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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission Statement of the Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Orchestras

Through the power of music, we instill excellence in youth and enrich our community.

History of the KJSOs

In 1939, Eugene Andrie founded the “Little Symphony Orchestra” of Kalamazoo. Even then, it was noted for its musical accomplishments, but Andrie could have scarcely imagined that his vision would blossom into today’s *Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Orchestras* (KJSOs): now composed of five ensembles with musicians drawn from Kalamazoo and its nine surrounding counties, the nation’s third-oldest continually-operating youth orchestra organization has performed hundreds of concerts throughout the world and made a profound impact on generations of musicians.

The *Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Orchestra*, the flagship ensemble and namesake of the organization, is led by Music Director Andrew Koehler, who also serves as a professor of music at Kalamazoo College. He is preceded in the role by a short list of distinguished conductors, including Music Director Emeritus Robert Ritsema, and Julius Stulberg, who shepherded the group from just a few years after its founding until his death in 1974.

Every season, the KJSO presents three performances of professional-level repertoire in historic Chenery Auditorium. It partners with the Stulberg International String Competition to host their bronze medal winner every year, and has additionally welcomed as guest artists luminaries such as Alon Goldstein, Alpin Hong, Zlatomir Fung, Rachel Barton Pine, and Midori. For selected members, the KJSO also offers a dynamic chamber music training program; ensembles are coached by accomplished local professional musicians, and perform outreach concerts throughout the area. The KJSO also tours internationally, and, with recent excursions to China and South Africa, can boast of having performed on every inhabited continent in the world.

Preparation for younger string players hoping to one day join the Junior Symphony is provided by the three tiers of the *Prep String Orchestras* (PSOs). The Training Orchestra provides the youngest string players an opportunity to reinforce basic skills; those students can then go on to the Concert String Orchestra, and eventually the Symphonic String Orchestra, where the emphasis shifts to building technical and orchestral playing proficiencies. A distinguished KJSO alumna and noted pedagogue, Audrey Lipsey, is the director of all three ensembles. The *Prep Winds Ensemble* (PW) was established in 2015 to provide parallel training for younger woodwind and brass players. It is the newest member of the KJSOs family. The PW is directed by respected performing and teaching artists Keith Geiman and Beth Jonker.

The *Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Orchestras* organization is financed entirely by individual and business patrons, state and local grants, ticket sales, and special fund raising events. All KJSOs programs are tuition free so that every student, regardless of means, can participate. KJSOs alumni go on to academic and career success at astonishing rates, and some can even be found in major American and international orchestras, devoting their lives to the power of sharing music.

Website of the KJSOs

www.kalamazoojuniorsymphony.com or www.kjsso.org

Password to the members section: *orchestra*

Organization of the KJSOs

The KJSOs is an autonomous organization, whose entire operating budget every year is funded by grants and fundraising. Authority for the government and direction of the KJSOs is vested in a board of directors consisting of at least 10 members, including two student player directors and their alternates elected by their peers.

The board of directors hires all staff members and formulates the broad strategic goals and policies of the organization. The KJSOs is an Equal Opportunity Employer and provides programs and services without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or handicap.

Fee Structure and Fundraising for KJSOs Members

The KJSOs is among the few youth orchestra organizations in the United States that *does not charge tuition* to its student members, thanks to the strong support of community organizations. Minimal fees are assessed at the beginning of the season. These fees include:

1. An annual registration fee to activate player membership;
2. A camp fee

In addition, the KJSOs Board determines a yearly, **mandatory fund raising goal** for each family, which is tracked through each family's fundraising account. At the end of the year the sum of each family's fundraising must total the amount predetermined by the Board of Directors. This sum will be communicated to orchestra families at the beginning of the year.

Contact Information for KJSOs Staff

Administrative Staff:

Executive Director

Lee Fletcher

Office: (269) 349-7557

E-Mail: lfletcher@kalamazoojuniorsymphony.com

The Executive Director serves the needs of the orchestras, orchestra members, and their families, and can be reached directly in the office from 9 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday. Please take any questions to the executive director and she will refer them to the appropriate person or committee.

