



GOLDEN STATE Youth Orchestra

Audition FAQs



ABOUT THE APPLICATION

Am I eligible to audition?

Musicians aged 6 to 18 are invited to make an audition appointment with GSYO. Individual audition appointments are made year-round, based upon openings in the program. Candidates must study with a private teacher, and have had at least one year of lessons to be considered for placement.

Is there an audition fee?

Yes. GSYO requires a non-refundable audition fee of \$25.00, which must accompany the application.

How do I choose which orchestra to audition for?

Review the audition requirements for each ensemble to determine which group you think you may be qualified for.

What if I choose the wrong orchestra when I fill out the application? Will I still receive placement?

You will be considered for all GSYO ensembles regardless of the orchestra selected on the application. You should be as accurate as possible when selecting an orchestra to audition for as it helps us send you to the correct faculty member.

If I only wish to participate in Summer Conservatory, do I still have to audition?

Yes. Current GSYO members must audition for seating placement, and new auditionees must audition for correct class placement and seating assignments.



AUDITION DAY LOGISTICS

What should I wear for the audition?

There is no formal dress code for the audition. Musicians are welcome to wear whatever they feel comfortable in.

When should I arrive for my audition?

Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before your audition time. Look out for any possible traffic or weather delays.

Is parking available for auditions?

Yes. There is a small parking lot and ample street parking at the GSYO Office. GSYO rehearsal locations have large parking lots.

What should I bring with me to the audition?

Bring your instrument, music, and a stand for warm-up. Cellists should bring a cello stop or strap. Wind players and string players should carry any necessary accessories (reeds, extra strings, rosin, etc). Percussionists are expected to bring their own sticks/mallets. You do not need to bring extra copies of your music for the audition panel, nor will you need a stand for the audition as there will be one in the room.

Are there warm-up rooms once I arrive at the audition site?

Yes. At the GSYO Office, there is one communal warm-up room. At the rehearsal locations, there is usually a small space available for warm-up.

How long is the audition?

An average audition is 5-10 minutes long, though younger players may audition for a shorter time at the discretion of the audition panel. During your audition, you may be stopped by the panel and asked to go to another solo or excerpt. This is common and does not reflect upon your performance.

What if I cannot make my audition appointment?

Due to the high demand for auditions, we kindly request that you do not attempt to reschedule your appointment unless there is a true emergency or illness. If for some reason you absolutely cannot change your schedule to accommodate the appointment time, you must notify the office immediately. We cannot guarantee that we will have an alternate time available, but we will do our best to assist you.



AUDITION PREPARATION

What are the audition requirements?

At the very minimum, students auditioning for the first time will need to prepare a solo and/or etude of their choice, scales, and arpeggios (arpeggios for strings only). There will also be sight-reading. For more details for each group visit the requirements page.

Is there a specific audition piece I should prepare?

Current members of the Chamber Players Orchestra and Camerata Orchestra (strings only) will receive specific audition music for the Spring promotion auditions. All first-time auditionees, and members of the Galbraith Honor Strings, El Camino Wind Orchestra, Sinfonietta Orchestra, and Symphony Violin IIs who wish to audition for promotion, must prepare their own solo piece under the advisement of a private instructor. Please see the requirements page for more information.

Should I memorize the music for the audition?

If you would like to memorize your solos, you are more than welcome to do so. Memorization of music is not required. Wind and brass players should memorize their scales.

When are the auditions held?

Auditions for the current season are held year-round, based on openings in the program. Open auditions for next season will be held in March and early April. Please plan accordingly.

Where are the auditions held?

All auditions are held in Palo Alto. Most auditions are held at the GSYO Administrative Office at 4055 Fabian Way in Palo Alto. Occasionally, auditions will be conducted at one of the GSYO rehearsal locations..

Who will listen to my audition?

String players are heard by GSYO Conductors and string faculty when appropriate. Woodwind players are heard by Director of Winds Debra Gardner and GSYO wind coaches. Brass players are heard by Senior Brass Coach Dr. Richard Roper and GSYO brass coaches. Percussion players are heard by Percussion Coach Dr. Kumiko Ito.

Can I observe a GSYO rehearsal prior to auditioning?

Yes! GSYO hosts Open House dates for each ensemble in February or March. Please check the How to Join page for more info.

What will the judges be listening for?

The faculty will be listening for overall music impression, clarity of intonation, preciseness of rhythm, and scale & arpeggio preparation (arpeggios for strings only). Musicians should pay special attention to tone and articulations.



AFTER THE AUDITION

When will I find out if I have been accepted?

Students auditioning for the current season will receive notification from the GSYO Office within a week of the audition. All Spring audition results will be sent in late-April/early-May. All auditioning students will receive correspondence, regardless of the outcome.

How will I receive my results?

Audition results are sent via email.

Why was I placed in an orchestra I did not want to audition for?

Our experienced GSYO faculty/coaches will place students at the orchestra level where they will be most successful. Sometimes that may be an orchestra above or below the level for which you wished to be considered.

I'm not pleased with my results. May I re-audition?

No. Our faculty is very experienced at placing students appropriately. If you decline the offered orchestra placement, you can inquire about openings and reapply at a later date. If you auditioned in Spring, you should wait until Fall or Winter to check the open positions list. If you auditioned in Fall or Winter, you should wait until Spring to reapply.

What does it cost to be in GSYO?

GSYO offers scholarships to students who demonstrate financial need and will never refuse a student the opportunity to participate because of an inability to pay the membership fees. For each ensemble, there is an annual tuition fee, which varies by group. In addition to the annual fees, students are also required to purchase tickets to all GSYO benefit concerts. The Senior Symphony attends a weeklong Summer Music Retreat and tours internationally every other summer, while the Sinfonietta Orchestra and Galbraith Honor Strings both hold mandatory mini-camps, local to Palo Alto.

Is GSYO a big time commitment?

GSYO offers a wonderful opportunity for young musicians to develop their skills and learn about being part of an orchestra. An orchestra is a team that needs every player to pull his/her weight. To accomplish this, all musicians must be committed to the program. GSYO ensembles rehearse once a week for two to three hours, depending on the group. Members are expected to attend weekly rehearsals and concerts, and any dress rehearsals or progress checks as required by the conductor. All GSYO families will receive a detailed schedule from the Office at the beginning of the season.