

# RDYO Family Handbook

INFORMATION FOR PLAYERS AND FAMILIES

[WWW.RDYO.CA](http://WWW.RDYO.CA)



Richmond  
Delta  
Youth  
Orchestra

*Come play with us!*

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*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. This year has been incredibly challenging and unique, and we hope these guidelines will assist you and your family with in-person and online rehearsals.

While this document has been edited to reflect some of the changes we have made this year for the safety and health of our musicians, staff, and their families, please refer to our [COVID-19 information webpage](#) for specific details. We continue to monitor the restrictions and guidelines, and will maintain the most up to date information on the website.

### Overview

The Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra is operated by the BC Youth Music Society, a registered charity. Since 1971, the Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra (RDYO) has provided a professional orchestral preparation program for young musicians. The Orchestra provides a type of musical instruction that is not commonly available for children and youth: instruction and performance opportunities in an ensemble setting. For many youth, the RDYO is a social as well as an educational opportunity, as our young musicians are able to meet other young people who share their passion for music.

The Orchestra currently serves approximately 120 young musicians aged 6 to 25 in a levelled program from Junior Strings and Junior Winds to Symphony (the most senior level). Instruction is available for string, wind, brass, and percussion students, all in an ensemble setting. Enrollment in junior divisions is capped to ensure individual attention. Our Chamber Ensemble Program provides enriched instruction for our most promising young string musicians, in quartet and in chamber orchestra formats. Our young musicians come from a variety of communities in Metro Vancouver, including Richmond, Delta, Burnaby, Vancouver, Surrey, New Westminster, North Delta, and White Rock.

Throughout its nearly 50 years of operations, the RDYO has continued to grow and develop under the leadership of a stable Board of Directors and musical staff. Demand for our program increases each year. The most dramatic growth in enrollment took place in 2014, when the RDYO relocated its rehearsal space to Richmond.

Public and community concerts are an integral part of our program, both to provide performance opportunities for our young musicians and to bring the joy of music to diverse audiences in the community. This makes us very much a part of the cultural life of the Metro Vancouver community. Recent outreach events include performances at Trinity Western University and the Richmond World Festival. Annually, RDYO participates in Richmond's Culture Days, hosting an open house and instrument "petting zoo." All of our outreach concerts and events are offered free of charge for the audience. We estimate that several thousand audience members attended an RDYO concert in 2019.

The Orchestra has been highly successful in preparing young musicians for professional careers. Each year, Orchestra "graduates" go on to enter post-secondary music programs. Several Orchestra 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. Therefore, our programs enrich not only our own communities at this time, but many other performing groups and communities in years to come.

## Goals

The RDYO's goals are to:

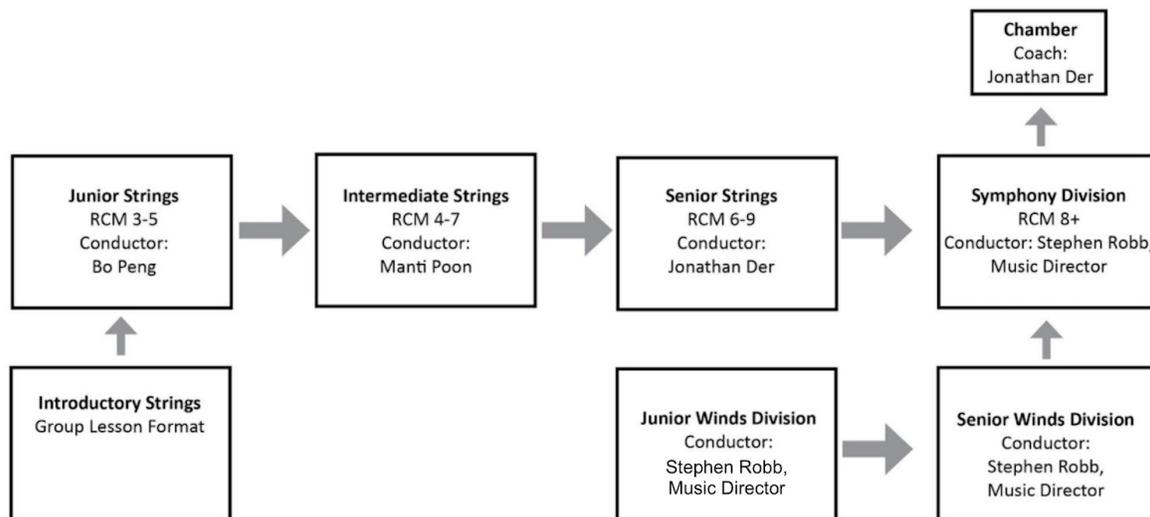
- encourage young musicians to learn more about themselves through their music;
- promote an understanding and appreciation of orchestral music in our communities;
- provide high quality musical training in orchestral and ensemble settings; and
- provide all members equal benefits and opportunities to develop musically.

