



*Peninsula Youth Orchestra*

## **Peninsula Youth Orchestra Handbook**

## **Welcome to the Peninsula Youth Orchestra!**

Together with our PYO conductor, Rebecca Nixon, and our Sinfonia conductor, Ms. Dianne Chapman, we hope to provide you with many opportunities to grow as musicians and have some fun, too!

We're proud to offer you a quality music experience. PYO gives its members a chance to use the talents that they hone through their school music programs and private lessons.

The PYO strongly supports school music programs. Therefore, we would like to explain an important policy for membership in the PYO.

To qualify for the PYO, you must be enrolled in your school's band or orchestra program if it is provided. The reason is simple: If students opt out of music programs to play only in PYO, then school music programs are at risk.

The PYO has always been a great way to enhance school and private instruction. PYO and music teachers have the same goal: to help young people grow as musicians.

To get the most out of your experience this year, be sure to get to know other musicians in the orchestra. Traditionally, PYO members are among the best in their schools, both musically and academically. Join in on our social activities and consider becoming part of the student board. And remember that you are an integral part of the whole. Others are counting on you to attend performances and be on time for rehearsals.

Parents, you too can help. Did you know that all of our board members are working parents? This organization wouldn't be here without their dedication and abilities. Won't you consider lightening their load and sharing your talents? There are plenty of opportunities, whether it's setting up for rehearsals or performances, volunteering with the newsletter, providing snacks for concerts, or helping with the budget and finance committee. Be sure to sign up at the parents' meeting or call one of the committee chairpersons listed in your parents' handbook.

I look forward to meeting all of you this year. If you have any questions, please refer to your handbook or contact me. On behalf of the PYO Board of Directors, welcome and best wishes for a fun and successful year!

***Horacetta Harmon***  
**Chairman of the Board**

**Mission Statement**  
**Peninsula Youth Orchestra**  
**And**  
**Sinfonia**

The Purpose of this organization is to:

- Encourage and promote interest in the instruction and performance of orchestral music by children and young persons.
- Provide instruction and training for the performance of orchestral music by such children.
- To serve as a training venue to elevate the performance level of the musicians for eventual membership in the symphonic orchestra (PYO)
- Encourage the activities of the parents of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra.
- Support public and private school music programs and teachers.

## **History of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra**

The Peninsula Youth Orchestra was organized in 1960 with the financial and moral support of the Junior League of Hampton Roads and Peninsula Symphony Orchestra, a youth string orchestra. Twenty-three youngsters under the direction of Elizabeth Chapman rehearsed for one hour a week in a church school building. Only a few short concerts were presented that year and the audiences consisted mostly of families and friends. Mrs. Chapman was sole conductor and strings flourished on the peninsula. The string group grew in many ways. The number of players more than doubled. Longer rehearsals and greater skill among the members resulted in performances of a higher order. The growth of the orchestra and the increased interest in string music led the Newport News and Hampton School Systems to add string instruction to the music curriculum of the schools.

In the mid to late sixties, it was felt that it was time to expand and enrich the student's musical experience; the PYO became a full symphony. The necessary woodwind, brass and percussion players were added, Ronald Marshall came on board to join Elizabeth Chapman as co-conductor and the organization changed the name to the Peninsula Youth Orchestra.

In 1972, tragedy struck the orchestra and Mrs. Chapman passed away. Her husband, Mr. Harold Chapman, a well-known composer, took over the orchestra, but unfortunately died within 18 months. Their deaths were a tremendous loss to the Peninsula Youth Orchestra and the musical community.

In the fall of 1974, the PYO was fortunate in acquiring a talented conductor, Mr. Roland Carter. He was a professor of music at Hampton Institute, the current Hampton University.

In 1977, Mr. Carter left Hampton for another position, and was replaced by Mr. Cary McMurrin, who was also the Conductor of the Peninsula Symphony. Mr. McMurrin continued as Conductor until Mr. Roland Carter returned in 1979-80.

The next year, Mr. Carter left the area and the orchestra then became inactive. In 1983, two former board members, Mrs. Peggy Kelly and Mrs. Betty Nobles, reactivated it. Since that time, it has been a performing orchestra.

