

PHILADELPHIA
SINFONIA
Educating Musicians. Creating Artists.



**Member Handbook
2025-26 Season**

PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA ASSOCIATION MEMBER HANDBOOK 2025-26 Season

Organizational Goals: Philadelphia Sinfonia Association supports the artistic growth of young musicians in the Delaware Valley by providing high-level ensemble experience in a supportive, educational environment. We believe that the pursuit of excellence requires performers with integrity, working together towards a common goal. Thus, our mission is three-fold: to provide ensemble performance opportunities for young musicians, to achieve the highest level of artistic advancement, and to educate young people broadly to be strong citizens and leaders as well as responsible musicians. We recruit from a demographically diverse student population to provide an opportunity to anyone who musically qualifies and to enrich the experience of all members of the organization.

Artistic Staff:

Gary D. White, Music Director, Conductor of PS and PSCO
Danielle Garrett, Conductor of PSP
Beth Dzwil, Conductor of PSS

Administrative Staff:

Robert Hodges, Managing Director
Kasey MacAdams, Program Manager
Danielle Garrett, Orchestra Manager & Librarian

CONTACT INFORMATION

Sinfonia Cell Phone: 215-351-0363
Email: info@philadelphiasinfonia.com

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 996, Philadelphia, PA 19105-0996

Rehearsal Location (please do not send mail):

Howard Center for the Arts
1212 Wood Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107

Board of Directors:

Dawn Evans, President	Jerrell Jackson
Frances Han, Vice President	Kevin Levy
Jeffrey A. Kowalczyk, Treasurer	Joel Price
Susannah Chang, Secretary	Alexandra Samuels
Christina Breslin-Frankel	Janine Scaff
Amanda Ciktör	Jason Ward
Elizabeth George	Jenny Weinart

MEMBERSHIP

Philadelphia Sinfonia is open to musicians aged 14-23, Philadelphia Sinfonia Players to musicians aged 11-18, and Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings to musicians aged 10-16. Admission into the program is by audition, scheduled in the spring, summer or fall of each year, and is dependent on the varying needs of the orchestras in each section.

Fees: All membership fees are due in full at the time of enrollment. Membership fees are not refundable when a musician leaves the program for any reason. Payment plans and/or need-based financial aid scholarships may be available; please contact the Managing Director. Members who have not paid their membership fees in full or made special arrangements in writing with the Managing Director by the first rehearsal will be suspended from the orchestra and other players will be auditioned to replace them.

Expectations and Policies:

- ~ Practice all parts and come to rehearsals prepared.
- ~ Conduct yourself in a professional manner at every Sinfonia event.
- ~ Respect and honor the requests and policies at each venue, including where to store instrument cases, policies about food and beverage, and safety procedures.
- ~ Follow Sinfonia's attendance policy (see page 4).
- ~ DO NOT, under any circumstances, bring alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, or weapons of any sort to any Sinfonia function or event. There will be no smoking in or outside the rehearsal venue or at any concert or orchestra event. Violation of these rules will result in immediate dismissal.

Communications: We make every effort to keep each member well-informed and up to date throughout the year. You are responsible for:

- ~ Reading weekly email announcements from the Conductor and from the Managing Director
- ~ Listening to all announcements made during rehearsals
- ~ Taking and reading all printed handouts
- ~ Keeping Sinfonia apprised of changes to your email address, phone number, and mailing address

Dismissal: Reasons for dismissal from the Philadelphia Sinfonia Association program include: failure to attend a dress rehearsal or concert; lack of adequate musical preparation or progress; conduct reflecting unfavorably on the orchestra; excessive unexcused absences or habitual lateness; non-fulfillment of financial obligations; non-compliance with other aspects of the policies listed in this handbook.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Goals: An important goal of PSA's mission is to achieve the highest level of artistic advancement. Regular attendance at rehearsals and attendance at all concerts is crucial to achieve a high level of performance.

Dress Rehearsals and Concerts: Attendance at every dress rehearsal and concert is mandatory. In most circumstances, absence from a dress rehearsal or concert will result in dismissal from the orchestra.

Allowed absences: We can grant each student a limited number of absences from regular rehearsals each season. Three categories of absences may be allowed: 1. Music Festivals (up to 3 per year); 2. Discretionary absences (up to 3 per year); 3. Excused absences for illness, SAT or ACT exams, college auditions, or mandatory credit-related school events. At least 2 weeks advance notice is required for every allowed absence.

1. Music Festivals: We value regional music festivals (PMEA, SJBODA, NJMEA, DMEA events); therefore, members are allowed up to three absences per season for these events. In order to keep festival absences to three, wind, brass, and percussion members are strongly encouraged to choose between orchestra and band festivals.

