



2023 - 2024

Family Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME AND GENERAL INFORMATION	4
Overview	
Goals	
Structure of the Orchestra	
Faculty and Staff	
COMMUNICATIONS	8
REHEARSALS, PRACTICING, AND CONCERTS: RDYO POLICIES	9
Rehearsals	
Rehearsal Locations	
Practicing outside of rehearsals	
Concerts	
Concert attire	
Understanding the Orchestra hierarchy	
Attendance (rehearsals and concerts)	
TUITION AND VOLUNTEERING	15
Tuition Fees	
Refunds	
Bursaries	

Volunteering	
Supporting the Orchestra	
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	19
ANNUAL EVENTS	21
Music camp	
Rotary Concert	
Christmas outreach concerts	
Winter workshop	
Competitions	
Open house days	
Parent viewing days	
Year-end party	
RDYO Code of Conduct	24

Note: The Membership Commitments and Code of Conduct that you read and signed when you registered is excerpted from the RDYO Family Handbook.

WELCOME & GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome to the Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra! We are delighted to welcome new and returning musicians to our Orchestra family. We invite parents and musicians to review the membership commitments outlined here, to increase your understanding of what is involved in youth orchestra participation.

We continue to monitor the restrictions and guidelines regarding COVID-19, and will maintain the most up to date information on the website.

Overview

The Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra (RDYO) is a professional orchestral preparation program for young musicians, providing instruction and performance opportunities in an ensemble setting. Founded in 1971, the Delta Youth Orchestra operated in Ladner until 2013. The Orchestra changed its name to the Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra to reflect its growing membership from the City of Richmond and its base move to Richmond. Today, RDYO comprises seven divisions and enrolls over 180 young musicians from all over Metro Vancouver. RDYO has a rich history of offering public performances at outreach concerts and events throughout the Lower Mainland.

RDYO operates two programs:

Symphony Orchestra Program (SOP): Students aged 6 to 18 are registered in this leveled program. Levels progress from introductory through to more advanced level. Instruction is available for string, wind, brass, and percussion students, all in an ensemble setting.

Chamber Ensemble Program (CEP): CEP provides enriched instruction in quartet and in chamber orchestra formats.

RDYO's goals are to:

- Foster the development of knowledge, appreciation and ability in an ensemble/orchestral music setting through weekly rehearsals and concert performances
- Encourage young musicians to discover their musical identities through ensemble playing as they gain more confidence in their skills and fine tune their performance abilities
- Provide high quality musical training to students with both benefits and opportunities to develop musically through bursaries, scholarships and camps
- Implement leadership opportunities that support students to become pillars in their community through participation, accountability and teamwork

- Develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of orchestral music beyond a school setting to prepare students for a future in music

RDYO has had wonderful success in preparing young musicians for post-secondary education which lead professional careers. Several RDYO alumni play in professional or community orchestras, including the Richmond Orchestra, the Vancouver Academy of Music, the Ottawa Symphony, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. RDYO is fortunate to have two RDYO alumni as sessional staff. Our musicians acknowledge the need to give back to their community in order for music appreciation and education to have a deeper reach in our society. Others go on to be loyal patrons of the performing arts throughout their lives, ensuring that future generations of musicians have an appreciative audience.

