



**LA CROSSE AREA YOUTH
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS**

**2026-2027
Student Handbook**

401 Main St. Suite #205
La Crosse, WI 54601
www.lyso.org

2026-2027 LYSO Student Handbook

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Introduction

The mission of the La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras is to provide a unique opportunity for youth to develop and showcase their artistry in the symphonic tradition and to enhance their lives and the cultural environment of the communities we serve. The Board of Directors understands and appreciates that participation in the La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras programs requires a serious commitment on the part of its students and their families.

The La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras accepts applicants based on their musical ability, without regard to sex, race, religion, disability, or national origin. All students of LYSO are required to read this handbook and abide by all of its policies. Parents or guardians of students are asked to ensure that their child abides by these policies and meet the professional expectation of this organization.

This reference guide will provide students and their families a comprehensive resource for the La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras. Included are rehearsal and performance schedules, rules and regulations, general guidelines and other pertinent information. Should you have questions or issues that are not addressed in this book, please don't hesitate to contact the manager at manager@lyso.org.

About LYSO

Founded by Frank J. Italiano in 1967 and incorporated in 1969, the La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras give regional youth valuable musical experience. Guided by professional musicians and teachers, students develop instrument techniques, perform in an orchestra, and build a lasting appreciation for the arts.

The Philharmonic Orchestra was added in fall 1983 as a full orchestra. Over time, various ensembles were introduced, leading to today's two main groups: the Philharmonic Orchestra and the Italiano Orchestra.

The Philharmonic Orchestra

The Philharmonic Orchestra offers an intermediate-level full orchestra experience (incorporating strings and winds). Intended for young musicians with some prior playing experience, it engages both middle and high school performers. Through their work in the Philharmonic Orchestra, players deepen their understanding of orchestral literature and develop the unique skills of performing in an orchestra, providing a valuable complement to their school band and orchestra programs.

The Italiano Orchestra

The Italiano Orchestra provides an advanced full orchestra experience for student musicians who demonstrate exceptional performance skills. Primarily composed of high school students, the ensemble explores standard orchestral literature to prepare students for musical pursuits at the collegiate and professional levels. Students in this ensemble require a high degree of personal dedication and consistent hard work from every musician.

General Policies

Semester Schedule and Location

ALL rehearsals are from 4:00-6:00 pm at Central High School, 1801 Losey Blvd. S, La Crosse.

2026 Fall Semester

Sunday, September 13th

Required Informational Meeting and Rehearsal

Sunday, September 20th

NO REHEARSAL, King Apple Parade

Sunday, September 27th

Rehearsal & Sectional

Sunday, October 4th

Rehearsal

Sunday, October 11th

Rehearsal

Sunday, October 18th

Rehearsal & Sectional

Sunday, October 25th

Rehearsal

Sunday, November 1st

Rehearsal & Sectional

Sunday, November 8th

Rehearsal

Sunday, November 15th

Required Rehearsal

Sunday, November 22nd

Dress Rehearsal & Concert

2027 Spring Semester

Sunday, January 10th

Concerto Competition Audition | Informational Meeting and Rehearsal

Sunday, January 17th

Rehearsal & Sectional

Sunday, January 24th

Rehearsal & Bring a Friend Day

Sunday, January 31st

Rehearsal & Sectional

Sunday, February 7th

Rehearsal & Photo Day

Sunday, February 14th

Rehearsal

Sunday, February 21st

Rehearsal & Sectional

Sunday, February 28th

Rehearsal

Sunday, March 7th

Required Rehearsal

Sunday, March 14th

Dress Rehearsal & Concert

Saturday, April 3rd

La Crosse Symphony Orchestra Side-by-Side | Italiano Only

Attendance

Our orchestras can only produce the highest quality performance when all musicians are in attendance. Unlike sports teams, we have no “substitutes” and our sound changes when musicians are missing. Therefore, all musicians are expected to attend every rehearsal. We do understand that school music events come first; however, they do count as an absence.

