



SSYO Handbook

2024 - 2025 Season

Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra
32 Erie Street
Stratford, Ontario N5A 2M4

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Message from the Music Director



Welcome to the 4th season of the Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra! I'm thrilled about what we have in store this year.

For the first time, our spring concert will have a theme: A Masquerade Ball! We'll be exploring music from Khachaturian, Fauré, Verdi, Andrew L. Webber, Richard Meyer, and more. We're also excited to feature a soloist performing with the ensemble for the first time.

Gwendolyn Nguyen will be returning to lead the junior strings, and this year, we'll be tackling a larger piece that will challenge both the juniors and the rest of the SSYO.

In December, we'll continue the SSO's beloved holiday sing-along with members of the Stratford Concert Choir at Avondale United Church.

This season, we'll also be fundraising during intermissions of SSO concerts, and we're looking for SSYO volunteers to help sell concessions. This could be a great opportunity for older students to earn school volunteer hours.

Additionally, we're happy to welcome adult "students" to join the SSYO, provided they do not displace younger musicians. If you're interested, please get in touch.

I'm incredibly proud of our achievements from last year and can't wait to see what this season brings!

Musicalement vôtre,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Eric Arborelius". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

About the Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra

Started in the fall of 2021, the Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra aims to connect young musicians from Stratford and surrounding areas and create a community where young artists can learn the joy of symphonic music. While the SSYO does not replace private instruction, it helps to grow skills learned from their teachers, and becomes a launching point for any type of music making.

Focussing on classical music, the SSYO also performs selections from movie scores, musical theatre and opera. We welcome any young musician who is able to read music, plays an orchestral instrument, and is excited to join us for our weekly 1.5 hour rehearsals. The SSYO team works to arrange music to fit the ensemble, and has performed music from Bizet's *Carmen and l'Arlésienne Suites*, *The Pirates of the Caribbean*, the Shostakovich Jazz Waltz and more!

If you think you may be interested, but want to see what it's all about, we invite you to come sit in on a rehearsal to watch!

About the Junior Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra

One of the greatest joys in working with the Youth Orchestra is that we immediately saw how large the appetite was for this type of ensemble. So much so, that we created a Junior program (J-SSYO) for those who weren't quite ready for a 1.5 hour rehearsal, and who are still gaining the fundamentals of their instrument.

The J-SSYO is open to string players who want to be a part of the SSYO, but aren't ready just yet. With weekly rehearsals of 45 minutes, the J-SSYO spends 30 minutes of rehearsal under the guidance of Gwendolyn Nguyen before joining the SSYO for the last 15 minutes. Each term, the J-SSYO will join the SSYO on stage at their recital for one piece on the programme, allowing them to share in the excitement!

If you are interested in either the SSYO or the J-SSYO, please come to our registration night on Thursday Sept 5, 2024 at [Zion Lutheran Church](#) at 7:00 PM and consider attending our "open rehearsal" on Monday Sept 9. You may also email us at ssyo@stratfordsymphonyorchestra.ca

Expectations of SSYO Members

Commitment and Preparation

Dedication to the SSYO is largely demonstrated through regular attendance to all scheduled rehearsals, concerts, and events as well as consistent, individual musical preparation.

Through each of its members' individual investment in playing their part to the best of their ability, the quality of the SSYO will continue to grow each season. Every member makes an equally important contribution to the SSYO experience.

Concert Dress

Musicians shall choose dress options appropriate to their gender expression.

The dress of orchestra musicians should reflect the tone of the event, a professional demeanour and be suitable for the stage.

All garments must be of true black, without pattern or visible logos.

Tops: Black top, black dress shirt. Sleeve length should be $\frac{3}{4}$ to full length.

Bottoms: Black pants, Black skirt long (below knees)

Shoes: Formal Black

Jewellery: We recommend little to no jewellery on stage

Formal one piece dress suits are also okay

Optional

Ties: If you do choose to wear, please wear a straight tie or bow tie.

Socks: Black socks or hose.

Black Suit Jackets optional

Private Lessons

Members are strongly encouraged to take private lessons as the aim of the SSYO is not to teach young artists how to play their instruments, but rather to learn how to play together as an ensemble. If you are having trouble finding an appropriate private teacher, please contact the music director who will be able to connect you with local teachers. We also recommend checking out the [Stratford Music Teachers online music directory](#).

Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination Policy

The Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra is committed to providing an environment free of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, can contribute fully and have equal opportunities to learn and grow.

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, every person has the right to be free from harassment and discrimination. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated, condoned or ignored at the SSYO.

As part of the SSO, their *Policy on Workplace Harassment and Violence* applies to the SSYO staff, members and volunteers.

Please approach the music director privately if you feel you, or others, are being harassed, bullied or discriminated against. If you are uncomfortable approaching the music director directly, please contact info@stratfordsymphonyorchestra.ca to speak with a staff member of the SSO, who can raise your concerns in a private manner to SSYO leadership.

SSYO Tuition Schedule

Fee Schedule

SSYO joining in September: \$350 due September 23, 2024 for the season.

SSYO joining in January: \$250 due January 20, 2025 for the single term.

Junior SSYO joining in September: \$250 due September 23, 2024 for the season

Junior SSYO joining in January: \$175 due January 20, 2025 for the single term.

