



2026-2027 Handbook

Spokane Youth Symphony Mission Statement

To provide exemplary orchestral education and performance opportunities
for the youth of the Inland Northwest.

Website: www.SpokaneYouthSymphony.org

Email: info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org

Mailing Address

SYS
P.O. Box 9547
Spokane, WA 99209

Office

3910 W Custer Dr
Spokane, WA 99224

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SYS Personnel

Board of Directors

Jason Miller, President
Niki Moore, Vice President
Ken Treis, Treasurer
Bryce McKeirnan, Secretary
Sharon Cattich
Mary Beth Cullitan
Michael Ebinger
Connie Kerbs
Logan Pintor
Julia Salerno
Heidi Sine

Artistic Staff

Philip Baldwin, SYS Artistic Director and Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra Conductor
Roberta Bottelli, Spokane Youth Philharmonic Conductor
Jerilynn Harris, Spokane Youth Sinfonietta Conductor
Hannah Reitz, Spokane Youth Strings Conductor (one-year appointment)
Vanessa White, SYSA Program Director

Administrative Staff

Jennifer O'Bannan, Executive Director
Joann Matiska, Office Manager
Pia Hallenberg, Development & Marketing Manager

Orchestra Aides

Orchestra Aides assist the conductor at each rehearsal, concert, and tour. Orchestra aides record attendance, hand out fliers, make announcements, and communicate with students and parents about SYS expectations and events. Compensation for the position is full tuition for the SYS 2026-2027 season for one child.

Entrance Auditions and Enrollment

To participate in any SYS orchestra, a student must first audition and be accepted into an ensemble. **Only students new to SYS and those who wish to move up need to perform an entrance audition.**

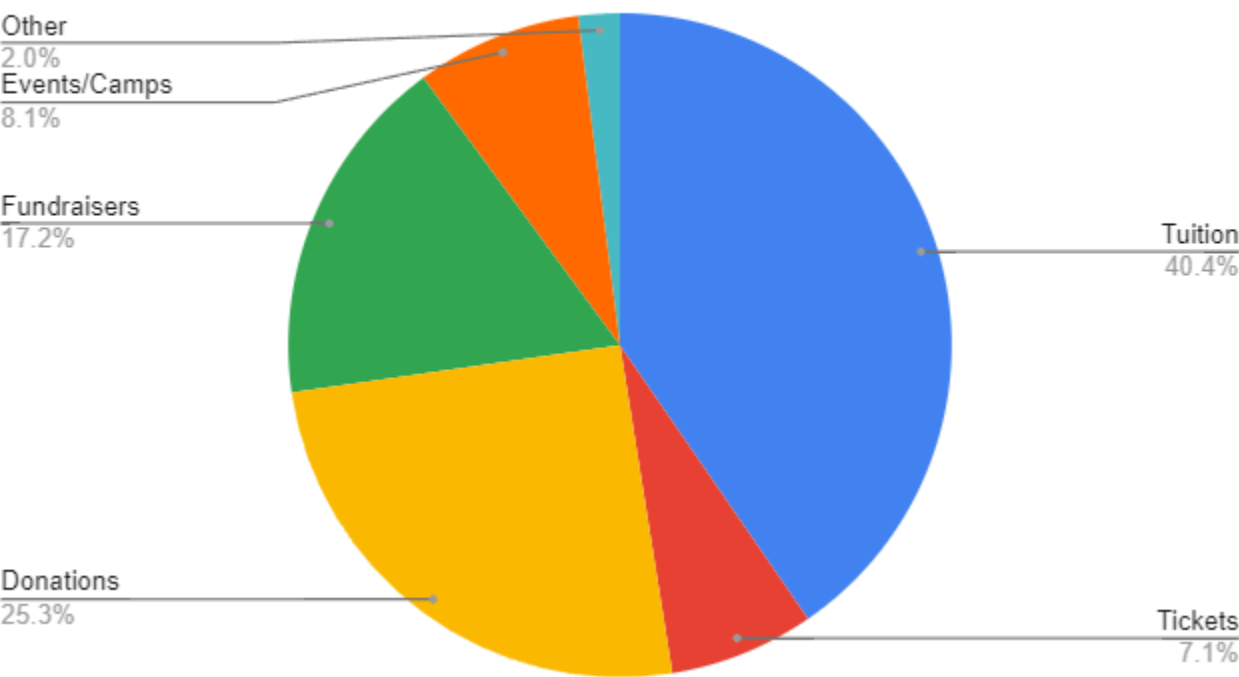
Auditions typically take place in late May and late August/early September for each season. Current SYS members who wish to move up to the next orchestra are expected to audition in May. **Students who plan to remain in the same orchestra do not need to do an entrance audition.** The September auditions are primarily intended for students new to the program and those current members who are asked to re-audition.

