



2020-2021

Student Handbook

Vermont Youth Orchestra Association
Elley-Long Music Center at St. Michael's College
223 Ethan Allen Ave, Colchester, VT 05446
802-655-5030 www.vyo.org

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Welcome to the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association

The mission of the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association is to develop young people as artists, citizens, and leaders through the shared pursuit of musical excellence.

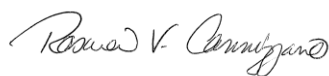
Welcome to the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association's 2020-21 season! This year, we look forward to making music in an unprecedented time. In response to the challenges of making music during COVID-19, the artistic staff look forward to introducing our musicians to exciting new repertoire and a unique performance experiences in various chamber ensembles. In addition to these offerings, VYOA is presenting a new guest artist series curated specifically for the entire VYOA community by new music director Dr. Mark Alpizar.

Performing and celebrating our musicians' growth and artistry is essential. Given the current challenges of presenting live music, the VYOA is outfitting the performance hall of the Elley-Long Music Center for live streaming. Now family and friends from across the country will be able to tune in and enjoy our "Live From Elley-Long" performances.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline programs, policies, expectations, and offerings for the 2020-21 season. The success of our programs demands a high level of commitment from each student and their families. Best efforts have gone into updating this season's student handbook in planning for challenges around COVID-19. Please know that all programs, schedules, guidelines, are subject to change as safety directives from the governor and state health department are updated.

In preparation for this season, please read this handbook and become acquainted with this year's safety protocols. It is a privilege for us to make music together.

If you have questions, please reach out to your ensemble manager or VYOA's Director of Operations, Art DeQuasie at art@vyo.org.



Rosina Cannizzaro
Executive Director



Mark Alpizar
Music Director

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General Safety Protocols

These protocols are effective August 2020.

- For the safety of our musicians and staff, family members will not be allowed to enter the building. Families can park in the lot behind the building and walk their child to the front of the building or they can utilize the drop-off area in front of the building. Cars will be asked to stop so the passenger door opens toward the building. Cars will not be allowed to stand or park in the front of the building during the duration of the rehearsals. Please use parking spots in the parking lot directly behind and adjacent to the building. This ensures pick-up and drop-off will be safer and less prone to bottle-necking.
- All ensembles will have a staggered start time to allow for student check-in and screening in a safe manner. At Elley-Long Music Center, foot traffic is one-way for musicians. Entering will be through the front doors by the drop-off area, and posted signs will designate how to exit.
- Musicians must wear a mask when they enter the building. Upon entering, all musicians' temperature will be taken. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will be unable to participate in the rehearsal.
- Musicians must use hand sanitizer before heading to their rehearsal space.
- All musicians and staff are required to wear masks during their time in the building.
- Woodwind and brass musicians must leave their mask on, but lowered while playing. Masks should be raised back up during long rests. Flutists must be masked at all times, including while playing.
- Musicians must bring their own music stand to use. String players will not be sharing stands. All musicians will sit in their assigned seat. Woodwind and brass chairs will be spaced by a 6 feet radius. String players will be spaced by no less than a 4.5 foot radius.
- All string players must bring their own rosin. Cellists and Bassists must bring their own rock stop or end pin cover. VYOA will not loan out any equipment or instruments.
- Rehearsals are 90 minutes long with no planned break other than to stretch between pieces.
- Musicians should use the restroom before rehearsal starts. Restrooms have a three-person occupancy limit and musicians must observe posted signs for use.
- All woodwind and brass students will be provided materials where spit valves can be emptied. Musicians will be expected to dispose of these at the end of rehearsal.
- All woodwind and brass players must play with a bell cover on their instrument during rehearsals and performances. VYOA will provide each student with one bell cover for the year. Musicians are responsible for replacing their bell cover if it becomes lost or damaged.
- Percussion students will be provided sanitizing wipes and must wipe down VYOA mallets and instruments before and after rehearsal.
- At the end of rehearsal musicians will close up and leave the building in an orderly fashion. Musicians will not be allowed to congregate inside the building.

- VYOA staff will be sanitizing all chairs and hard surfaces after each group's rehearsal. A 30 minute break has been allotted between all rehearsals in each space to allow for sanitizing during the changeover.
- Families must notify the VYOA if their musician or someone in their family has contracted COVID-19 and their musician has been at rehearsal within the 14 day timeframe. Names will be kept confidential when musicians and staff are notified for contact tracing purposes.

Screening and Attendance

- Musicians should not attend rehearsal if they are sick or displaying symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms listed by the Vermont Department of Health include:
 - Fever (100.4 F or higher)
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle pain or aches
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- Families will receive a screening questionnaire weekly. This must be completed before musicians can attend the upcoming Saturday or Sunday rehearsal. Parents will be required to complete the questionnaire at the time of drop-off if not submitted online in time.
- Out of state travel: The VYOA will be following the Cross State Travel guidelines as listed and updated by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. VYOA staff is referencing the out-of-state travel map on the VT ACCD website that dictates whether a student must be quarantined for 14 days or not before attending rehearsal. Please let staff members know if your travel to a yellow or red county was essential travel as described by the VT ACCD. Maps are updated Friday and can be found at <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>.

