Michigan Philharmonic Youth Orchestra

Handbook

2026-27 Season

Revised 08.24.2026
(Subject to change)

ENSEMBLES

The Michigan Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (MPYO) is supported by the Michigan Philharmonic. The MPYO is dedicated to challenging and inspiring students through high-level ensemble training and performing original musical repertoire. All ensembles are open for auditions.

Strings: Open to less experienced string players (violin, viola, cello, bass) who wish to learn ensemble skills such as playing in a section, listening, and following a conductor. Students must have at least one year of playing experience and be able to read music.

Sinfonia: Open to intermediate-level string players who have begun shifting (violin/viola: 3rd position; cello: 2nd position) and have at least two years of ensemble playing experience.

Youth Symphony: Open to advanced players in winds, brass, percussion, and strings. Challenging and exciting standard and contemporary repertoire is selected for performance. At least three years of ensemble playing experience are recommended.

Wind Ensemble: This ensemble is designed to teach woodwind and brass students pre-orchestral performance skills and experience playing as a wind section. Students must have at least two years of playing experience and be able to play a minimum of four scales.

AUDITIONS

Auditions are held twice annually in June and August at the Plymouth Arts and Recreation Complex (PARC). Students must prepare a major and a minor scale and a piece of their choice under two minutes in length. The conductor will also select a piece for each student to sight-read. Students may also audition to join MPYO for the spring semester by contacting the MPYO Manager for an audition time.

REHEARSALS

All rehearsals, unless otherwise noted, will be held at:

Plymouth Arts and Recreation Complex (PARC)
650 Church Street
Plymouth, MI 48170

- **Annex Gym** (through door 16) for Strings, Sinfonia, Youth Symphony
- **Band Room** (through door 24) for Wind Ensemble

Rehearsals take place weekly on Tuesday evenings at the following times:

- **Strings**: 5:00-6:00 pm (Annex Gym)
- **Sinfonia**: 6:00-7:15 pm (Annex Gym)
- **Wind Ensemble**: 6:00-7:15 pm (Band Room)
- **Youth Symphony**: 7:30-9:00 pm (Annex Gym)

When you arrive, another ensemble may be finishing its rehearsal. Please wait quietly in the hallway until the other ensemble has left the rehearsal space. We rent our space from PARC, so please treat it with respect and keep it clean by picking up all bottles, pencils, etc., even if they are not yours.

Students may not leave PARC once they have signed in on the attendance sheet before rehearsal begins, or during breaks. Once students sign out when rehearsal has ended, they may leave. Parents, please discuss with your student(s) whether they have your permission to leave PARC after rehearsal without you.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at each rehearsal is required, as it is imperative to the success of each ensemble. Sign in as you enter the building and sign out as you leave. Students who are 11 years or older may sign themselves in and out with parent approval. Each ensemble will have its own sign-in clipboard.

Arrive no later than 15 minutes before the start of each rehearsal and 30 minutes before a concert, or as determined by the conductor.

Contact the MPYO Manager and your conductor as early as possible if you expect to be absent or tardy, no later than 4 PM on the day of the rehearsal.

- Excused absences: a school function or performance where grades are given, family emergency, or illness.
- Unexcused absence: when no prior notice is given to the MPYO Manager or the conductors.
- Late arrival: arriving at or after the beginning of rehearsal. Two unexcused late arrivals will equal a missed rehearsal.

Students who miss three or more rehearsals (excused or unexcused) may be asked to re-audition with the current semester's repertoire to perform in the concert at the end of the semester.

Attendance at all dress rehearsals is mandatory. If a student has an unexcused absence for a dress rehearsal, he or she may not be allowed to perform in the next day's concert. Please let your conductor and/or the MPYO Manager know as soon as possible if you have a conflict with a scheduled dress rehearsal.

REHEARSAL CANCELLATIONS

If Plymouth-Canton Community Schools cancels school due to inclement weather, the MPYO will also cancel rehearsal for that evening. Please check your local news for school closures. The MPYO manager will announce rehearsal cancellations via Remind and/or email.

MATERIALS

Bring the following items to every rehearsal and concert unless otherwise noted:

- Your instrument
- Your OWN music stand—do not rely on your stand partner to supply this!
- Your OWN music—always mark notes in your own music!
- #1 or #2 PENCIL—Keep one in your case or folder. Do *not* mark your music with ink pens, markers, or colored pencils.

Your stand and pencil are as important as your instrument and music.

MUSIC POLICY

- Every MPYO member will be given sheet music for practice and rehearsal purposes.
- It is the responsibility of every member to bring his/her music, a pencil, and an eraser to each rehearsal. Do not depend on a stand partner to bring music.
- You will need your own music for markings.
- All music given to MPYO members is the property of the MPYO and must be returned immediately after each concert unless specified by the conductor. This applies to original parts and photocopies, including practice photocopies.
- Members are expected to keep MPYO sheet music in reasonably good condition and keep it in their MPYO music folders. Any markings must be made with a #1 or #2 pencil only.
- Fines for lost music are:
    - $10.00 for original parts
    - $5.00 for photocopies
- **Any student who forgets his/her music folder will have to sit through the rehearsal without playing unless he/she can see another student's music.**

PRACTICE

Practice your MPYO music at home between rehearsals. Rehearsals are designed to help students work as an ensemble, not for individual practice. The success of each ensemble depends on each student's commitment to the music. If you ever have a question about the music, ask your conductor before you leave rehearsal. Your private music teacher will also be able to help you with your MPYO music.

