

Mid-Missouri Community Orchestra Handbook

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Version 01/22/2024

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Welcome to MMCO!

Welcome to the Mid-Missouri Community Orchestra! I am happy to be working with all of you this year and excited to embark on our musical journey together. Throughout the course of our time together, we will all grow, as both individuals and players. Everyone in the group will have different reasons for joining and goals we set for ourselves, but we all get to work together as a community to create something wonderful. This is a judgment free and supportive environment, where we can all help each other learn and develop as musicians.

With that in mind, do not hesitate to come to me for anything you need. Keep me updated on your goals, repertoire suggestions, questions, and general comments (even if you think they may be insignificant!). We are all part of this team, and my role is to ensure that everyone is receiving all the support and service they need to accomplish their goals and feel welcome in our orchestra. Feel free to reach out to me either in person at rehearsal, via text or email. I am looking forward to getting to know each of you better and working together to make something great!

About Me

Director biography and philosophy statement

This is my second year with the MMCO, and my first year as director. I am in my final year of my undergraduate degree in music education at the University of Missouri. I grew up in Saint Louis County and have played violin and viola from fourth grade to present. When I started at Mizzou, I learned to play the cello and the piano and had the pleasure of working as a teacher with the Missouri String Project. Ever since middle school, my passion has been music education. I am extremely fortunate to have such incredible opportunities to work with a variety of music groups and I am looking forward to working together in this group!

Music is my passion in life, but I have other interests as well (crazy as it may seem!) I love to run; in my spare time it is very likely that you'll find me on the MKT trail. I also love to spend time with my two dogs, terrier mixes named Good Snug and Shoresy. I love movies, if you have any good movie recommendations, you should let me know! Above all else, I love to have fun, which is exactly what I am looking forward to with this group. I believe that, with a positive mindset, we can all accomplish our goals and build each other up to be the best individuals and players that we can be.

Ensemble Description

MMCO is composed of musicians who began learning their instruments as adults and musicians who learned earlier in life and are looking for a relaxed, informal orchestra experience. We meet on Monday evenings from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM in Sinquefeld Music Center (SMC) Room 130. Participants pay a tuition of \$50 dollars to ensure a full semester of rehearsals, materials, and extra help, as well as the opportunity to play in an orchestra and perform in a concert at the end of the semester. MMCO is currently under the umbrella of Mizzou’s Community Music Program— managed by Joanna Griffith. Other MMCO “officers” include Director Meredith Blucker-Sliter, String Specialist, and Community Coordinator Marsha Richins.

Spring Rehearsal and Concert Calendar

1/29/24.....First rehearsal, 7:00pm SMC 130, welcome back!
2/5/24.....Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
2/12/24..... Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
2/19/24..... Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
2/26/24..... Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
3/4/24.....Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
3/11/24.....Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
3/18/24.....Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
3/25/24.....No rehearsal, spring break
4/1/24.....Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
4/15/24..... Rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
4/22/24..... Dress rehearsal 7:00pm SMC 130
4/29/24.....Concert, SMC 130, call time 6:30, concert time 7:30pm

Policies and Procedures



COVID-19 Precautions

When the Coronavirus pandemic hit our community, MMCO moved from being a full orchestra to a string orchestra. Masks are no longer required as a part of MMCO rehearsals, but please use your best judgment when considering your attendance. We ask that you do not attend rehearsal if you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or any other contagious illness. We all come from different places across campus, across Columbia, and across Missouri, and the ages of MMCO members have a range of at least 60. Please keep this in mind and take precautions to protect the health of our fellow musicians and to limit the spread of disease to our friends, family, loved ones, and whomever else we contact.

Instrument, Music, and Other Supplies

Instrument

It is important that each musician has access to a playable instrument to use for practice and rehearsal. If, at any point in the semester, your instrument or bow is in a state of disrepair, please try to have it repaired by a reputable repair person. Please do not sabotage your sound by playing with faulty equipment. If you have trouble with anything regarding instrument/bow disrepair or missing equipment, please let me know. I can fix some problems by myself, or I can point you in the direction of someone who can. In rare cases, I can even lend you something to use for a short period of time.

