

Chebucto Symphony Orchestra Player's Manual - September 2009



"I don't know which one of you is doing it, but at the end of the concerto we shall refrain from playing 'shave and a haircut.'"

Introduction

Welcome to another wonderful season of the Chebucto Symphony Orchestra! This manual is provided to each member of the orchestra by the Board of Directors to address and clarify orchestra procedures and set standards of performance and professionalism which we can all follow to ensure the orchestra runs smoothly in practice and on stage. Here, you will find the answers to such relevant orchestral questions as “When am I supposed to stand up?” “Do I have to bring my own music stand?” “Am I allowed to write on my music?” “What happens if I forget to practice?” and the ever popular, “It’s concert night...WHAT DO I WEAR?!” In short, the answers are: follow the concertmaster. Yes. Yes with strident conditions enforced by our charming librarian. A swift and painless death. And black. We hope this manual is helpful and answers any policy-related questions you have this year. Please do take the time to read it thoroughly. If you feel something is missing in this manual, or if you have any comments or concerns, please tell one of the board members and we will be happy to make changes for next year. Also, the orchestra relies heavily on volunteers for its success. If you, or anyone you know, are interested in volunteering, please see a board member! Thank you for your talent and dedication and have a wonderful season!

Membership

Membership in the orchestra is governed by the By-Laws of the Chebucto Orchestral Society which can be found on the Orchestra web site. An annual membership fee of \$140 is set by the Board of Directors and all members are expected to pay it. Those who cannot pay their fees (through economic distress or other circumstance) should be aware that the orchestra has a bursary fund from which, at the board’s discretion, fees may be paid. Application can be made in person to any board member.

Membership is open to all, subject to acceptance by the music director. Formal auditions are not required, but a prospective member might be asked to demonstrate his or her proficiency. Members are expected to sign up for an entire concert season (September-May), and attend rehearsals. If you are not able to do so, please notify your section leader or the conductor as soon as possible.

Members are expected to provide the membership coordinator with an accurate mailing address and telephone number. The orchestra does not sell its membership lists and respects confidentiality. Increasingly, e-mail is being used for communication. If you have an e-mail address and check it regularly, please provide it. For all other information on the Chebucto Symphony Orchestra, please visit our web page at www.chebuctosymphony.ca

Guidelines at Rehearsal

Attendance at Rehearsals:

The Chebucto Symphony Orchestra is a community-based volunteer orchestra and as such, we realize that we all have commitments outside the orchestra. It is perfectly acceptable to miss a practice here and there if you are ill, there is a blizzard, you have a conflicting engagement, etc. However, as a courtesy to your section and the orchestra as a whole (many of whom likely rely on your part for cues and harmonic synchronicity), please inform someone if you are not able to attend rehearsal so that your part may be redistributed or an alternate performer may be arranged. When you have a key part, please deliver your music to the librarian or another orchestra member who will be attending rehearsal. On a separate note, consistent attendance ensures that you are following the progression of each piece as rehearsed and have accurate tempo notations, cues and stylistic notifications, which will help future rehearsals run efficiently.

Rehearsals – Venue and Time:

The normal rehearsal location is the Church Hall, St. Matthew's United Church, Barrington Street, Halifax. Should the location of the rehearsal change, we will call or email you; likewise, if a rehearsal is cancelled, you will be contacted. Rehearsals are held weekly, although occasional additional sessions may be held if warranted. Check the website or your e-mail for rehearsal schedules. Extra rehearsals are announced well in advance. Rehearsals start with tuning at 7:00 p.m. It is important to be in your seat and ready to tune by that time. Rehearsals normally end at or before 10:00 p.m., and there is a break in the middle when you can catch your breath. This is also a social time for members to chat. Please save your conversations for then! If you are late, please unpack your instrument and set up your stand as surreptitiously as possible. Then join the orchestra discretely. If you are part of a large section, and arrive late, find a place at the back and move to your accustomed spot during a break in the playing.

String Section Leaders:

It is the responsibility of the string section leaders to coordinate bowings with your section as well as assigning divisi sections.

Practice:

Orchestral repertoire is challenging. At least, the good stuff is, so please practice your parts. It is understandable that there are certain passages that rely on rehearsals to make sense, but that does not stop you from figuring out fingering, complicated rhythms and counting on your own. It makes rehearsals run so much more efficiently if we don't need to stop and correct

remedial parts that can be worked out with a solid hour of practice. Also, do you really want to be that person? Really?

Practicing your part during rehearsal while other sections are being separately rehearsed is discourteous, but you are welcome to show up early to run through passages with your sections. You are also welcome to arrange practice sessions outside of rehearsal. Tenfold if there are sweets.

Rehearsal - Etiquette:

For all intents and purposes, the orchestra is a group and the conductor is our Fearless Leader. Comments made by the conductor to a specific section should be noted and communicated to all members of that section. The conductor sets the tempo, dynamic notifications and stylistic aspects of each piece, without which, the music would sound rather dull. Please listen to the conductor and refrain from chatting to your section during rehearsal so that other sections may receive the critique they deserve! Also, it will save you from dirty looks, which Classical musicians are, by nature, adept at giving. Successful orchestral musicians listen to each other as much as possible. If you cannot hear the playing of the player to either side of you, you are playing too loud. Determining which section has the theme or the solo is essential to a balanced sound. Know where your part is and how it relates to the melody. This will help the orchestra sound balanced as well as providing essential counter-harmonies and cross-rhythms.

Chairs:

Some orchestra members show up early to set up chairs. They don't have to, but they do, which is marvelous. Please do your part to ensure the rehearsal space is returned to its original state at the end of rehearsal by putting away your chair before you leave.

