

RUTGERS

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conductor – Prof. Kynan Johns

Attendance Policy - Expectations

Congratulations on being selected as a member of the Rutgers Symphony Orchestra.

The Rutgers Symphony Orchestra (RSO) is considered a flagship of the Music Department at Mason Gross School of the Arts. Its aims are to present the highest quality musical performance on a level comparable to a professional orchestra, in a conservatory setting. Students will gain valuable experience in ‘excerpt laden’ works from the standard repertoire that will provide a sound basis for future success in auditions. It is expected that all students will show a professional commitment with regards to syllabus requirements, attendance policies and expectations.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Attendance at ALL rehearsals is compulsory. It is expected that you arrange carefully your schedule at the beginning of semester to ensure that no conflicts arise;
2. Ensemble placement, seatings and assignments are decided through audition at the beginning of the year, for strings, and beginning of each semester, for brass and wind. The department makes assignments based upon your audition and departmental need. In the case of wind and brass, your assignments across RSO and RWE are considered your ensemble course workload and as such it is expected you meet all requirements of preparation, assessment and attendance for those works as outlined in the relevant ensembles syllabi;
3. Exceptions for short-term leave may be granted only in rare and unique cases of ‘exceptional professional opportunities’ and only one approved request per semester;
4. Exceptions WILL NOT be granted for engagements with per-service regional orchestras, pit bands, teaching or any type of ‘gig’. Within balance and reason, good professional full-time auditions may be considered, along with any engagements with full-time orchestras. However, as an enrolled student, 100% attendance is expected and as such ‘leave of absence’ should not be assumed, nor considered obligatory and may only be granted if the request meets the criteria and other course arrangements satisfactory to the relevant ensemble Professor can be made without impact on other students;
5. If you believe your request meets the criteria, applications must be made **IN WRITING** to the relevant ensemble director, containing all supporting materials including exact dates and letter of invitation before semester begins, and at least six weeks prior to the first rehearsal of each program. Requests will be discussed the relevant instrumental area chair from which you will receive written confirmation whether or not your request has been approved;
6. If your opportunity is deemed ‘exceptional’ and a release granted, you will be required to provide an approved substitute from a list available from the ensemble manager. Failure to secure an approved substitute cancels the leave. Any coursework missed through release may need to be completed subsequently through mutually agreed upon arrangements, made between yourself, the relevant ensemble professor and area chair and agreed upon as a condition of release;
7. In the event of illness, you must provide a Doctors note attesting to the reason and provide one copy to the relevant ensemble director. Coursework missed through illness will need to be completed through subsequent agreement. Injuries that might prevent you from playing will not exempt you from attendance at rehearsals, as long as you are physically mobile;
8. If for any reason you miss more than 2 rehearsals in any concert rehearsal period then you may be required to withdraw from that concert and be required to re-take the ensemble the following semester to make up the missing coursework portion.

Expectations

1. Meet all syllabus, attendance policy and expectation requirements;
2. Be prepared for all rehearsals;
3. Concert Masters are expected to make sure that all bowings are correct and clear;
4. Principals are expected to take responsibility for their section on a given piece, including planning sectionals if needed. That being said – those who are not acting as principal should give due respect to their principal and follow their comments during rehearsal in matters of tone, balance, articulation and intonation. A section player's role is to support their principal. Never play louder than your principal, unless it is a solo, or the conductor is requesting. Discuss with your principal how they wish you to play unison passages;
5. String players are expected to be in the same part of the bow and on the same string as their principals. Fingerings may differ;
6. General rehearsals for concerts are held for a 3 hour period from 2-5 before the 7:30pm concert in consideration of student schedules and those who commute. One must be careful not to spend too much energy and monitor themselves carefully;
7. Students are expected to listen to numerous recordings, read liner notes and undertake simple internet (grove online or wikipedia) research to prepare their parts so they may develop an opinion on how they wish to play the music. The first rehearsal in most orchestras is for the orchestra to show the conductor how they wish to play the piece. Don't come to rehearsals with a blank mind - come with opinions and ideas to contribute;
8. Orchestra rehearsal schedules are not structured like choir or band rehearsals in which smaller time blocks may be specified. Rehearsal schedules are not posted or organized to the minute. There will be a general plan for each rehearsal to help you in your planning, but a rehearsal may not divide evenly in two-halves, please be prepared to play 20 minutes before the exact scheduled time within a rehearsal;
9. Wind/ Brass – Please pay close attention when any conductor is working with the strings, as from this you will gain much information on type of sound, articulation and phrasing that you can apply to your section and part. It is the nature of the beast and the same in all professional orchestras that more rehearsal time is spent on string issues than on wind/ brass issues – this is because wind/ brass players are mostly playing solo lines and are exposed – whereas strings play tutti and in general present the majority of the orchestral material;
10. The opera schedule is akin to a professional opera company schedule (actually it is a little shorter). Although it may appear more intense, it is good practice and experience to attempt a schedule that is standard and comparative to professional companies. Be astute at monitoring your stamina over this more intense period;
11. String strengths for the opera will be 66442 once we move to the pit, thus string rotation will be possible from the second (evening) rehearsal of the first Sunday rehearsal of spring semester;
12. Please take note that music rental companies lend music on a 6-week hire, so all parts should be available at this time in advance

To maintain the standards that are expected from the Rutgers Symphony Orchestra, so that we may all benefit from a high standard of music making, respect and adherence to the above policies and expectations is essential. Detail can only be achieved with a commitment to preparation and the presence of everyone at all rehearsals. Such preparation and expectations should be course of habit to transition to the profession.

Congratulations on your successful audition and best wishes for a wonderful year of exceptional music making.