The PYO was managed by a board of advisors, with the support of the Guild of the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra, the Peninsula Symphony Orchestra, and the Friends of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra, an active association of parents of the students. It is now managed by a Board of Directors, most of who are either parents of PYO members or local music teachers.

## **Peninsula Youth Orchestra**

### **Historic Outline**

1960 Peninsula Youth Orchestra founded with 23 string players under first conductor, Elizabeth Chapman.

1971 By this year, the string group expands to add brass, woodwinds and percussion players and Ronald Marshall becomes co-conductor.

1972 Harold Chapman succeeds his wife as conductor after her death.

1973 Roland Carter begins as conductor.

1977 Cary McMurrin, conductor of the Peninsula Symphony, takes PYO reins.

1978 Roland Carter returns as conductor.

1981 Dora Short Mullins begins short period as conductor. Later in year, Michael Simpson takes over as conductor.

1982 PYO inactive for a season.

1983 Ronald Marshall returns as conductor and holds position for 5 years.

1988 Kevin Bushee becomes conductor.

1992 Yom Tran is conductor.

1994 Reed Perkins begins as conductor.

1995 PYO Sinfonia begins first season under direction of Assistant PYO

Conductor, Florace Arnold. Mrs. Arnold begins PYO Summer Strings  
Program.

1995-1996 Thirty-fifth Anniversary Season.

1997 Dianne Chapman Terrell begins as conductor of Sinfonia.

2000 Georgianna Locklear conducts PYO.

2001 Dr. Edgar Williams begins as conductor of the PYO and Marvin Western  
begins as Assistant Conductor and Wind Coach and Gina Spraggins joins  
the Sinfonia as String Coach.

2003 Dr. Eric Reiff conducts PYO.

2004 Ms. Sarah Glosson conducts PYO.

2005 Rebecca Nixon conducts PYO.

## **Orchestra Descriptions**

### **Conductor and Coach Biographies**

**Purpose:** The Peninsula Youth Orchestra was founded in 1960 to provide a high quality musical experience to dedicated young musicians of the Virginia Peninsula. Membership in the Peninsula Youth Orchestra and the PYO Sinfonia is open by audition to school age musicians (including home school), college students, and young adults up to age twenty-five. The Virginia Commission supports the PYO for the Arts, the Newport News Commission for the Arts, the Hampton Arts Commission, individual and corporate donations, and by membership dues.

The PYO sponsors two orchestras: The Peninsula Youth Orchestra is a full symphony orchestra of accomplished high school and middle school aged musicians. With PYO Music Director and Conductor, Rebecca Nixon, they rehearse and perform original symphonic works of the highest quality. The PYO Sinfonia, under the direction of Dianne Chapman, is a string orchestra for younger or less experienced players, with the goal of preparing them for membership in the senior orchestra.

#### **Rebecca Nixon**

Conductor of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra

Rebecca Nixon was awarded her Bachelor of Music in Music Education from Bowling Green State University and is currently pursuing her Master of Music Degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. She studied cello with Louise Lang and Dr. Alan Smith; and studied conducting with Dr. Emily Freeman Brown. Mrs. Nixon has performed with several symphonies including the Wooster Symphony Orchestra, Wooster Chamber Orchestra that performed at the Kennedy Center; the Alliance Symphony, the Bowling Green Philharmonia, and the Virginia Beach Symphony. Mrs. Nixon is a member of Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and has taught string programs in Bowling Green and Toledo, Ohio and Newport News, Virginia. She has taught Summer Institute for Strings at Bowling Green State University, has judged All-City and Regional Orchestra auditions, and has taught privately for a number of years. She is currently the Director of Orchestras at the Magnet School for the Arts at Woodside High School and sponsors the Tri-M Music Honors Society.

## **Dianne Chapman**

Peninsula Youth Sinfonia, Conductor

Dianne Chapman is a graduate of Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia, where she received both her Bachelor of Science degree in Instrumental Music Education and her Master of Music Education degree. She retired from Newport News Public Schools with 32 years experience as a string teacher, an orchestra director, and Coordinator of Strings for the school system. In addition to her position as Sinfonia conductor for the Peninsula Youth Orchestra, she also performs as violinist and violist with the HICO String Quartet as well as in various other ensembles in the area. Mrs. Chapman has served as clinician and guest conductor for District, Regional, and All-City groups throughout the Tidewater area. A former Board member of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA), Mrs. Chapman has life membership in the Virginia Music Educators Association and the Music Educators National Conference, and membership in the Virginia and Newport News Retired Teachers Association, Delta Kappa Gamma Society International (Honor Society for women educators), and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She has been profiled in the publication, *Black Women in American Bands Orchestras* by D. Antoinette Handy.

