



PIONEER
VALLEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

MEMBER HANDBOOK



PIONEER VALLEY
SYMPHONY

I. History and Vision statement

Mission Statement: One of the oldest community orchestras in the United States, the PVS was founded to serve the Pioneer Valley through music in three ways: by performing symphonic and choral music; by providing members of the community the opportunity to participate in making music; and through musical education, particularly by introducing young children to live orchestral music.

Founded in 1938, the Pioneer Valley Symphony is one of the oldest community symphonies in the United States. The PVS had its beginnings during the Great Depression, when a group of friends would meet in Shep Raymond's cabin to make music together. Informal weekly music sessions by the Greenfield Civic Orchestra—as they called themselves—turned into occasional public appearances. Harold Leslie, a violinist, joined the group and had a profound impact on the amateur performers. Upon returning from a trip to hear the Albany Symphony Orchestra, Leslie, along with another performer, Harold Livingstone, decided to form their own orchestra in Greenfield. The idea for the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra was thus born. The first rehearsal occurred on May 23, 1939, and consisted of 22 players; by the time of the first concert, in December 1939, the group had ballooned to nearly 50 musicians. A concert in the second season was reviewed by Virgil Thompson, a critic for the New York Herald Tribune and respected musician. He wrote in his column on April 29, 1941, "The program was distinguished, the playing admirable. Rarely have I heard an amateur orchestral concert so glowing with musical life. It even played in tune."

The Pioneer Valley Symphony Chorus, founded in 1962, attracts an enthusiastic group of volunteers. Its founding resulted from the desire to regularly perform symphonic choral works. Without a dedicated chorus within the organization, this was difficult to do. The PVS now makes the performance of large-scale symphonic choral works a central part of its programming.

In 1994, the PVS began an annual educational program and concert for the third and fourth graders of Franklin County. Offered free to participating schools, this program serves to introduce nearly 1000 students to orchestral music every year.

In 2013, the PVS expanded yet again, establishing a Youth Orchestra to serve the region's young musicians.

II. Governance

A Board of Directors, established by the By-laws of Pioneer Valley Symphony, governs the Pioneer Valley Symphony. A copy of the current By-laws can be found at www.pvsoc.org/members. An Orchestra Steering Committee shall be selected by the Orchestra Members to assist in managing the day-to-day functioning of the Orchestra. The Orchestra Steering Committee will arrange for unlocking and locking the rehearsal space, when needed, and will be an ear for the membership, resolving disputes and taking action in conjunction with the Music Director, when needed.

III. Membership Policies and Responsibilities

A. New Members:

The Pioneer Valley Symphony is a community-based volunteer organization. Criteria for membership is based on section and repertoire needs, and is open to all qualified musicians. Prospective or past members should email personnel@pvso.org with questions or to schedule an audition.

B. Auditions:

All new members must audition. Auditions are informal and brief, lasting at most 15 minutes. Applicants may perform any music of their choice. Ideally, their choices should include two short selections from contrasting works - fast and slow, from either solo or orchestral repertoire - that demonstrate both technical facility and musicianship. Applicants will also be asked to sight-read a piece of music. Anyone intending to play more than one instrument must audition on all instruments.

The Personnel Manager will arrange the time for the audition and assemble an audition panel consisting of the Music Director, Section Principals and other interested musicians. The audition will be run by the pertinent Section Principal, who will choose the sight-reading selection and make copies available to the audition panel. Following the audition, the panel will privately discuss the audition and come to a consensus on whether the applicant should be accepted as a member.

C. On-going Membership

Once accepted as a member, membership is granted for the entirety of the season, or until that Member voluntarily resigns the membership or the membership is revoked by the Board of Directors. Members are asked to commit to their level of participation for each season at the beginning of the season. Seasons run from September to May. Members must play in at least three concerts during the season to remain in good standing. Members are expected to perform in all concerts to which they have committed at the beginning of the year unless explicitly excused by their Section Principal, Personnel Manager, or Music Director. A sabbatical leave, with guaranteed placement upon return, may be requested for no longer than one season. Members wishing to return after a period of more than one year may have to audition for the Music Director, or may be reinstated without an audition at the discretion of the Music Director and the Section Principal