## Structure of the Orchestra

Presently the Orchestra consists of seven divisions with approximately 120 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. Check our Faculty & Staff page on the RDYO website for further information on our conductors.

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.

In addition to our conductors, RDYO has two committed staff members: our Orchestra Manager, Nadia Petriw, and our Administrator, Robert Humber. Between them, Nadia and Robert are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Orchestra.

## 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. Division managers will send out weekly reminder emails with the latest information. Please adjust your spam filter or firewalls so that you can accept @rdyo.ca emails.
- Our website, [www.rdyo.ca](http://www.rdyo.ca), is a great source of information regarding schedules and concert information. Check the myRDYO page for details pertaining to your division.
- Occasionally, the RDYO phone committee may call you to relay important information such as a rehearsal cancellation.
- Your division may have another method of communication, such as a Facebook group or WhatsApp.

# REHEARSALS, PRACTICING, AND CONCERTS: RDYO POLICIES

## Rehearsals

Rehearsals have set start and finish times. In order to accommodate ventilation requirements, musicians will only be able to access their rehearsal space 5 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, notification will be placed on the website 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; and
- A bell cover (required for all wind and brass instruments)

## Rehearsal Locations

RDYO rehearsal locations change in order to accommodate our group sizes and current physical distancing requirements. Our Administrator and Manager will generally be working at one of the in-person rehearsal locations or from home on most Saturdays. Because the locations change from week to week, it is essential that parents and musicians check the website before setting out for rehearsal.

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 Manager, [Manager@rdyo.ca](mailto:Manager@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

With the current guidelines, regular concerts are not possible, and we are working to find alternatives. 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 are currently developing recording opportunities for each ensemble to be able to produce an audio and video performance with virtual and in-person recording options. For all formal recordings, players are required to follow the concert dress code, which is found on our website. 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. Players with a recorded infraction will not be eligible to participate in the Concerto Competition or the Scholarship Competition, at the discretion of the Division Manager.

*A note on scheduling:* Our major virtual concerts are scheduled ahead of time and will be announced on the RDYO website. Some video recordings will also be available on Youtube following the virtual performances, depending on copyright regulations for the selected pieces.

## 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.

## Symphony: Attire for formal concerts



### Girls

- Black below-the-knee dress or black below-the-knee skirt or black dress pants
- Black blouse with sleeves
- Black dress shoes (flats or a moderate heel)
- Jewellery kept to a minimum



### Boys

- Black tuxedo, or black suit, or black trousers and jacket
- White long-sleeved shirt
- Black bow tie
- Black socks
- Black dress shoes

## All other divisions: Attire for formal concerts



### Girls

- Black below-the-knee skirt or black dress pants
- White blouse with sleeves
- Black dress shoes (flats or a moderate heel)
- Jewellery kept to a minimum



### Boys

- Black dress pants
- White long-sleeved shirt
- Black bow tie
- Black socks
- Black dress shoes

## All divisions: Attire for informal concerts

- Purple RDYO T-shirt
- Black pants
- Black shoes
- Black socks

## 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 takes attendance, noting any late arrivals (there should be none!), and assigns tasks to parents through the year. These tasks will include helping organize a social event for players, supervising online rehearsals, and helping to transport and set up equipment for rehearsals, concerts, and recordings.

## Attendance (rehearsals and concerts)

Each individual musician is required to submit a Weekly Participant Screening Form prior to attending every in-person rehearsal. Every in-person rehearsal is also live-streamed, so that families who choose to participate only online, or musicians who are unable to attend due to illness are able to participate with their division from home.

