



Lakeland Youth Symphony Student & Parent Handbook

2018 - 2019

Lakeland Youth Symphony
Student & Parents Handbook
2018–2019

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I. Welcome

The Lakeland Youth Symphony (Lakeland or LYS) has provided musical education and performance opportunities for young musicians in Northern New Jersey since 1957. Lakeland fosters a positive, encouraging musical environment that builds self-esteem and confidence, providing students with unique opportunity to grow within the same music environment for their school years. Our students build both musical skills **and** friendships in our beginner violin classes that will develop through graduation.

The Lakeland Youth Symphony is a **non-profit** organization. Funding is provided through tuition, private donations and fund-raising activities. Please remember: because Lakeland is a **non-profit** organization, all income is invested in our musical programs – we do **not** make money! We exist solely to provide our children the best opportunities to better their skills. Unlike other organizations, Lakeland does not turn away students based on ability. Rather, students are placed in the orchestra that best meets both their musical skills and social development needs. Our mission is to enrich the lives of our children through music.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the various policies and procedures that affect all students and to introduce to new members to LYS. It is the responsibility of both the parents and the students to read and become familiar with this handbook and understand the policies and expectations set forth.

II. Organization

A. Lakeland Family

The Lakeland Youth Symphony was founded in 1957 by parents, music teachers and friends who wished to broaden the string ensemble opportunities for young musicians in the Lakeland, now Morris County, area. LYS began with a string ensemble of a few high school students. Today, the Lakeland Youth Symphony has expanded to offer programs to over 175 children ranging in age from five to eighteen. This once small, single orchestra has grown into four progressive levels of orchestras, as well as the Prelude beginner violin, viola, and cello program, which is based on a modified Suzuki Method for children as young as five. Students in the highest level orchestra also have the opportunity to play in a Chamber Ensemble group.

B. Orchestral Program

All programs include once-per-week rehearsals, several concerts, and opportunities for musical workshops and performance trips. The season runs from September through May with an optional “Summer Strings” program for the Lakeland Philharmonia and Symphony Orchestra in June.

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Entry to the LYS orchestras is by audition for the purpose of placement by ability level. Beginners entering our Prelude program do not need any prior music experience. The orchestra students and beginner violin graduates continue their musical education through four levels of orchestra.

At the conclusion of each orchestra year, all students audition to determine their placement for the fall. Students should prepare for auditions with the guidance of their private teachers and in accordance with the orchestra benchmarks distributed via email/website each January. Auditions are very low-key and are conducted by our professional staff to determine the best placement for the student technically and socially.

1. Prelude 1 & 2 - Beginner Violin/Cello Classes
Monday evenings, 5:30 pm

The two-year program will introduce your child to the violin, viola or cello and have them playing on stage in a few short months. A well-appointed violin/viola/cello in the appropriate size is included in the tuition. Based on a modified Suzuki method, this parent-assisted class for children from 5-9 years old will teach the fundamentals and skills needed to play a varied repertoire and read music. The classes are a “no electronic devices” zone where students may learn with the undivided attention of their parents.

The Prelude beginner violin/viola programs are taught by Angel Liu on Saturday mornings and Sue On on Monday evenings. Aimee Nishimura teaches our Prelude cello classes on Monday evenings.

2. Lakeland Strings (LS)
Monday evenings, 5:30 – 6:45 pm

Lakeland Strings is the introduction to the string orchestra for our younger students. They perform different parts within the ensemble, including both melody and harmony, while learning the important contribution of each part and instrument. They improve their note-reading skills while learning new keys, dynamics, styles and techniques in ensemble playing. Lakeland Strings, conducted by Mrs. Carol Meiseles.

3. Youth Ensemble (YE)
Tuesday evenings, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

The Youth Ensemble is an intermediate-level string ensemble for students with basic orchestral experience. Weekly rehearsals build on the solid foundation provided by the Lakeland Strings to increase rhythmic and orchestral skills; improve sight-reading abilities; and build cooperative team skills. Each rehearsal is fun and informative, building an ensemble with a unique sound and personality. The Youth Ensemble is conducted by Ms. Sue On.

