



# Member Handbook 2024-2025 Season

Youth Symphony of Denton  
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Hyunseok Chang, Music Director, Symphony Conductor

Damia Cleaver, Executive Director, String Conductor

Rob Amberson, Philharmonic Conductor

## Board of Directors

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## Welcome to the Sixth Season of the Youth Symphony of Denton!

We want to welcome you to the 2024-2025 Season of the Youth Symphony of Denton (YSD). The Youth Symphony of Denton was created to give students in the Denton area and beyond the opportunity to study and perform with other students who are serious about their musical pursuits. This was the dream of Damia Cleaver, local music teacher and performer, and Hyunseok (Hank) Chang, local music teacher, performer and conductor of the Ascolti Korean Chamber Orchestra in Korea, and the Denton Philharmonic Orchestra (a community orchestra for adults.) Denton has an exceptionally good school music program, and we desire to enhance the education students are receiving at school, as well as giving a place to perform for those who do not have school orchestra programs. We want to help these students achieve greater depth in their music studies as they join the family of the Youth Symphony of Denton. The lessons they learn as a part of the Youth Symphony will not only help them in their future musical pursuits but will also help their development of professionalism, leadership skills and becoming the influencers of the future.

### About the Youth Symphony of Denton Ensembles

Membership in the orchestra is formed through an audition process. Most students in the orchestras will be of middle and high school age, but younger students are encouraged to join us if their playing skills fit one of our ensembles and if they are able to focus for the length of the rehearsal time. Students are expected to participate in their school music programs if one exists. There will be some exceptions to this rule, but they are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Please talk with the Executive Director if you need a waiver for this.

**Youth Symphony**, conducted by Mr. Hyunseok (Hank) Chang, is the highest of our ensembles and is a string orchestra program for the first concert and becomes a full orchestra program in November. They perform standard, high level orchestral repertoire, by the classical composers and also experience more obscure works as well. They tour nationally and internationally every few years and also perform side-by-side concerts with members of the adult Denton Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Chang has worked with musicians of all age levels and desires to teach students how to make music, not just play notes. He also leads them in greater knowledge of musical repertoire and the different styles represented in mainstream literature.

**Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by Mr. Rob Amberson, is an intermediate string level orchestra that also performs standard orchestral literature, alongside arranged works and educational compositions. Students in this ensemble will work on music of continuing difficulty as they eventually develop the skills required to participate in our Youth Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Amberson's years of experience have given him the foundation necessary to lead these Philharmonic students into a deeper understanding of performing orchestral music.

**String Orchestra**, conducted by Damia Cleaver, is a beginner group of students who have played for at least one year and are continuing to develop their individual and ensemble skills while performing educational music. They will work on deepening their knowledge of how music works by learning new finger patterns and working with progressively more difficult rhythms. Mrs. Cleaver has been a private music instructor in the Denton school district and in her private studio for over 20 years and desires to give her students a strong technical foundation on which to build their musical lives.

**Beginning Orchestra**, taught by Damia Cleaver, is for students who have little to no experience in playing a string instrument. It was formed to give students who are homeschooled or attend private schools or schools in districts without a string program. They will gather in twice a week classes to learn the basics of the instrument, how to read music and rhythms, and how to play with others. The orchestra is open to students of all ages, and teaching will be done in a fun and interesting way to hold their attention and help them progress on the instrument. The goal of the program is that they will progress to the point of being ready to join the String Orchestra after one year in this program and progress through the Youth Symphony program.

**Chamber Music Groups** are available for Philharmonic and Symphony students. These groups meet for 1 ½ hours extra each Saturday and are placed in small groups of 3 - 8 students for the purpose of learning to play chamber music. There is not a conductor for these groups, but they will be coached by a teacher and will learn the skills they need to be able to rehearse on their own. The skills taught in Chamber groups are very important and help create a fully developed musician.

