

Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra: Path to Membership

July 2026

At LHCO, we want to make sure that every member has a great experience playing alongside musicians of compatible ability. To meet this goal, we have established a list of minimum technical standards that all members must meet:

- An intermediate/advanced level of musical and technical proficiency.
- A functional sense of rhythm, intonation, and dynamics.
- The ability to hear and resolve mistakes and problems that occur during rehearsals.
- The ability to sight-read at an intermediate/advanced level.
- The ability to tune within harmonies and to adjust one's volume of playing.
- The ability to hear how one's part fits into the whole and become a functioning ensemble player.

We don't hold formal auditions - no prepared solos or excerpts, no panel of judges, no performance anxiety. Instead, we utilize a "soft audition" process to be as welcoming and low-pressure as possible while still preserving the playing standards of the orchestra. We pre-screen, invite qualified players to join us in rehearsal, and if deemed a good fit, invite for a full, trial concert cycle. We get to see how you engage with the music and the ensemble, and you'll get to experience what our ensemble actually feels like,

Here's what joining looks like, step-by-step.

Step 1: Tell us about yourself. Start by filling out our [online inquiry form](#). You're also welcome to share a link to a short video of yourself playing if you'd like, though this is **completely optional**.

Step 2: We review your inquiry. We're looking for post-secondary ensemble experience, familiarity with challenging repertoire, and skills developed through private instruction. Your optional video adds another facet to consider. Two possible outcomes:

- If deemed not a good fit at this point in your musical journey, we'll share a list of resources (other ensembles and learning options) that may be a better match for you.
- If your background appears to be a good fit, we'll invite you to play a rehearsal, as described below.

Step 3: Your rehearsal visit. You'll join us for a full rehearsal. If we're deep into a concert cycle, we'll ask you to wait until the start of the next cycle. We fully expect that visitors will be sight-reading. However, if you feel more comfortable seeing the music in advance, just let us know and we'll try to arrange it. When you arrive, please look for your section's leader and they will tell you where to sit. We get to hear you play in context, and you get to hear and experience our ensemble.

Step 4: After your rehearsal visit. You'll hear from us within 1-2 days following your rehearsal visit. Three possible outcomes:

- You're invited to play a trial concert cycle with us (more on that below).
- We'd like you to play a trial concert cycle but there is not currently an opening in your section. In this case, we will reach out at the first opportunity.
- We feel LHCO isn't the right fit for you at this time, and we'll refer you to other resources.

Step 5: Your trial concert cycle. When you are confirmed for a guest concert cycle, you'll be added to our concert-specific email list and treated as a member of the ensemble. Our performance standards are high and our rehearsal hours are limited, therefore in addition to playing ability, we will be looking for musical engagement, rehearsal preparation and attendance.

Your dues are waived during this cycle — you're our guest. We genuinely hope you'll feel at home, and are welcomed to join us at our social events.

Step 6: After the trial cycle.* After your trial concert cycle, we'll assess how things went. In some cases, a guest player may be invited back for a second trial cycle to determine eligibility (typically because the repertoire did not allow for a full assessment, as in our summer pops or winter holiday concerts).

You'll hear from us within a few days after the trial concert. Three possible outcomes:

- You're invited to become a full member and to join our next concert cycle.
- You're eligible for our waitlist and may be contacted when there is an opening for either a short-term sub or a regular membership.
- We have determined this isn't the right fit, and we will provide outside resources.

Your first season

We hope this is the beginning of a long relationship with our orchestra. You will have opportunities to volunteer, and we will do our best to make sure you're connected to your section and the ensemble as a whole.

Questions?

Reach out to us at personnel@lhco.org — we're happy to answer questions at any point in the process.