Music

At the first rehearsal, I will have enough copies of music for everyone and a few extras just in case—unless we are having trouble getting ahold of a piece. Please make sure you have a secure place to store and access your music as you will need to use it during rehearsal, private practice, and at the concert. If you lose your copy of a piece, let me know and I will give you a replacement. Scores are available upon request and will be sent by email.

Other Supplies

Some other supplies you will need to ensure your success in MMCO are rosin, extra strings, a cleaning cloth, a working case, a music folder, and, as always, a pencil.

Seating Assignments

This section mostly deals with the logistics of dividing up the violins into firsts and seconds. Violas, cellos, and basses, for the first rehearsal, you don't have a principal designate, so just sit, or stand where you like. During our second rehearsal together, *all* sections will designate a section leader for themselves who will help lead sectionals and answer section-level questions.

Violins, I like to have an equal amount in both sections—or maybe just one or two more firsts than seconds. If you feel confident in your ability to play out, and you are comfortable in third position, then I invite you to sit in the firsts. Do not be discouraged if you still need some practice in the upper positions, though. One of my expectations of you is to take risks and be bold, so if you can do that through your initial seating choice, then more power to you! For all sections, please reserve the frontmost seats for members with impaired hearing or vision.

Rehearsal Organization

Asterisk indicates appropriate time to meet with director

Warm-up & Tune	7:00 - 7:10
Rehearsal 1/2	7:10 - 7:45
Break*	7:45 - 7:50
Rehearsal 2/2	7:50 - 7:25
Pack-up*	7:25 - 7:30

I will do my best to make sure rehearsals follow this schedule. We will have two rehearsals this semester that are focused on sectional work—one in the first few weeks and one closer to the concert. In that case, I will send out a schedule beforehand. I will also send out a tentative rehearsal plan with specifics about pieces and sections so that you may practice and show up prepared to rehearse. Remember, rehearsals are not practice sessions. There are more pertinent ensemble issues that need to be addressed and your preparation is key to making our rehearsals successful.

Attendance

We take attendance at the first rehearsal, at the concert, and once or twice in between for data purposes. I do not penalize for late arrivals or absences—you paid to be here, after all. The onus is on you, and it always will be. I trust you to use your best judgment. This might bother some people in the group who are committed to showing up consistently, but life happens, and I will not pile on grade-school consequences for late arrivals or absences.

Here are some helpful guidelines to consider: try not to miss the first rehearsal; **do not** miss the concert; missing three rehearsals means your participation is at 75%. Missing more than half of the rehearsals will be grounds to consider your ability to participate in MMCO.

Concert Information

Our concert is Monday, April 29th at 7:30pm in SMC 130. Please wear comfy black clothing and tasteful accessories. Plan to be there *by* 6:30—note that *by* does not mean *at*—to run through the program. Please store your cases and belongings outside of Room 130, in the hallway. Any valuables can be kept in the music library (in the same hallway) upon request. Programs will be available as a QR code located outside of the entrance to the hall. Invite as many people as you want! The event will also be live streamed on the School of Music's YouTube page.

Monday, April 29th

6:30 PM Call Time

(please arrive early if possible,
to help set up and unpack)

7:30 PM Concert

SMC 130

Rehearsal Cancellation

Rehearsal cancellations are rare, but a few situations necessitate one. These include 1) inclement weather, 2) absence of both the director and string specialist with no sub availability, and 3) the absence of around 50-75% musicians at a single rehearsal.

