

ARTISTIC POLICY, 2022-2023

The Artistic Policy of the Meridian Symphony Orchestra is founded in the belief that both the hearing and performance of orchestral music is enjoyable and uplifting, providing a benefit to the individual, the community and the art. For the audience, we provide a variety of musical styles in an educational and family-friendly environment. For the musicians, we provide a stimulating, yet relaxed atmosphere in which skills and artistic abilities can be enhanced, while enjoying the support of our peers.

To achieve these goals, we ask the following of each of our members:

REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE

To make the most of our rehearsal time, we will:

- Organize each rehearsal to maximize playing time for all musicians.
- Structure rehearsals to balance the demands of each composition with the time available.
- Arrive at rehearsal prepared to begin at the appointed starting time. Advance notice of tardiness should be communicated to your section leader and personnel manager when possible.
- Limit conversation to the composition being rehearsed.
- Individually devote a sufficient practice time per week, in addition to rehearsal, to play your part proficiently. It should be the goal of each member to learn the notes of each piece outside of rehearsal, so that our time can be used to rehearse the music.
- End the rehearsal promptly at the appointed time.

AUDITIONS

We will hold auditions to fill any open positions within the orchestra and place individuals in their optimal positions within the group. Consideration will be given to the needs of the individual, as well as the needs of the ensemble. To facilitate this process we will:

- Recruit and retain a balanced symphony orchestra consisting of a minimum (optimum) of: 8 (16) First Violins, 8 (16) Second Violins, 6 (12) Violas, 6 (12) Celli, 4 Contrabass, 2 Flutes, 1 Piccolo, 2 Oboes, 1 English Horn, 2 Clarinets, 1 Bass Clarinet, 2 Bassoons, 4 Horns, 3 Trumpets, 3 Trombones, 1 Tuba, 1 Timpani, 3 Percussion, 1 Piano/Keyboard, 1 Harp, for a total of 60 (88) musicians, plus an Artistic Director/Conductor.

Any open positions in the orchestra will be advertised for audition with additional assistance of members who may know individuals that can temporarily fill the position.

- Require a placement audition for all new musicians entering the orchestra. In addition, members of the orchestra that remain on leave for more than one year will be required to audition for placement. The Artistic Director, and no less than two other orchestra members, preferably the section leader of the affected section, will comprise the audition committee and conduct the audition.
- On a 2-year rotating basis, allow each member of the orchestra (minimum one year membership) the opportunity to audition for a principal position, to include Concertmaster. The audition music will be at the discretion of the Artistic Director. The audition committee will be comprised of the Artistic Director and no less than two other orchestra members, preferably principals of the non-affected sections. Affected current principals will be given no less than 30 days notice and the music to prepare for the audition challenge. The odd years rotation will be the string sections and the even years will be the winds and brass. In addition, if the Artistic Director feels that there is someone qualified that does not seek the position of principal, a dialogue may be initiated to gauge possible interest.
- Allow the Artistic Director to appoint an interim principal in the string sections if a vacancy occurs during the season.
- In the event that any principal leaves the orchestra during the season, auditions to fill that vacancy will occur prior to the next season.

MUSIC SELECTION & ATTENDANCE

To achieve our best in performance, it is important that we:

- Select music that will meet the needs of a variety of skill levels with the goal of continually expanding the orchestra's repertoire.
- Attend rehearsals regularly; No more than two absences per concert set when there are seven or more rehearsals in the set and no more than one absence when there are fewer than seven rehearsals in the set. No absences should occur during concert week which would include the regular Monday rehearsal and dress rehearsal. Advance notice of absences should be communicated to your section leader and personnel manager whenever possible.
- Attend all dress rehearsals and performances. Absences may be excused in advance by the Artistic Director and personnel manager. Unexcused absences from a dress rehearsal or performance will result in dismissal for the remainder of that season.

ROLE OF SECTION LEADERS, PRINCIPALS, AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Section leaders play an important role in the artistic development of the orchestra and share responsibility with the Artistic Director for the musical integrity of the ensemble. Section leaders are leaders of the string, woodwind, brass and percussion sections. Principals are the first chair of each instrument to include the first chair of the 2nd violins. In an effort to optimize our artistic product we will:

- Allow the Artistic Director to appoint section leaders for the winds, brass and percussion.
- Recognize the role of the section leader and principals as mentors and managers of their section. Section leaders will be responsible to call additional sectional rehearsals when necessary and will lead such sessions as required.
- Encourage regular meetings, but at least annually, between the Artistic Director and section leaders to preview the music of each concert set, as necessary. Styles and difficult passages should be reviewed in advance to allow preparation and forethought. Principals in the string sections will provide bowings to their section prior to the second rehearsal of each concert set.
- Recognize the role of Concertmaster in the calling of the orchestra to order, receiving the tuning pitch, and assisting the conductor in rehearsals and performances.
- The strings sections will be seated at the discretion of the principal. Consideration will be made to accommodate the preferences regarding stand partners.
- Allow the Artistic Director, with board approval, to appoint an Assistant Conductor and assign duties as appropriate.

GUEST ARTISTS/MEMBER SOLOISTS

In presenting soloists with the orchestra, we will balance opportunities to share outstanding community and professional soloists with our audience, with that of spotlighting outstanding talent within our orchestra. In pursuit of this balance we will:

- Approve soloist appointments in the process of review of the annual proposed repertoire presented by the Artistic Director to the Board.
- Encourage the use of member soloists whenever feasible.
- Budget honoraria for non-member soloists.

Policy approved by Meridian Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors on July 26, 2022.

I have read the MSO Artistic Policy and understand my responsibilities to the orchestra.