



Welcome to Greenville County Youth Orchestras

Our Mission

Our mission is to impact the lives of young people through music by providing a quality orchestral program that develops and educates young musicians in the art of performance and enhances their personal musicianship. We strive to make our programs available to all qualifying students by offering a robust scholarship program to assist families in need with orchestra fees, summer studies, and private lessons.

What we do.

GCYO has 4 honors level ensembles, each geared to a specific stage of development of the young orchestral musician. The program is designed such that a beginning level musician can start in the Prelude ensemble and, with talent, dedication, and practice, end their high school music career in our most advanced ensemble, the Young Artist Orchestra.

Our focus is education. Our conducting staff are gifted educators as well as performing musicians. Sectional rehearsals, led by area strings and wind educators, are an important part of the rehearsal process for all ensembles. Sectionals give our students instrument specific work on their orchestra's repertoire and the skills needed to be successful in the performance. In addition to sectional rehearsals, small group lessons are offered for musicians in our lower level orchestras. These lessons focus on skill development and offer an initial lesson option for our families.

We encourage parents to seek out private lessons for their child.

The GCYO Association

The GCYO Association is a not-for-profit corporation that partners with the Greenville County Schools (GCS) in providing this after-school orchestra program. GCS provides conductor and coach salaries as well as rehearsal facilities. The Association, with an annual budget of approximately \$100,000, administers the program and provides funding for administrative staff, all concert expenses including venue rental, programs, music rental and coaching staff. In addition, we budget a minimum of \$10,000.00 each year for scholarship assistance for our students.

Parent Expectations

Becoming a musician is a journey. Young musicians need a team of family and professionals to get them on the road. You can expect GCYO to do our part as we provide quality instruction and musical opportunities for your musician. ***We expect you to support your students as they participate in GCYO in the following ways.***

1. Support your musician in meeting the expectations we have set for them
2. Support GCYO financially by paying the participation fee
3. Support GCYO financially by donating if you are able ([donate here](#))
4. Support GCYO by volunteering your time!

2025-26 Annual Participation Fees:

Young Artist Orchestra: \$300

The Philharmonic: \$275

Intermezzo: \$150

Prelude: \$125

Participation Fees are due to the GCYO Association upon registration/Orientation. Fees may be paid in the following ways:

- Cash or Check made out to GCYO and either brought in an envelope with your musician's name on it, or mailed to 102 Pine Knoll Drive Greenville, 29609, Attention: GCYO.
- Online via Jumbula <https://gcyo.jumbula.com/>

If you are unable to afford the student fees, submit a request for financial assistance.

Financial Aid Program: We understand that financial difficulties occur. Financial aid is awarded based on a family's financial need. If you need financial assistance, see guidelines below.

GCYO Financial Aid and Scholarships

Raising Musicians: Financial Aid Awards

All students should have the opportunity to excel musically! The GCYO Board of Directors has established a scholarship fund to assist families with the high cost of raising a musician. Financial aid awards are made for private lessons, GCYO tuition fees, and summer music programs. Award is based on financial need, the student's participation in GCYO, and a teacher recommendation.

GCYO Fee Assistance:

We understand that financial difficulties occur. Financial aid is awarded based on a family's financial need. We expect all families, however, to "buy in" at some level. Please be prepared to pay a deposit of 50% of the student fee upon registration. Application must be completed by August 1.

Financial Aid for Private Lessons:

This scholarship program is designed to ASSIST parents with the high cost of private lessons. Applicants must apply by September 30th. Funds will be sent to the teacher or institution providing lessons.

Financial Aid for Summer Studies:

Summer music camps and programs are an important part of a musician's advanced studies. They are also expensive! Application for summer studies assistance must be submitted by April 1 (previously May 11). These funds may also be used to cover private lessons over the summer. Funds will be sent directly to the camp or teacher.

Scholarship Auditions

Senior Scholarship:

Graduating seniors who will be pursuing a music degree in college may apply for the Senior Scholarship. There will be one \$1,000 scholarship awarded. Deadline May 1.

Find out more information and apply here: <https://gcyo.net/financial-aid-information/>

CONCERT DATES, CONCERT DRESS, REHEARSALS

2025-2026 CONCERTS

Performances are a part of the education you receive in GCYO. We expect our musicians to make every effort to attend the performances that their ensemble is involved in. [Please see the calendar for dress rehearsal schedules.](#)

Fall Concert: Peace Center Concert Hall

Tuesday, November 18, 2025 - Load-in/Rehearsals /Performance at 7:30 PM (All Ensembles)

Philharmonic and YAO Concert/Concerto Competition Winners: Peace Center, Gunter Theatre

Saturday, March 7, 2026- Load-in/Rehearsal/Performance (Philharmonic, Young Artist Orchestra Concert with Concerto Soloists)

Spring Orchestra Concert: Peace Center Concert Hall with Greenville Symphony Principals

Tuesday, May 5, 2026- Load-in/Rehearsal

Wednesday, May 6, 2026- Performance (All Ensembles)

TICKETS: Only purchase tickets from the Peace Center website:
<https://www.peacecenter.org/events>

GCYO CONCERT BLACK DRESS:

All black. Nice long sleeved black button down dress shirt (men). Tops must be at least elbow length or long sleeve dress shirt, shoulders covered (women). Bottoms must be long black pants or ankle length skirts. Black shoes, belts, socks, no bare ankles, no sandals

At dress rehearsals: concert dress is not required.