Music Stands and Lights:

Please bring your own stand. The orchestra does not have a stash of stands hidden in a cupboard. Some members voluntarily bring extra stands, but do not rely on them. Additionally, some members find the lighting at St Matthew's dim and bring their own stand lights. You are welcome to do so as we have extension cords to share.

Tuning:

Tuning is essential to making sure the orchestra sounds like an orchestra, as opposed to a group of screeching frequencies resembling the anguish of the masses (for more on this, please go to the library and read up on experimental music of the 20th century). As such, we encourage everyone to tune prior to the start of rehearsal. The concertmaster will cue section tuning before rehearsal begins, but it goes much quicker if you're already warmed

up and have something that resembles an A=440 emanating from your instrument. Tuning order is as follows:

- 1 - Woodwinds
- 2 - Brass
- 3 - Low Strings (including violas)
- 4 - High Strings

We tune to the oboe unless there is a fixed pitch instrumental part (piano, organ, etc.), in which case, we tune to that. No matter how flat/sharp it is.

Doubling of Parts:

Doubling of parts and/or solo passages may occur at the conductor's discretion. It is not a personal slight, it is to ensure an important part is heard. If anything, blame the composer for writing a solo line in the lower octave of the flute section to begin with. Parts may also be redistributed or assigned at the conductor's discretion. Once again, this is not a personal slight. The best way to ensure you have audible, admirable and interesting lines is to practice! (There's always a catch)

Sheet Music:

Each member will be assigned a folder of music for each concert. The parts may be originals or photocopies. It is your responsibility to keep your music in good condition. It is also your responsibility to make notations and negotiate page turns on your own. Notations are to be made in SOFT HB PENCIL ONLY. This ensures markings can be easily erased before the music is returned to the archives or orchestras we borrowed it from. Consider making photocopies of the music if there is a certain section requiring heavy notation or to avoid awkward page turns (please, NEVER cut, trim, hole-punch, or put sticky tape on originals). Always bring your music (even if you share a stand) and return it at the end of the concert. For more on proper handling of your music, please see our charming librarian.

Tickets and Publicity:

A good way to ensure an adoring audience (besides diligent practice) is to sell advance tickets to our concerts. Call in favours from friends and family (there's usually a reception after each concert!). Tell your co-workers (most of which probably think Classical music is extremely cultured and refined and will probably think YOU are likewise cultured and refined for being in an honest to goodness orchestra). Put up posters. Create Facebook events. Whatever you do, please make sure you at least tell SOMEBODY! Revenue from concerts allows us to pay soloists, rent music, obtain performance space and pay fees to ensure the orchestra remains a registered organization.

Advertising:

Selling advertising space in our concert programs is another way to promote the orchestra and increase revenue. Ads in our programs are also advertised on our website and are available in full page (\$320), half page (\$180) and quarter page (\$80) installments.

Guidelines for Performances

Concert Dress:

For the gentlemen: black tuxedo or dark suit, white shirt, black bow tie, dark socks, dark shoes

For the ladies: black pants or long skirt, black shirt with long to medium sleeves, dark shoes

Concert Protocol:

Orchestra on stage, warming up by 7:55pm. All noodling stops at 7:59pm. This gives the audience the cue to pay attention. If there is still a line up at the door we will delay.

Tuning: Concertmaster enters and tunes-

Winds

Brass

Low strings (including violas)

High strings

The orchestra is tuned to A=440. It is advisable to tune offstage and adjust pitch as needed during tuning. Proper tuning etiquette dictates you tune only with your section.

Conductor: Conductor and soloist(s) arrive following tuning - **We all stand**. Conductor then motions us to sit. This begins the concert.

During: Play your part correctly, watch the conductor and refrain from chatting amongst your section.

Bowing: Thunderous applause occurs. The conductor and soloist(s) bow. They may leave the stage. The conductor motions the orchestra to rise. **Follow the concertmaster**. Sit following the concertmaster's cue. Certain sections of the orchestra may be recognized. Follow the conductor for this and rise when indicated. This is usually followed by the whole orchestra rising, following which you sit when the concertmaster sits. When the conductor leaves the stage at the end of the applause, we all sit following the concertmaster's cue. In short, **Watch the Concertmaster!**

Finale: Leave your folder of music on your chair at the end of the concert so that the music may be collected and returned. There are steep penalties for music returned late and we do not wish to cause undue stress to our charming librarian. Remove pencils, cleaning papers/cloths and other items before returning your folders as they may go to another player for the next concert.

Reception: Concerts are usually followed by a reception in the church hall. This is an opportunity to eat squares and greet your adoring fans. These receptions are set-up by dedicated volunteers who, in the past, have needed to make emergency runs to the grocery store to fill the tables with goodies for our audience and orchestra. We encourage all members to bring along something to nibble on for the reception. It doesn't need to be a three tier gateau with rolled fondant and a miniature replica of the orchestra in marzipan on top (although if you have the time...), but we would appreciate a bunch of grapes or a batch of cookies or something.

Recording of Concerts: The Orchestra may make a recording of each concert (for study purposes only). Because members of the American Federation of Musicians participate in our Orchestra through the generosity of the Federation, each member will be required to sign a release form, permitting the recording to occur. Anyone who might have concerns about this practice should speak to a member of the Board of Directors.

Conclusion

Thank you again for your commitment to the orchestra and for taking time to read this manual. It really is YOUR orchestra and we hope you enjoy it! Please bring any concerns to the Board of Directors and break a leg this season!

Contact List 2009-2010

President	Adam Mueller
Vice President	Betty Veinot
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Director	Garry Macey
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Our web site is: www.chebuctosymphony.ca