Protocols for Positive COVID-19 Cases

- In the event that a VYOA member is found to have tested positive for COVID-19 or exhibits significant symptoms of COVID-19, that member may not participate in in-person rehearsals and/or performances for at least 14 days.
- The VYOA will follow all guidelines as outlined by the state health department.
- The VYOA musician must meet the following conditions before returning to any VYOA in-person programming:
 - There are no signs of symptoms for at least 10 days.
 - The musician has received a negative COVID-19 test.

VYOA Programs

The VYOA offers instrumental ensemble programs for musicians who play the following instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba, Percussion, Piano, Harp, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass.

2020-2021 Instrumental ensembles

Please note: Due to COVID-19, Vermont Youth Orchestra (VYO) and Vermont Youth Philharmonia (VYP) will be split into smaller ensembles for the 2020-2021 season to allow for social distancing. Rehearsals for those ensembles and for Vermont Youth Strings (VYS) will be 90 minutes long. Concerts will be held at the Elley-Long Music Center.

Saturday Programs

Presto (6-week Fall and Spring sessions)

Kathleen Kono, conductor

Myriam Bouti, manager

Rehearsal: Saturdays, 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Prelude!

Kathleen Kono, conductor

Myriam Bouti, manager

Rehearsal: Saturdays, 12:30pm – 1:30pm

Da Capo (8-week Fall and Spring sessions)

Ed Owens, conductor

Art DeQuasie, manager

Rehearsal: Saturdays, 10:30 – 11:45 AM

Sunday Programs

Vermont Youth Orchestra

Dr. Mark Alpizar, conductor

Art DeQuasie, manager

Rehearsal: Sundays, 11:00 AM- 3:00 PM

Vermont Youth Philharmonia

Dr. Yutaka Kono, conductor

Art DeQuasie, manager

Rehearsal: Sundays, 3:00 – 7:00 PM

Vermont Youth Strings

Asiat (Ace) Ali, conductor

Mia Fritze, manager

Rehearsal: Sundays, 3:30 – 5:00 PM

Additional programs

Endangered Instruments Program

The Endangered Instruments Program (EIP) is the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association's subsidized lesson program that trains young musicians on less-commonly played orchestral instruments (Double Bass, French Horn, Trombone, and Bassoon) in preparation for membership in a VYOA orchestra. EIP students are eligible to receive 24, 30-minute lessons per school year (Sept. – June) for up to three years at a reduced rate in return for meeting the requirements listed below.

The lesson fee structure is two tiered. First and second year EIP students contribute \$10 per lesson and third year students contribute \$15 per lesson.

To maintain eligibility, EIP students must practice regularly, participate in their school music program, participate in May auditions annually, and accept their placement in a VYOA orchestra when awarded.

Although the VYOA has a few instruments available for loan to EIP students, new EIP students are responsible for obtaining an instrument, either from their school, via loan, or as a rental.

Participation in the EIP program is in high demand and is based on first-come, first-served. If the teacher and the music director determine that a student is insufficiently dedicated to giving the time and effort needed to master their instrument, after a warning, their participation will be revoked with placement being offered to a wait listed student.

For more information or to apply for Endangered Instruments Program lessons, please contact our office at 802-655-5030, or send an email to executive director, Rosina Cannizzaro, at rosina@vyo.org

Lesson Program

The Vermont Youth Orchestra Association offers an instrumental lesson program for students interested in learning to play the violin, viola, or cello. Through studying with an experienced teacher, students will improve their technique, learn important repertoire, and gain valuable performance experience. Lessons take place at the Elley-Long Music Center or a satellite studio at the First Congregational Church in St. Albans. Please visit www.vyo.org/lessons or email Patricia Jancova at patricia@vyo.org for more information.

School tours (Cancelled for 2020-21 season due to COVID-19)

VYS and VYP participate in school tours in the spring. A school tour day typically includes visits to two elementary/middle schools, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This experience provides additional performance opportunities for the ensembles, enables players to share their music with their peers, and inspires an interest in music in others. School tours involve a one-day absence from school, usually just prior to each ensemble's spring concert. While it is regrettable that some students are unable to participate in their ensemble's school tour day, this does not affect those students' eligibility to perform in concerts, nor is it deducted from their allowed absences. VYO most often participates in a school day performance in the Fall.

Summer Symphony Camp (4th week of June)

Summer Symphony Camp is a great way to introduce young musicians to symphony and jazz orchestra. This week-long program is designed to provide a fun and supportive environment for exploring these new avenues of ensemble playing. All students will participate in both orchestras, performing a wide range of musical styles and giving them an opportunity to experiment with different musical genres. Campers make new friends while playing great music and participating in other fun electives. Camp is held at the Elley-Long Music Center during the final week of June.