To enroll for the 2026-2027 year, the SYS student’s parent or guardian must submit the online 2026-2027 Enrollment and Payment Agreement form, found www.spokaneyouthsymphony.org, at Member Resources, and provide the required **\$250 Family Enrollment Fee** (unless applying for Tuition Assistance). The student needs to be a returning SYS member or have been accepted by audition into one of the SYS orchestras for the 2026-2027 season. The online enrollment and payment agreement form includes agreements to the 2026-2027 Handbook, 2026-2027 Liability Release, and 2026-2027 Media Release, along with the agreement to pay full tuition or monthly payments.

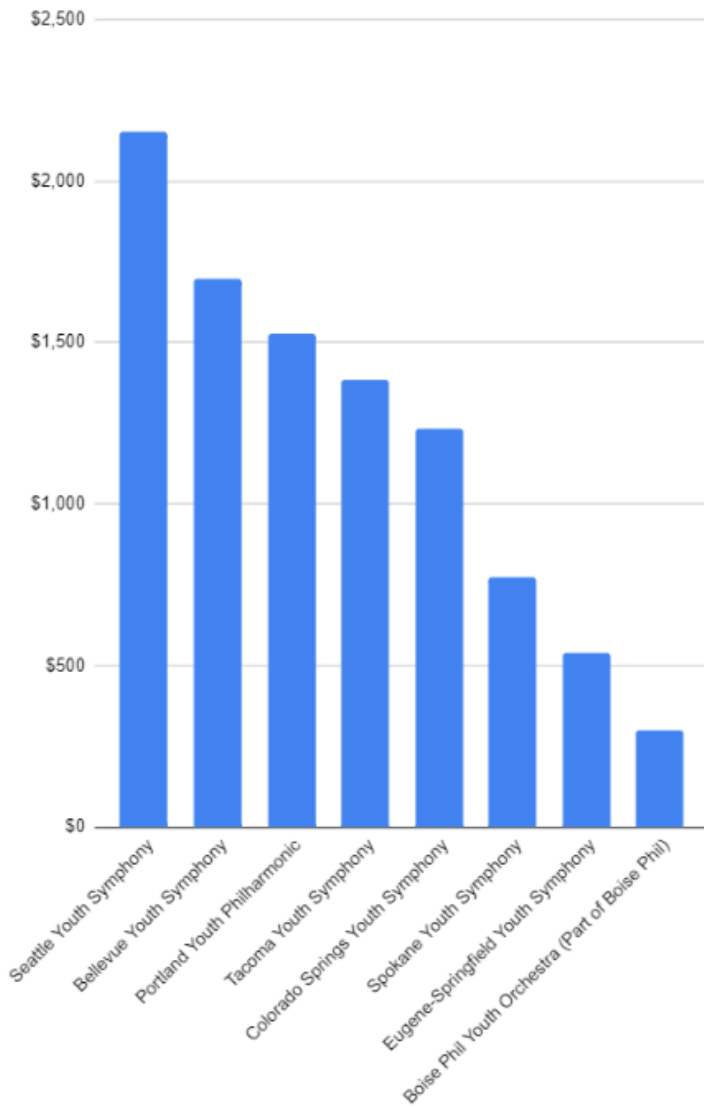
Tuition and Fees

The Spokane Youth Symphony is funded by tuition, grants, donations, concert ticket revenue, and group fundraising events. *The tuition fees only cover 40% of the yearly expenses of the organization.* Our expenses include paid conductors, administrative staff, music specialists for workshops and sectionals, rent for rehearsal space and the SYS office, rent for the Fox Theater, music, instruments, equipment, printing costs, and general organizational expenses. We strive to be conservative with our expenditures while dedicating our organization to providing an enriching educational experience.