## Rehearsals

All of the ensembles meet on Saturdays during the school year at our rehearsal location at the University of North Texas Music building in Orchestra Hall. Room 232 or 132. The following is the schedule for the rehearsals, unless otherwise notified:

Beginning Orchestra	11:00 AM – 11:50 AM
String Orchestra	12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Philharmonic Orchestra	12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Symphony Orchestra	2:15 PM – 4:45 PM

## Concerts

The Youth Symphony of Denton Concert season consists of 4 major concert cycles. These concerts are typically scheduled in October, December, March and May and take place at Voertman Hall on the University of North Texas campus. There may be other opportunities for performance that develop throughout the year, where students can represent the Youth Symphony. These include Denton Arts and Jazz Fest in October, performing at senior care centers, pop up performances around the city, participating in Make Music Day in June, etc.

## Financial Obligations

Each member of the Youth Symphony of Denton will be responsible for paying tuition and fees. Tuition helps fund the program's operating costs, music and supplies, and salaries for the directors.

### Tuition

All Orchestras	\$700
Chamber Music Program	\$300
Wind, Brass & Percussion students (joining Nov)	\$490

New students can join the orchestra at the beginning of any concert rehearsal set, and fees will be prorated accordingly.

Fees can be paid in full, partial payments, or monthly payments and can be paid with cash, checks, or via Venmo (Youth-SymphonyDenton). If paying by cash, please put the money in an envelope with the child's name and amount enclosed on the front. Checks can be given to the Executive Director at rehearsals or mailed to:

Youth Symphony of Denton  
2120 Crestmeadow St.  
Denton, TX 76207

## Withdrawal

If a student desires to drop out of the Orchestra for any reason, one month's written notice is required. This can be done by sending an email to [support@youthsymphonydenton.com](mailto:support@youthsymphonydenton.com). Tuition is non-refundable unless approved by the Board. Refunds may be considered only for members providing proof of future residency more than 50 miles away from rehearsal facility, proof of a major life event (death, divorce, health problem, job loss, military displacement, or custody change) or other rare circumstances beyond the control of the parent or child.

## **Financial Aid/Scholarships**

The Youth Symphony has a scholarship program in place to help any family in need. The application can be found on the financial page of the website, and the Board of Directors will make the final decision concerning the awarding of the scholarships. We do not want any child to be left out of the program because of financial issues. Please talk with the Executive Director if you would like to apply.

## **Accommodation**

The Youth Symphony of Denton will make every effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities or medical exceptions. Please notify the instructor of your child's ensemble of any individual needs and we will make every effort to accommodate them. Instructors may request instructions in writing and will only share this information with individuals who must know to ensure that the student's needs are met. Individuals who feel their needs are not being met are encouraged to reach out to the Executive Director for assistance.

## **Discrimination**

The Youth Symphony of Denton does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. We only necessarily discriminate on the basis of age to ensure programs remain isolated to youth and are developmentally appropriate.

## **Diversity**

Our goal is to promote and inspire the continuing development of musical talent in qualified areas for youth regardless of cultural heritage, gender, ethnicity, and economic status through intensive training in classical orchestral music and performance. We recruit and enroll a diverse group of students for all our ensembles and include reaching out to the local schools in underserved areas.

## **Attendance Policy**

A musical ensemble is a unique team requiring attendance by every one of its members. Any single absence has a negative impact on the quality of preparation and performance. It is the responsibility of the members and families to be familiar with the rehearsal schedule and to report expected absences well in advance. Please contact the Executive Director via email or text to report absences before the rehearsal.