There are only nine rehearsals per concert cycle. The reason for the absence is not the issue; rather it is the absence itself and the subsequent lack of preparation. **More than three absences per concert cycle will mean you are not as prepared as the others, and you will forfeit your eligibility to perform at the concert.**

Attendance at all concerts, dress rehearsals, and the final rehearsal preceding a concert is mandatory for every student. Missing any of these required events could result in ineligibility to perform that semester. Exceptions may be made by the discretion of the Artistic Director and your group's Orchestra Conductor.

Absences

All absences, such as illness, family emergency, or school-sanctioned activities, must be submitted online prior to the absence using our online form. If you are unable to play your instrument due to injury but are well enough to attend, you are expected to still come to rehearsal.

Arriving Late/Leaving Early

A student will be considered tardy if not seated and ready to play when the conductor begins the rehearsal. Two instances of tardiness will be counted as one absence. Leaving early will count as an absence. Students must use the online absence form as soon as they know they will be tardy or have to leave early.

Sheet Music

Each LYSO student is assigned a music folder at the beginning of the season, every player is responsible for their own folder and the music issued. Since original music replacement charges can run anywhere from \$5 to \$30 per part, you must handle your music carefully and return it on time. It is the student's responsibility to be certain that they have all the music that has been assigned. A musician who has failed to return music or pay replacement costs will not be permitted to participate in orchestra activities until they have arranged for replacement of the music. **Music may only be marked in pencil.**

School Participation:

The LYSO organization is firmly committed to the vital role of school music programs in a student's musical development. We believe that participation in school ensembles is foundational; therefore, students are expected to actively participate in their school orchestras and bands whenever these opportunities are offered. As representatives of our organization, LYSO students are expected to serve as leaders in their words and actions at all times at school and at LYSO events, modeling integrity, professionalism, and dedication.

Rehearsals

You will find a full season schedule/calendar under the student tab of the website. Please refer to the schedule often. Mark all dates on your calendar, and be sure that your parents are aware of all these dates as well.

What to Bring to Rehearsals

- Your instrument with all its proper accessories (mutes, reeds, rock stops, etc.) Think ahead, remember to bring your instrument home from school on Friday.
- Your own music and pencil with eraser – do not rely on your stand partner.
- All string players should have an extra set of strings in their instrument case.
- All woodwind players should have extra reeds in their instrument case.
- Come to rehearsals musically prepared. Know your music.

Use of Rehearsal Facilities:

- No food, gum, or drinks in rehearsal or sectional rooms at any time.
- All students need to pick up trash and help put chairs and music stands back so that all rooms are left better than they were when rehearsal began.
- Do not wander through the building before rehearsals, after rehearsals, or on break. Areas for LYSO use are rehearsal rooms, sectional rooms (on a sectional day), break area, and restrooms. We are guests in our rehearsal space and need to act as such.
- You are responsible for keeping your instrument and other belongings safe during a rehearsal. LYSO is not responsible for damage or theft of your instruments or other belongings. Please do not leave instruments unattended or lying on chairs where they can be knocked off and damaged.

Family Participation

The LYSO program could not function without the volunteer time that families give. We encourage families to contribute beyond paying tuition by acting as ushers, chaperones, or participating in a committee with our Board of Directors. Family and friends may quietly observe regular rehearsals. Rehearsals are closed to guests during dress rehearsals, and disruptive visitors will be asked to leave.

Audition Requirements and Procedures

Student Requirements

Orchestra acceptance is based on musical ability as well as the orchestra's specific needs for instrumentation. Student musicians entering 4th grade through 12th grade who play an orchestral instrument may audition. With two orchestras, there are many opportunities for talented musicians.

Audition Requirements

Audition Requirements for the Philharmonic Orchestra:

Solo: Select and perform up to 3 minutes of a solo piece from the Wisconsin State Music Association (WSMA)'s Solo and Ensemble list (class A, B, or C). You may also select a solo of similar difficulty, if desired.

Scales: Prepare the required scales, found at lyso.org/philharmonic-auditions/, at a comfortable and steady tempo.

Audition Requirements for the Italiano Orchestra:

Solo: Select and perform up to 3 minutes of a solo piece from the Wisconsin State Music Association (WSMA)'s Solo and Ensemble list (class A). You may also select a solo of similar difficulty, if desired.

Scales: Prepare the required scales, found at <https://lyso.org/italiano-auditions/>, at a comfortable and steady tempo.