SYS Sources of Income



Annual Tuition of Large Youth Symphonies in PNW



Tuition Amounts

To enroll in SYS, each family must pay:

1. **A Family Enrollment Fee of \$250.** This is a one-time fee per family, regardless of the number of students who participate in SYS.
2. **Per-student tuition fees** that vary by orchestra are shown below. When multiple students enroll from the same family, a \$10/month (\$90/year) discount is applied to each student's tuition.

Note for Returning Families: The **Family Enrollment Fee** replaces the fundraising requirement from previous years. Fundraising is now optional, and **fundraising dollars from prior years can be used for any SYS fees** (including the Family Enrollment Fee). See the Fundraising section for more details. **Enrollment is not complete until the Family Enrollment Fee is paid** or a Tuition Assistance application has been received. Students who have not completed their enrollment will not be allowed to participate in SYS beyond the first rehearsal.

Tuition and fees will be billed at the time of enrollment. If the full annual amount is paid before October 1st, a \$100 discount will be applied per student. Families can also choose to pay in 9 monthly installments (September through May).

2026-2027 Fees

Orchestra	Monthly	Annual (includes \$100 discount*)
Suzuki Academy	\$75	\$575
Strings	\$75	\$575
Sinfonietta	\$85	\$665
Philharmonic	\$95	\$755
Symphony Orchestra	\$105	\$845
Additional fees		
Family Enrollment Fee (Due at the time of enrollment)	\$250	
Optional Volunteering Fee	\$225	

Multiple Child -\$10 monthly, -\$90 annually per child if 2+ children enrolled

* Families must pay the full amount by October 1st to get the \$100 discount; otherwise, the monthly amount (x9) will be billed throughout the year.

Please be aware that monthly payments will be invoiced by email at the beginning of each month.

Fundraising

SYS promotes several fundraisers throughout the year to help students and families earn money for camps, tours, as well as tuition and fee expenses. Participation in fundraisers is optional. Fundraising earnings are credited to each family's fundraising account and will be carried forward into subsequent years as long as at least one student from the family continues in SYS.

Fundraising dollars can be applied to any SYS expense, including tuition, fees, camp enrollment, and tour payments. Many families choose to save their fundraising dollars for future tours, since tour expenses can be substantial. Others use fundraisers to help pay for their ongoing enrollment in SYS.

SYS provides several opportunities for fundraising throughout the year. The amounts earned vary by each fundraiser as shown below:

- **Holiday Fundraiser:** Students and their families sell evergreen wreaths and other holiday items for delivery around Thanksgiving. Details will be provided at the first rehearsal of the season. Please be aware that family fundraising earnings are based on the net revenue for each sale, not the retail cost to the customer. Fundraising accounts are credited for approximately 40% of the sales price of the items sold.
- **RaiseRight:** Families buy gift cards from participating companies through RaiseRight. Fundraising accounts are credited for the amounts shown in the RaiseRight app. A donation is made by the retailer, which is typically about 4% of a gift card's face value. Shipping fees will apply if you order physical cards. Purchased e-gift cards are easily accessible through the RaiseRight app. To sign up, visit [Raiseright.com](https://raiseright.com) and use the **Enrollment Code: 363HCRNB68S8**.
- **Flower Power Fundraiser:** Flower Power offers quality bulbs and plants available from growers in Holland and the U.S. and offers an unconditional, 100% replacement guarantee. All items are shipped to buyers directly beginning in April. Fundraising accounts are credited for 40% of the sales price of the items shown.
- **Monetary Donations:** If a donation is made in a family's or student's honor, the family receives credit for 50% of the donation amount.

After two years of absence, any remaining fundraising credits in a family's account will be donated to SYS. Note also that fundraising balances can not be transferred between families except to honor donor intent (for example, if a grandparent donates to support multiple families of grandchildren).

Parent Volunteering

Parent Volunteering for a minimum of nine (9) hours, July-May, is required per family OR pay the \$225 opt-out fee for the 2026-2027 season. To volunteer, please visit "Parent Volunteers" under "Member Info" on our website. (Parent Volunteer duties will be posted as our season develops.) If you do not sign up and volunteer for 9 or more hours of volunteer duties by the end of May 2027, you will be sent an invoice for \$25 per hour for volunteering not completed.

Parents will receive regular email notices alerting them to volunteer opportunities. These will include activities such as rehearsal chair set-up and tear-down, concert chaperones, tour chaperones, program stuffing, rehearsal door guards, wreath pick-up day assistance, etc. Links in the email will direct the parent to a volunteer posting, where they will be able to sign up. You may also access a list of volunteer categories on the website's Parent Volunteer page.

