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 in the 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, giving its members an experience in professional expectations, attitude and execution. To this end members will gain valuable experience in standard repertoire that will provide a sound basis for future success in auditions.

To achieve these goals it is expected that all members will show a professional commitment with regards to attendance, routine, participation and preparation and treat this orchestra as a per service orchestra, where you are expected to prepare your own parts and educate yourself in your preparation.

Member of the Rutgers Symphony Orchestra are expected to:

1. Be prepared for all rehearsals;
2. Concert Masters are expected to make sure that all bowings are correct and clear;
3. Attendance at ALL rehearsals is compulsory. There will be NO exceptions. It is expected that you arrange carefully your schedule at the beginning of semester to ensure that no conflicts arise;
4. In the event that an exceptional professional opportunity conflicts with any rehearsal, you may submit material outlining this opportunity to the Director no later than the first week each semester. If an opportunity is deemed exceptional then a release may be granted. In such a case it is required that you will provide a substitute from a list available from the orchestra TA (No releases will be considered for concert week);
5. Any unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade by one full letter: 2 tardies equals 1 absence. It is expected that you be in your seat 3-5 minutes before the start of rehearsal or you will be considered late (tardy);
6. In the event of sickness you must provide a Doctors note attesting to the reason and provide one copy to the Teaching Assistant responsible for attendance, signed by the conductor. Only supported illnesses that are contagious or make you physically immobile will exempt your attendance at rehearsals. If due to injury you are unable to physically play – you’re attendance at rehearsal is still required to meet the course requirements;
7. If for any reason you miss more than 2 rehearsals in any concert rehearsal period then you may be required to withdraw from orchestra and re-take the ensemble the following semester. 3 unexcused absences = Fail.
Expectations of musicians in matters of routine

8. Principals are expected to take responsibility for their section on a given piece, including planning sectional 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 in unison passages;

9. String players are expected to be in the same part of the bow and on the same string as their principals. Fingerings may differ;

10. General rehearsals for concerts are sometimes held for a 2 hour period from 5-7 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;

11. Musicians 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. This year a number of recordings will be streaming on the Rutgers library web-site for your usage. 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;

12. Orchestra rehearsal schedules are not structured like choir or band rehearsals in which smaller time blocks are 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;

13. Wind/Brass – Please pay close attention when any conductor is working with the strings, as from this you will get 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 follow their leaders;

14. 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, since strings strengths of 66442 are all that can fit in our pit - rotation is possible from the second rehearsal on the first Sunday rehearsal;

15. Please take note that music rental companies lend music on a 6-week hire. Therefore parts will be available only 1 week or so before a new cycle. Many parts are available online for your preparation.

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 routines is essential. Detail can only be achieved with a commitment to preparation and the presence of everyone at all rehearsals.

Again congratulations on your successful audition and have a wonderful year of exceptional music making.