Adjudicators

The adjudication panel consists of LYSO conductors and faculty. This panel will determine the placement of the musicians. **The panel's decisions are final.**

Additional Information:

- May and August auditions are for new students and current Philharmonic students seeking to advance to the Italiano Orchestra.
- December auditions are only for students new to LYSO
- Returning students who participated during the second semester of the prior season do not audition for the upcoming season.
- Live auditions are closed to the public.

Annual Placement Audition

All students (new and returning) must play a **placement audition** prior to the first rehearsal in September. Placement auditions take place only before the fall semester and are valid for the entire year. Requirements and excerpts for this audition will be emailed to everyone after the August audition date. Students who do not submit a virtual audition video will be placed at the back of their section.

Financial Information

Tuition Fees:

- Tuition fees are: **\$350 per semester**.
 - o Fees can be paid either by check at rehearsal, mailed to our office, or through the students section of our website via PayPal.
- Tuition fees are nonrefundable. Fees must be paid by the 2nd rehearsal.
- This is an all-inclusive fee - there are no additional fees for the audition, folders, music, etc.

Fundraisers:

Fundraising dollars are used to purchase equipment, music, print programs, tickets and posters, to rent performance halls and rehearsal space, to pay salaries, and to hire music coaches. All fundraisers are voluntary. Students and families will be notified as fundraising opportunities become available. Some of these fundraisers may be for the organization as a whole, while others may allow for students to fundraise toward their tuition. If you become aware of a fundraising opportunity befitting of LYSO, please reach out to the Artistic Director, at italiano@lyso.org.

Financial Assistance:

It is the policy of the LYSO to deny no child admission because of an inability to pay the Tuition Fee. This assistance is available to all students regardless of age, ability or length of time in the LYSO. All requests for financial assistance must be received by the Monday before the first rehearsal of each semester. Please contact the orchestra manager at manager@lyso.org to discuss options.

Concert Information

Please encourage family and friends to attend for their pleasure as well as the performers' benefit.

Concert Ticket prices: Adults - \$15.00 Senior Citizens - \$5.00 Students - \$5.00

Tickets can be purchased online or at the door with check, cash, or card.

Concert Dress

The dress code is designed to be affordable and inclusive, with gender-neutral options. Inappropriate attire may lead to dismissal from a concert. Since students often outgrow concert clothes quickly, we encourage families to consider second-hand options or participating in our Concert Closet. Students who wish to learn more about the Concert Closet Program may find information here, <https://lyso.org/assistance/>, or by emailing the Orchestra Manager, manager@lyso.org.

Philharmonic Orchestra

Students wear ALL BLACK.

- Top: Long-sleeved (at least $\frac{3}{4}$ length), black dress shirt OR floor-to-ankle-length long-sleeved black dress
- Bottom:
 - Long black dress pants OR floor-to-ankle-length black skirt (not form-fitting)
 - Black socks or tights (at least mid-calf height, no bare legs or feet)
 - Black dress shoes (no open toes, sandals, or sneakers)

Italiano Orchestra

Option A: All Black

- Top: Long-sleeved (at least $\frac{3}{4}$ length), black dress shirt OR floor-to-ankle-length long-sleeved black dress
- Bottom:
 - Long black dress pants OR floor-to-ankle-length black skirt (not form-fitting)
 - Black socks or tights (at least mid-calf height, no bare legs or feet)
 - Black dress shoes (no open toes, sandals, or sneakers)

Option B: Traditional Tuxedo

- Top: Long-sleeved white dress shirt, tuxedo coat, black bow tie, black cummerbund
- Bottom: Black tuxedo slacks, black dress socks, black dress shoes

Communications

LYSO Website

The calendar, tuition payment, sheet music, absence management, and other pertinent information can be found on the LYSO website (<http://lyso.org>).

Announcements

Announcements are frequently made via email. It is the student and family's responsibility to make sure that all parties are informed after each rehearsal.

Last Minute Information

When information changes at the last minute, LYSO will communicate through email. Also, any last-minute information such as a rehearsal cancellation due to inclement weather, will be posted on our Facebook page.

Bad Weather Cancellations or Delays

In the unlikely event we need to cancel a rehearsal, communication will be sent via email as promptly as possible. If you live outside of the La Crosse area, weather may vary. If we do not cancel a rehearsal, but you feel that you can't get your child there safely, please let us know via email.