Tuition Assistance

The tuition assistance 2026-2027 application is available at www.SpokaneYouthSymphony.org by going to "Tuition Assistance" under "Member Info."

The Spokane Youth Symphony (SYS) strives to provide financial assistance to children in need so that they may benefit from an orchestral music experience. SYS believes that no deserving young musician should be denied participation in SYS orchestras due to an inability to meet tuition requirements.

Need is typically established by documented eligibility for the National School Lunch Program. Applicants will be notified of assistance awards within 15 days of application.

Send applications to:

SYS
PO Box 9547
Spokane, WA 99209

or email to info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org

Instrument Shortage Policy

Students who have not yet enrolled or current SYS students willing to move down an orchestra to play 'shortage' instruments in the specific orchestra of need can receive half-tuition scholarships for a maximum of one year from the time of acceptance into the shortage position. Positions will be filled on a first-come-first-serve basis once officially accepted by the conductor's approval into the specific orchestra of need. Extensions beyond one year will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Withdrawal from SYS

If a student must withdraw from the program,

1. The parent needs to contact SYS staff by emailing info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org.
2. The student then needs to inform his/her orchestra conductor and orchestra aide.
3. Any SYS music must be returned to the orchestra conductor or orchestra aide within two weeks of the last concert or rehearsal that the student participates in.
4. A fee will be charged for any unreturned music.
5. Tuition refund policy: Monthly tuition payments are non-refundable after the first rehearsal of the month. For families who paid full tuition, SYS will refund a prorated amount.

Rehearsals, Concerts, and Tours

Rehearsals

The rehearsal season for all orchestras will begin on Monday, September 14th.

Rehearsal times and locations:

Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra:

St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th Ave. (Great Hall)
Mondays, 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Spokane Youth Philharmonic:

St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th Ave. (Community Room)
Mondays, 6:30-8:30 PM

Spokane Youth Sinfonietta:

Manito Presbyterian Church, 401 E 30th Ave. (Fellowship Hall, basement)
Mondays, 6:00-8:00 PM

Spokane Youth Strings:

Manito Presbyterian Church, 401 E 30th Ave. (Sanctuary platform)
Mondays, 6:00-8:00 PM

Spokane Youth Suzuki Academy:

Manito United Methodist Church, 3220 S. Grand Blvd. (Fellowship Hall and 2nd floor rooms)
Mondays, 6:00-7:30 PM

The 2026-2027 schedule for concerts and rehearsals is available online. You will be notified via email of schedule or location changes.

Absences

Rehearsals are very important and should take priority over other activities with very few exceptions.

The following are excused absences: 1) illness, 2) family emergency, 3) religious observance, or 4) school music event. All other absences will be considered unexcused. Three or more unexcused absences may be cause for dismissal or may prevent a student from performing in a concert. In the event that your child must be absent, submit the [SYS Absence Form](#) (found under "Member Info" on the website) within one week of the absence.

In the event of a required school music event, please notify the orchestra aide as far ahead as possible before the rehearsal.

Seating Auditions

Auditions play an important role in the training and development of a musician. While every care is taken to seat students fairly, based on their audition, it is important to recognize that auditions are, by nature, subjective and that there is no perfect system for evaluating students. Audition outcomes are in no way intended to discourage students or to belittle their efforts. Auditions judge a player's abilities on a given day but are not meant as a judgment of a student's character or as a way of assigning their relative value within the organization. The SYS conducting staff endeavors to reward hard work and to value each student's contribution to the organization and the musical product.

Wind/Brass Seating

If there is more than one woodwind or brass player per part, the following seating order will be observed: Principal 1st (#1 rank), Principal 2nd (#2 rank), Assistant Principal 1st (#3 rank), Assistant Principal 2nd (#4 rank). In certain exposed soloist passages, the assistant principals may be asked to not play for artistic and/or balance reasons.

Missed Auditions

If a member is unable to participate in a scheduled seating audition, an audio or video-recorded **audition must be emailed to the SYS OFFICE at info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org at least one day before the audition day.** The musician must understand that the recording may carry less weight than a live audition. You will be notified by email when your recording has been received by the SYS office. Students who miss a seating audition and do not provide a recording will likely be seated at the back of the section for that concert and rehearsal series.