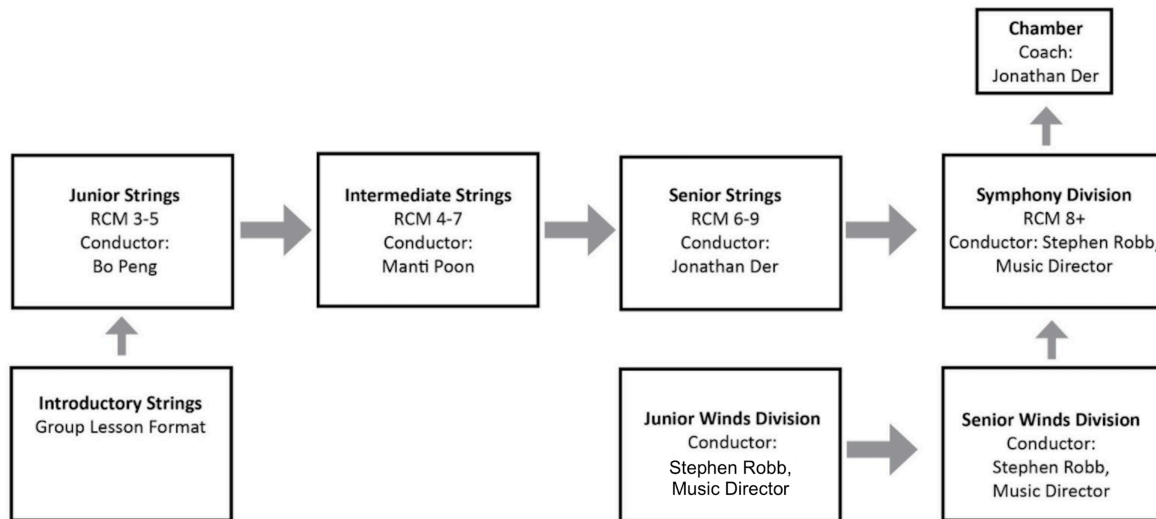
RDYO's mandate is to provide unique and enriching musical instruction to children and youth while nurturing a safe, growing community for students to share their passion for classical music. The majority of our members start in the junior levels and stay with the organization until Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra's success is due to the strengths of our unique program offerings which offer us a steady retention rate that serves the RDYO's mission: to serve our communities with inspired musical performances through a strong foundation of musical education in an ensemble setting for youth.

Structure of the Orchestra

Presently the Orchestra consists of seven divisions with approximately 180 players. The divisions are:

- Junior Strings
- Intermediate Strings
- Senior Strings
- Symphony
- Chamber
- Junior Winds
- Senior Winds

Typically, players will spend two years in each division. The flow from one division to the next is represented in the diagram below. The Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) levels indicated are guidelines, and by design there is overlap between divisions. This allows conductors to place musicians within a division that suits their age and ability.



Faculty and Staff

RDYO hires professional conductors to lead our ensembles. Several of our faculty have been with the Orchestra for many years, while others are newer members of the RDYO family.

Conductors are responsible for organizing rehearsals, selecting repertoire, and scheduling outreach concerts. Conductors determine seating assignments, including the position of concertmaster. Orchestra members are expected to show respect for their conductor at all times.

Conductors are assisted by Division Managers, who are parent volunteers. Division managers take attendance, oversee rehearsal set-up, and communicate with parents and musicians.

Please check our [Faculty & Staff page](#) on the RDYO website for further information on our conductors.

COMMUNICATIONS

RDYO regularly communicates to its families about program news, events, closures and other important information. **All families, including musicians, parents, and guardians**, are responsible for regularly

checking their preferred media for messages and announcements. RDYO communicates through the following means:

- **Email** is the primary method of communication. Please make sure that RDYO has your most up-to-date email. Weekly reminder emails will be sent out with the latest information. Please adjust your spam filter or firewalls so that you can accept @rdyo.ca emails.
- Our website, **www.rdyo.ca**, is a great source of information regarding schedules and concert information.
- Occasionally, the RDYO may call you to relay important information such as a rehearsal cancellation.

It is the responsibility of the families to make sure that your correct email address and phone number is on file with us. Please notify loren@rdyo.ca of any changes to your email address or phone number.

REHEARSALS, PRACTICING, AND CONCERTS POLICIES

Rehearsals

Rehearsals have set start and finish times. Musicians will only be able to access their rehearsal space 10 minutes prior to the start time. Please arrive 10 minutes early so that rehearsals can begin on time. Arriving late for rehearsal shows disrespect for the conductor and fellow musicians, and will not be tolerated.

The most up-to-date information about our rehearsal schedule is on the website. Very occasionally, RDYO may have to cancel a rehearsal, for example if road conditions are unsafe or provincial health guidelines change. In this case, email will be sent out to all families at 7:30 a.m. on the day of the cancellation.