VYOA Member Expectations and Policies

This section outlines the expectations of VYOA student musicians and policies that ensure a safe learning environment and make it possible for our ensembles to perform at an exceptional level.

Commitment to Musical Excellence

As a member of the VYOA, your personal progress and success as a musician and the collective progress and success of your ensemble depend upon your **FULL** participation. By joining a VYOA ensemble, you make a commitment not only to yourself but also to each of your fellow musicians to do the following:

Participate in rehearsals regularly (in accordance with the attendance policy for your ensemble). The challenging music and intensity of work in our ensemble rehearsals means that each minute of rehearsal time is valuable and important. Due to shorter rehearsals and smaller ensembles this year, an absence more acutely impacts rehearsal.

Practice your ensemble music on a regular basis between rehearsals and achieve mastery of it well before the concert. The primary purpose of rehearsals is for musicians to grow together as an ensemble and to develop a clear, consistent, and cohesive approach to the music. **Learn parts before rehearsal-not during rehearsal!**

Study with a private teacher, if at all possible. Private study is essential for ensuring the continuing development of your musical skills and for meeting the technical challenges of your ensemble music. Be sure to share important solos or problematic passages with your private teacher so they can help you with these areas.

Participate in other music activities, especially the school programs that are available to you. One rehearsal per week with us is not enough time to develop your ear, ensemble skills, and musicianship to the fullest. School programs offer not only opportunities for students to develop in these areas but also to develop their leadership skills. We also find that VYOA students who take part in their school ensembles advance more quickly.

Be a good colleague and role model by:

- **Being on time for rehearsals**
- **Engaging fully in rehearsals:** *Cell phones and other devices are to be turned off during rehearsals.*
- **Being supportive of each other**

Read all emails from your Conductor and Operations Staff. Respond to the emails in a timely manner if asked!

Attendance Policy

The VYOA's attendance policy recognizes that critical school or family events may conflict with rehearsals and that illnesses occur. Compliance with the VYOA school music participation policy may also cause students to miss rehearsals. Once a student has missed more than their set number of allowed absences, they will be asked to meet with their conductor.

- **Prelude! & VT Youth Strings** members – allowed no more than **two absences** per semester.
- **VT Youth Orchestra & VT Youth Philharmonia** members – allowed no more than **two absences per concert cycle**.

Please make use of your allowed absences sparingly and strategically. We recommend that students use their allowed absences for things over which they have no control. These include illness, family emergencies, college visits, mandatory school events, or school music events. We ask that students and their families work together to avoid absences due to things that are under their control. These include family vacations, school work, work shifts, or other competing activities. Making competing commitments means making tough choices, a process that is itself an important learning experience!

Lateness: Rehearsals start on time. Late arrivals are disruptive to the group. This season, students are asked to **arrive no more than ten minutes prior** to the beginning of rehearsal. We ask that parents be mindful of this in planning transportation to rehearsals.

Members must notify their ensemble manager of any upcoming absence from rehearsal. Email is the best way to give notification. All absences, *including* SAT testing, Music Festivals, or illness, require that the ensemble manager be notified in advance of the absence.

School Music Program Participation Policy

As a key element in the VYOA's partnership with school music programs, **all VYOA students in elementary and middle school are required to participate in their school music program if one is offered.** At all grade levels, when scheduling conflicts arise between VYOA and school music events (especially performances), participation in those school music events is given precedence, resulting in an excused absence.

Student Behavior Expectations

Reasonable standards of behavior and dress are expected while rehearsing, performing, or participating in any event or activity associated with the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association. No set of rules can cover every possible situation. The list below, along with common courtesy and respect, offers a guide to appropriate behavior.

General behavior

1. Demonstrate **appropriate, respectful, and safe behavior** with VYOA staff, sectional coaches, and fellow students
2. **Put trash in the appropriate containers.** Please help keep our building clean and well maintained!
3. Students need to demonstrate **safe behavior at all times while at the Elley-Long Music Center.** Running, rough housing, and using equipment for improper purposes will not be tolerated.
4. Everyone must take care to **avoid damaging instruments** or any property in the building. Members are responsible for their own instruments. **Do not leave instruments or bows unattended** where they might be damaged accidentally. Do not leave your instrument on your chair during breaks. ***Instruments should be safely put into cases during breaks or when not needed.*** All instruments should be insured; most homeowner or renter's insurance policies can include a rider to cover instrument insurance.
5. The use of *tobacco, alcohol or any illegal substances* is **strictly forbidden** in and around the Elley-Long Music Center at all times. Also, students are forbidden from vaping or bringing a weapon of any kind (e.g. knife, firearm) to the Elley-Long Music Center or areas surrounding the Elley-Long Music Center. Violations of this policy are grounds for suspension or expulsion.

