

# Gold and Silver Orchestras Handbook 2019

## ***What is the purpose of the Gold Orchestra?***

The **Gold Orchestra** is an organization in three tiers (Gold Full Orchestra, Silver String Orchestra, and Bronze Training Orchestra) that seeks to develop the youth of Manhattan, KS and the surrounding areas. It exists to provide ambitious musicians with enhanced opportunities to prepare and perform music. It also seeks to develop character traits like responsibility, perseverance, ambition, teamwork, and others through working collaboratively to prepare a performance.

The **Gold Orchestra** was founded by Dr. David Littrell in 1989. The **Silver Orchestra** became an intermediate orchestra in 2012, when the **Bronze Training Orchestra** was created to serve the community's youngest students. For a full history of the orchestras, visit [www.goldorchestra.org](http://www.goldorchestra.org).

## ***How does a student join the Gold/Silver Orchestra?***

Auditions are held in mid-May to give string students an opportunity to join the Gold or Silver Orchestra. This audition also decides the orchestra in which the student will be placed. The Gold Orchestra accommodates the most accomplished string students while the Silver Orchestra serves as an intermediate orchestra and is for students aspiring to join the Gold Orchestra. Seating auditions for placement within the orchestra take place in September.

In 2019, Gold Orchestra expanded to include woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Those positions will be re-auditioned each year. In 2019, these auditions were held in March. In future years, they will likely be held in May, as are the strings.

## ***What are seating auditions?***

Seating positions in an orchestra serve to place the musician in an ideal location according to their skill level and leadership ability. All students are required to audition for their chair seating. Several passages of music are chosen from the fall repertoire, and a short audition will be conducted before and after rehearsal on September 28. Gold Orchestra woodwind, brass, and percussion players will not need to audition for chair placement.

There is no audition for violinists to be placed in the Violin 1 or Violin 2 sections. When the roster is finalized, the conductors will distribute violinists according to the needs of the orchestra. It is important to note that it is crucial to have strong players in both sections. While Violin 1 parts are often higher and sometimes more rhythmically active than Violin 2 parts, placement in either section is not a statement on a player's importance or value. Both sections are vital to the orchestra's success, and balancing them is key.

## ***How does a student join the Bronze Training Orchestra?***

Participation in the Bronze Training Orchestra does not require an audition. Students should have some experience playing their instrument, and should be able to identify notes and read simple rhythms. Interested students should contact Dr. Littrell ([litmus@ksu.edu](mailto:litmus@ksu.edu)). The Bronze Training Orchestra meets on Saturday mornings beginning September 7.

### ***What are the responsibilities of a Gold/Silver Orchestra member?***

- You **MUST** be a member of your public school orchestra/band, if there is one available.
- You **MUST** commit to the fall season that begins in late August and runs until November.
- You **MUST** attend ALL rehearsals and concerts, unless otherwise excused in advance.

Criteria for excused absence:

- A. Total **excused absences**, including illness, should be limited to **two** or fewer. Missing more than two rehearsals, regardless of the reason, is grounds for removal from the orchestra.
  - B. Excused absences such as important family trips and weddings, will require a **written (email) two-week advanced notification** with a parent's statement of the reason(s) for the absence.
  - C. An additional practice chart, signed by the parent, will be required at the rehearsal following the absence.
  - D. Students should be aware that absences, for any reason, may affect their **chair seating**.
  - E. Absences to "sleep in" or take a day off are **NOT** excused. The intent of the policy is to provide some accommodation for families and students with **valid schedule conflicts**.
  - F. The final **dress rehearsal** (Nov. 11) and **Rock Springs** are 100% **required** rehearsal days. No students will be excused from these days **for any reason**.
- You are required to bring your **music folder**, **pencil**, and **instrument** to each rehearsal. No cell phone use anytime in the rehearsal room, wearing of hats, or gum chewing during rehearsals. Please consider the appropriateness of your dress when attending rehearsals. Students are expected to "look nice" at every rehearsal.
  - You are responsible for being **punctual** to all orchestra rehearsals, concerts, and other activities. Arrive no later than **fifteen minutes before** each rehearsal and allot time for **warming up** on your instrument.
  - You **MUST** attend the **October 25-27** retreat at Rock Springs 4-H Camp, which is held the last weekend in October every year. (Students who are considering taking the ACT in the fall need to schedule it on some other Saturday than Rock Springs weekend).
  - You are expected to practice and learn all pieces during individual practice time. Rehearsals are to be spent on ensemble-related preparation, not mastering individuals' parts. Practice charts will be distributed during the season. The section with the highest number of minutes (averaged by number in your section) will win a reward!
  - You are responsible for proper formal black concert attire.
    - Men: Black long-sleeve, collared dress shirt, black dress pants, **black socks**, black dress shoes, long black necktie. No jackets.
    - Women: Black top with minimum  $\frac{1}{2}$  length sleeves, black slacks or skirt (skirt/dress must be long enough to pass the knee when seated), **black hose or leggings (IF skirt/dress does not reach all the way to ankles)**, black shoes