Performance Standards

If a member does not appear to be meeting performance, leadership, or behavioral standards, the director may reassign seating.

All seating decisions are final and at the conductor's discretion.

Photo Night

In the early fall, each orchestra will be professionally photographed. Individual photographs are available for an additional fee. *(All students will be photographed individually so they are included in the yearbook.)* All students are required to attend rehearsal in concert attire on their orchestra's picture night, even if they are not purchasing photos.

Photo Night Schedule:

Sinfonietta: Monday, September 28

Philharmonic: Monday, October 5

Symphony Orchestra: Monday, October 12

Strings & Suzuki Academy: Monday, October 19

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please plan for Photo Night so that the student has all the required clothing items in time. For details, see "Concert Attire Dress Code." Links to online clothing sites are available on our website.

Concerts

The main Spokane Youth Symphony concert series includes four concerts at The Fox, 1001 West Sprague

Avenue, Spokane. All SYS orchestras perform four concerts per season. The concerts begin at 4:00 p.m., and dress rehearsals occur at The Fox on the day of the concert. Parents need to purchase tickets for any family that is not in SYS to attend. Subscription season tickets provide excellent value since you will save \$10 per subscription ordered if you have at least one child currently in our program. Season ticket prices are as follows for SYS Family members: Adult-\$50, Senior-\$46, Youth-\$36 for all four-season concerts!

2026-2027 Concert Season “A World of Music”

All concerts are on Sundays and begin at 4 pm with dress rehearsals earlier in the afternoon.

November 15, 2026, *Rhythms Without Borders*

January 31, 2027, *Notes From Every Nation*

March 14, 2027, *Melodies Across the Map*

May 23, 2027, *One World, Many Sounds*

Concerto Competition

A yearly Concerto Competition for students in the **Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra** will take place on Sunday, January 17, 2027, at Whitworth University’s Cowles Music Center. Rules and details of the competition will be available in early Fall on our website. Up to three winners will perform as soloists with the Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra at the March 14, 2027, “Melodies Across the Map” concert.

Awards

Awards are presented at the final concert of the season. These include (for each orchestra): Most Improved Award, Leadership Award, and Conductor’s Award. The Jessica Sund Camp Scholarship Award is given to a student in Strings and Sinfonietta, and the Angela Armstrong Inspirational Award is to be awarded to a senior string player in Symphony Orchestra.

Tours

Tours for all orchestras typically occur in the Spring. Strings, Sinfonietta, and Philharmonic will have a local tour at no extra cost to families. SYSO may have longer tours outside of the Spokane area. The cost for these larger tours will be determined based on the costs involved for the destination and tour length. Surplus fundraising money may be applied towards these tours.

Musician Responsibilities

Musician Code of Conduct

Membership in the Spokane Youth Symphony is an honor and a privilege. The young musicians chosen by audition to play in these groups are expected to make membership a priority among their many activities. Instrumentation and balance are established at the time of audition and must be maintained. If the orchestras are to provide the highest possible level of performance, preparation of the music and attendance at all rehearsals and concerts for the entire season are of utmost importance.

1. **Attendance is required** at all rehearsals and concerts. Upon arrival, check in with the Orchestra Aide before taking your place. **Students should arrive 15 minutes before rehearsal** to tune and be ready to play before the rehearsal begins. **Late arrival is not acceptable.**
2. **Bring a portable music stand and pencil** to all rehearsals (*music stands apply to Philharmonic, Sinfonietta, and Strings members only*).
3. **Return all music promptly** to the orchestra aide when asked to do so. If a student must leave the orchestra, all music must be returned within two weeks of leaving, or a penalty will be assessed.
4. **If you borrow anything, return it.** This is particularly true for borrowed instruments, which must be turned in at the end of the season.
5. **Your complete attention is always required.** The use of cell phones and electronic games is not allowed during rehearsals or concerts.
6. **Students must behave respectfully** to the conductors, staff, volunteers, and fellow musicians. **Speaking out of turn during rehearsals or concerts is not permitted.** (This includes whispering, joking, and otherwise disruptive behavior. A student may be removed from the group by the conductor, orchestra aide, or parent volunteer if such behavior continues.)
7. All students must **respect the property of our rehearsal and concert locations.** Gum chewing is not permitted.
8. We **strictly prohibit the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.** Any student in violation will be immediately removed from the orchestra.
9. **In matters of seating, the conductor's decision is final.**
10. **At concerts, students must be seated in the theater hall as audience members** when they are not on stage performing. Appropriate audience etiquette is expected while students support their fellow musicians. Such etiquette includes refraining from talking, using personal electronics or phones, or doing homework, and it includes remaining seated. **Respectful listening is an important part of a musical education.**