REHEARSAL LOCATIONS AND TIMES

Prelude: 5:30 – 6:45 Fine Arts Center - Winds Room

Intermezzo: 5:00 – 6:30 League Academy

Philharmonic: 4:45 – 6:15 Fine Arts Center- Recital Hall

Young Artist Orchestra: 6:30 – 9:00 Fine Arts Center- Recital Hall

GCYO ensembles rehearse on **Mondays** following the GCS [calendar](#) and holidays.

- Our first rehearsal is **August 25 , 2025**
- Our last rehearsal is a dress rehearsal on **May 4, 2026**
- Our Spring Auditions are (tentatively) **May 11 and 18**

REHEARSAL PREPARATION

Rehearsal time will be used to work on style, intonation, expression, technique, tone, color, balance & blend, ensemble, unity of purpose, and other aspects of orchestral performance. As an orchestra member, you are expected to do the following:

- Practice every day to incorporate what was rehearsed at the most recent rehearsal and develop your technique according to weekly instructions.
- Practice regularly with a metronome.
- There will be a part check/audition for each concert cycle. At the discretion of the staff, the part checks may or may not be used for seating.
- *Philharmonic and YAO musicians*: Obtain recordings of the works being rehearsed, listen to them, following and becoming familiar with individual parts in context of the work.

REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Notify student's conductor when you will be absent and copy the Administrative Assistant (Marie@gcyo.net)
 - It is a courtesy to the conductors to let them know as soon as you can so they can begin planning alternative arrangements for the rehearsals if necessary.
- Do not email the Executive Director
- Students are not permitted to miss any dress rehearsals
- Conductors and coaches will take Attendance at the beginning rehearsals
- Consequences of regular absences
 - Student will not be allowed to perform in that specific concert cycle
 - Repeated absences: expulsion from program after consultation with conductor
 - Missing a Concert: expulsion from the program at the direction of the Executive Director.

Allowable absences

- October Concert Cycle: 3 absences
- Phil and YAO Gunter Theatre Concert: 3 absences
- Spring Orchestras Concert: 4 absences

YAO Students: Please check your calendars for the sectional dates and let the conductor know in advance if you can't attend a sectional. When you have the **Concertmaster** of the Greenville Symphony leading your sectional YOU need to be there.

CELL PHONE POLICY

- Cell Phones are not permitted during rehearsals
 - Once roll call begins cell phones must be placed in the student's instrument cases (conductors will remind them)
 - Cell phones may be used to assist in tuning BEFORE rehearsal start time
 - Cell phones may be used during break
- Penalties:
 - First offense: The conductor will remind student of the policy and ask the student to put the phone away
 - Second offense: The conductor will call the student's parents
 - Third offense: After consulting with the Executive Director, the student will be asked to leave the program

BEHAVIOR POLICY

- GCYO abides by the general behavior policies of the Fine Arts Center (our orchestra's home) and Greenville County Schools. We expect our students to act with respect at all times within the school premises and whenever they are representing GCYO (at concerts, tours, etc.)
- Students who do not follow these guidelines linked below under the Student Behavior Code headline will be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion from the program.
- [FAC HANDBOOK](#)

GCYO STAFF and CONTACT INFORMATION

David Kiser, Executive Director, david.kiser@gcyo.net (Scholarship/Enrollment/General)

Marie Pearce, Administrative Assistant, marie@gcyo.net (Schedule/Payments/Attendance)

Mr. Neil Casey, Young Artist Orchestra Conductor, Casey@gcyo.net

Dr. Gary Robinson, Emeritus Conductor, baton47338@aol.com

Charis Burger, Philharmonic Conductor, cburger@greenville.k12.sc.us

Elizabeth Conrad, Intermezzo Co-Conductor, econrad@greenville.k12.sc.us

Patrick Murch, Intermezzo Co-Conductor, pmurch@greenville.k12.sc.us

Kathleen Robinson, Prelude Co-Conductor, kathleenrobinson36@gmail.com

Jeff Purcell, Philharmonic Coach

Katelynn Lowe, Prelude Coach

Seth Russell, YAO Cello Coach

Braxton Ballew, YAO Bass Coach

Savannah York, YAO Viola Coach

Jackie Tso, YAO Violin Coach

Leslie Warlick, YAO Second Violin Coach

Lauren Vaughn, YAO Woodwinds Coach