2. Discretionary Absences: Please carefully consider your use of the three allowed discretionary absences.

3. Excused Absences: For these specific reasons ONLY: illness, SAT or ACT exams, college auditions, or mandatory credit-related school events. Absence from a dress rehearsal or concert is never excused.

Requesting absence: Absence requests must be submitted in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the absence. The request form is available online through our website (in the Members Section). Sending a request does not mean that your absence has been granted. We will get back to you by email to confirm your request and keep you apprised of your attendance status for the year.

~ **Illness or emergency:** If you are too sick to come to rehearsal, please call or text us at 215-351-0363 to let us know.

~ **Lateness:** For a successful rehearsal, we need every member to be on time, in your seat, and ready to play. Lateness of more than 5 minutes will be noted in your attendance record. Frequent lateness will result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the Conductor and the Managing Director.

~ **Frequent or consecutive absences** are particularly detrimental to the continued artistic growth of the orchestra, and are therefore strongly discouraged. Requests for more than one absence per month are unlikely to be granted.

~ **Early departure** is strongly discouraged and in most cases will count as an absence. *Sinfonia does not excuse students early to attend Proms or other social events; please do not ask us.*

OUR THREE CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE – MUSIC FESTIVALS, DISCRETIONARY, AND EXCUSED – ARE NOT INTERCHANGEABLE, AND ABSENCES FOR ONE KIND CANNOT BE USED FOR ANOTHER.

We expect you to be responsible and serious about your commitment to Sinfonia by carefully planning your calendar to avoid scheduling conflicts, managing your time in advance, and communicating any conflicts to us in a timely fashion. Please communicate with us so we can help you resolve conflicts well in advance. Exceptions to this policy are made by the Conductors, in consultation with the Managing Director, on a case-by-case basis.

REHEARSALS

Saturday rehearsals occur at: **The Howard Center for the Arts**
1212 Wood Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107

Parking is available at a reduced rate, for Sinfonia members only, at the Parkway garages at 322 N Broad and 339 N Broad. Parking vouchers can be picked up in advance at rehearsals and are only valid on rehearsal days.

Rehearsal Schedule:

Saturday: 9:20 - 11:00 am: Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings (PSS)
9:50 am - 12:00 noon: Philadelphia Sinfonia Players (PSP)
12:20 pm - 2:00 pm: Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra (PSCO)
2:50 pm - 5:30 pm: Philadelphia Sinfonia (PS)

Music: You are responsible for bringing your music to rehearsal every week and to every concert (even if you have a stand partner). Folders are provided at the first rehearsal. Mark your music with a soft pencil; never use ink, as marking may change throughout the rehearsal process.

Facilities:

- ~ Members may be asked to assist with rehearsal teardown as needed.
- ~ Bottled water is allowed in rehearsal rooms. Food is allowed in hallways outside of rehearsal space - please dispose of trash in the proper containers.
- ~ No eating or drinking in the sanctuary of any church in which we rehearse or perform. Brass players must use paper towels for instrument drainage.
- ~ Please clear the rehearsal area of any personal items before you leave, and deposit trash in the designated containers.

Seating (PS & PSP): Strings (in PS and PSP) and Winds & Brass (in PSP) are required to take a seating audition at the beginning of each season. PS strings will prepare 2-3 orchestral excerpts drawn from the current repertoire and chosen by the conductors. Excerpts are posted on our website in late summer. PSP strings, winds and brass prepare a solo of your choice. Woodwinds, brass, harps, and percussion will rotate seating as determined by the conductors with assistance from the section leaders.

Cell Phones are not permitted during rehearsal; please leave your phone with your instrument case and make sure it is on silent mode.

Parent Volunteers: In order to keep tuition costs as low as possible, we rely on parent volunteers to be active participants in our program. We ask parents to attend a meeting in the fall where we will provide details on how you can be involved in creating a great experience for all our musicians. At rehearsals, parent volunteers help with setup and breakdown, monitor the front desk, run the afternoon snack bar, and help with various administrative tasks. At concerts and other events, volunteers act as ushers, sell tickets, and help organize receptions.

CONCERTS

For this season's concert dates and locations, refer to your Concert Agreement Form and to the back cover of this handbook.

Concert Call: Call time for concerts is at the conductor's discretion and will be announced several weeks prior to each concert. In most circumstances, call time will be no more than 2.5 hours prior to the scheduled start time. Percussion players may be called earlier for setup. Concert information, including call time, directions, parking, ticket information, and dress requirements will be distributed at rehearsals and via email.