Rehearsal etiquette

1. **Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off during rehearsals!**
2. **Restroom usage:** Please use the restrooms **before the rehearsal or at the break**. Students may not leave the rehearsal for any reason (other than for absolute emergencies) while it is in progress. Any issues with bathroom supplies or hygiene should be reported immediately to VYOA staff. Observe all posted signs and obey the bathroom occupancy.
3. **Please do not bring food or drink into rehearsal spaces.** A water bottle is the only exception.
4. **Listen carefully** to instructions from your conductor or manager. Do not talk while your conductor or manager is speaking.
5. **Talk among musicians should be kept to a minimum**, and should deal directly with issues related to the music at hand.
6. **Books, homework, and other off-task materials are not to be brought into the rehearsal area** – being attentive and engaged even when you are not playing is an important part of being in an ensemble. You will learn important things about the music and how to improve your skills by observing your colleagues rehearsing.

Bullying and Harassment Policy

The VYOA strives to provide a safe, secure and respectful environment for all students at Elley-Long Music Center and at VYOA-sponsored activities. Bullying has a harmful social, physical, psychological and academic impact on bullies, victims and bystanders. Therefore, the VYOA has defined an explicit policy banning bullying at Elley-Long Music Center and at VYOA-sponsored activities.

Definition

Bullying is deliberate or intentional behavior using words or actions, intended to cause fear, humiliation, intimidation, harm or social exclusion. Bullying may be repeated behavior and involves an imbalance of power. The behavior may be motivated by an actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic, such as, but not limited to: age; national origin; race; ethnicity; religion; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical attributes; physical or mental ability or disability; and social, economic or family status.

Bullying behavior can be:

1. **Physical** (e.g. assault, hitting or punching, kicking, theft, threatening behavior)
2. **Verbal** (e.g. threatening or intimidating language, teasing or name-calling, racist remarks)
3. **Indirect** (e.g. spreading cruel rumors, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion and sending insulting messages or pictures by mobile phone or using the internet – also known as cyber-bullying)

Prohibition

The VYOA prohibits all bullying, whether it is physical; verbal; indirect; cyber-bullying; bullying by proxy; or between students and students, students and adults, or adults and adults. Bullying behavior is prohibited in all VYOA sanctioned events and under VYOA supervision. Suspension or expulsion/termination from the organization are possible consequences for individuals found to have taken part in these behaviors.

Disciplinary Process

In addition to the expectations and policies shown above, the conductor of each orchestra may set additional requirements for rehearsal and concert behavior.

Failure to abide by any of these expectations or policies will be addressed through the following steps:

1. VYOA staff members speak with the student and/or parents concerning the problem.
2. If the problem persists, the Conductor and/or Director of Operations or ensemble manager may remove the student from the activity or have him/her sit out of one or more activity.
3. Failing a satisfactory resolution, the student may be expelled from the VYOA.

(Note: Tuition is non-refundable.)

Concert Attire Regulations

The goal of our concert attire regulations is to help our students present a professional appearance and ensure a uniform look throughout the ensemble. **No one member's outward appearance should distract the audience from everyone's performance.**

Vermont Youth Orchestra & Vermont Youth Philharmonia

Students in the above ensembles are required to wear:

- Black button down dress shirt (black suit jacket, optional)
- Black dress slacks
- Black bow tie (optional), black socks, black dress shoes (no other colors, please!)
- **Unacceptable:** jeans or leggings or athletic shoes

-OR -

Choice of:

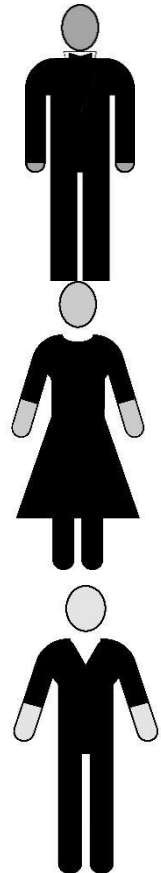
- Long black dress (hem must fall **below the knee**) with black socks or black hosiery and black dress shoes
- Long sleeved all-black shirt (**elbow length at minimum**) paired with solid black dress slacks; accompanied by black socks or black hosiery and black dress shoes
- Long sleeved all-black shirt (elbow length at minimum) paired with long black skirt (hem must fall **below the knee**); accompanied by black socks or black hosiery and black dress shoes
- **Shoulders and knees must be covered when seated!**

Unacceptable:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ○ Short skirts | ○ Sleeveless, short-sleeved, tank or tube tops |
| ○ Slit skirts | ○ Jeans or leggings |
| ○ Neck lines or back designs with significant skin exposure | ○ Bare feet or athletic shoes or flip-flops |
| | ○ Non-black articles of clothing |

Please Note: ALL BLACK ITEMS should be solid black without pattern or ornament

A student who fails to wear the appropriate attire for a concert may be withheld from performing in that concert.



Vermont Youth Strings

Students in the above ensemble are required to wear:

- Clean, solid white button down dress shirt (long or short sleeved)
- Black dress pants
- Black bow tie, black socks and black dress shoes (no other colors, please!)