4. Lakeland Philharmonia (LP)
Tuesday evenings, 7:00 – 8:00 pm

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The Lakeland Philharmonia continues the students’ education by exploring the historical and artistic evolution of string music, including a first-introduction to original pieces by great composers. Music that challenges their technical skills is chosen to further improve their playing ability in advanced positions and bow techniques with an emphasis on producing a unified, more advanced ensemble sound. The Lakeland Philharmonia is conducted by Ms. Theresa Kemp.

5. Symphony Orchestra (SO)

Monday evenings, 7:00 – 9:15 pm (Chamber meets 6:15 – 7:00 pm)

The Symphony Orchestra is a full symphonic orchestra that includes strings, brass, winds and percussion students. Membership in the SO is reserved for outstanding players whose technical level is advanced, who show strong musicality and musicianship, and who are capable of the discipline necessary to perform in one of New Jersey’s premier youth orchestras. Our students are challenged to look beyond the notes and rhythms to understand the impact and message of their music. The Symphony Orchestra and the SO Chamber group are conducted by Petko Dimitrov.

C. Location & Rehearsal Times

Lakeland Youth Symphony is conveniently located in Mountain Lakes and easily accessible with sufficient parking. All groups meet at *Mountain Lakes High School*.

| Program | Day | Time |
|------------------------|------------|--|
| Prelude Violin/Cello I | Mondays | 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm |
| Prelude Violin I | Saturdays | 9:00 am – 10:00 am 10:00 am – 11:00 am 11:00 am – 12:00 pm |
| Prelude Cello II | Mondays | 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm |
| Prelude Violin II | Saturdays | 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm |
| Lakeland Strings | Mondays | 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm |
| Symphony Orchestra | Mondays | 7:00 pm – 9:15 pm |
| Chamber Ensemble | Mondays | 6:15 pm – 7:00 pm |
| Youth Ensemble | Tuesdays | 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm |
| Lakeland Philharmonia | Mondays | 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm |

D. Conductors/Instructors

The Lakeland Youth Symphony is proud to have experienced and enthusiastic instructors and conductors who are passionate about teaching the students, inspiring each to do his/her best and

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to learn how to play as a team. Their knowledge of and passion for both music and young people qualify them uniquely to provide our students an exemplary experience that will impact their lives now and for years into the future.

To support them in their efforts, parents must encourage their children to respect their conductors/instructors and to heed their instruction in rehearsal and in private practice time at home.

Angel Liu, Prelude Violin Instructor

Angel Liu grew up in a home surrounded by the music of her mother's piano students. She began playing the violin at the age of seven and eventually found herself in the Lakeland Youth Symphony during her late elementary and middle school years. Her undergraduate degrees are in both music education and violin performance from the Mason Gross School of the Arts. Ms. Liu was an active member of the Rutgers Symphony Orchestra and Musica Raritana; she won the Rutgers Chamber Music Competition a total of three times. Ms. Liu has also played with the Livingston Symphony Orchestra, and is currently involved with the Chester Baroque Orchestra. Being a member of ASTA and NAFME, both nationally known music associations, Ms. Liu strives to not only be a talented performer, but also an instinctive teacher who shares her love of music with every age group. Her attention to detail, nurturing manner, and ability to make work fun, provide our students with a first-class foundation in violin playing, developing habits for future success. Ms. Liu is currently the orchestra director at Thomas A. Edison Middle School in West Orange.