What to bring to rehearsal:

- Bring your instrument, along with any needed accessories such as rosin, extra strings, a mute, reeds, etc.;
- A pencil with a good eraser;
- Your RDYO music folder, with music;
- A music stand;
- *A face covering/mask if you wish to wear one*
- *A bell cover (required for all wind and brass instruments)*

You are responsible for all of your belongings. Please put your name on music stands, music folders and instrument cases. RDYO is not responsible for any lost or stolen belongings.

Rehearsal Locations

RDYO rehearsal locations might change in order to accommodate our group sizes based on availability of locations. Division managers will be present at in-person rehearsal locations at either St Alban's Church or St Anne's Church.

RDYO continues to seek alternate rehearsal locations, as well as a more permanent home for our music library, percussion instruments, and weekly rehearsals. If you have a suggestion, please bring it to the attention of our Orchestra Coordinator, loren@rdyo.ca.

Practicing outside of rehearsals

Players are expected to practice their orchestral pieces during the week, so that they are ready to play at their regular rehearsals. Many players find it beneficial to work on their orchestral pieces with their regular music teacher. Your conductor will tell you how often to practice.

Concerts and Recordings

Concert attendance and participation is an essential part of our players' musical education, and we recognize the benefits of performing and giving back to our community. We will continue to work towards virtual performances for each ensemble until live performances are possible. For all formal recordings, players are required to follow the concert dress code, which is found on our website and in this handbook. Players who are not appropriately dressed may be assigned to the back of their section, or may be denied the opportunity to perform, at the discretion of the conductor.

Concert attire

RDYO has a dress code for formal and informal concerts. The goal of the dress code is to present to the audience a unified and professional appearance. Failure to comply with the concert attire requirements may result in the musician being seated at the back of their section, or not being allowed to perform in the concert. Examples of unacceptable attire include t-shirts, leggings, jeans, athletic/running shoes, coloured or white socks, high heels, and mini-skirts.

Formal Concerts – Symphony

Bottom options:

- black dress/skirt below the knee
- black dress pants

Top options:

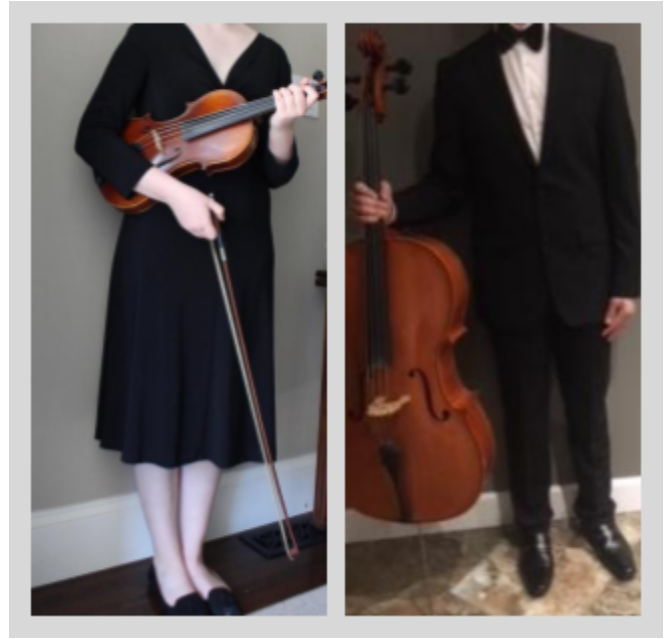
- long-sleeved black dress top
- long-sleeved white shirt and bowtie with black suit/tuxedo jacket

Shoes:

- black dress shoes with no or moderate heel

Notes:

- keep jewelry to a minimum
- socks should black
- NO jeans, visible logos, or casual shoes such as runners or sneakers
- when masks are required, please wear black



Formal Concerts – All Other Divisions

Bottom options:

- black skirt below the knee
- black dress pants

Top options:

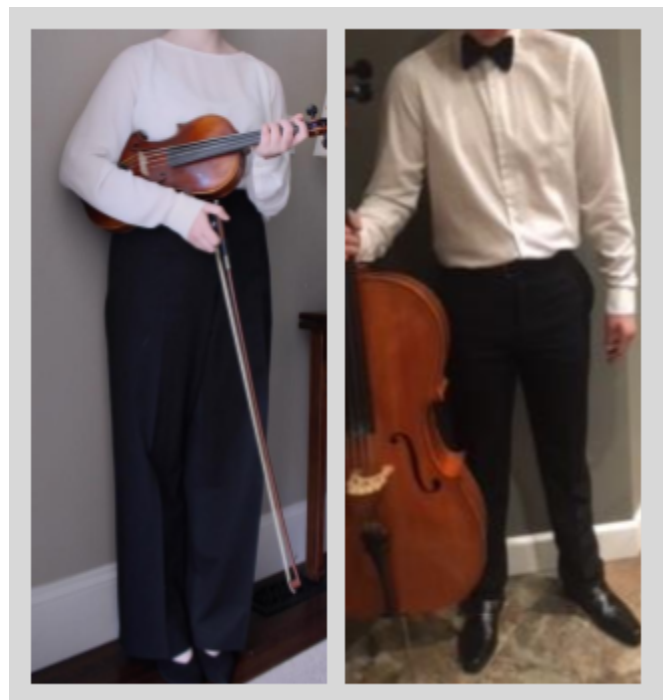
- long-sleeved white dress top
- long-sleeved white shirt with black bow-tie

Shoes:

- black formal shoes with no or moderate heel

Notes:

- keep jewellery to a minimum
- socks should black



- NO jeans, visible logos, or casual shoes such as runners or sneakers
- when masks are required, please wear black

All divisions: Attire for informal concerts

Tops: black RDYO t-shirt

Bottoms: black pants, black socks, black shoes

Understanding the Orchestra hierarchy

Conductors decide how musicians are seated within an ensemble, and these decisions are final. The “first chair” or principal player in a section is responsible for leading that section. Being selected as a principal player is an honour and a responsibility; the principal must set an excellent standard for practicing, attendance, and attitude.

Each division is overseen by a parent volunteer, known as the Division Manager. The Division Manager supports the conductor, and at times assigns tasks to parent volunteers in order for rehearsals and events to run smoothly.

Attendance (rehearsals and concerts)

RDYO’s orchestral program is an intensive one. Each rehearsal involves development of technique and advancing in the repertoire. Missing even one week can mean that players fall behind their peers, making it difficult to catch up. Conductors are not able to work with individual players to review missed instruction.

If you participate in other extracurricular activities, we ask that you prioritize RDYO for both rehearsals and concerts. It is impossible for conductors to prepare the ensemble for a concert without the full commitment of all musicians. If you feel that your attendance may be sporadic due to other commitments, then RDYO is likely not a good fit for you.

Attendance is recorded at each rehearsal and concert, with a notation of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. An excused absence means that you have a valid reason for missing a rehearsal or concert, and that you have notified your division manager. Examples of an excused absence include:

- Illness;
- School or family trip; or
- School-related event,

An unexcused absence means that either you did not notify your Division Manager, or that your reason for absence was not deemed valid. Examples of invalid reasons include:

- Sports game or practice;
- Too busy/tired; or
- Forgot.

Tardiness policy

It is vital to the success of each rehearsal and class that students arrive on time and ready to play. Students are expected to arrive 10 minutes before their rehearsal begins.

Two tardies are equivalent to one unexcused absence

TUITION AND VOLUNTEERING

Tuition Fees

Tuition fees are determined by your ensemble division, as well as the number of musicians from your family within RDYO. Tuition fees may be paid using PayPal or cheque.

Refunds

Refunds will be granted until the second weekend in October each season (this coincides with our yearly Music Development Camp), less a \$50 administrative fee. As we commit to rehearsal venues and other expenses with a budget based on our initial registration numbers, we are unable to offer partial refunds after this date. Any refund requests after this date may be considered by the Operations Director and Music Director in special circumstances but will not be automatically granted and are subject to approval.

Bursaries

Bursary support is often available for musicians in the orchestra through our donors. Please submit a letter to the [Operations Director](#) outlining your family's situation and needs, and we will respond as soon as possible to address your request. Bursaries are not guaranteed for the following year, and additional applications may be requested. Your personal information will be strictly confidential.