Unacceptable: jeans or athletic shoes

-OR -

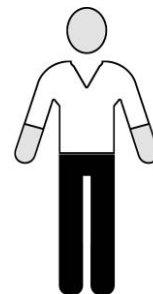
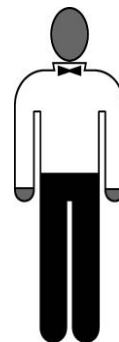
- Clean, solid white shirt (short or long sleeved)
- Solid black dress slacks or long black skirt (hem must fall **below the knee**)
- Black socks or black hosiery and black dress shoes (no other colors, please!)
- **Shoulders and knees must be covered when seated!**

Unacceptable:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ○ Short skirts | ○ Sleeveless, short-sleeved, tank or tube tops |
| ○ Slit skirts | ○ Jeans |
| ○ Neck lines or back designs with significant skin exposure | ○ Bare feet |
| | ○ Non-black articles of clothing |

Please Note: ALL BLACK ITEMS should be solid black without pattern or ornament

A student who fails to wear the appropriate attire for a concert may be withheld from performing in that concert.



Additional information for VYOA families

Tuition

Annual tuition is required for participation in all VYOA programs. Tuition may be paid in cash, check, credit card, or ACH. Payment plans are available, please see your tuition contract for details. **Note: This season, all families have been automatically enrolled in a monthly payment plan. Please direct any tuition payment questions to Office Manager, Brea Landberg at brea@vyo.org.**

Please note the following important tuition policies:

- For all orchestras and programs, tuition is non-refundable after the first day the ensemble meets.
- Student tuition for the current season must be paid in full in order for the student to receive an audition appointment for the coming season

VYOA Financial Aid Program

The Vermont Youth Orchestra Association awards 10%-15% of tuition revenue in financial aid to students annually. We are committed to ensuring that all students who are placed in an ensemble are able to participate. The VYOA offers financial aid support to qualifying families with a combined household income up to \$120,000. Application forms for need-based financial assistance are included in the standard registration packet for each of our programs. Each application is reviewed in confidence by an independent committee. For more information, please contact our Executive Director, Rosina Cannizzaro at rosina@vyo.org

Virtual Concert Hall

We are excited to share that all VYOA performances will be live streamed from the performance hall of the Elley-Long Music Center. While we can't have audiences in the hall, audience members can stream VYOA performances from the comfort of their homes. Concert registration will be available online.

Concert recordings

DVDs – DVDs of VYO concerts will be made available for purchase by our media partner, RETN at the Media Factory. These can be ordered through the RETN website www.retn.org. Instructions are given at the time that DVDs become available for each concert.

Audio Recordings – Recordings of all concerts presented by the VYOA will be made available for purchase and download at www.InstantEncore.com. Families are notified of when the recording is available and are given links for purchase and download.

Parental support

Supporting your child's VYOA participation: For students to benefit from everything the VYOA offers, we need parents to assist with their children's participation in the following ways:

- Read all emails and materials from VYOA. Respond in a timely manner when requested
- Plan for your family to attend (live stream) each of your child's VYOA concerts
- Stay informed via the means described in "Communicating with the VYOA" section below

- Ensure prompt arrival at rehearsals and concerts and pick-up at the end.
 - *Students should arrive only 10 minutes prior to the published start time for rehearsals.*
 - *Students must be picked up directly following the end of a rehearsal or performance*
- Support full attendance of your child at all rehearsals and events by avoiding conflicts between family plans and VYOA activities whenever possible
- Support your child's private lessons, practice routine, and participation in school music activities
- Introduce people to the VYOA, including parents of prospective students, and help grow our community by bringing friends to your child's concerts
- Speak to VYOA staff members regarding any concerns surrounding your child's participation. The sooner we are aware of your concerns, the better chance we have of resolving them successfully.

Volunteering: At various points in each season, the VYOA needs assistance from parent volunteers. Typically, this includes helping at concerts or special events, serving as a chaperone for school tours or community concerts, or helping with a large office mailing. Parents are always welcome to contact the VYOA staff to volunteer or to add their name to a list of volunteers available for a particular task.

Please consider making a charitable gift to the VYOA to support accessibility to our programs through scholarship support. The VYOA is a 501(c)3 organization and gifts are tax deductible to the extent of the law.

Recommended equipment/supplies for students

Students are required to have all applicable items with an asterisk (*) available for rehearsals and performances

General

- Medium to soft lead pencil with eraser*
- Folding music stand

Electronics tools/smart device apps for everyone

- metronome (either dedicated device or app on phone)
- tuner (either dedicated device or app on phone)
- digital recorder (most smart phones offer this feature)

String players

- extra set of strings*
- mute* (keep in instrument case; always bring to rehearsal area if your music calls for muting)
- rosin*
- rock stop or strap for cellists*
(**required** at all times)
- end pin cover or rest for bassists*
- spare bow (for emergencies)
- cleaning cloth

Percussionists (one pair of each)

- Snare drum sticks*
- Timpani mallets*
- Yarn mallets*
- Bell/xylophone mallets*

