

# **Rainier Symphony Orchestra Member Policy**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

As an active and performing orchestra, we seek both the musical and artistic growth of the individual and the ensemble as a whole. The orchestra is a place of community where musicians can improve and polish their musical skills, while nurturing similar growth in colleagues. We believe that the resulting whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

The members' responsibility of preparation, punctuality, attendance, musical growth, and respect to colleagues and to the ensemble is not only desired, but is necessary to the success and longevity of the organization.

We realize that to be a vital entity in the community, the orchestra cannot be an end in itself. Members must foster their love of music to others, who are our audience. We strive for quality in performance, for if we do not, neither the audience, nor the orchestra community, nor the music itself will be served.

## **ORCHESTRA MEMBERSHIP:**

Membership in Rainier Symphony begins with a successful audition. After a successful audition, the player is offered provisional membership in the Rainier Symphony with full membership coming after three (3) concert series, by recommendation of the Music Director and section principal, and with the approval of orchestra committee. If the Music Director and section principal cannot agree about the recommendation of the provisional player, they will submit their opinions to the Orchestra Committee for a final decision concerning the granting of full membership.

After a successful audition, each provisional member will be assigned a mentor by the audition committee. The mentor is a member of the orchestra who will help the provisional member become familiar with the orchestra policies and procedures.

A member may be dismissed during the provisional membership period if the level of playing is not up to the level shown during the audition or if there are attendance or other issues. See "Corrective Action / Dismissal" section for additional information.

Current orchestra members are not required to audition for continued membership. However, if an orchestra member loses his/her membership due to attendance or other issues, or voluntarily leaves the group, then she/he may be required to re-audition as a new player at the discretion of the Music Director. See attendance, dismissal, and leave of absence sections for more information.

Occasional players (whether paid or unpaid) are those who substitute or play an instrument not normally required (such as harp, bass clarinet, saxophone, etc.). They are not considered to be members of the orchestra.

## **OPENINGS, AUDITIONS:**

The concertmaster and principal string players are responsible for interviewing interested string candidates to determine if they have suitable skill level to play in the Rainier Symphony. Potential candidates are invited to sit in a rehearsal with the Rainier Symphony with an audition scheduled at a later date.

Openings for woodwind, brass, and percussion section positions, and all principal positions, must be announced so that all interested musicians may audition. Openings will be advertised in publications and locations where qualified players will likely hear about the opportunity. Members are strongly encouraged to help in recruitment efforts.

Auditions are held with the Music Director, section principal, and Concertmaster. Other players may also be included, such as other principals or other section players, however the audition committee should not exceed 5 members. The committee will make a recommendation to the Music Director who will make the final decision to

offer the player provisional status. The decision may be to accept or decline the player, and may also be to republish audition notices to find additional candidates.

All auditions will be conducted according to the “Audition Procedures” developed by the Music Director and Orchestra Committee.

### **ORCHESTRA COMMITTEE:**

The Orchestra Committee is made up of seven members, representing at least three of the sections of the orchestra. Two members are the Orchestra Representatives to the Board of Trustees. One member of the Orchestra Committee is the concertmaster. The other four orchestra committee members are elected by the orchestra members for two-season terms, with two new or returning members elected each year. There is no limit to the number of terms a person may serve. One of the two Orchestra Representatives serves as the chair of the committee and conducts the election of the other committee members. Nominations should be made at the first rehearsal of the season, and the election should be held at the next rehearsal, by paper ballot.

The Committee shall meet regularly, with a minimum of one meeting per concert series. A simple majority of committee members constitutes a quorum.

The primary functions of the Orchestra Committee are as follows:

- To serve as a conduit of communication between players and the Music Director/conductor
- To hear petitions and grievances of players
- To mediate in personnel matters among and between players
- To work in cooperation with the Orchestra Manager
- To recommend policy to the Board of Trustees as it relates to Rainier Symphony players
- To participate in the health, growth, and direction of the organization

It is not a function of the Orchestra Committee to manage, supervise, or discipline paid employees or contractors.