Aimee Nishimura, Prelude Cello Instructor

Aimee earned a double degree in music education and cello performance from the Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University and has also completed graduate work from the John J. Cali School of Music, Montclair State University. In 2010, her chamber ensemble was runner up in the Alexander and Buono International Flute Chamber Competition. In 2011, Aimee had won the Rutgers Undergraduate Concerto Competition and performed the Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1 with the Rutgers Sinfonia and she was the recipient of the Rutgers A. Kunrad Kvam award for excellence in performance on a stringed instrument. During the summer of 2012 in Vienna, she performed the Haydn Cello Concerto with the Vienna International orchestra and also while there she performed the Beethoven Clarinet Trio Op.11 at the prestigious Schloss Hapturn Palace. In the summers of 2013 and 2014 she was a performance assistant for the Performing Arts Institute Summer Music Program at the Wyoming Seminary School. Along with her extensive performing career, Aimee is also a successful and active educator, who feels passionate about teaching young students the joy and accomplishment of playing a stringed instrument. She has taught at the Livingston Middle School Strings Program and was the Orchestra Director at North Warren Regional High School and has mentored with the Sussex Youth Orchestra under the baton of Gerald Tedesco. Most recently she runs a private cello studio from her home, teaches with the Faith Center of the Arts Strings Program, and teaches the Prelude Cello class with the Lakeland Youth Symphony.

Sue On, Prelude Violin Instructor and Youth Ensemble Conductor

Sue On, B.A. in Music Business and Music Education, is a graduate of William Paterson University where she served as orchestra concertmaster under the direction of Sandra Dackow. Sue is passionately devoted to sharing her love of music with students of all ages. Originally from Connecticut, Sue currently teaches private violin, viola, cello, and piano lessons at her home studio in Parsippany, New Jersey. During the summer, she travels across the nation to various Suzuki Institutes teaching violin, piano, and music history. Sue formerly worked at "Little Kids Rock," a non-profit organization dedicated to teaching instrumental music in hundreds of public schools. She helped research, create and distribute curriculum that is used by over 100,000 students nation-wide. She has also studied with the New York Grand Opera alongside the founder, and esteemed Julliard professor, Vincent La Selva. Additionally, she has studied violin with the late Cynthia Prentice, Claudia Tondi, Franco Gennarelli, and jazz violinist Scott Tixier. When Sue isn't teaching you can find her conducting a youth orchestra, teaching in Wayne Elementary Schools or performing with the South Florida Symphony Orchestra as a section violinist or with the New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra as concert mistress.

Carol Simon Meiseles, Lakeland Strings Conductor and Educational Director

As a conductor of Lakeland ensembles since 1990, Carol Meiseles has experienced the growth and value this program provides in developing students' musical skills and enjoyment in playing music. She has conducted every Lakeland Orchestra level, most recently the Lakeland Strings. Retired from West Morris Central High School in Chester where she conducted and taught for many years, she now enjoys her roles as conductor and as Education Director for Lakeland. She also teaches at the Paterson Music Project and maintains a private studio. As Lakeland's Education Director, she oversees the program, helping to recruit new students and develop the musical skills and talents of our Lakeland musicians as well as nurture partnerships with local music teachers, schools and libraries. She is honored to be a part of the Lakeland family as it continues to provide a nurturing environment for our students.

Theresa Kemp, Lakeland Philharmonia Conductor

Theresa Kemp is an award-winning graduate of the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University, Theresa gained valuable experience from working with the Shanghai Quartet while a student. Now, she excels, not only as a cellist and cello instructor, but as a music educator with an emphasis on strings in the Mountain Lakes school system. Her passion for children to learn and love music led her to join the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra's CHAMPS program as a teaching artist, weekly navigating the challenges of a large group class for beginning cellists. Her motto of "public praise; private correction" exemplifies her desire to create a positive, nurturing environment while challenging each child to fulfill his/her potential. Theresa also uses her talents through working with the Paterson Music Project, volunteering for Morris Arts events, and playing cello for hospital patients in the Creative Arts and Healing Program for the AtlanticCare Regional Medical Center. Lakeland Youth Symphony is privileged to have a cellist/educator/conductor of her caliber as part of our conducting team.