1. Attendance at all rehearsals is required. However, we do understand that absences will occur due to occasional illnesses, familial situations, religious conflicts, school activities, etc. In the event of these and other extenuating circumstances, each member may be permitted to miss up to two (2) rehearsals per concert cycle. Exceptions to this rule are made on a case-by-case basis and are determined by the Executive Director and the Conductor of the ensemble.
2. A student will be considered tardy if they are not in their seat when the rehearsal initially begins, when the rehearsal resumes after a break, or if the member leaves rehearsal early. Three (3) instances of tardiness equal one absence.
3. A student will be ineligible to participate in an upcoming concert if more than two absences occur during the concert cycle, for any reason. If more than two absences occur, the conductor and administration will evaluate the member's eligibility on a case-by-case basis, and participation in the upcoming concert will be at the discretion of the conductor.
4. Attendance at all concerts is required. If an ensemble member is absent for two performances, for any reason, it is grounds for dismissal from the remainder of the YSD concert season, at the discretion of the conductor.
5. Students are required to maintain their presence for the entirety of all concerts that feature multiple YSD ensembles. Students will not be permitted to leave the concert venue after their performance without advance notice and prior approval. This policy is enforced to ensure the safety of all members, to show respect for fellow musicians, and to display the professionalism of our orchestras at performance venues.

6. Please plan family activities so that they will not conflict with rehearsals or performances, when possible.
7. When All-Region auditions and Solo and Ensemble events approach, please have your child ask their school orchestra or band director to schedule them at a time that does not conflict with their Youth Symphony rehearsal, if possible. Make this request on the event application form that you turn in to the director.

Please plan ahead! An unexpected illness or conflict may arise later in the concert cycle, preventing you from attending a rehearsal or performance, so be diligent not to miss for an imprudent reason in the early stages.

## **Rehearsal Expectations**

Members of YSD Ensembles are expected to be familiar with their rehearsal schedule, which is regularly communicated and distributed by the staff and conductors, and readily available on our website. The rehearsal venue will be open and rehearsal spaces will be prepared 15–30 minutes prior to the rehearsal start time, to allow members to arrive early and prepare for their rehearsal in a timely manner. Members are expected to understand and abide by the following rehearsal expectations:

1. Arrive 15 minutes before rehearsal start time to unpack, tune, and ensure you have all necessary materials for rehearsal
2. Members are responsible for providing all equipment necessary for the successful operation of their instrument(s), including backup supplies
3. Bring all assigned orchestral parts and a pencil to all rehearsals
4. Printed copies of orchestral parts must be secured in a binder (no loose pages please!)
5. If a member does not have their orchestral parts at rehearsal, they may ask the Conductor or Executive Director for a copy to borrow for that rehearsal
6. Respect your conductor and peers by listening and remaining quiet when you are not playing your instrument – when the conductor is working with another section, it is always relevant and valuable information for you to consider as well
7. Cell phones or other devices are to be placed in the instrument case or bag. **NO CELL PHONES ALLOWED ON THE PERSON WHILE REHEARSING OR PERFORMING.** Undivided attention is required for the best results of a rehearsal.
8. Food & drink is not permitted inside the rehearsal room with the exception of water that has been properly secured inside an enclosed container.
9. Members are responsible for cleaning up after themselves at the end of rehearsals – please remove all personal belongings, and clean/dispose of any trash accumulated
10. Members are not permitted to leave the rehearsal property during their scheduled rehearsal times
11. Members & families are responsible for arranging transportation to and from rehearsals and other YSD functions – please be considerate of the staff by arranging for transportation to be available to pick up members on time at the end of rehearsals (building will remain open and staff will remain present until all members have departed)
12. Negative words and actions and profanity are considered inappropriate and will not be tolerated. This includes inappropriate discussions on social media.
13. No roughhousing or horseplay is allowed due to the delicate nature of the instruments and the potential for accidents occurring.

14. Students who are able will be asked to assist with the set-up or resetting of the rehearsal room after rehearsal is over. This is part of our leadership training, can also count for volunteer hours for your various organizations.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Infractions of any of the above rules will be discussed with the student and parent by any staff member. Staff reserve the right to:

1. Suspend students from program participation temporarily
2. Deny students performing opportunities regardless of rehearsal attendance expectations
3. Revoke the award of solos, scholarships, and other honors
4. Removal from the program for the season
5. Permanent removal from the program
6. Referral to authorities for criminal, civil or other action
7. Take away trip traveling privileges

Appeals for any disciplinary action may be made to the Board of Directors through discussion with the Executive Director. Decisions made by the Board are final.

Tuition will not be refunded in causes of disciplinary dismissal.