The two Orchestra Representatives also serve as a conduit of communication between players and the board.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Since true ensemble playing depends upon rehearsal, attendance is one of the measures by which a player earns the privilege to perform with the Rainier Symphony. Understanding the effort and commitment of the player to the orchestra,

- Players should be in their place ready to start the rehearsal at the designated time.
- Consistent tardiness will result in a warning from the Orchestra Committee.
- One excused absence shall be allowed for a concert series having four or fewer rehearsals
- Two excused absences for concert series having more than four rehearsals
- New or returning players may be required to attend all of the rehearsals for a concert series, as determined by the Music Director.
- If a player is not required to attend all rehearsals because they do not play in every piece, the number of excused absences allowed will be based upon the number of rehearsals they are required to attend. The conductor determines the number of rehearsals required.
- Occasional players (as defined above) must attend all of the rehearsals in a concert series as scheduled for their part, as determined by the Music Director.
- Players (including principals and substitutes) are expected to perform in all of the performances of a concert series, unless prior approval from the Music Director is obtained.

An excused absence is one in which the player notifies the Orchestra Manager AS SOON AS THE DATE OF ABSENCE BECOMES KNOWN.

For woodwinds, brass, and percussion players missing a rehearsal, the player must make every attempt to find an appropriately qualified substitute. When possible, the section leader and Orchestra Manager will assist in finding a

substitute player. Also, woodwind, brass, and percussion players must make arrangements to deliver music to rehearsal. Any failure will result in the absence being considered unexcused.

Allowances for extreme unanticipated emergencies will be made, but a minimum of a phone call to the Orchestra Manager is REQUIRED.

Exceptions to these rules must have the advance approval of the Orchestra Committee, and concurrence of the Music Director.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTION / DISMISSAL:**

After one unexcused absence per concert series, a warning will be issued by the Orchestra Manager, with notification of the orchestra committee. Two unexcused absences per concert series will be grounds for membership review by the Orchestra Committee. The Orchestra Committee will communicate in writing with the player to ensure there has been no misunderstanding over the attendance policy and find out if the player is willing and able to meet the attendance policy in the future.

Action to dismiss a member may be initiated by the Orchestra Committee or the Music Director. Dismissal of any member from the Symphony will occur only as a last resort. Dismissal requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the entire Orchestra Committee and the concurrence of the Music Director. If the MD does not concur, a unanimous vote of the entire Orchestra Committee overrides the MD's veto and the member shall be dismissed.

Should the player in question be a member of the Orchestra Committee, the player in question shall remove him/herself from the Orchestra Committee during this time.

Every reasonable effort toward solution through encouragement and warning shall precede dismissal. A member may be dismissed for nonattendance, for behavior detrimental to the organization, for attitude inconsistent with the goals and mission of the orchestra, or for performance clearly below the standard of the ensemble and/or the standard of the individual's audition. The section principal, if not already a member of the Orchestra Committee, will be engaged to participate in the efforts to work with the player prior to dismissal.

### **PRINCIPALS' ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A principal position requires not only excellent musicianship, but leadership as well. All principal players are expected to play a leadership role in their section and to work closely with other section leaders to maintain a quality performance, even in the event they are unable to participate in a concert series. Principals should work within their section to assist with part distribution, answering questions, and encouraging the growth of musicality and ensemble. Principals should also assist with recruiting new players and substitutes.

All new principals shall be selected by audition in accordance with the "Audition Procedures". There may also be co-principals (equally shared chairs) or principal and associate (where associate on occasion performs as principal).

Principals also have primary responsibility for mentoring and monitoring student members in their section.

### **SEATING/PART ASSIGNMENTS:**

Rainier Symphony wants non-principal players to have the opportunity to play principal parts as their skill/desire permits. Such changes shall be made at the discretion of the section principal, who will notify the Music Director of the change.