Petko Dimitrov, Lakeland Youth Symphony Orchestra Conductor and Music Director

A native of Bulgaria, Petko Dimitrov is Music Director of Lakeland Youth Symphony; also serves as Music Director of the New Symphony Orchestra in Sofia, Bulgaria. Mr. Dimitrov teaches orchestral performance at the School of Mahanaim. Previously, Petko has served as Music Director of the Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra, and Artistic Director and Conductor of the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra’s summer series at Lasdon Park in Katonah, New York. He has also served as Assistant Conductor of the Ridgefield Symphony, Princeton Symphony and Symphony in C. Mr. Dimitrov had his debut at Carnegie Hall in 2007, Avery Fisher Hall in 2008 and Alice Tully Hall in 2015. In the spring of 2007 Petko led WCYO on tour in Austria and performed in prestigious concert venues such as Haydnsaal in Eisenstadt and Schlossberg in Graz. As Assistant Conductor of the Haddonfield Symphony, Mr. Dimitrov was awarded a Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation Fellowship in the 2007-2008 season, which recognizes accomplished young conductors and provides them with a monetary award to further develop their career. Mr. Dimitrov has been selected twice among the finalists of the George Solti International Conducting Competition.

E. Parent Volunteer Board

The Lakeland Youth Symphony Volunteer Board is organized to assist the instructors and conductors and to manage the operations of the non-profit organization. The Volunteer Board is responsible for many aspects, from arranging rehearsal and performance times/locations to creating the budget, preparing financial statements, collecting tuition and paying expenses. The Volunteer Board is also responsible for fundraising, grant writing, media/publications, recruiting, marketing, community outreach and above all, ensuring the continued success of the Lakeland Youth Symphony!

Our Board **welcomes** new members to join in shaping the future of the organization. This is one of the many wonderful aspects of Lakeland. Parents can become involved and really make a difference!

Parent volunteers play a large role in the success of our organization. We depend on the parents to volunteer their time to ensure we have a quality music program and a successful year. All parents are needed, and expected, to volunteer during the season with concerts and other activities. The more participation from our families, the more we can offer our children!



“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time, they do have the heart!”



III. Code of Conduct

A. Artistic Standards

Adequate and consistent preparation is essential in developing skills and ensuring musical advancement. A commitment to practicing regularly is vital, not only to ensuring the student's individual success, but to the success of the entire orchestra as a whole. To maintain the artistic level of each orchestra program, each student is expected to practice regularly and, at the orchestra levels, obtain additional weekly musical instruction.

- ❖ Practice: An orchestra is a team, and a team is only as good as the sum of its individual members. Students are expected to practice regularly, including conductor assignments, and come prepared to rehearsals. Sectionals and weekly orchestra rehearsals are not individual practice times. These times are dedicated to learning to play as a team and fine tuning the group performance.
- ❖ Musical Instruction: All students are expected to receive additional musical direction from a private instructor in order to maintain the artistic quality within each orchestra. Referrals to private teachers can be made upon request.

B. Behavior & Expectations

All students, parents, instructors and conductors are expected to behave in a manner that shows respect, pride and a desire and effort toward the musical achievement and community excellence that distinguishes the Lakeland Youth Symphony.

- ❖ All students will conduct themselves at all times in a proper manner during the entire season and understand they are representing the Lakeland Youth Symphony as well as their conductors, teammates, and parents.
- ❖ Students must show appropriate behavior at all times within the rehearsal facility and at all performance venues.
- ❖ Smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, using illegal substances and using foul language will not be tolerated by any member of the Lakeland Youth Symphony.
- ❖ Students are to support each other and the entire orchestra during rehearsals, concerts and other outings/performances.
- ❖ Bullying will not be tolerated.
- ❖ During rehearsals, students will not disrupt the practice or show disrespect to "teammates" or conductors. Parents will refrain from distracting students and conductors during rehearsals, concerts and performances, especially in the use of cell phones, which should be silenced when in the rehearsal space. If a parent must take a call, he/she must leave the rehearsal area to prevent disruption.