SEATING

The conductors will determine section and seating assignments based on students' auditions and performance experience level. The conductors may make some changes in seating throughout the year.

PERFORMANCES

MPYO performances are held in various locations. The Winter and Spring Concerts are held at the Village Theater, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. The Pops Concert is held in Kellogg Park, Plymouth, and Tiny Tunes performance for Sinfonia is held at the Jack Wilcox Theater, PARC, Plymouth. See the schedule at mpyo.org/schedule/ for the dates and times of these performances.

SIDE-BY-SIDE CONCERTS

Side-by-side concerts are an opportunity for the students in the Youth Symphony and Sinfonia ensembles to play a portion of a concert with the Michigan Philharmonic. See the schedule at mpyo.org/schedule/ for the dates and times of the side-by-side performances.

Students must attend all specified rehearsals to participate in the side-by-side concerts.

SPECIAL WORKSHOPS

These workshops are given by guest composers/artists of the Michigan Philharmonic. They are designed to educate students on the art of composition as well as expose them to composers living today. Students are invited to attend these workshops and the concerts given by the Michigan Philharmonic to hear the performances by these guest composers. Although not offered every year, this program is unique to the MPYO. Past workshops have included specialists in jazz improvisation, composition, violin performance, Chinese erhu, Indian sitar, and Latin percussion.

CONCERT DRESS

Strings

- *Gentlemen:* White long-sleeved dress shirt, black pants, black socks, and black dress shoes
- *Ladies:* White blouse (long or ¾-length sleeves), black pants or ankle-length black skirt, black stockings, black dress shoes

Sinfonia

- *Gentlemen:* White long-sleeved dress shirt, black necktie, black pants, black socks, black dress shoes
- *Ladies:* White blouse (long or ¾-length sleeves), black pants or ankle-length black skirt, black socks or stockings, black dress shoes

Wind Ensemble

- *Gentlemen:* Black long-sleeved dress shirt, solid-color tie (optional), black pants, black socks, black dress shoes
- *Ladies:* Black blouse (long or ¾-length sleeves), solid-color tie or scarf (optional), black pants or ankle-length black skirt, black socks or stockings, black dress shoes.

Youth Symphony

- *Gentlemen:* Black long-sleeved dress shirt, black necktie, black pants, black socks, black dress shoes
- *Ladies:* Black blouse (long or ¾-length sleeves), black pants or long skirt, black socks or stockings, black dress shoes

Students who do not have the appropriate concert dress may not be allowed to perform. If you are having trouble finding any of the above clothing items, please let your conductor or the MPYO Manager know as soon as possible.

MPYO SHIRTS & GEAR

Students may purchase an MPYO T-Shirt or sweatshirt at the beginning of the fall semester. There will be a limited time window to purchase MPYO gear. MPYO gear acts as a “uniform” for our more casual concerts and events.

MPYO CONCERT TICKETS

Tickets to the Winter and Spring MPYO concerts may be purchased through the website of the Village Theater at Cherry Hill or at the Village Theater's box office on the night of the concert.

MICHIGAN PHILHARMONIC TICKETS

We *strongly* encourage all MPYO students and families to attend Michigan Philharmonic concerts—at least one per season. Whenever possible, the Michigan Philharmonic will try to offer discounted tickets to MPYO families.

PRIVATE LESSONS

We encourage all MPYO students to take private lessons. We maintain a list of qualified private teachers, including many professional musicians in the Michigan Philharmonic, whom we would be happy to recommend. Please contact the MPYO Manager for more information.

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS

We strongly encourage all students to participate in their own school music programs and ensembles. The MPYO aims to augment music education with additional performance opportunities and challenging repertoire, rather than replace school programs.

ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

The MPYO may offer opportunities for students to play for several other events throughout the community, such as street fairs, receptions, and service club meetings. Interested students should contact the MPYO Manager. Some performance opportunities may be based on the student's audition and experience.

TUITION

- Strings or Sinfonia: $335/year
- Wind Ensemble: $360/year
- Youth Symphony: $385/year
- Maximum per family: $735

Financial aid is available on a limited basis. Tuition is due at or before the first rehearsal in the fall unless you have made other arrangements. For those requiring financial assistance, contact the MPYO manager. *Tuition rates are subject to change.*

MPYO WEBSITE

The MPYO has its own website at mpyo.org. This site contains the rehearsal schedule for the year, upcoming events, community-wide performance opportunities, the current season's handbook, and a downloadable brochure with audition information. To better communicate with our MPYO families, all MPYO updates and current details and important announcements will be posted on the "News" section of the MPYO website. Email reminders will also be sent as necessary. Parents, please make sure the MPYO manager always has your current email address. Be sure to check the website regularly for MPYO updates.

MPYO ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We regularly post announcements and photos on social media. We welcome everyone to follow our pages.

- Facebook: facebook.com/miphilyo
- Instagram: instagram.com/miphilyo
- Twitter: twitter.com/miphilyo
- YouTube: youtube.com/CYOmichigan
  (This channel was created when the MPYO was called the Celebration Youth Orchestra.)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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