LYSO Office

The best method of contact is via the manager's email, manager@lyso.org. The manager does not work any set hours and has other responsibilities beyond LYSO, but will do their best to respond to any inquiries within 48 hours. While we do have a physical office space, it is not staffed regularly.

Email

Email is the best method of communication with LYSO staff.

Email addresses are:

Board of Directors, President:

president@lyso.org

Orchestra Manager:

manager@lyso.org

Artistic Director & Italiano Orchestra Conductor:

italiano@lyso.org

Philharmonic Orchestra Conductor:

philharmonic@lyso.org

Liability Release Form 2026-27 Season

I, the parent or guardian of the below-named child/ward, give my permission for their participation in all activities, rehearsals, and performances of the La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras (LYSO).

I hereby release and discharge the LYSO, its agents, directors, and volunteers who participate in or conduct activities on behalf of the LYSO from all claims, demands, or actions which the parent or guardian's heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns may have, against the LYSO, its successors or assigns, for all personal injuries, known or unknown, to my child/ward and injuries to property, real or personal, caused by or arising directly or indirectly out of any activities conducted by the LYSO, including, but not limited to, scheduled activities, rehearsals, and performances for the 2026-27 season.

I authorize the La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras or its agents or volunteers to take my child/ward to the nearest available physician or facility for medical treatment in the event of an emergency in which neither emergency contact can be reached. I authorize any licensed physician or medical facility to treat my child/ward.

I, the parent or guardian, have read this release and understand all of its terms, and I execute it voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance.

Name of Child: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** ____ **Zip** _____

Does this child have any disabilities, handicaps, present injuries or limitations, asthma, allergies, hemophilia, heart condition, history of respiratory illness or other significant medical condition?
Yes () No () If yes,

Insurance Company: _____ **Policy #** _____

Date of last Tetanus Shot: _____

Family doctor in case of emergency:

Physician's Name _____ **Phone** _____

Parent/Guardian: Name _____ **Phone** _____

If there is an emergency and I cannot be reached, please contact:

Alternate Contact Name: _____ **Phone** _____

WHO IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO ACT ON MY BEHALF.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent or Guardian

Release Form and Code of Conduct 2026-27

Student Name: _____ **Parent Name:** _____

- I give permission to the La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras (LYSO) for the student (listed above) to be photographed and/or video recorded for LYSO publicity purposes - in print or on the internet.
- I give permission to LYSO for the above student to be published as a student of LYSO in concert programs.
- I give permission to LYSO for the above student's contact information to be published in a directory which will be provided to LYSO students and families only.
- I hereby give consent for my child to participate, without compensation, in all LYSO activities. I hereby release the La Crosse Area Youth Symphony Orchestras from any claims of invasion of privacy or defamation that may arise out of, or that may be related to, all LYSO activities.

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

LYSO Student Code of Conduct & Expectations

By signing below, I agree to take full personal ownership of these standards and uphold them at all LYSO activities:

- I agree to arrive on time, fully prepared, and attend all scheduled performances.
- I agree to bring my instrument, music, and a pencil to every session, and to ensure my instrument and sheet music are kept safe and well-cared for.
- I agree to silence all conversation immediately when the conductor steps onto the podium, to listen attentively, to write down all musical directions in my music, and to save social talk for breaks.
- I agree that my cell phone and any other electronics will be put away and not used during rehearsals, and I commit to showing respect by not engaging in any rudeness, disruptions, or bullying of any kind.
- I agree to respect the rehearsal spaces by keeping them clean, bringing no food or drinks (except water) into rehearsal rooms, and helping reset the room after rehearsal by putting away my chair and stand.
- I agree to prioritize physical and emotional safety at all times, and I promise to be free from the possession, use, or after-effects of alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs at all LYSO activities.
- I understand that my family and friends may quietly observe regular rehearsals, but that dress rehearsals are closed to guests and disruptive visitors will be asked to leave.

Consequences: I understand that failure to follow these expectations requires a mandatory conference with my Orchestra Director and the Artistic Director, which may result in disciplinary action or dismissal from the LYSO program.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____