A STUDENT'S PARENT WILL BE CONTACTED IF POOR BEHAVIOR IS ONGOING AND, IF NOT CORRECTED, A STUDENT MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE ORCHESTRA WITHOUT TUITION REIMBURSEMENT.

Concert Attendance

Musicians will be expected to participate in all scheduled concerts. Our students are required to sit **quietly in the theater as audience members** with the other students when not on stage performing. It is unacceptable to arrive late or leave early. If a parent would like their child to sit with them after intermission, or if the student must leave the building due to an unavoidable circumstance, the parent must submit the **Concert Attendance Release** form found on the **Absences** page of the website before the day of the concert. Students are expected to remain in the designated seating or backstage until the end of the concert unless pre-excused by a parent.

Parents are responsible for transporting students to and from concerts. Dress rehearsals take place in the afternoon on the day of the concert. For a Symphony Orchestra (SYSO) student to leave the Fox facility

between the dress rehearsal and the concert, a parent must complete the online **Fox Afternoon Release form**. The other orchestra members from Philharmonic, Sinfonietta, Strings, and SYSA must remain at the Fox between the dress rehearsal and the concert unless accompanied by a parent.

Concert Attire Dress Code

Concert attire is an important part of symphony music as a performance art. The audience experiences the harmony of the orchestra not just by what they hear but also by what they see. The Spokane Youth Symphony requires formal dress for concert performances. For all orchestras, this means **no black jeans or cargo pants, no tight pants (leggings), no casual shoes (no boots or athletic shoes) or low-cut blouses**. More specific requirements are as follows:

Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra

Ladies: Long-sleeved (or three-quarter-sleeved) full-length black dress or long-sleeved (or three-quarter-sleeved) black blouse and full-length black skirt or full-length black dress slacks, opaque black stockings, black dress shoes and subdued accessories. No athletic wear or jeans.

Gentlemen: Black suit, white long-sleeved dress shirt, black bow tie, black dress shoes and black socks

Spokane Youth Philharmonic, Spokane Youth Sinfonietta, Spokane Youth Strings, and Spokane Youth Suzuki Academy

Ladies: Long-sleeved (or three-quarter-sleeved) white blouse with black mid-calf or full-length skirt or full-length black dress slacks, black stockings and dress shoes, and subdued accessories. No athletic wear or jeans.

Gentlemen: Long-sleeved white shirt, long black tie, black dress pants, black dress shoes, and black socks

If a musician arrives for a concert dressed inappropriately, they will not be allowed to play.

NOTE: Reasonable dress code accommodations will be made in accordance with the SYS Non-discrimination policy.

The following online retailers may offer performance attire that meets the dress code requirements for our orchestras:

www.concertattire.com

www.stageaccents.com

tuxedowholesaler.com

Please note that many options offered on these sites do not meet the requirements described above. SYS does not recommend or endorse any specific business.

School Music Policy

The Spokane Youth Symphony strongly encourages all its members to participate in their school music programs. We recognize the vital role played by music educators, both private and public, in training our musicians. Youth orchestras, school music programs, and private teachers share the common goal of training the next generation of musicians, audience members, and arts supporters.

Private Lessons

It is strongly recommended that all our orchestra members receive private lessons. The level of playing in our orchestras requires the involvement of private teachers to provide the necessary background in technical matters. A list of teachers who work with our students is available on our website.

Non-discrimination policy

The Spokane Youth Symphony admits members based on musical ability and potential, as demonstrated in an audition. Musicians are selected based on playing ability and instrumentation needs to create a balanced orchestra. The Spokane Youth Symphony does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, creed, religion, political belief, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, or ethnicity in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, or other programs.

For questions regarding the SYS program, write to the SYS office at info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org.

If you have questions concerning personnel, policies, and procedures for the Board President, or a question for a conductor, please write to info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org, and your email will be forwarded to the correct person.