

Concert Orchestra Seating Auditions - Monday, March 9

Note: while only string players participate in mid-cycle seating auditions, I encourage everyone - students and parents - to review the philosophy outlined below.

Seating auditions are valuable in at least two ways. The most **visible** outcome is a new seating configuration. To create seating for the concert I consider the feedback of the audition adjudicator - who evaluates a snapshot of your performance skills - and my own rehearsal observations. I then discern as best I can the relative strengths of the musicians within each section and assign those strengths to specific chairs in a way that maximizes the individual and collective strengths of the ensemble. While many seating configurations are possible, I generally place the top 4-6 players in each section on the front 2-3 stands, then distribute strengths and needs throughout the remainder of the section. The goal is not to rank students, but to physically organize our musicians in a way that points us towards an artistically convincing performance.

While seating is a visible result of auditions, **the quality of each musician's preparation** has the greatest impact on our ultimate performance. Thoughtful preparation helps individual musicians grow into their best performances. Auditions provide a focal point to accelerate individual and ensemble growth. Continue reading to see what goes into creating a strong audition.

Audition Preparation Strategies

To quote singer-songwriter Paul Simon, "The ear goes to the irritant." With that in mind, one of our responsibilities as musicians is to eliminate "irritants" by playing with accurate pitch and rhythm. These two elements provide a critical foundation for effective musical communication. Perfection is neither a healthy or realistic goal, but with grit, consistency, and thoughtfulness you can become very good or even excellent.

In regards to tempo, when a target tempo is too fast for you, it's wise to play at a slower tempo. Controlled is better than sloppy. Demonstrate what you know and **can** do rather than what you have not **yet** accomplished.

Musical communication, however, requires more than just eliminating irritants and demonstrating control. To draw the listener in and allow the ensemble to perform with a rich palette of colors, play with a beautiful, characteristic tone. Fine musicians also honor details such as bow direction, dynamics, and accents, as well as details implied by the shape and direction of the melodic line (phrasing), musical context, and/or your role in the orchestra in a given passage (melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, etc.). You may have written some of these details in your music as they've been unveiled or discussed during rehearsal, or may have discovered some on your own.

As you prepare your audition, ask questions and seek feedback where uncertainty exists. Ask two or three people to listen to a practice audition in advance of the scheduled audition. Learn from those experiences. Long term planning/practicing almost always beats cramming, but cramming is better than nothing. Enjoy the process of growth rather than fixating on an outcome such as a specific chair. That is to say, evaluate your work based on preparation and musical goals rather than valuing yourself based on a geographic location on stage.

You can only control what **you** do, not what others do or how others perceive what you do - this is an important life lesson. Lead from wherever you sit. Put the music first and your ego second. If placed in a visible leadership role (first stand, for example), be the best servant-leader you can be. Provide clarity, invite excellence, lead with joy and integrity.

For additional thoughts on the subject of performing, [link here](#) to read a great post on the SPCO website.

The excerpts for this audition cycle are located on the next page.

Concert Orchestra Seating Audition Selections - Monday, March 9

Note: Not all excerpts will be used, but please prepare all of them.

If you will be absent from the auditions, upload a video of all of the excerpts to YouTube, and send the link directly to miranda@gtcys.org at least two days before the audition date. Only those excerpts used on the 21st will be scored. In the video, you must introduce yourselves and introduce each excerpt in the video. Students who miss the audition and do not send a recording on time and in the correct format will not have the opportunity to be assessed again until the next audition.

Tempos

Brahms: Beg-m.83 (half note = mm68); m.83-m.142 (half note = mm70); m.143-end (quarter note = mm63)

White: Allegro/Tempo I (quarter = 104); Poco meno mosso (quarter = 69); Piu mosso (quarter = 96)

Frozen: m.1-6 (q=104); m.35-83 (h=72); m.108-154 (q=137); m.155-159 and 175-end (quarter=84)

Violin 1

1. **Brahms:** Beginning - m.30
2. **Brahms:** m.41-61
3. **Brahms:** m.84-109
4. **White:** m.13-30
5. **White:** m.39-54
6. **Frozen:** m.63-70, 139-155

Violin 2

1. **Brahms:** m.19-30
2. **Brahms:** m.41-61
3. **Brahms:** m.84-109
4. **White:** m.79-end
5. **Frozen:** m.139-155

Viola

1. **Brahms:** Beginning - m.30
2. **Brahms:** m.41-61
3. **Brahms:** m.84-110
4. **White:** m.79-end
5. **Frozen:** m.61-70, 143-154

Cello

1. **Brahms:** m.17-36
2. **Brahms:** m.41-61
3. **Brahms:** m.89-110
4. **White:** m.79-end
5. **Frozen:** m.63-70, 114-122, 143-154

Bass

1. **Brahms:** m.21-50
2. **Brahms:** m.100-m.115
3. **Brahms:** m.143-end
4. **White:** m.69-end
5. **Frozen:** 127-130, 138-155