## **All-Region Auditions**

Students that attend a school without an orchestra program, and therefore without the ability to be registered for All-Region and All-State auditions, have the opportunity to be registered through the Youth Symphony, as this is not a UIL activity. Please talk with the Executive Director if you are interested in this opportunity.

## **Concerto Competitions**

YSD Concerto Competitions are held annually in February, and the winners will be invited to appear as soloists with the orchestra at the May Concert. Specific details, instructions & policies will be provided to individuals wishing to audition for this competition in the Fall, and the choice of solo must be approved by Mr. Chang. Competitions are open to all members of the Youth Symphony Orchestra only. Winners will not be allowed to audition the following year.

## **Media Release**

To help the community learn about our orchestra, we have a website and are on Facebook and Instagram. We will also occasionally have articles in the local media. Photos and videos will often be taken during rehearsals and performances and will be posted online or in the paper. If you do not wish for your child's image or name to appear in this way, please notify the Executive Director and the child's conductor.

Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up with what's happening with the orchestra and share our pages with others.

Website: [www.youthsymphonydenton.com](http://www.youthsymphonydenton.com)

Facebook: Youth Symphony of Denton (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070911072868>)

Instagram: youthsymphonydenton (<https://www.instagram.com/youthsymphonydenton>)

## **Concert Attire**

As a training organization, the Youth Symphony of Denton will require a specific dress code for all concerts. Concert Black is a standard style of dress for most orchestras. The purpose of this attire is to unify all members and put the focus on the music, not the clothing worn.

Option #1 – Black pants and a black button-down dress shirt.

Option #2 – Full-length black dress OR full-length black skirt or dress pants with black blouse. Dress/blouse must be a modest cut without ornate designs, must not be strapless, sleeves must be at least elbow length, and must extend to the skirt/pant waist;

**EVERYONE** – Black dress shoes with closed toes/heels and black socks/hosiery; neatly styled hair; jewelry and hair ornaments should be modest and should not interfere with playing your instrument; avoid perfumes, colognes, etc.

For informal concerts, students will wear the official Youth Symphony t-shirt and jeans (or shorts if it is warm.) These t-shirts will be offered for sale in the Fall and again in the Spring. This is also a fund raiser for the organization, so family and friends are welcome to buy t-shirts as well.

## **Parent Communication**

We will communicate with parents via the Band App (<https://band.us/n/ada59czbz5z77>) and email. Please feel free to email us at [support@youthsymphonydenton.com](mailto:support@youthsymphonydenton.com) anytime you have questions. If you'd like to talk with us on the phone, send an email or text (940-390-5956) with a good time to call you, and which person you need to talk with, and we will get back with you as soon as possible. PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAIL OR BAND APP ON FRIDAY NIGHT FOR ANY CHANGES THAT MIGHT BE MADE FOR THE FOLLOWING DAY'S REHEARSALS. Any potential closings due to the weather will be sent via the Band App and email.

## **Parent Guild**

Parent Volunteers are vital to the success of the program. Parent volunteering is handled through the Parent Guild, which is open to all parents and family members. The following are areas in which the program need assistance:

1. Join one of the many committees that help make this organization great. Some require an occasional meeting. Others can communicate in other ways. We need everyone to support us in some form.
2. Program Design and development for each concert. If you are gifted in this area, please let us know so that we can utilize your gift.
3. Distribution of program posters within the community about one month prior to the concert. Everyone can help with this.
4. Concert Greeters – assist with checking tickets, pass out programs and assist patrons with seating
5. Concert Bake Sales – bake items to sell and or work the sale at the concert.
6. Trip Fundraising – Assist the student fundraising committee with choosing and implementing projects and collecting funds.
7. Capital Fundraising – Work with the Board of Directors to help plan and implement the major fundraising efforts that occur to benefit the program as a whole.
8. Find financial sponsors for the orchestra from the business community. There is a presentation package available. It includes sponsoring one month of rehearsal (\$800, sponsoring a concert (\$1,000), covering the cost of one student on Full Scholarship (\$700) or Partial Scholarship (\$350) as well as the Silent Auction and Program Ads listed below.
9. Sell program ads to local businesses to be included in the programs to help raise money for the group.
10. Silent Auction – Gather items to be auctioned and help with the displaying of items at the event.
11. Party planning – help plan and or host parties.
12. Develop ways to honor our graduating seniors.