D. Attendance Policy

1. Return/reply to attendance form as accurately and early as possible- especially for concerts. This applies to both winds and strings as finding substitutes and calculating the correct number of string folders are both time-consuming.
2. Anyone missing a rehearsal (unexpectedly) should notify both the Section Principal and Personnel Manager. Wind and Brass players are asked to find a substitute if possible and if appropriate (based on the repertoire).
3. Anyone unexpectedly unable to play a concert should notify the Section Principal and Personnel Manager immediately.
4. Attendance at all concert week rehearsals is required. In the event a concert week rehearsal must be missed, only one per concert cycle is acceptable with proper notice to the Section Principal and Personnel Manager.
5. Missing more than 2 rehearsals in a cycle may eliminate players from playing in the concert. If players miss a third rehearsal in a concert cycle, they cannot play unless their Section Principal requests a waiver from the Music Director, based upon the players' preparedness and the orchestra's need.
6. String Principals missing a rehearsal must designate a substitute from within the section.
7. Auxiliary wind players may be excused from rehearsals based on the repertoire, at the discretion of the section principals and the Music Director.

E. Conduct and Artistic Performance Standards

If the Music Director and/or the Board of Directors deem a Member's conduct unsatisfactory, the Member may be removed from the PVS by vote of the Board of Directors. Reasons for removal include but are not limited to: offensive language, negative attitude, excessive absences/recurring performance absences, sexual or other harassment, or any other conduct detrimental to the PVS. The Member shall be given written notice of the unacceptable conduct. If the Member is removed from the PVS, the Member shall receive written notification from the Board of Directors as to the reason for removal.

If for artistic reasons, the Music Director believes the Member's performance unsatisfactory, the Music Director will initiate a review process and notify the Personnel Manager and Board of Directors about such initiation. The review process will be tailored to each Member, and may include an initial meeting to discuss the performance issues, a probationary period during which time the Member will be allowed to correct the performance issues, a further official review to discuss the Member's progress, and a re-audition. The Music Director may, but is not required to, consult with others in the orchestra before making a final decision regarding the Member's continued participation in the orchestra. The Music Director will notify the Personnel Manager and the Board of Directors of any decision made at the conclusion of the review process.

F. Grievance Process

It is the intent of the Orchestra Steering Committee to provide a process for resolving conflicts in an informal and non-confrontational manner as quickly and smoothly as possible. The following steps should be followed:

1. Any player can initiate a grievance or complaint in writing.
2. The complaint is presented to the Section Principal to resolve, if possible.
3. If there is no conciliation, the Orchestra Steering Committee will consider the matter. The Committee will meet with all parties to come to a resolution to the satisfaction of all members involved.
4. The Music Director may be asked to assist in a resolution, especially if the conflict is related to musical performance.
5. The Music Director and/or Board of Directors may be informed of the conflict and may be asked to assist in the resolution.
6. Resolutions may range from a warning letter to dismissal from the Orchestra.

G. Section Principals

1. Principals are expected to attend all rehearsals in a concert cycle and notify the Personnel Manager of any expected absences. String Principals missing a rehearsal must designate a substitute from within the section.
2. All Section Principals are expected to participate in audition panels as appropriate to their instrument, consult with the Music Director regarding section staffing, and arrange sectional rehearsals, as needed.
3. String Principals will establish a system for seating rotation consistent with the needs of their section, preferably with input from section members, to be applied consistently throughout the season.
4. As the Leader of the orchestra, the first violin Principal's duties will involve working closely with the music director, representing the whole orchestra in a musical way. The Leader will also establish bowings in consultation with the Music Director, and distribute them to the other String Principals as early as possible in each concert cycle. All String Principals will then make their bowings available to their string sections on-line, through Dropbox, Google, or some other similar method no later than one week after bowings are given to them by the Leader.
5. Upon notification of a vacancy of a Section Principal, the Personnel Manager, at the discretion of the Music Director, will call for auditions through advertising and invitation. Members interested in playing the principal parts are encouraged to speak to the Music Director.

6. Applicants may perform any music of their choice. Ideally, their choices should include two short selections from contrasting works - fast and slow, from either solo or orchestral repertoire - that demonstrate both technical facility and musicianship. Applicants will also be asked to sight-read a piece of music. The Personnel Manager will arrange the time for the audition and assemble an audition panel consisting of the Music Director, other Section Principals and other interested musicians. The audition will be run by the Music Director. Following the audition, the panel will privately discuss the audition and come to a consensus on whether the applicant should be accepted as a Section Principal.

7. The Music Director may, at their discretion, determine that a Section Principal should be replaced and call for auditions for their replacement.

H. Volunteerism

While the vast majority of orchestra members are volunteers, String Principals are paid a small honorarium to recognize their extraordinary efforts in establishing bowings in a timely manner and managing larger sections of the orchestra. In addition to the music directors, the PVS organization employs staff to manage programming, events, finances, fundraising, and community outreach.