Concert Dress: Our concert dress code is designed to present a professional, polished appearance, and the dress code will be enforced. Failure to wear appropriate dress for a concert will bar you from participating in that concert. Please ask questions about the dress code well in advance so you are prepared.

PS & PSP Women: Plain, black ankle-length dress with wrist-length sleeves, or plain black ankle-length skirt/dress pants and black blouse with wrist-length sleeves; black socks or stockings and black shoes. For concerts after April 1, dresses or blouses may be short-sleeved (not sleeveless).

Men: Black tuxedo, white long-sleeve shirt, black bow tie, black socks, and black shoes that hold a shine.

PSS Plain white long-sleeve dress shirt, plain black pants or ankle-length skirt; black socks or stockings and black dress shoes.

PSCO Women: same as PS & PSP

Men: Plain black long-sleeve shirt, black pants, black socks and black dress shoes.

The effect should be simple and professional. Please do not wear colorful or sparkly accessories, sheer or revealing clothing, or any other items that might be distracting to the audience.

Tuxedo Sale (PS & PSP): Each year in the fall, we host a tuxedo fitting and sale at a Saturday rehearsal. This is great opportunity for musicians to be prepared with proper concert attire, at a discounted rate.

Photography/Video: No flash photography or tripods are permitted at any Sinfonia concert; no photography or video recording of any kind is permitted at the Kimmel Center concert. We ask parents and audience members to be respectful of other listeners and of the performers in their use of cell phones or cameras.

Biographies (PS & PSP): For the final concert each spring, we require each musician to write their own biography. These may be no more than 150 words long and must be typed and emailed in advance. Due dates for all biographies will be announced several weeks ahead of time.

OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to our full and chamber orchestras, Philadelphia Sinfonia Association offers a variety of other opportunities for enrichment, both musical and otherwise.

Section Leaders (PS & PSP): Part of Sinfonia's mission is to foster and encourage leadership skills in young musicians. Section leaders are expected to act as liaisons with the conductor, staff, Board of Directors, and members of their sections.

- ~ The conductor appoints section leaders. Appointment is based on at least one year's experience with Sinfonia, leadership skills, and attendance record.
- ~ Section leaders will receive training on how best to organize, lead, and communicate with the musicians in their sections.
- ~ Under the guidance of the conductor, section leaders will arrange the rotation and covering of parts through discussion with their section. Section leaders are responsible for ensuring that all parts are properly marked.

Sectionals and Coaching: Once or twice each year, we provide opportunities for musicians to work in smaller groups in a more intimate setting. This can include sectional rehearsals with Philadelphia Orchestra members, professional musicians working within a section during rehearsals, or side-by-side rehearsals with professional groups.

Mentoring: We provide opportunities for our members to act as mentors for musicians with less experience, both within our program and with other groups.

Concerto Competition (PS): In some seasons, we offer PS members the opportunity to participate in an internal Concerto Competition in which one winner is selected to perform with Philadelphia Sinfonia. Guidelines will be distributed during the fall in competition years.

Community Outreach: Sinfonia values our community, and we encourage all our members to be civically responsible and engaged. We regularly hold outreach events which have included a clothing drive, fundraisers to support communities affected by natural disasters, and a student-run food drive with Orchestras Feeding America supporting Philabundance.

Summer Music Programs: Sinfonia receives a wealth of information about various summer music programs for students, both locally and across the country. We are happy to share this information with you, and will make it available. Please note, Sinfonia does not directly endorse or promote any particular programs, we simply provide you with information given to us.

PHILADELPHIA SINFONIA ASSOCIATION 2025-26 CONCERT SEASON

Gary D. White, *Music Director & Conductor of PS and PSCO*

Danielle Garrett, *Conductor of PSP*

Beth Dzwil, *Conductor of PSS*

Philadelphia Sinfonia • PS

Sunday, November 23 ~ 3 PM

Temple Performing Arts Center, Philadelphia, PA

Sunday, March 1 ~ 3 PM

Temple Performing Arts Center, Philadelphia, PA

Friday, May 22 ~ 8 PM

Kimmel Center, Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia Players • PSP

Sunday, February 15 ~ 4 PM with PSS

Trinity Center for Urban Life, Philadelphia PA

Sunday, May 17 ~ 3 PM

Temple Performing Arts Center, Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra • PSCO

Schedule to come

Philadelphia Sinfonia Strings • PSS

Saturday, January 17 ~ 7 PM

Howard Center for the Arts, Philadelphia, PA

Saturday, May 2 ~ 7 PM

Howard Center for the Arts, Philadelphia, PA