Volunteering

RDYO is a registered charitable organization governed by a Board of Directors. Volunteers are vital to the operation of RDYO and this is an important component of your membership commitment. **RDYO membership involves a minimum 10-hour volunteer contribution.** Your volunteer hours help the Orchestra operate and ensure that tuition remains affordable.

RDYO Membership has involved a minimum 10-hour volunteer contribution per family. Every family is encouraged to volunteer for at least one concert.

A postdated volunteer cheque of \$250 is required at the start of the season and destroyed if all hours are met. In cases where neither parent/guardian is available as a volunteer, there is also an option for the deposit to be cashed in lieu of volunteer hours. Volunteer deposit cheques must be submitted along with tuition.

On the following page are some areas in which RDYO needs volunteers in a typical season, as well as tasks that are unique to our current rehearsal situations. Please contact Loren Ma at loren@rdyo.ca to be assigned specific duties or to be connected with a volunteer team leader.

Volunteer Opportunities in RDYO

1) Camp:

- a) Head Chaperone:
 - i) In attendance, to act as a support for Orchestra Coordinator in case of child / health emergencies
 - ii) Head Chaperone becomes Acting Orchestra Coordinator
 - iii) Children under their wing will be divided equally among other chaperone groups
 - iv) Coordinate with other chaperones for student transfer
- b) Chaperones:
 - i) Will attend Music Development camp as chaperone
 - ii) Will be in charge of a group of students for the weekend
 - iii) Make sure that students are safe
 - iv) Accompany on the bus ride there and back if needed

2) Concerts - Backstage

- a) Will assist Orchestra Coordinator with the flow of backstage during the concert
- b) In charge of moving groups of students on and off stage
- c) During the concert, making sure that students stay where they need to be
- d) Check for concert uniform
- e) Take attendance and make sure that all students are accounted for

3) Concerts - FOH ambassadors

- a) On the day of: person will be in charge of greeting families, handing out promotional information for RDYO
- b) Assist fundraiser volunteers

4) Concerts - Photographers:

- a) On the day of: will be in charge of taking photos both backstage and in the audience point of view for our website and social media

Please note that there will be many concerts and we will need help for each one.

5) Concerts - Fundraiser

- a) Raffles, Silent Auction etc
- b) Fundraisers - Seasonal
 - i) Be in charge of the card making fundraiser
 - ii) Find new fundraisers that RDYO can participate in

6) **Division Group:** Division Managers are an important conduit between the families, conductors, board, and staff. Each division has their own division manager. The detailed list of roles and responsibilities can be found [HERE](#). Example of weekly tasks are:

- Setup and cleanup of rehearsal spaces
- Attendance taking
- In-person rehearsal supervision
- Concerts
- Communications
- Social events

Supporting the Orchestra

Every family is asked to promote the Orchestra, and in particular, our concerts within their community.

Examples:

- Place a concert poster on the bulletin board of your church or favourite coffee shop;
- Like and share RDYO posts about concerts on Facebook and Instagram;
- Retweet RDYO tweets;
- Chat about RDYO to any friends with young children who might be interested in music.

Our social media handles:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/deltayouthorchestra/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/rdyorchestra/>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra Society is a registered charity which is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Board meetings are held once a month. Please visit our website for the information of [our current Board](#).

As a governing Board, the primary responsibilities of the Board are to oversee the leadership of the Operations Director and the Music Director, and to create policy. The Board is responsible to the parent community; Board members are asked to contribute to the area that best suits their interests and abilities, to the extent that they are able. The following areas are examples of Board member initiatives:

- Hiring: recruiting conductors and staff
- Facilities: researching new rehearsal facilities, liaising with landlords
- Fundraising: including donor relations and grant writing
- Finance: overseeing the budget and bookkeeping operations
- Policy: developing and revising policy
- Scholarships & awards: overseeing the adjudication process
- Five-year plan: ensuring that the Orchestra continues to thrive

ANNUAL EVENTS

RDYO schedules educational opportunities and events for our young musicians throughout the year. Please consult the website for specific dates and further details.