Operations Director

Dave Crider

Cell: (231) 649-1620

E-Mail: dcrider@kalamazoojuniorsymphony.com

Artistic Staff:

Music Director and Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Conductor

Andrew Koehler

Work: 269-337-7323

E-Mail: akoehler@kalamazoojuniorsymphony.com

Prep Strings, Training Orchestra Conductor

Audrey Lipsey

Work: 269-345-6664

E-Mail: aalipsey@crescendoacademy.com

Prep Winds Conductors

Beth Jonker

Email: bjonker@mattawanschools.org

Keith Geiman

Email: keith_geiman@hotmail.com

II.EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

Preparation

You are expected to devote enough time practicing your assigned music so that all notes and rhythms are learned **BEFORE** coming to rehearsal. Sufficient student practice is essential for the orchestra to spend its time efficiently rehearsing ensemble playing and style.

Attendance Policy

The KJSO generally rehearses on Sunday afternoons, from 1:30-4:30, and performs three concert cycles per season between September and April. A precise calendar of rehearsals and concerts is posted to our website well before the start of the academic year. We ask that you and your parents carefully review that schedule for the **entire season** as soon as it is presented and compare it to the other planned activities on your calendar. You are expected to be in attendance and on time to every rehearsal, sectional, and performance. If you have an unavoidable conflict, the KJSO allows up to two excused absences per concert sequence. Though a number of valid reasons for an absence will be considered as excused, school band and orchestra conflicts take precedence.

EXCUSED REHEARSAL ABSENCES DO NOT PERTAIN TO DRESS REHEARSALS OR CONCERTS; attendance at both is mandatory. Any member who has a compelling reason for missing a dress rehearsal or more than the allotted number of excused absences may request special permission to do so directly from the music director as early as possible in the cycle; his decision in such matters is final. Missing a dress rehearsal or more than the allotted number of excused absences without permission will bring your membership under review.

It is your responsibility to record your attendance at each rehearsal by placing a check next to your name under the appropriate date on the attendance sheet. You must also do this before the start of rehearsal; arriving late twice will equal an absence. On any regular rehearsal day that you need to request an excused absence, you must email the Operations Director 48 hours in advance; illness is the only exception. **Wind, brass and percussion players who can find substitutes within their sections must do so (and provide those colleagues with copies of their music) when missing rehearsal.**

Scheduled rehearsals may occasionally be canceled. Most often, this is due to inclement weather. In this event, TV stations will be notified of a cancellation. In addition, a cancellation notice will be sent to you by e-mail and if possible, put up on our website www.kjsso.org and Facebook page. In exceptionally rare circumstances, a rehearsal may be canceled due to some other emergency (e.g. conductor illness without sufficient notice to secure a substitute). In this event, we will attempt to email everyone and reach those families who travel from out of town by phone. We will also post a notice on the entrance to the building.

Additional Required Annual Events

Tune-up camp: The KJSO season begins on the first Saturday and Sunday after Labor Day with an annual overnight "Tune-up" camp. The camp tradition was begun to give new and returning students an opportunity to get acquainted in an informal setting. Musical activities include full orchestra rehearsals and sectionals with highly qualified music educators. In addition to music making, orchestra members enjoy the social and sports activities available at camp. At the conclusion on Sunday evening, parents and friends are invited to attend a mini-concert.

KJSO Seating Auditions: Held annually at the end of August, these seating auditions consist of a performance of orchestral excerpts selected by the Music Director from the KJSO season's repertoire for this audition. That information is used for the Music Director to make a determination about each student's seating for the ensuing season. Excerpts will be sent to KJSO members by e-mail during the summer.

Rehearsal Decorum

You are expected to be seated and tuned 10 minutes prior to the beginning of rehearsal. Rehearsal time is valuable; in order to make the most of it, please bring your full concentration to the task at hand. This means not checking your cell phone or chatting idly; both of those can be done instead during the rehearsal break.

Responsibility for Music

As a KJSOs member you are entrusted with a great deal of valuable music for which you are fully responsible – both in terms of always remembering your music for rehearsal, and in terms of taking good care of it. Music is checked out to you before the first rehearsal and again before each concert sequence. It is collected after each concert by the music librarian. **You will be charged for any lost or defaced music or folders.** Please, when handling music, only make marks using a soft, black graphite pencil (and never ink or colored pencils), and only make minimal markings that can be easily removed. **It is each member's responsibility to bring a pencil to every rehearsal.**

Participating in School Music Programs

Though we are not legally allowed to require it, the KJSOs strongly encourages every member to participate in their school music program, both for the advancement of their individual musical skills and for the promotion of the arts in their schools. Participation in a school music group is not only a vote for the continued inclusion of fine arts in the schools, it is a place for KJSO members to hone and offer their leadership.