## **Gina J. Spraggins**

Peninsula Youth Sinfonia, String Coach

Gina Jordan Spraggins is a native of Hampton, Virginia. She is a graduate of Phoebus High School, and Norfolk State University. She has also done further study at Hampton University. She taught Orchestra in Newport News Public Schools and is currently a guidance counselor at Achievable Dream. Ms. Spraggins was one of the first few young black musicians to hold membership in the Peninsula Youth Orchestra. As the assistant with the Sinfonia, Ms. Spraggins is an excellent resource person for the young musicians in the group, a fine teacher and musician in her own rite.

## Peninsula Youth Orchestra

### Office and Committee Duties and Responsibilities

**Chairman:** Principle officer of the PYO. Presides at all meetings. Coordinates duties of other officers. Responsible for overall committee coordination.

**Vice Chairman:** Presides at all meetings in the absence of the President

**Secretary:** Responsible for issuing notices of all meetings and seeing that the minutes are kept. Provides minutes of the last meeting to all board members prior to the next meeting.

**Treasurer:** Handles all moneys and keeps a record of the financial transactions of the PYO. Presents a written financial statement at the end of the orchestral season. Prepares the annual budget and presents to the board of directors for approval prior to the beginning of the season. Responsible for grant applications. Serves as Chairman of Budget and Finance Committee. Responsible for working with Operations Committee to insure proper management of donations at the door at concerts

#### Committees:

**Fundraising:** Responsible for developing a strategy and recommending new fundraising ideas. Responsible for organization and execution of fundraising from corporations, major businesses and individual donors. Provides a donor list to the Publications Committee for inclusion in the concert program.

**Publication:** Responsible for developing, printing and distributing a newsletter 3—4 times annually for musicians, parents, donors and board members. Responsible for developing and printing programs for each concert.

**Parents' Group:** Responsible for assisting with rehearsal and concert supervision of musicians. Responsible for attendance records of the musicians. Responsible for assisting with set-up and takedown of equipment at rehearsals and concerts. Responsible for coordination of pre and post concert receptions. Works closely with the Operations Committee on organizing volunteers and equipment for concerts.

**Publicity:** Oversees all functions of the PYO related to community awareness. This includes advertising open rehearsals, auditions, concerts, fundraising activities and any other functions sponsored by the PYO.

**Operations:** In conjunction with the PYO Conductor and the Sinfonia Conductor selects concert venues. Coordinates transportation of equipment for concert venues with the assistance of the Chairman of the Parents' Group. Oversight of Music Library that is managed by the Conductor/Music Director. Responsible for set up and logistical arrangements for concerts.

**Budget and Finance:** Responsible for the financial records of the PYO. This includes preparing and presenting an annual budget and next year's forecast, reviewing the budget quarterly and collecting funds and paying bills. Responsible for coordination and execution of grant application submissions. Annual year-end reports and audits, contracts.

**Membership:** Responsible for coordinating an annual membership drive for returning and new members with the assistance of all PYO conductors. This will include distributing renewal letters/announcements to existing members, publishing a directory of all members, and organizing open rehearsal and open auditions. Responsible for preparing information packets for student musicians to include general information, registration forms, financial assistance forms and guidelines for members.

## **Peninsula Youth Orchestra**

**And**

## **PYO Sinfonia**

### **Guidelines for Members**

**Auditions:** All wind, brass and percussion players (including former members) must audition for membership and chair placement in the PYO. All new string players audition for membership and chair placement in the PYO or Sinfonia. Returning PYO string players audition for PYO chair placement. All seating assignments are based on ensemble balance, both within sections and by stand.