Wind players

- instrument cleaning tools/supplies*
- instrument stand
- extra reeds*
- cork grease
- appropriate screwdrivers for minor repairs and adjustments
- extra pads

Brass players

- instrument cleaning tools/supplies
- valve oil*
- slide grease*
- slide lubricant and water bottle (trombones)*
- mutes (as required by repertoire)*
- instrument stand
- spare mouthpiece

Communicating with the VYOA

The VYOA staff communicates with students & parents primarily via email. Students and parents receive emails from their Orchestra conductor and ensemble managers on a regular basis regarding rehearsal schedules, performances and other important events. Please be sure to read all emails. The VYOA avoids overloading families with emails but activities in the normal course of the season do require frequent communication. Please keep your ensemble manager updated with any email address changes. If you suspect you are not receiving all VYOA emails, check your junk/spam folder periodically as this is where mass emails are sometimes routed.

Please read the **VYOA E-Newsletter**. Published on a monthly basis, it contains useful information regarding upcoming events and opportunities. If you have opted out of receiving it in the past, please contact info@vyo.org to resume delivery.

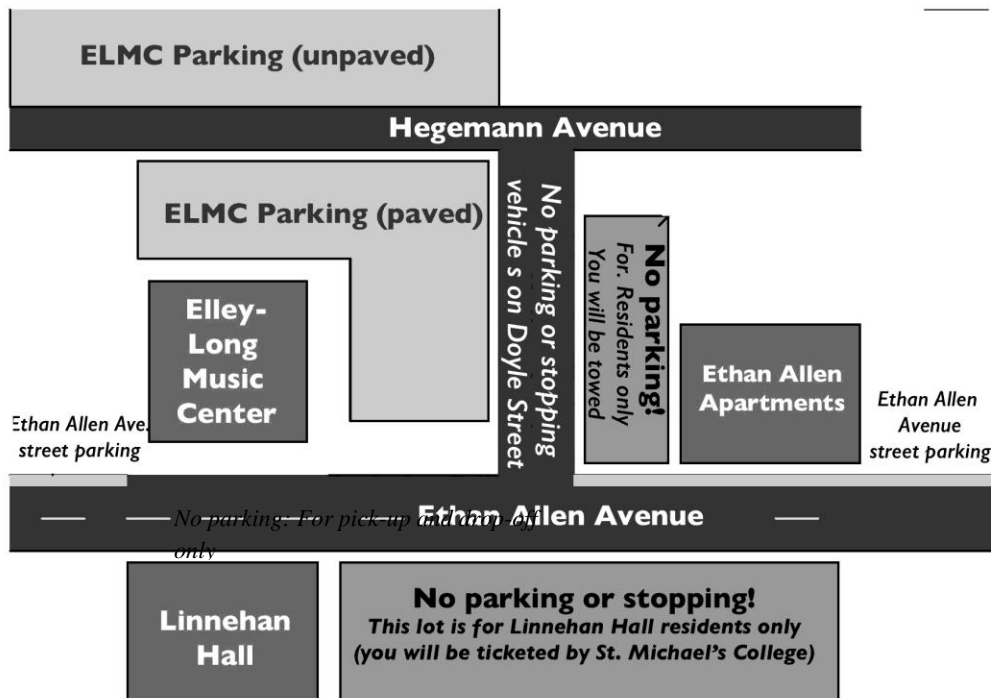
Ensemble managers do not hold regular office hours. Please feel free to call the VYOA office to leave them a voicemail message. Often times the fastest method of communication with staff is via email – see the first page for a list of these email addresses or consult the VYOA website at www.vyo.org

The VVOA website and Social Media: Please visit our website frequently! It contains a great deal of useful information and will help keep you up to date. www.vyo.org. While we do not rely solely on social media for communicating essential information, it is a useful way to keep current with VVOA events. “Like” us on Facebook and Instagram @vyoaorg.

Weather conditions

The VVOA does not normally cancel concerts or rehearsals in the event of inclement weather. Please use your best judgment when deciding to travel to a VVOA event in bad weather. Please notify the operations staff if you decide not to attend an event because of weather conditions. If the VVOA does cancel an event, as much notice as possible will be given out via email, Facebook, and outgoing voicemail messages.

Parking at the Elley-Long Music Center at Saint Michael’s College



Park only in the following areas:

- the paved lot directly behind and adjacent to the Music Center
- the grassy field behind the Music Center
- the street along Ethan Allen Ave

Please DO NOT park in any of the following areas:

- the lot adjacent to the apartment building next to the Music Center - you may be towed!
- the lot adjacent to the dorm building (Linnehan Hall) is available on a temporary basis.
- the pull-off area directly in front of the Music Center – this area is needed as drop-off and pick-up area for equipment and for people with mobility restrictions

We encourage students and parents to **drive cautiously around the Music Center**. Fort Ethan Allen is a busy residential and business area. Please avoid obstructing traffic especially during the busy drop-off/pick-up times. There is limited parking space on Ethan Allen Ave but plenty of space behind the Music Center in our paved and grassy lots. Please park and arrange to meet your child inside the Music Center. Let's be good neighbors to the residents of Fort Ethan Allen!