Members are strongly encouraged to volunteer for positions to assist in the day-to-day operations of the PVS. The Board requests that each Member volunteer for at least one position during the regular concert season. Volunteer positions vary during the year and Members are encouraged to discuss volunteer opportunities with any Board member.

I. Music Parts

Each Member must obtain and return the music to the librarian for each concert. Music will be handed out prior to or during the first rehearsal and should normally be returned at the concert. If music is lost or not returned by the due date, the Member shall reimburse the Orchestra for the music and any additional fees that may occur.

Every attempt shall be made prior to the first rehearsal for a given concert to have bowings and markings for the string section completed by the Section Principal with input from the Music Director. Principal string players should provide bowed copies of their parts, paper or electronic version, to their section members by the second rehearsal whenever possible. All other players are required to mark their own parts in order to ensure that a bowed part is always available for each stand at all rehearsals and concerts. Markings must be in light pencil and easily erasable. Members shall reimburse the Orchestra for the costs of replacing any parts which are marked too darkly for erasure.

Non-string principal players should provide copies of their parts to the rest of their section by the first rehearsal after receiving the part, to ensure that all parts are covered in the case of unexpected absences or emergencies.

J. Dress and Fragrance

Attire for regular concerts shall be all black ankle-length skirts or pants and tops with full or $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves. Dress for family, educational, and other concerts may vary when appropriate.

Personal products containing fragrance of any kind should be avoided by everyone. Musicians and staff should not use perfumes, colognes, or scented shampoos or cosmetic products just prior to and during rehearsals and concerts.

K. Other Expectations

Each Member is expected to assist in the set-up and breakdown of the chairs and music stands. To ensure the smooth operation of the Orchestra, members are asked to perform the following activities: Set-up and removal of their own chair and stand at rehearsals, assist in set-up and removal of necessary stage, percussion, and other equipment, and clean up around their area any debris that may be present in the rehearsal or concert halls.

L. Availability through Email

Members will be notified of rehearsal and concert schedules and announcements through email, including any last-minute changes in schedule which may occur. It is the responsibility of each Member to maintain an email account and check it regularly for notices from the Orchestra or, in the alternative, to make arrangements with another Member of the Orchestra to be apprised of any email notifications.

IV. Assumption of Risk

The PVS is not responsible for claims of loss, theft, or damage to instruments, cases, or other valuables or personal property. Members assume all risk of any and all such losses or damages. In order to prevent damage and/or injury to personnel and instruments, the rehearsal hall floor and concert stage shall be kept clear of instruments and cases. Cases should be closed and latched, and stored on the tables, stage, or perimeter floor of the rehearsal hall during rehearsal, or stored in the designated rooms during concerts. When not being played, instruments should be placed in a latched case and stored in a safe or secured location.

V. Non-discrimination Policy

The PVS does not discriminate against any employee, volunteer, or program

participant on the basis of age, race, sex, color, creed, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender identity, gender expression, ancestry, marital status, gender, veteran status, political service, affiliation or disability. Complaints about possible discrimination should be brought to the attention of the Orchestra Steering Committee, any

member of the Board, or any officer of the PVS, for consideration by the full Board of Directors. The Board may discipline, suspend, or dismiss anyone who has engaged in discrimination of any kind. Retaliation against anyone who has complained about discrimination is also prohibited. Members or applicants in need of a reasonable accommodation of a disability should contact the Orchestra Steering Committee, their section leader, or an officer of the PVS.

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and is a violation of the PVS's policy. Sexual harassment includes requiring a person to submit to unwelcome sexual conduct as a condition of association with the orchestra, and sexually oriented statements, comments, jokes, innuendoes, or pictures that create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Anyone who believes that they have been the subject or victim of sexual harassment should promptly report the incident to the Orchestra Steering Committee, any member of the Board, or any officer of the PVS, so that the Board can investigate the incident.

VI. Videotaping, Recording and Photography at Concerts and Rehearsals

Concerts and rehearsals may be recorded for use by the PVS or others as granted by the PVS (like radio) for educational, archival, fundraising publicity, and other purposes. By participating in the orchestra, players give permission for audio recording without remuneration.

Pictures and videos may be taken at any rehearsal or concert by the PVS or others as granted by the PVS (like press) for education, archival, fundraising, publicity and other purposes. By participating in the orchestra, players give permission for the use of their picture without remuneration unless the players request in writing to the Board of Directors by email to president@pvso.org that their likeness not be used.