While principals will normally assign parts in their sections, changes to part assignments for a given concert series may be made by, and at the discretion of, the Music Director in order to maintain or achieve acceptable standards of ensemble performance in the best interests of the orchestra. In such cases, and prior to implementation, the Music Director will coordinate with the section Principal and notify the orchestra committee of the reasons for seeking the change. Such temporary part assignments are not punitive and will not affect a members title, role or standing in the orchestra.

If the affected player requests, the orchestra committee shall review the circumstances of any such change in assignment and make a determination as to whether a lack of justification exists or whether favoritism or punitive intent played any part in the change. Upon such a finding, the Orchestra Committee may overrule the Music Director by majority vote with any directly affected players abstaining. The Music Director may veto the committee's decision, with the committee reserving the right to override the veto by unanimous consent.

If the Music Director considers it in the best interests of the orchestra to recommend a permanent change in positions, he/she will present the recommendation to the orchestra committee with specific reasons. The committee will approve or deny the recommendation by majority vote with any directly affected players abstaining. The Music Director may veto the committee's decision, with the committee reserving the right to override the veto by unanimous consent.

Any affected player may appeal the committee's decision if he/she does not concur. In adjudicating the appeal, the orchestra committee may award an audition to the player making the appeal, or may approve or deny the appeal by a majority vote, with any directly affected members of the committee abstaining. The Music Director may veto the committee's decision, with the committee reserving the right to override the veto by unanimous consent.

Pending review, approval and/or final disposition on appeal of any seating change recommendation by the Music Director, the affected player(s) will be seated in the position(s) requested by the Music Director. The committee will make every effort to approve/deny any seating change recommendations and adjudicate any appeals within 14 days.

#### **NON-MEMBER PLAYERS:**

At the discretion of the Music Director, non-member players (sometimes referred to as ringers) may be used in performance to augment a section, or play an instrument not currently in the orchestra (such as harp). Non-member players will not be used to replace full members of the orchestra, except in cases of absences.

#### **STUDENT MEMBERS:**

Recognizing the responsibility of a community orchestra to mentor young musicians, and the value of experience in their learning process, student musicians are invited to audition to become student members. At the discretion of the Music Director, and with the concurrence of the concertmaster and section principal, the Rainier Symphony may accept qualified and responsible young musicians as student members. As student members certain allowances, such as attendance, may be granted. The Music Director will determine whether the student member performs in a concert.

#### **CONCERT ATTIRE:**

Formal concert attire, as outlined below, is required at all concerts unless otherwise specified:

Men:

- Black tuxedo, black bow tie (a black suit is acceptable)
- Black socks and black shoes
- White shirt

Women:

- Three-quarter or full length black dress, or dressy black slacks and black blouse
- Black shoes and black stockings

Everyone:

- Tasteful jewelry in keeping with formal attire
- No perfumes, colognes, aftershaves, or other scents

#### **MUSIC, EQUIPMENT:**

Players are entrusted with music and equipment belonging to, or borrowed by, Rainier Symphony. If a player loses or damages any music or equipment, or in any other way personally causes Rainier Symphony to incur a fee or charge (for example, returning rental music late), whether accidentally or intentionally, the player is responsible to promptly and fully reimburse Rainier Symphony.

## **TICKETS:**

Each orchestra member is entitled to one complimentary ticket to each concert series she/he plays if attendance requirements have been met (a “series” is two or more concerts where the same music is played).

Members are encouraged to sell advance tickets. These may be sold at a \$2 discount. A volunteer is responsible for distributing, tracking, and reporting to the Ticket Sales Coordinator all tickets sold by the orchestra, and complimentary tickets given to orchestra members for each concert series.

Orchestra members shall request the amount of tickets they anticipate they will sell at the rehearsal no later than 3 weeks prior to the concert series. The complimentary ticket, if desired, shall be requested at the rehearsal no later than 2 weeks prior to the concert.