Music Camp - October 6-8, 2023

Each Thanksgiving Weekend, RDYO organizes a two-day residential camp for all winds/brass/percussion musicians and strings musicians from Intermediate Strings and above. Music camp is an important opportunity for young musicians to bond with each other and with their conductors, as well as engaging in intensive rehearsals and sectional coaching. Time is set aside for socializing and group games. Many of our graduates look back on music camp as their fondest RDYO memory.

A note on cell phone use at camp

Because we want our musicians to connect with each other, we encourage them to leave their cell phones at home. If you strongly feel that your child needs a phone, please be aware of our policies: musicians are only allowed to use their phones during quiet times and breaks, or while in their cabin. Whenever a conductor is in the room, whether for meals, rehearsals, a presentation, or performance, phones must be put away.

Rotary Concert

Each November, RDYO performs at a charity concert for the Rotary Club. The concert benefits many Rotary charities, and it also benefits RDYO. Each family is required to purchase two tickets to this concert, which is always a splendid evening of entertainment. All funds RDYO receives from ticket sales go into our Scholarship and Bursary Fund. In addition, Rotary donates a significant sum of money each year to our Scholarship and Bursary Fund, meaning that all RDYO families benefit from our relationship with Rotary. The Rotary Concert is the only concert for which parents are required to purchase tickets. If you do not wish to attend the concert, please give your tickets to a friend.

Christmas outreach concerts

RDYO participates in many outreach concerts, particularly at Christmas. Dates and times will be notified nearer to the date.

Winter Workshop

Each year during the winter term, RDYO hosts a one-day workshop on a Saturday. The day is jam-packed with rehearsals, master classes, and sectional coaching. We also try to arrange for a fun musical activity, such as a drumming workshop. Details on the day and time will be posted as soon as they are confirmed.

Competitions

RDYO sponsors an orchestra-wide Concerto Competition and a Scholarship Competition each year. For the Concerto Competition, an independent adjudicator will judge the performance of one movement of a concerto. For the Scholarship Competition, the adjudication process considers not only musicianship, but also attendance, self-discipline, attitude, and participation. RDYO considers these attributes to be essential to success in the Orchestra, and in life. Players with unexcused absences (as outlined in Attendance, above) will not be considered for the Scholarship Competition or the Concerto Competition, at the discretion of their Division Manager or Conductor.

The Concerto Competition will take place in November/December. The Scholarship Competition will take place in April/May.

Open house days

Several times during the year, RDYO will hold open house days, during which anyone interested in the orchestra may view or participate in a rehearsal. These days will be announced ahead of time; feel free to extend an invitation to anyone you know with a musical child.

Parent viewing days

Each conductor will hold at least one parent viewing day during the year. This is a great opportunity for parents to learn more about how an orchestra rehearses, as well as to meet other parents in the division.

Year-end party

RDYO's Board of Directors hosts a year-end party for all our young musicians. Typically, the event will take place in early June. More details will be announced closer to the date.

RYDO CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Code of Conduct is a representation of our core values and an outline of expected behaviour and attitudes for all members of our Orchestra family.

- **Demonstrate respect for yourself and others.** Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself and never intentionally harm another musician. If you see someone being bullied, intervene by telling them to stop or immediately report it to an adult in charge.
- **Demonstrate courtesy to others.** Use appropriate language and behavior at all times while maintaining friendly and courteous behavior.
- **Behave in a positive and responsible manner.** Follow the conductor's instructions and expectations at all times.
- **Attend regularly with requested permission for absences.** Attendance and participation are an essential part of the educational process. Regular attendance is necessary for student success. All students are encouraged to be present and prompt. Rehearsal attendance is the responsibility of both parents and students. Parents will be contacted if a pattern of late arrivals is noted.
- **Be prepared for rehearsals and concerts.** Be in the assigned place with appropriate materials, ready to work at the time that rehearsal begins.
- **Acknowledge your contribution to the success of the Orchestra.** Take your part in the Orchestra seriously. Do not become a distraction for others. Give every other musician the opportunity to maximize their potential. Encourage your fellow students. Never tear them down.
- **Cooperate with others.** This includes peers, conductors, administrators, volunteers, parents and visitors. Be polite and respectful.
- **Dress appropriately.** See dress code in the Orchestra Family Handbook for more details.
- **Respect others' property,** especially other musicians' instruments.