



ILLINOIS SYMPHONY
YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

Audition Information

2023-2024 Season

Symphony Orchestra

STRINGS & KEYBOARD

Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass, Piano, and Harp

The ISYO Symphony Orchestra (SO) is a full orchestra composed of strings, winds, percussion, piano, and harp. Members will be introduced to the joy and excitement of symphonic music-making, performing a diverse cross-section of orchestral repertoire. Symphony Orchestra members are strongly encouraged to take private lessons and expected to spend time practicing their instrument daily. Ensemble skills, advanced musicianship, and artistic fun will be the priorities of this ensemble, and a wide variety of performance opportunities will allow SO members the chance to share their talents with family, friends, and the wider community.

AUDITION PROCESS

Students can sign up for auditions online on the Illinois Symphony Orchestra website, ilsymphony.org, under the Youth Orchestras tab, then the Auditions tab.

Each student should prepare the requested audition requirements (see below) and arrive early to warm-up on the day of their audition. Students will be directed to the audition room at their scheduled audition time.

Students should bring their instrument, audition music, and 3 additional copies of their solo audition music for the judges. Students may come into the building with or without a parent/guardian, per the family's discretion. Please note that ISYO is not able to supervise students outside of the audition room. Only the student will enter the audition room, and a parent/guardian may wait outside the room.

In the audition, the student will first be asked to play two or three major scales, chosen from the required list below.

After scales, the student will play their prepared solos. A student may choose to prepare one or two solos or portions of solos they believe best represent their musical skill at this time, for a total audition solo time of approximately 1.5 minutes. If you need help securing music, please contact Jake Woollen at jwoollen@ilsymphony.org.

After solos, the student will play a sight-reading piece provided by the judges. Once the audition is completed, the student will exit the audition room, reunite with their parent/guardian (if applicable), and exit the building.

AUDITION PREPARATION

Lessons: If possible, seek assistance from a private lesson teacher. A private lesson teacher can help you with the audition requirements, as well as give you valuable advice on how to perform well for your audition. ISYO encourages musicians to take private lessons in addition to participating in ISYO programs, and we are happy to provide a list of community teachers upon request. Financial assistance for private lessons may be available to families who qualify.

Practicing & Tempo: Use a metronome when practicing your solos and scales. Good internal pulse is crucial to playing in a large ensemble. You can find free metronomes online through any search engine. There are free or inexpensive apps such as Metronome Beats and Pro Metronome, as well as online resources like Metronomus and Metronomeonline.com. Practice slowly with a metronome at first. After several slow repetitions, begin to play faster, each with several repetitions: 1/2 tempo, 3/4 tempo, then full tempo. Practice at speeds slower and faster than the tempo indicated for the audition.

Sight Reading: For help in sight-reading, use <https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/>, which offers 18 free exercises per device. ISYO members receive a free subscription.

Intonation: Listen carefully to your tuning/intonation while practicing. Practice with a tuner. If you do not have one yet, a tuner is an essential tool to becoming a better performer. Tuners can be purchased, or there are free or inexpensive apps like Tuner Lite, as well as websites that can be found through simply searching "online free tuner."

Musicianship: Be careful to observe accents, dynamics, accidentals, written instructions, and other musical aspects notated on the music.

Solo Repertoire: If you would like help finding appropriate solo pieces for the audition, feel free to reach out to Jacobsen Woollen at jwoollen@ilsymphony.org! Private teachers and school ensemble directors are also great resources for finding good repertoire. You can also look on www.orchestraexcerpts.com to find orchestral excerpts for your instrument.

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, & BASS

SCALES (from memory):

- All major scales up to five sharps and flats – 2 octaves minimum, 3 octaves preferred/required for specific scales (see below).
 - Violin: 3 octave G scale required.
 - Viola: 3 octave C scale required.
 - Cello: 3 octave C scale required.
 - Bass: 2 octave G scale required.
- Scales should be performed in a flowing tempo, i.e. 120 bpm.

SOLOS:

- Play one or two solos or excerpts, totaling 1.5 minutes.
 - You may be asked to stop before you have finished, but this is purely to ensure auditions stay on time.
 - For repertoire ideas, see a list of options above. Any solos you have been working on will also be fine.

SIGHT-READING:

- You will have the chance to briefly look over a sight-reading excerpt and will then be asked to play it to the best of your ability.

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

PIANO

SCALES (from memory):

- All major scales up to five sharps and flats, 2 octaves only and with both hands simultaneously at approximately quarter note = 120 bpm

SOLOS:

- Play one or two solos or excerpts, totaling 1.5 minutes.
 - You may be asked to stop before you have finished, but this is purely to ensure auditions stay on time.
 - Any solos you have been working on will be fine.

SIGHT-READING:

- You will have the chance to briefly look over a sight-reading excerpt and will then be asked to play it to the best of your ability.

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

HARP

SCALES (from memory):

- All major scales up to five sharps and flats – 2 octaves only at approximately quarter note = 120 bpm.

SOLOS:

- Play one or two solos or excerpts, totaling 1.5 minutes.
 - You may be asked to stop before you have finished, but this is purely to ensure auditions stay on time.
 - Any solos you have been working on will be fine.

SIGHT-READING:

- You will have the chance to briefly look over a sight-reading excerpt and will then be asked to play it to the best of your ability.