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- ❖ No cell phones, personal gaming or music devices are allowed during rehearsals, warm-ups, or concerts. These items should be silenced and remain in the students' instrument cases during rehearsal time (they may check them during conductor-sanctioned "break-time"). Items may be confiscated by the conductor and returned after rehearsal.
- ❖ Chewing gum or eating in the rehearsal or performance area is not allowed. If a student must eat a snack during break-time, he/she must dispose of wrappers in the trash. Water bottles are allowed during rehearsal, but must be disposed of properly.
- ❖ After rehearsal, students are asked to help put away their stands and chairs and make the clean-up process a collaborative effort.

C. Discipline

Our disciplinary policy is dependent upon the students', as well as the parents', understanding and acknowledging that each student be responsible and accountable for his or her own actions and behavior. During rehearsal time, our instructors and conductors are responsible for our Lakeland students. Any student exhibiting disruptive behavior, thus distracting the conductor and/or interfering with the normal flow of rehearsal, will be subject to the following disciplinary guidelines:

- ❖ 1st Offense: The student will be required to "sit out" for the remainder of that rehearsal and a warning will be issued.
- ❖ 2nd Offense: The student will be required to "sit out" for the remainder of that rehearsal and a parent will be notified.
- ❖ 3rd Offense: The student will not be allowed back to rehearsal until the conductor, student and parent(s) meet to discuss and resolve said disciplinary issues. Any subsequent disciplinary issues will be brought to the attention of the Board President and may result in expulsion from the Lakeland Youth Symphony.

IV. Attendance

Consistent attendance is critical to the student's individual development as well as overall growth of the orchestra. Unlike sports teams, our orchestras rehearse only **once** a week. This is why it is **critical** that students attend each rehearsal. Every rehearsal covers information vitally important to the ensembles' performance. Both parents and students must realize how necessary each rehearsal and each student are to the functioning of the orchestra as a whole!

- ❖ Students are expected to participate in all rehearsals and concerts. It is their responsibility, as well as the parents' responsibility, to know rehearsal times and concert dates.
- ❖ All students must be at all rehearsals and concerts **on time** as a courtesy to the conductors and fellow students in the orchestra. Students should be seated and ready to play **5**

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minutes before the start time. Remember, **EARLY IS ON TIME, ON TIME IS LATE AND LATE IS UNACCEPTABLE.**

- ❖ The calendar is available on the website, and email reminders will be sent closer to concert time. We strongly encourage you to continually check your calendar and give as much prior notice of any known conflicts (e.g. college visits, school performance obligations, SAT/ACT/AP testing, etc.).
- ❖ Students are expected to participate in school concerts. Therefore, mandatory music-related school events take precedence over LYS events.
- ❖ Students are allowed **3 excused absences** per concert cycle. Attendance at each dress rehearsal and sound check is required. Students who fail to attend either the dress rehearsal or sound check without prior communication with the conductor may be removed from the concert at the conductor's discretion.
- ❖ Please try to plan ahead, be proactive, responsible and courteous in communicating conflicts. Please send a message through "REMIND" as soon as the conflict is known. Include the student's name the reason for the absence. In order for your student's absence to be considered "excused," the message must include an explanation.
- ❖ Attending other sports practices/games/tournaments and social events are not considered excused absences. State/regional championships/etc. will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the conductor. No unexcused absences are allowed.
- ❖ In cases of unanticipated absences (illness or other emergency), please send a message via "REMIND" **before the start of rehearsal** and include the student's name and orchestra in the subject line and the reason for the unanticipated attendance in the email body. For prolonged illness, a doctor's note may be requested.

Consequences for excessive tardiness or absences as well as unexcused absences are at the discretion of the conductor and may include (but are not limited to):

- ❖ Not being allowed to play in your next concert;
- ❖ Dismissal for the remainder of the season;
- ❖ Levying of a fine to cover Lakeland's costs for hiring a replacement musician;
- ❖ Not being allowed to audition for the upcoming season

Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the conductor.