We accept cash and cheque payments, if you prefer to pay online we are able to invoice through PayPal. We cannot accept e-transfers.

Should paying in one lump sum be a barrier for your family, please contact us to create a payment plan.

Scholarships

The SSYO is working towards building a scholarship fund as we do not want cost to be a barrier for anyone's ability to join. If you wish to donate to the scholarship fund, please go to https://www.stratfordsymphony.ca/Support_Your_SSO/ and select the scholarship fund when making your donation. Donations will receive a tax receipt.

If you are in a position where the tuition is creating a barrier for you or your child to join, please email us at ssyo@stratfordsymphonyorchestra.ca to see what options may be available.

Refunds

The Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra does not offer refunds for tuitions that have been paid following the member's first rehearsal with the ensemble. We offer a one week "trial" with the ensemble to see if it is a wonderful fit for the young musician, and will reimburse anyone who feels after their first week that it isn't a good fit.

SSO Benefits

A musical education includes attending live performances, and we are lucky to have the SSO perform six concerts at Avondale United Church each year. We encourage all SSYO members to attend as many concerts as they are able.

SSYO members are invited to attend all concerts for free. Should the SSO concert be sold out, we will work with the SSO team to see if we are able to attend the dress rehearsal. Families may certainly attend with the SSYO members: tickets may be purchased at <https://www.stratfordsymphony.ca/Concerts/>

Rehearsal Information

Rehearsal Expectations

Playing in an ensemble with other musicians is one of the most important skills and rewarding aspects of music making. The SSYO expects that all members follow appropriate orchestral etiquette:

- Attend all rehearsals, and notify the conductor in advance of any conflicts.
- Be ready to play on time. In orchestra being on time means having your instrument assembled and already pre-tuned before rehearsal begins.
- Prepare your music and practice in between rehearsals.
- During rehearsal, please raise your hand to ask questions, and always listen to the music director or your fellow musicians when they are speaking.
- If you are not playing a movement, or are not in a particular piece, please be quiet while your colleagues work. Feel free to bring a book, or leave the room if you would like until they have finished.
- Work collaboratively in sectionals, and treat everyone with respect.

What to bring to every rehearsal

- [Tuner app](#) on your electronic device (or you can buy [Tuners at L&M](#))
- Instrument
- Pencil
- Music prepared **in a binder**
- Instrument accessories (rosin, cello puck/strap, slide grease, reeds, mutes etc.)

Schedule

Junior SSYO rehearses 6:30 - 7:15 PM

SSYO rehearses 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Unless specified otherwise, all rehearsals are held at [Zion Lutheran Church](#)

Fall 2024

- Thursday, Sept 5 -
Registration Night
- September 9 - Reh 1
(open reh for new students)
- September 16 - Reh 2
- September 23 - Reh 3
- September 30 - Reh 4
- October 7 - Reh 5
- *October 14 - Week Off*
(Thanksgiving)
- October 21 - Reh 6
- October 28 - Reh 7
- November 4 - Reh 8
- November 11 - Reh 9
(SSO rehearsal strings only)
- November 18 - Reh 10
- November 25 - Reh 11
- **December 2 - Dress Reh**
- **December 9 - Concert**
 - [Avondale United Church](#)
 - 5:30 PM call, 7:00 PM concert

Winter 2025*

- January 20 - Reh 1
- January 27 - Reh 2
(High School Exam Week)
- February 3 - Reh 3
- February 10 - Reh 4
- February 17 - Reh 5
(Family Day)
- February 24 - Reh 6
- March 3 - Reh 7
- *March 10 - Week Off*
(March Break)
- March 17 - Reh 8
- March 24 - Reh 9
- March 31 - Reh 10
(SSO rehearsal strings only)
- April 7 - Reh 11
- April 14 - Reh 12
- **April 21 - Dress Reh**
(Easter Monday)
- **April 28 - Concert**
 - Location TBD
 - 5:30 PM call, 7:00 PM concert

SSYO Consent Form

Member's Name: _____ Age: _____.

Instrument(s) Played & Level/Years: _____.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____.

Parent/Guardian Email: _____.

Parent/Guardian Cell: _____.

SSYO member Email (if applicable): _____.

SSYO member Cell (if applicable): _____.

Emergency Contact: _____.

Any allergies/medical info we should be aware of: _____.

Joining: SSYO J-SSYO

Payment Preference: Cash Cheque PayPal invoice

Communication Preference: To Parent/Guardian only To member only To Both

Please check to opt in to emails regarding SSO & SSYO shows and events:

As a Member/Parent/Guardian, I hereby give consent to the Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra to take and use photographs/videotape of me/my child taken during the 2024-2025 season for publicity, promotional and/or educational purposes (including publications, presentation or broadcast via newspaper, internet or other media sources).

I do this with full knowledge and consent and waive all claims for compensation for use, or for damages.

____ **Yes**, I give consent for photography/recording as outlined above.

____ **No**, I do not give consent for photography/recording as outlined above.

As a member/parent/guardian of the Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra, I have read, understand and agree to follow the guidelines, terms and expectations set out in this SSYO Handbook.

Member Signature: _____ Date: _____.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____.