

Willimantic Orchestra Handbook

Membership

The Willimantic Orchestra is a non-profit community orchestra dedicated to the performance of authentic orchestral music.

- String instrumentalists of all reasonable abilities are welcome. Questions regarding ability may be addressed to the conductor or section leader.
- Woodwind and brass players of considerable ability are encouraged to express interest. In case of open seats, they may be recruited or auditioned depending on numbers interested.
- All instrumentalists are encouraged to become dues paying members. Members are entitled to vote at members' meetings and participate in decision making. Dues are an important income resource that enables the orchestra to pursue its mission.

Orchestral Etiquette

Attendance

1. Attend all rehearsals prepared to participate in a professional manner.
2. Arrive early enough to be warmed up and ready to play at 7:00pm. It is disruptive and rude to make a habit of squeezing into one's seat after rehearsal has begun. Occasional tardiness is understandable and forgivable, but make an effort to be as quiet and unobtrusive as possible if joining late.
3. Notify the conductor, section leader and stand partner as early as possible of anticipated absences. The rehearsal schedule can be adjusted to work around key absences. If applicable, ensure your music is available to your stand partner in your absence.

Property

4. Bring a pencil to rehearsal and use it. Use light pencil marks so as not to deface the music. Don't under- or over-mark the music. Certainly write down bowings and musical directions as instructed. But don't ruin the sheet music by circling every last key change, accidental, and dynamic marking until your music is black with pencil. If you must mark your music heavily, please use a personal photocopy for that purpose.
5. RETURN ALL MUSIC TO THE LIBRARIAN AFTER CONCERT. There is a sign-out form for music folders, and musicians are financially responsible for lost music or music returned so late that the orchestra incurs a late fee on rental music. Even if circumstances prevent you from playing in the concert, it is your responsibility to ensure the music is returned.
6. Do not handle other people's instruments unless they ask you. Do not 'play' the percussion equipment if you are not a percussionist.
7. We are guests in our rehearsal and performance locations. Treat the space and property with respect.

Rehearsal Protocol

8. Tune only when it is your section's turn to tune (winds/brass followed by strings). Don't tune loudly. Tune as softly as possible so the players around you can hear themselves as well as the tuning A. Do not talk or practice while others are tuning.
9. Give your attention to the conductor during rehearsal, even when not playing. Stop when the conductor stops. If you keep playing, it's a sign that you're not paying attention. Also, don't noodle around or practice while the conductor is talking.
10. Don't chat during rehearsal. If you need to communicate something to your stand partner, do so inconspicuously and quietly. Save personal conversations for break time.
11. At the same time, don't be afraid to ask questions. Approach your section leader during a break, or raise your hand with appropriate questions for the conductor for any clarifications. Ensure all

comments are directed to efficient use of rehearsal time – save questions such as checking notes in the score for breaks.

12. Don't tap your feet.
13. Position yourself so both you and your stand partner have enough arm and leg room and can see the music and the conductor comfortably. Don't be afraid to ask the people around or behind you if they can see the conductor or if you can move a little to give them more space.
14. Play with both your feet on the floor and absolutely not crossed.
15. Do not eat or chew gum. Water bottles with lids are ok.
16. Turn off your cell phone or other electronic devices, aside from a recording device if desired to assist with your practice at home.
17. Avoid perfume or cologne as others can be allergic or find it irritating.

Conduct Expectations

18. Have a positive attitude, provide encouraging feedback and assistance to others as you can to assist in their musical growth.
19. Don't question the conductor or treat him/her with disrespect. Trust in and follow their artistic direction to the best of your ability.
20. Treat others with respect. Aggressive, provocative, disruptive or inappropriate behavior is not tolerated.
21. Any behavior that is inconsistent with the orchestra guidelines will be brought to the attention of the member through the board. Feel free to contact a board member if you have concerns that are not being addressed. If necessary, the member may be asked to leave the orchestra.

Musical Professionalism

22. We strive to present as professional an appearance as possible at our performances. Concert attire is black suit preferably with bow tie for men, and long black dress for women (short skirts are not appropriate).
23. For divisi parts in the strings, the outside player plays the top line while the inside player plays the bottom. When there are more than 2 parts divide by stand (1st stand takes the top, 2nd stand next, etc) unless otherwise directed by the section leader.
24. When sharing a stand, the inside player turns the pages.
25. If you must choose between getting all the notes or getting the beats, choose the beats. It is better to skip a note/ measure than to be out of time with your section or to play a solo during a rest. Don't be the loudest person in the group unless asked for.
26. Honor the effort of your fellow musicians and come to rehearsal each week playing the music better than the preceding week.

27. Enjoy the experience of creating beautiful music in a welcoming environment.

Contribute Beyond Playing

Serious arts organizations can never have enough money, publicity, leadership and followership. Every musician in the orchestra should seek some sort of non-musical role to contribute to the success and smooth operation of the group.

- Be a dues paying member.
- Participate in fundraising: sell a program ad, write grants, promote the orchestra to local businesses, consider becoming a sponsor yourself.
- Promote the orchestra to fellow players and audience members. Tell people about it. Invite people to concerts or to come play. Put up posters in person or on social media.
- Become involved in one of the orchestra's committees. Changes in leadership keep the work fresh and help avoid burnout.
- Do your part to help set up and break down the stage before and after rehearsals and/or concerts.
- Be a self-starting problem solver. Instead of watching two 89 year old ladies move the piano on stage, get up and help. If you think we'd sound better on risers, organize a stage crew to move them into place and take them down.

Approved by Board 2/27/17