## Parent Volunteer Expectations

We are implementing a parent volunteer expectation which will enable our organization to run more smoothly. There are options for those who don't mind being front and center and for those who would like to remain in the background. Most roles are about 2 hours long and each family needs to cover 4 hours per year. If a family feels unable to volunteer for any position, there will be a buyout option, where you donate a specific amount of money to the orchestra.

## Student Fundraising

One of the highlights of being in a Youth Symphony program is the chance to go on trips as a group. Our next international trip will occur in the summer of 2025, and we plan to visit London and other areas of the United Kingdom. A trip of this sort costs quite a bit, so to help offset the cost, we will have fundraising opportunities throughout the years leading up to the trip. If your child chooses to participate in a fundraising activity, the money earned by the student will be given to the parents to be used towards the trip. Payment towards the trip will take place through the travel agency we choose to use. The Youth Symphony itself will not handle funds or pay the travel agency.

## Sponsorship and Capital Campaign Fundraising

Tuition only covers approximately 60% of the necessary funding required to run this quality program. We are actively seeking sponsorships from individuals and corporations who would be willing to cover the facility rental costs per month or provide donations to help with operating costs. Funding for these items is difficult to find through grants.

We will participate in **North Texas Giving Day** on September 19th. This is a chance to raise quite a bit of support for the orchestra. Please read over the accompanying information on this and plan to help with this fundraiser.

The company you work for might participate in a **matching gifts program**. If you plan to give to the Youth Symphony, ask your company if they have a matching gifts program.

People you regularly do business with might like to sponsor us or purchase an ad in one or all of our concert programs or provide an item for our **Silent Auction**. All you have to do is ask! We will provide the materials.

**Sell ads** to be listed in our programs. We have information to give you if you wish to do this.

Do a **Facebook Birthday** fundraiser. This is easy to do as you choose us to receive the funds and then put the fundraiser on your Facebook page.

Participate in one of our other fundraising opportunities, such as Restaurant nights, Garage Sales and car washes. This is all separate from the individual student fundraising, though sometimes this might be giving to the general trip fund.

## Field Trips

About once a month, we go as a group to a Dallas Symphony concert after our rehearsal or on a Friday night. The Dallas Symphony has a Student Card available for purchase for \$25. This card is good for 4 years and gives the students access to two tickets per concert. Not all of the concerts are available for this deal, but there are at least 20 available each year. We need one parent to volunteer to be in charge of each field trip, making sure there will be enough cars to transport the students and picking up and distributing the tickets at the Symphony the night of the concert. I will still be in charge of ordering the tickets for the concert, but I cannot be in charge the night of the concert. If you're interested in this opportunity, purchase your card as soon as possible so you will be ready when the first concert arrives.



**Youth Symphony of Denton**  
**Member Handbook Acknowledgement Form**

I have read the YSD Parent Student Handbook, and I will adhere to the policies and behavioral expectations stated within. I will discuss any absences my child may have as soon as possible with their conductor or the Executive Director. I commit my time and energy to a positive experience in the Youth Symphony of Denton.

(All student members from one family may sign together on this form. Continue on back, if necessary)

Student Name (print):

Student Name (sign):

Parent Name (print):

Parent Name (sign):

Date:

I give permission for my child to be photographed or video for the purpose of placing the photo or video on social media or other public outlets.

Parent Signature:

I (the parent) am willing to help in the following capacity to make the Youth Symphony the best possible experience (please circle areas in which you are willing to help):

Board Member

Program Design

Distribution of Concert posters

Concert Greeters/Ushers, sales of items, bake sale

Fundraising

Gather Program Ads

Silent Auction

Party planning

Field Trip Parent in Charge

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_