ensure *individual* progress. We are happy to assist you in finding a private teacher for your student. For a list of instructors please send an email to jmitra@ilsymphony.org.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

ISO offers a limited number of full and partial tuition scholarships to assist musicians who would otherwise be unable to participate in ISYO programs due to financial barriers. Our organization also offers a payment plan for families to divide the tuition into four monthly payments through registration on our website. To request information about tuition assistance, visit our website, ilsymphony.org, under Education, Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras, Registration & Tuition, and scroll down to Tuition Assistance to complete a Financial Assistance Information Request. You may also contact the ISO office at (217) 522-2838 Ext. 6 or email jmitra@ilsymphony.org for further details.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Many of our musicians rent their musical instrument. We do not recommend purchasing an instrument without consulting with your ensemble instructor. ISYO musicians can find rental instruments available at either of two local music shops: The Music Shoppe or Capital City Music. ISO also has a limited number of rental instruments available for use by musicians requesting financial assistance. Please contact the ISO office at (217) 522-2838 Ext. 7 or email jwoollen@ilsymphony.org for further details.

SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS

Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras recognizes the importance of school music programs. With a shared goal of educating musicians, our hope is to serve as an enrichment and extension program to school programs. We encourage continued active participation by ISYO students in their school music programs in addition to participating in ISYO.

Some local high schools offer the opportunity for students to receive credit for their participation in Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras. Please contact your school administration to find out if this is an option available at your student's school. If your student would like to receive credit for ISYO participation, please contact the ISYO office at least 2 weeks before a letter for credit is due to the school, usually quarterly or each semester. Please include the student's name, instrument, ensemble, and any specific information required by the school to be included in the letter. Be aware that schools have different allowances regarding maximum absences allowed for those wishing to receive credit. Letters can be sent directly to school administrators or given to families. Please let us know what your family would prefer if your student would like to receive credit for ISYO.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY & OTHER VOLUNTEERING HOURS

Illinois Symphony Orchestra and the Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras programs are currently approved as a volunteer organization for the National Honor Society chapters at Springfield High School, Glenwood High School, and Rochester High School. If you are interested in your high school having ISO/ISYO approved as an NHS volunteer organization, please contact your school's NHS chapter sponsors to request this. ISO is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. You or your school's NHS sponsor may contact Jackie Mitra at jmitra@ilsymphony.org with any questions about volunteering.

PARENT INFORMATION

PARENT ORIENTATION MEETING

We request that all families of Concert Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra attend a parent orientation meeting at the beginning of the season. The date and time of the meeting will be sent out with the beginning of the season email, usually from the conductor.

VOLUNTEER and SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

Tuition covers approximately 30% of the actual program costs of the Illinois Symphony Youth Orchestras. ISO also offers financial assistance to those who need it. Thanks to the generosity of our individual supporters, we work to keep tuition costs as low as possible and provide assistance to those in need. We encourage our members and families to help support ISYO programs through volunteering their time, connecting our organization to corporate donors and foundations, and providing individual financial contributions. We have a variety of ways that you can contribute to the success of ISYO and help support our mission:

- Participating with the ISYO Parent Committee
- Concert production – stage setup, taking tickets, program stuffing
- Setting up chairs and stands for rehearsals
- Assisting conductors at rehearsals
- Assisting with fundraising events
- Making a donation
- Securing donations from individuals and businesses
- Advertising in our program booklets
- Sponsoring a concert performance

We hope that each family will support our programs in these and other ways as they are able. Each member and their family come with a unique set of resources that can help us continue to provide excellent musical opportunities to youth and to our community. If you have an idea for how you can support ISYO programs that is not listed above, please contact the ISO office at (217) 522-2838 Ext. 6 or jmitra@ilsymphony.org.