### ***Why are there so many rules and expectations?***

An orchestra (much like a sports team, marching band, choir, etc.) excels only when the collective membership works towards a common goal. If any one member is unable to play his or her part, then the collective result is less than satisfactory. By its very nature, an orchestra relies on the unity of each section to create the masterpiece that was initially envisioned by each composer. This may be accomplished **ONLY** by commitment and hard work. The end result is rewarding and always magnificent.

### ***What is the fall schedule?***

The Gold/Silver Orchestra's fall schedule includes weekly Saturday rehearsals from 9:00-11:00 a.m. in the McCain Auditorium Music Wing, a Rock Springs retreat, and concert performances. A calendar is distributed via email and is available on the website. The Bronze Training Orchestra does not attend Rock Springs or participate in the concert performances listed above and will follow a rehearsal scheduled outlined by their conductor.

### ***What expenses are associated with Gold/Silver Orchestra participation?***

- Tuition of **\$140**
- Rock Springs weekend payment of **\$145**
- Supplies including
  - Music stand. A Manhasset music stand, though not mandatory, is far superior to wire stands for use at home and at Rock Springs.
  - Concert dress uniform (see above)
  - Assist in supplying refreshments after concerts.
- Optional expense of the Estes Park trip. We will have details on this cost as the season goes on, but we are making it a goal to keep the per-person cost under \$500.
- Tuition is due on June 10. Rock Springs payments are due at the first rehearsal. ***Late payments will incur a \$10 late fee each week that they are overdue.***

### ***Are there any additional opportunities?***

Manhattan has numerous opportunities for student musicians to broaden their musical experiences.

- **String Fling** is held every year at Kansas State University and is open to all string students, grades 5-9.
- Dr. Littrell offers the Cedar Vista **Senior** and **Junior Music Camps**, in addition to a **Cello Camp** during early summer. These camps are not limited to Gold Orchestra members; all string students are welcome.
- The **Manhattan Arts Center** offers private instruction and group classes on a variety of instruments.
- The **K-State Orchestra** performs numerous times throughout the fall and spring semesters. Rachel Dirks directs this orchestra. The concerts are free.
- The GO may perform **additional concerts** in the spring and summer but are not required.
- **Tour opportunities** usually occur in, but are not limited to, the late spring and early summer months. Past tours have included: Carnegie Hall performances – 2001, 2006; Midwest Clinic performances – 1992, 2010; England tour – 1997; Performances in Nebraska, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, the Grand Canyon, & Dallas; and, Memphis-Nashville tour – 2012.
  - **This year, the Gold and Silver Orchestras will be traveling to Estes Park, Colorado for performance and recreation May 26-30, 2020. Participating members this fall will be eligible to attend.**

### ***Who may I contact with questions?***

David Littrell, (dlitmus@ksu.edu) – Cody Toll ([cody.toll@gmail.com](mailto:cody.toll@gmail.com)) – Kristen Toll ([kristenmtoll@gmail.com](mailto:kristenmtoll@gmail.com))