**Conditions of Membership:** The Peninsula Youth Orchestra and the Sinfonia are full-year commitments. By accepting membership, each PYO member agrees to:

- Attend all regularly scheduled rehearsals
- Attend all scheduled performances and dress rehearsals
- Practice PYO music at least 15 to 20 minutes, at least 5 days per week
- Conduct him/her self in a professional manner at all PYO & Sinfonia functions

**Membership Fee:** A membership fee of \$200.00 per student is required. Families that have more than one child participating in the PYO and/or Sinfonia may pay \$200.00 for the first child and \$180.00 for each additional child. Payment of all fees is due by October 1. All fees are nonrefundable.

**PLEASE NOTE:** No player will be excluded from participation in the PYO or Sinfonia for financial reasons. If financial assistance is needed, please contact the PYO board treasurer for further information.

**Parents' Group:** A parents' group has been established to organize, recruit and lead parents and friends of the PYO and Sinfonia who wish to help with fund raising or other PYO activities. Parental involvement is always welcome.

**Fundraisers:** The PYO will sponsor fund raising activities each year. Each member family is asked to participate in these activities. A strong commitment from our supporters will provide enormous benefits to our musicians. Information about fund raising activities will be made available well in advance of each activity.

The PYO is a non-profit organization, which receives its support from outside funding and donations from the community. In the past, we received funding from the Newport News, Hampton and Virginia Arts Commissions. Increasing our budget will allow the purchase/rental of more music and musical instruments, pay for specialty coaches and guest artists, concert venues, and more advertising to get the word out about PYO:

Donor \$24 and Under

Friend \$25—\$49

Affiliate \$50—\$99

Associate \$100—\$249

Patron \$250—\$499

Benefactor \$500—\$999

Underwriter \$1000 and Up

Please, make checks payable to Peninsula Youth Orchestra

**We are guests:** Crittenden Middle School has graciously given us the use of their facility for rehearsal and performance. Every PYO member is responsible for the care of the rehearsal area and adjoining spaces while we are there. Please pick up any litter or debris, be careful of school property, and respect others who are also using the facilities. Do not wander around the building during rehearsals or breaks. Any damage to equipment or facilities is the responsibility of the orchestra member and his or her family.

**Rehearsals:** Regular rehearsals for the PYO and Sinfonia are held on Monday evenings, September through May, at Crittenden Middle School, 6158 Jefferson Avenue, Newport News, VA. Musicians should arrive by 5:45 pm; rehearsals will begin promptly at 6:00 pm and will end promptly at 8:00 pm. Parents: please make arrangements for each PYO and Sinfonia member to be picked up promptly at 7:30 pm. The PYO cannot take responsibility for your child after rehearsal. Cancellations/Bad Weather: In case of inclement weather, the PYO will follow the Newport News Public Schools' closing schedule; if they are closed — no rehearsal.

**Set-up:** All members help in the set-up. In order that set-up may go as quickly as possible, do not take your seat in the rehearsal area until all of the orchestra chairs are in place.

**Rehearsal procedures:** Orchestra members must be warmed-up and ready to play no later than 6:00 pm. This means that you should be in your seat, warming up before 6:00. At each rehearsal you must have your instrument, music, Black No. 1 or No. 2 pencil, any mutes, reeds valve oil, or other accessories needed. During rehearsals, your attention must be focused on the music. Questions should be directed to the conductor or, quietly, to the section leader. Each musician is responsible for his or her own part only; do not correct other players. Section players are expected to follow the musical example of their section leaders, trying at all times to match the leader's articulation, dynamics, intonation, expression, bowing, etc. Dismissal or removal of orchestra member is at the sole discretion of conductor. Discipline problems: such as excessive tardiness, lack of attention and disruptive behavior will result in a meeting with the conductor and the consequences that conductor deems necessary will follow.

**Take-down:** At the end of each rehearsal each orchestra member should quickly pack-up his/her instrument, music folder and accessories. Each orchestra member must then return his/her chair to its proper place. No trash of any kind is to be left in the orchestra room.

**Music:** Each musician is responsible for his or her folder and music. Music is to be marked with a No. 1 or No. 2 black pencil only. The player is responsible for music that is lost, damaged, marked in ink or colored pencil; replacement costs and shipping charges will be charged to the student's PYO account. Folders and music must be returned to the conductor at the final rehearsal or concert of each semester.