Procedures for these 3 instances are as follows:

- 1) I will inform you via email as far in advance as possible that rehearsal is canceled.
- 2) If both String Specialist and I are sick or dealing with a serious emergency, I will try to locate a qualified substitute. I will inform you via email as far in advance as possible of the situation, but if no sub can be found, rehearsal will be canceled.
- 3) In this case, 50-75% of you must inform me that you will not be at rehearsal. Since I often do not know about absences until 30 minutes to a few hours prior, this scenario will likely not come to fruition.

Extra-Orchestral Information



Expectations from MMCO Musicians

What do I expect from you?

I expect you to show up to rehearsal prepared. That means you have *all* the necessary supplies and that you have practiced the spots that we will focus on to the best of your ability. I expect you to engage in our rehearsal. Have a positive attitude and work hard to incorporate my feedback into your playing. I expect you to read all communications that I send, and to ask questions if you are unsure of something. Even if you'd like to know why I run my rehearsals a certain way, I want you to ask instead of letting your questions go unanswered. This goes hand in hand with another expectation which is to talk to me. As I mentioned earlier, help me place your names with your faces and voices. Most importantly, I expect you to do what you can to contribute to creating a respectful, pleasant, informal environment.

Expectations from the Director

What can you expect from me?

You can expect me to show up to rehearsal prepared. That means I have studied all the scores, I have the relevant materials on hand, I have a plan of action, and that I am ready to lead the rehearsal. You can expect me to communicate with you regularly and respond to your communications as soon as I am able—within 48 hours if not same-day. Even if I do not have the information on hand that you want, I will respond and let you know that I will get you the information as soon as I have it. You can expect me to get you your money's worth by ensuring 12 rehearsals—or equivalent—and a concert. You can expect me to be relentless in my attempts to make you a better musician.

Communication

I send out mass emails about once a week—with a few before the first rehearsal to get everything going. These emails will contain feedback, resources, important information, and a plan for the coming rehearsal. If you are not receiving the emails, let me know and I will fix that ASAP. I will include you in emails unless you let me know of your discontinued participation in MMCO.

As I mentioned before, you are free to email me using the information on the cover page, and I will respond ASAP—as soon as *possible*. I tend not to respond to notifications about absences, but I do read them and make a mental note. If you need anything, find me during break or pack-up, or contact me.

Discontinued Participation in MMCO

You are free at any point in the semester to pull yourself out of MMCO for any reason—just let me and Marsha know. If you decide to do this in the first week, you may be able to get a refund for your tuition. Remember, the onus is on you, and I trust you to make the best decision for yourself.

If, however, you are exhibiting defiance or are otherwise attempting to undermine me or ruin the respectful, encouraging atmosphere we work hard to create, or you have accumulated absences exceeding 50% of total rehearsals, you may find your participation in MMCO involuntarily terminated without reimbursement.

Practicing

I realize we all have other, more important things, to focus on during our day, but practicing is imperative. As I mentioned before, rehearsal time is not practice time. For rehearsals to be successful, you must show up prepared. To ensure your success, I will send out a tentative

practice/rehearsal schedule so that you know what to work on. Ideally, I would like you to devote *at least* 30 minutes a day to practicing, however, don't underestimate the power of consistency. Practicing for 15 minutes, 6 days per week is far more effective than practicing for an hour and a half right before rehearsal.

Some of you may not have a toolbelt brimming with practice strategies, so I will send some resources sometime in our first few weeks for you to try out. Some of my favorite resources come from YouTube. Try looking up practice strategies on your own to see what you can add to your toolbelt. As always, I am willing and able to provide you with, and coach you on, practice strategies that are suited to certain passages in the music.

Musician Agreement



Acknowledgement and Agreement

Read this handbook. Use it to your benefit. **By showing up to the first rehearsal, you agree to the contents presented within.** This handbook has gone through many hands to ensure accuracy, fairness, and totality. If you have questions, or you do not agree with some of the contents of this handbook, you must email me for clarifying information by the second rehearsal. With that, I wish you well, and I look forward to seeing you at the first rehearsal!