Music festival sponsorships

The VYOA sponsors participation in the **New England Music Festival** for VYOA students whose schools do not participate in the festival and for VYOA students who are homeschooled. VYOA students receive information via email in late September/early October on the sponsorship process. Families of participating students are responsible for all expenses and registration fees associated with the festival and are invoiced by the VYOA. Fees vary from year to year and we make every effort to notify families of total costs prior to the festival. For more information on the festival and the audition process, visit www.nemfa.org. Please note that the VYOA **cannot** sponsor participation in the **Vermont All-State Music Festival**. Students wishing to audition for All State must sign up through their high school music program (or as a homeschool). Visit www.vmea.org for more information.

Lost and found

Due to COVID-19, there will not be a Lost and Found during the 2020-21 season.

Auditions, placements, role assignments, and awards

Annual Placement Auditions

Auditions are required for placement in the following ensembles: Vermont Youth Orchestra, Vermont Youth Philharmonia, and Vermont Youth Strings.

When: All auditions are held annually in May/June. *Current students* must re-audition each year and automatically receive an audition appointment in late March. *New students* can email auditions@vyo.org to request an audition appointment. When appropriate, auditions can be scheduled outside the normal time frame, though timing or the existing ensemble makeup may delay a student joining an ensemble until later in the season. Mid-year auditions are offered in December only for students who did not audition for placement prior to the start of the season (ensemble assignments do not change over the course of the season, except in cases where there is an organizational need for a student to be reassigned).

Where: All auditions are held at the Elley-Long Music Center at Saint Michael's College.

Cost: There is no cost for any VYOA audition.

Time: Auditions are approximately 10 minutes in duration.

Placement results: Once auditions are completed, all placements are sent out via email to students and their teachers in early June. Waitlisted students are notified of their final status by the end of June.

Eligibility: Auditions are open to instrumentalists currently in grades 3-11. Instrumentalists should have at least one year of experience on an orchestral instrument. Woodwind and brass players younger than 6th grade should have at least 2 years of experience on their instrument. Younger students may be permitted to audition if given a recommendation by their private instructor.

To maintain eligibility for VYOA ensemble membership, students in elementary and middle school must concurrently participate in their school music program if one is offered. At all grade levels, when scheduling conflicts arise between VYOA and school music events (especially performances), participation in those school music events is given precedence, resulting in an excused absence.

Requirements: Details of VYOA audition requirements can be found at www.vyo.org/auditions

VYOA Senior Soloist Auditions

All VYOA high school juniors are welcome to audition in May (preceding their senior year) to perform as an orchestral soloist during the following season. Interested students must participate in a special 15-minute audition, playing the selection they wish to perform as a soloist. The soloist auditions are typically held on the 3rd Tuesday of May. No alternate audition day can be offered. **NOTE: 2020-2021 high school juniors who do not participate in the season due to COVID-19 may perform a senior solo audition if they completed a 2020 audition for the 2020-2021 season and they accepted their placement. New and former students who do not meet these two requirements are not eligible to audition for a senior solo.**

Piano accompaniment is required for this audition. Audition results are typically sent to all participants within the week following these auditions.

Note: Students should be aware that most orchestral music written in the past 90 years is under copyright and often available only via rental from the publisher. In these cases, the VYOA covers the first \$250 of the rental or purchase cost. All students planning to participate in these auditions should check in with Dr. Alpizar no later than December 1, 2020 (by emailing art@vvo.org) to determine if your selected piece is suitable for programming and if it presents significant music rental or purchase costs so that you can make an alternate repertoire choice if necessary. Because of reproduction and broadcast rights costs, videos of performances of works still under copyright cannot be included in the RETN broadcasts and DVDs.

Ensemble placements

The VYOA conducting staff use an evaluation system developed during thousands of auditions over the past two decades and consult closely over the course of auditions to identify and contextualize each student's current level of development, taking into account not only what is observed in the audition, but also the quality of their VYOA ensemble participation in the previous season and the trajectory of growth demonstrated in the year between auditions. The goal is to determine the ensemble placement and role of each student that is developmentally appropriate – where the student will experience suitable levels of challenge and opportunities for growth, camaraderie, and artistic accomplishment.

The following areas are key in determining instrumental ensemble placement:

- Technical level of audition repertoire (especially as it relates to position proficiency in strings)
- Technical facility
- Maturity of tone/projection
- Intonation
- Rhythmic accuracy
- Security in extreme registers
- Quality of audition preparation

Sight reading: The sight-reading portion of the audition serves primarily as a **diagnostic exercise** to identify elements of music notation a student may have difficulty processing, which is a helpful guide for rehearsal and curriculum planning. **Students should not consider sight-reading difficulties as failures** nor give these exercises undue weight in their perception of the quality of their performance. Sight reading skills are, however, taken into account when determining section leadership positions, as a well-developed level of musicianship is needed to succeed in a leadership role.