**Rehearsal Attire:** Rehearsal clothing is casual. Concert attire is more formal:

## **Attendance Policy**

**Preface:** The rehearsal is the heart and soul of the orchestral experience; one of the most important factors in the success of any orchestra is the presence of all its members at every rehearsal. When an orchestra member misses a rehearsal, it means that the material covered in that rehearsal must be rehearsed again, in order that all of the musicians will be unified in their interpretation and performance of that music. Absences slow down the rehearsal process and can be the cause of frustration on the part of the majority of our musicians who do attend all rehearsals. With this in mind, please note the following attendance policy:

- 1) **No** unexcused absences will be permitted. One or more unexcused absences may be cause for dismissal from the orchestra. Three or more excused absences will be cause for discussion with the Conductor.
- 2) Excused absences include: serious illness (such that the student was not able to attend school), a death in the immediate family, school trips, and major religious holidays.

In the case of illness or death in the family, the orchestra member must email or call the Conductor or call the PYO voice mail as soon as possible, preferably before 1:00 pm on Wednesday's. In the case of a family emergency, school trip, or religious holiday, the member must notify the conductor of the proposed absence as far in advance as possible. In the case of any excused absence, the orchestra member must bring a note from a parent to the conductor explaining the reason for the absence.

- 3) Homework, music lessons, test preparation, babysitting and other jobs are important, but are considered unexcused absences. Everyone else in the orchestra has homework, tests and so forth. You now have a regular commitment on Wednesday's from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Plan ahead and study ahead to avoid such conflicts.
- 4) Orchestra members should work with their parents to try and avoid scheduling college visits, family pleasure trips, etc., on rehearsal evenings. (Please do not schedule trips during dress rehearsal and concerts!)
- 5) If you do not inform the conductor of the date and reason for your absence, in writing, the absence is considered unexcused. No absence of any kind will be considered an excused absence without a note from a parent.
- 6) Without an acceptable reason, arriving at rehearsal after 5:30 pm or leaving before 7:30 pm will be considered one-half of an unexcused absence.

**Contact Information:**

Mailing address:

Peninsula Youth Orchestra

Post Office Box 6498

Newport News, VA 23606

(757) 927-8745

## **PYO Performance Dress Code**

The Peninsula Youth Orchestra groups perform in clean and neatly pressed black attire.

- Performers should wear black dress shoes. Athletic shoes, casual sandals, flip flops and tennis shoes are not acceptable.
- Performers should avoid distracting accessories such as hats, bangles, noisy bracelets and prints.
- Please wear small jewelry and little cologne or perfume as many people are very allergic.

## **Sinfonia Performance Dress Code**

Ladies:

- Black skirts (below the knee when seated), black dress pants, white (not off-white or beige) tops, black dress shoes with dark or neutral shade hose. (Younger players may wear white socks)

Gentlemen:

- Black dress pants, white dress shirts (especially made for wearing a tie), black bow tie, black/dark dress shoes and socks. (No jackets!)

## **PYO Performance Dress Code**

Ladies:

- If you have a formal, full-length, black school uniform dress, please wear that. All others please wear a black formal dress full-length (ankle-length). Dresses and tops should have sleeves. If you have already purchased a sleeveless dress, it needs to be worn with a jacket. Hosiery should be black or beige. Please be modest in your selection of a dress. Please see the conductor if you are interested in purchasing a black full-length uniform dress. It is a short sleeve stretch velvet top with a full skirt and very affordable.

Gentlemen:

- Black tuxedo or black suit with white shirt and bowtie. Please wear black socks with black dress shoes. Please see the conductor if you would like to order an adjustable tuxedo.

Occasionally, a conductor may also request a theme colored accessory. For example, the Sinfonia added a red accessory (such as a scarf, hat, or belt) when they performed at Barnes and Noble during the 2002 Holiday Season.

Sinfonia concert attire is as follows---Gentlemen: Black or navy pants (& matching jacket, if you have one), white shirt, long ties, dark shoes and socks. Ladies: Black or navy ankle-length long skirt (below the knee when seated) or long pants, white blouse, dark shoes, and no jackets.

**All:** Keep jewelry small and tasteful. Avoid strong colognes or perfumes. No athletic shoes.