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 and/or completed the Weekly Health Checklist and indicated an illness. 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, cheque, or cash. Options are available for families to pay in installments, and additional information can be found on our website at [www.rdyo.ca/registration](http://www.rdyo.ca/registration).

### 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 Board of Directors 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 Board President (via mail or email) 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. Bursary applications are reviewed by the President and only discussed with the Orchestra Manager and Administrator for the purpose of registration. Your name and information will not be discussed or disclosed with the entire Board.

### Volunteering

RDYO is a registered charitable organization governed by a parent-based volunteer Board of Directors. Volunteers are vital to the operation of RDYO and is an important component of your membership commitment. RDYO membership involves a minimum 5-hour volunteer contribution. Your volunteer hours help the Orchestra operate and ensure that tuition remains affordable.

In previous years, RDYO Membership has involved a minimum 12-hour volunteer contribution per family, or four hours per term. Every family was required to volunteer for at least one concert.

A postdated volunteer cheque of \$200 is collected 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 by September 30th.

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 Robert Humber at [admin@rdyo.ca](mailto:admin@rdyo.ca) to be assigned specific duties or to be connected with a volunteer team leader.

## Volunteer Opportunities in RDYO

<p>Administration assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Data entry</li> <li>● Tax forms</li> <li>● Registration facilitation</li> </ul>	<p>Camp Chaperone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Oversee cabin</li> <li>● Provide agenda information</li> <li>● Keep children on task</li> <li>● Support activities</li> </ul>
<p>Concert support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Back stage</li> <li>● Stage set up</li> <li>● Front of house</li> <li>● Equipment moving</li> </ul>	<p>Board member/special projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facilities</li> <li>● Personnel</li> <li>● Events, including year-end party &amp; fundraisers</li> <li>● Sponsorship &amp; donor support</li> </ul>
<p>Promotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poster creation</li> <li>● Social media</li> <li>● Distribution of posters</li> </ul>	<p>Concerto &amp; Scholarship Competitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Data entry</li> <li>● Schedule management</li> <li>● Flowers &amp; awards</li> </ul>
<p>Youth Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To put towards your high school volunteer requirements</li> </ul>	<p>Division Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attendance management</li> <li>● Parent communication</li> <li>● Rehearsal set up and conductor support</li> <li>● Establish snack rota</li> <li>● Social events</li> <li>● Online rehearsal supervision</li> </ul>
<p>Silent Auction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assemble baskets</li> <li>● Create forms</li> <li>● Set up &amp; cash out</li> </ul>	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If you have a talent or skill you'd like to share with RDYO, please speak to our Administrator!</li> </ul>

## 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:

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

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The RDYO is operated by the BC Youth Music Society, which is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Board Members perform much of the essential operational work that keeps RDYO going. Board meetings are held once a month on Saturday mornings.

The primary responsibilities of the Board are to oversee operations and to create policy. The Board is responsible to the parent community; all RDYO staff report to the Board. 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 admin staff
- Facilities: researching new rehearsal facilities, liaises 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
- Concerto competition: overseeing the adjudication process
- Camp: ensuring that the annual Orchestra camp operates smoothly
- Five-year plan: ensuring that the Orchestra continues to thrive

## DIVISION MANAGERS

Divisions Managers are an important conduit between the families, conductors, board, and administration. Their duties are shared amongst many parents this year, and may include:

- Attendance
- Setup and cleanup of rehearsal spaces
- Concerts
- Communications (weekly email reminders)
- Online rehearsal supervision
- Disinfecting practices
- In-person rehearsal supervision
- Social events

## ANNUAL EVENTS

RDYO schedules educational opportunities and events for our young musicians throughout the year. Many of these events have been postponed this year due to COVID-19, and we look forward to when we can safely offer them once again. Please consult the website for specific dates and further details.

### Music Camp

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.

The cost of attending camp is included in your tuition fees, and attendance is strongly encouraged. Even if your child has never been away from home before, we believe they will find the camp fun and engaging. RDYO charters a bus to take musicians and their instruments to and from camp; taking the bus is optional and will cost an additional fee.

#### *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. Our younger divisions will play informally at venues such as Brighthouse Library, while the older divisions often play at Aberdeen Centre. Dates and times will be posted on the website.

### 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. The Scholarship Competition will take place in April.

### 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.