After all factors have been weighed in a student's instrumental audition, we determine the "natural" ensemble placement and role (e.g. 1st or 2nd violin section, section leadership) for which the student has demonstrated their qualification. Not until all auditions for an instrument are complete do we determine the actual placements we can offer students.

For some instruments, placements can be heavily influenced by the number of available positions—flute and clarinet, for example, often have more qualified candidates than available orchestral chairs for those instruments. In these cases, students who are qualified for membership in a particular orchestra may be waitlisted pending the decisions of students who were placed ahead of them.

Orchestra seating and part assignment policies

At VYOA, we strive to promote educational opportunity, access to resources, and community building as key components of our shared pursuit of artistic excellence. The following section's seating and part assignment policies are designed to promote that ideal while giving students meaningful opportunities to develop the skills and characteristics that will help them achieve their current and future musical goals.

VYO Seating and Part Assignment Procedures

VYO seating auditions will not be held during the 2020-2021 season. All seating assignments will be done by the music director. Each of VYO's 4 chamber groups is designed to be equal in terms of artistic value and quality of repertoire. The groups are not ranked in any way. To aid social distancing, each concert's part rotations for the winds and brass will be limited. Students should remain in their assigned seats throughout the entirety of rehearsal. NOTE: String seating is not simply rank and file, seasoned players are found throughout the string sections to promote a higher ensemble quality.

VYP, VYS, Presto and Prelude! Seating and Part Assignment Procedures

All VYOA orchestras (except for VYO) use rotational string seating throughout the season. Rotational seating is non-hierarchical and often involves placing more experienced players throughout each section to ensure a strong artistic product and meaningful educational experience. At times, seating may be rotated between rehearsals as part of the educational process, but will be set into concert seating order well in advance of the performance. First violin/second violin assignments remain steady throughout the season, unless the addition of new players requires a re-balancing of sections.

VYOA Scholarships and Awards

VYP Friendship Award

The VYP Friendship Award was first awarded in April of 2010. This award was created by and is funded by the parents of Aaron Xue to honor his memory and highlight the importance and value of friendship among young musicians. Aaron was a VYP cellist who died unexpectedly in April of 2009. The award, as determined by VYP members' secret nominations and VYOA staff input, is given to the student who demonstrates exemplary character traits throughout the season while interacting with his/her fellow orchestra members, as shown in generosity with their time and energy, caring, willingness to listen, helpfulness, etc. The recipient is announced every year at the VYP Spring Concert in April.

Hermance Prize

The Hermance Prize is awarded annually to a Vermont Youth Orchestra senior who has performed as a soloist with a VYOA orchestra during the current concert season. Established in 1990 by the parents and grandfather of pianist Harry Hermance, this \$1,000 prize is presented at the VYO's final concert of the year in May in honor of Harry's commitment to musical excellence. The recipient of the prize is determined by their adjudicated performance at the Hermance Recital, which features performances by each senior soloist playing solo literature written with piano accompaniment or as an unaccompanied solo work. The Hermance Recital takes place in March or April, annually. VYOA students, especially the soloists' VYO colleagues, are strongly encouraged to attend this free event.

Weathers Scholarship

Ann Weathers (1923-2012) was a long-time friend of the VYOA. She shared the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association's interest in helping young students achieve their musical potential. To this end, she established an annual award to assist a VYOA graduating high school senior with the pursuit of a Bachelor's degree in music. The exact amount will depend on the performance of the scholarship's endowment fund. Any high school senior who is currently a VYOA ensemble member and plans to pursue a music degree in the areas of performance, education, or composition is eligible to apply. Applicants must demonstrate: financial need, an enthusiastic commitment toward pursuing a career in music, and a record of past artistic achievement and recognition. Of these criteria, financial need is the first to be considered. The application due date is late April and all senior VYOA members will be notified via email of application requirements and deadlines. Please contact rosina@vyo.org for more information and the application materials.

Additional Services Provided by VYOA

Student Recordings

Students may use the VYOA audio equipment installed at Elley-Long Music Center to create a CD performance recording for college or summer festival applications. The fee for this service is \$50/hour for VYOA members. To reserve recording time, schedule an appointment with Director of Operations Art DeQuasie (art@vyo.org).

Instrument Loans

While students are expected to provide their own instrument, we do have a limited number of instruments available for loan to VYOA musicians. These are instruments that are typically not available via rental (e.g. clarinets in A, double French horns.) There is no fee for the loan if the student's VYOA ensemble repertoire requires a related instrument not typically owned by a student musician. Examples include the piccolo for flutists, English Horn for oboists, and E-flat, A, and bass clarinets. In special cases, these instruments can be loaned for short term, non-VYOA use. A fee is charged for these loans. The amount of the loan fee is set according to instrument type and duration of the loan.

Renting the Elley-Long Music Center

Due to COVID-19, rental of the Elley-Long Music Center will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Inquiries should be directed to facilities manager Brian Johnson at brian@vyo.org.