V. Concert Attire & Etiquette

A. Concert Attire:

Students are expected to adhere to a dress code for all concerts unless directed by their conductor. **Students should not wear jeans or sneakers** to any formal concert. Dress standards are as follows:

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Beginner Violins

Girls: Nice dresses or pant suits

Boys: Nice pants with collared shirt (dress shirt and tie are encouraged)

Lakeland Strings

Girls: Nice skirts/tops or dresses or pant suits. Skirts or dresses should be knee-length when the student is seated.

Boys: Nice pants with collared shirt (dress shirt and tie are encouraged)

Youth Ensemble

Girls: Outfits should be combination of black and white (i.e. white blouse, black skirt, etc.).

Nice skirts/tops or dresses or pant suits. Skirts or dresses should be knee-length when the student is seated.

Boys: Nice black pants with a white collared shirt (dress shirt and tie are encouraged)

Lakeland Philharmonia & Symphony Orchestra – NOTE: Generally at the final rehearsal before a concert, students will decide upon an accent color to help girls choose accessories (i.e. hair bow, jewelry, shoes, etc.) and boys choose a tie color.

Girls: Black skirts/tops or dresses or pant suits. Skirts or dresses should be knee-length when the student is seated.

Boys: Black suit with a white dress shirt and tie

B. Etiquette

Participation in Lakeland Youth Symphony not only provides the opportunity for performance, but also for learning proper decorum for formal concert settings. Parents must assist us by teaching your child correct audience etiquette and exhibiting this same behavior:

- ❖ Avoid entering and leaving the auditorium during the performance. [If absolutely necessary, please **wait** for the break between performing groups.]
- ❖ Please do not talk while a group is performing.
- ❖ Please set cell phones and alarms to silent.
- ❖ Please stay for the full duration of the concert to appreciate the efforts of all performers.
- ❖ Please be attentive to the performers. **No one**, neither children nor adults, should be playing video games, texting, checking email or Facebook, etc.
- ❖ Parents should keep small children seated with them at all times. If that child causes a disturbance, the parent/child should exit the auditorium as soon as possible to avoid disrupting the performance.

VI. Parent Information

Parents and guardians can support their students in many ways, including:

- ❖ Ask your student how rehearsals are going, what new skills they are learning and how they plan to practice them at home.
- ❖ Observe a few rehearsals during the season and attend your child's performances.
- ❖ Encourage your child to practice regularly and listen to their practicing.
- ❖ Have them check the Internet for recordings.
- ❖ Make sure your child's instrument is in good working condition.
- ❖ Get your child to rehearsals, concerts and other activities on time.
- ❖ Read all emails timely and share them with your child.
- ❖ Volunteer!

Parents and guardians can also support the Lakeland Youth Symphony in many ways, including:

- ❖ Tell friends, family and neighbors with young musicians about the Lakeland Youth Symphony and encourage them to join.
- ❖ Invite family and friends to concerts.
- ❖ Make a tax-deductible donation to the Lakeland Youth Symphony.
- ❖ Utilize gift-matching programs offered by employers.
- ❖ Share fundraising ideas and leverage your personal contacts.
- ❖ Volunteer!

The Lakeland Youth Symphony is a **non-profit** organization so volunteers are key to our continued success. There are many ways parents and guardians can help Lakeland including the following small sampling of roles:

- ❖ Rehearsals
 - Attendance takers
 - Conductor assistants
 - Hall monitors
- ❖ Community contacts
 - Look for performance opportunities in your community
 - Post signs in your local community (i.e. grocery bulletin boards, libraries, day-care facilities, etc.)
 - Introduce your child's music teacher/school music department/private instructor to Lakeland
- ❖ Picnic
 - Set-up
 - Food preparation/games/serving
 - Clean-up
- ❖ Holiday Concert

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- Set-up
- Concessions/gear sales
- Monitors
- Clean-up
- ❖ Spring Concert
 - Venue ideas/coordination
 - Chaperones
- ❖ Field Trips
 - Venue ideas/coordination
 - Chaperones