Ticket orders will usually be ready for pickup from the volunteer at the following rehearsal. Money and unsold tickets are to be returned to the volunteer by the dress rehearsal of the concert series. This is to allow enough time to tally and report ticket sales to the Ticket Sales Coordinator prior to the first concert in the series. We want to be sure that we know exactly how many tickets are available to sell at the door so we do not oversell. Also, if a player will not be using his/her complimentary ticket, please return it so it may be sold.

If a player checks out tickets and returns them by the deadline, the tickets do not have to be paid for. **IF A PLAYER CHECKS OUT TICKETS AND DOES NOT RETURN THEM BY THE DEADLINE, THE PLAYER MUST PAY FOR THE TICKETS CHECKED OUT.** Tickets can be exchanged if seats are available, but not refunded.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Rainier Symphony desires to accommodate players with personal needs that require their absence, while also balancing the musical needs of the ensemble. Members taking time away from the orchestra may return according to the policy below.

### **SINGLE CONCERT SERIES LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- A. This policy is used when a member will miss all of the concerts in a given series. If a member can attend all rehearsals and will only miss one concert in the series, the member should speak with the Music Director to see if this is acceptable (in which case this policy does not apply), or whether the member should not play for the entire series (in which case this policy would apply). A member in need of a single concert series leave of absence must submit a written request (letter or email) to the Orchestra Committee no later than 30 days prior to the first rehearsal of the concert series to be missed. Requests after this period will be accepted only in the case of family or personal emergency, or physical injury. Members must submit requests as soon as the need becomes known and should not wait until 30 days prior to rehearsal.
- B. A member shall automatically be allowed one leave of absence per season, if the written request requirement has been met.
- C. Failure to meet the written request requirement for a single concert series leave of absence will be grounds for membership review by the Orchestra Committee. See the “Orchestra Membership” section for membership process.
- D. If the member is a string principal, or any woodwind, brass, or percussion player, the member will assist in finding a qualified substitute. If the member is a section string player (not a string principal), the member should consult with the Concertmaster to determine if a substitute is needed.
- E. Additional leaves will be allowed for members with demonstrated professional or personal conflicts, however these must be approved in advance by the Orchestra Committee, with final approval by the Music Director.

#### **SEASON-LONG LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- A. A member of at least one year in need of a season-long leave of absence must submit a written request (letter or email) to the Orchestra Manager, who will forward it to the Orchestra Committee, no later than August 1 for the season beginning in September. If a member does not submit a written request for a season-long leave of absence, membership in the Rainier Symphony is discontinued. See the "Orchestra Membership" section for membership process.
- B. All such requests for a leave of absence must be approved by the Orchestra Committee, with final approval by the Music Director.
- C. Expectations
  - 1. If the member is a string principal, or any woodwind, brass, or percussion player, the member will assist in finding a qualified substitute. If the member is a section string player (not a string principal), the member should consult with the Concertmaster to determine if a substitute is needed.
  - 2. The member will return to the orchestra after his/her leave of absence with the same or higher level of playing.
- D. Process Information
  - 1. The Orchestra Committee will notify the member in writing (letter or email) of the Committee's decision regarding his/her request for a leave of absence and any conditions to it.
  - 2. If the member wishes to change any conditions, the member must contact the Orchestra Committee, and any changes must be confirmed in writing.
  - 3. If the conditions upon which the leave of absence are met by the member, the member's seat will be returned after his/her leave of absence.
  - 4. The substitute for the member will be clearly informed in advance that his/her position in the Rainier Symphony is only for the duration of the member's leave of absence.

#### **RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES:**

Should there be any dispute regarding the application of any part of the Orchestra Member policy, the matter will be decided by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the entire Orchestra Committee and the concurrence of the Music Director. If the Music Director does not concur, a unanimous vote of the entire Orchestra Committee overrides the Music Director's veto as the final authority.

#### **POLICY CHANGES:**

Changes to policies, including the orchestra policy, require the approval of the Rainier Symphony Board of Trustees.