Private Study

The KJSOs also strongly suggests that you study your instrument with a private teacher. Private music study is essential to your total musical development and successful participation in KJSOs ensembles. **In the case of financial need, music lesson scholarships are available by contacting the KJSOs office for an application (see section III.)**

Concert Dress

All members are expected to acquire their own concert dress, and to choose one of the following options directly below.

Option 1: Black tuxedo or black suit, white tuxedo or white button-down shirt, black bow tie, black socks, black shoes;

-Or-

Option 2: Formal, all black attire.

General Health and Well-Being

Please refer to the separate Health and Well-Being Policy.

III.SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR KJSO MEMBERS

Scholarships

Need Based Scholarships

- 1.*Fee Based Activity Scholarship:* Should the KJSOs registration and/or camp fee pose a difficulty, the KJSOs maintains scholarships to defer or eliminate this cost.
- 2.*Private Music Lesson Scholarships:* For those who require assistance with their private lesson fees.
- 3.*Summer Music Camp Scholarships:* For those students, up to grade 11, who have been accepted to a summer music camp and who require assistance with the tuition.

Merit Based Scholarship

Posie Tomlinson College Scholarship: Funded through the "Posie Tomlinson Scholarship Endowment Fund," this scholarship is awarded to a student graduating from the KJSO and going on to an accredited four-year college, music school, or conservatory to major in music. The winner of the Posie Tomlinson Scholarship is announced on stage annually at the KJSO's spring concert.

Application Procedure for All Scholarships

All scholarship applications and instructions will be posted on the KJSO website and should be either mailed to the Kalamazoo Junior Symphony office at 714 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 or personally handed to either the KJSO's Executive Director Lee Fletcher or Operations Director Dave Crider. Applications must be received by the stated deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Instruments

Loaned Instruments: The KJSOs has a limited number of instruments (e.g. A clarinets, a bass clarinet, some string instruments) available for loan through the office. Students who have been loaned an instrument are fully responsible for that instrument. This responsibility includes a signed contract and proof of insurance for the instrument during the loan period.

KJSO Percussion Instruments: The KJSOs owns a large array of expensive percussion instruments and handmade beaters. Members of the KJSO percussion section are charged with the careful handling of all percussion instruments and associated equipment. It is the responsibility of the KJSO percussionists to see that all necessary percussion equipment is unloaded from the percussion storage room and properly set-up **prior to the beginning of rehearsal**. After rehearsal, percussionists are responsible for carefully packing up and returning all percussion equipment and beaters back into the instrument closet (covers placed on the timpani and beaters back in their proper case).

KJSO Concerto Competition

Every season, the KJSO reserves one spot on a concert for a member to take the stage as our soloist. The audition date to compete for this honor can be found on the online yearly rehearsal schedule, and generally takes place in the fall. If you are interested in signing up for an audition time, please contact the Operations Director. For your audition you should be prepared to play the piece (generally just a movement of a larger work) you wish to perform at the concert. A piano will be available for accompaniment, but you must you must hire your own accompanist. For more detailed rules, please see the application guidelines included in your beginning of the year packet.

KJSO Ensemble Program

The KJSOs sponsors several honors ensembles: typically, a Brass Quintet, a Woodwind Quintet, and two String Quartets. The members for these groups are selected by the Music Director based on the strength of the annual Chair Auditions; these ensembles represent the KJSOs throughout the community.

Each ensemble will perform once before a KJSO performance as part of a concert prelude. They will additionally perform outreach concerts throughout the area, including pre-Kalamazoo Symphony concerts, school and community functions, nursing homes, etc. Occasionally, groups may also be referred for paying gigs if the members are interested.

Each ensemble is expected to rehearse for at least an hour weekly; at least 12 of those meetings will be led by a professional coach to help guide their progress. Ensemble coaching or practice sessions may not interfere with KJSO performance and rehearsal times. All players will be expected to learn their individual parts on their own time. Participation in a KJSO ensemble is free of charge.

Player Director Elections

Player Directors are full members of the KJSOs Board of Directors. As such, they are entitled and expected to attend monthly board meetings, to vote on resolutions and actions (except as excluded by the KJSOs By-Laws), to communicate the student perspective and any student concerns on all matters, and to serve on standing committees. Player directors and their alternates will be chosen from members of the KJSO.

Elections will be held at the end of the season in the spring with votes cast for the two director positions; one must be a string player and one a non-string player (wind, brass, percussion). The two students with the next highest vote count in the election will hold the position of alternate. Alternates are welcome to attend board meetings as well.

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