

Hochstein Sinfonia Orchestra

2026-2027 Handbook

The Hochstein School
Hochstein SInfonia Orchestra (HSS)

2026-2027

Mission Statement

The Hochstein Sinfonia Orchestra offers orchestral training and musicianship building for instrumental music students through rehearsal and performance of standard orchestral repertoire as well as through collaborative improvisation and composition techniques.

Membership Guidelines

Enrollment

Enrollment is by audition only and is generally open to students in grades four through twelve at the discretion of the Music Directors. Auditions are held in late spring with additional audition dates provided at the Directors' discretion.

Students *must* be members in good standing with their school band and/or orchestra programs. The only exceptions are for students whose schools do not provide an appropriate ensemble program or for students who are homeschooled. Students are required to fill out and return an **Understanding and Permission Form** to participate in these ensembles, which will be distributed at the first rehearsal. **Students who do not complete this form are not eligible to remain in their ensemble.**

Students are expected to study their instrument on a private basis. The Hochstein School offers a discount on ensemble tuition to orchestra members taking private lessons through the school. Please call the main office (454-4596) for a complete list of available teachers.

Commitment

Artistic commitment to the group means that all students are prepared for each rehearsal and performance. Students are required to practice their parts and work on difficult passages with their teachers continuously during the season. The Music Directors will give clear instructions as to which pieces and/or sections should be prepared for the following rehearsal or performance. Students are encouraged to ask any questions that might help them prepare their parts more effectively.

In the rare circumstance that the Directors do not believe an orchestra member is fulfilling their commitment to the ensemble, that member may be removed from the ensemble at the Directors' discretion.

Seating

The function of student seating is to create a well-balanced and blended ensemble and to give leadership opportunities and/or solo opportunities to many players. Seating assignments are determined by factors including, but not limited to: musical repertoire, ability, leadership traits, needed soloists, and age. The Music Directors reserve the right to assign such seating in all sections.

Section auditions for strings will occur once every concert cycle. Members should expect to play excerpts from the ensemble's literature in front of a small group of their peers. The primary mission of these auditions is to give members added experience in the audition environment. Students may be videotaped or asked to play individually for the Music Directors.

Rehearsal and Performance Etiquette

Rehearsals for the Hochstein Philharmonia Orchestra will normally be held at Downtown United Presbyterian Church (DUPC) at 121 North Fitzhugh St. on Saturday mornings from 9:00-11:00 AM. **Please take time to review the attached calendar and note well when rehearsals may be at alternate times and locations.** As students are expected to be playing promptly at the start of rehearsal, students are expected to arrive **15 minutes** prior to the rehearsal start to allow time to be seated, warmed up, and ready to rehearse. Directors will note frequent tardiness, which may result in a review of a student's membership status.

Each student must bring the following items to every event:

- music folder, with all the year's concert music
- instrument (in working order) and all necessary accessories (Hochstein does not have extra supplies such as rosin, strings, cello rockstops, shoulder rests, or etc.)
- at least one pencil for marking music during rehearsal

It is the expectation of all ensemble members that electronic devices and other distractions are not in active use during rehearsal time. Students or other family members are not permitted to record rehearsals or the performances of others for any reason. Any member found in violation of this policy will be subject to immediate removal from their ensemble.

Each student is to behave in an appropriate manner during all events. This includes listening attentively to and following all the instructions of the Music Directors or any agent of the ensemble or Hochstein School. Failure to do so may result in immediate removal. If a student behaves inappropriately, the student may be asked to submit to the Music Directors a letter stating the reasons for the behavior, as well as justification for why the student should be allowed to continue as a member of the ensemble.

Concert Attire

Concert attire is concert black for all. Please wear a black shirt/blouse, long black skirt below the knee/black dress pants, and black dress shoes. Ensembles will sometimes choose an optional seasonal accent color at the discretion of the Music Directors.

Attendance Policy

Because of the importance of each member to the success and growth of the group, it is imperative that students attend every rehearsal. If a student must miss a rehearsal, an absence form must be filled out and turned in to the Music Directors **at least two weeks in advance**. Absences must be submitted electronically at **bit.ly/hochabsence**. If a student is absent due to illness the morning of a rehearsal, call the Hochstein office as soon as possible (454-4596). **Please also fill out the electronic absence form following your phone call**. Repeated absences may result in leadership opportunities being limited and/or removal from the group.

Each student is allowed no more than **two absences per concert cycle,** with **no absences permitted the two rehearsals before a concert**. Arriving late and/or leaving early will, at the discretion of the Directors, count toward a member's total absences. If a member exceeds two absences within the concert cycle, the Directors reserve the right to change the member's seat, reassign solo parts, and remove the member from a concert cycle. Excessive absences, tardiness, and early departures will encourage the Directors to review membership status; the Directors reserve the right to remove a student from the group for these reasons.

Participation in an area All-State or All-County events is encouraged, but students must be diligent in notifying the Music Directors via the online absence form as soon as possible. **When signing up for any Solo Festival, students and/or parents should talk to their school music directors and request time slots on Friday evening or late Saturday afternoon time.** In the event you have a conflict, notify the Music Directors as soon as possible.

Students are highly encouraged to participate in performance opportunities outside of their Hochstein ensemble, but must remain aware of the above attendance policy. When agreeing to participate in other events such as musicals, orchestra pits, competitions, etc., please make every effort to avoid missing rehearsals close to a concert date. We believe that all students' commitments are of equal value, but consideration must be made when agreeing to participate in additional events. **Please make it a priority to add the rehearsal and concert dates to your family calendar,** taking note of any potential conflicts. Many of these conflicts can be mediated through collaborative conversations.

Ensemble events will be canceled due to weather only if the Hochstein School is closed. Check local news channels and websites. Cancellations will also be sent out through ensemble email distribution lists.

Rehearsal and Performance Schedule

Report time before concerts is generally 90 minutes prior to the start time, but earlier times may be necessary for special rehearsals. It is crucial that each member of the orchestra attend all performances during our season. Each student holds the same responsibility to practice the music and perform at their highest level. Please notify the Music Directors immediately when conflicts arise so that a solution may be discussed. Limited performances may be added to our calendar as opportunities present themselves. The Music Directors will give as much advance notice as possible when such performances are added.

Sunday, November 1, 2026
HPO & HSS
Hochstein Performance Hall, 2:00 PM
(Call Time: 1:00)

Sunday, February 28, 2027
HSS & HCS
Hochstein Performance Hall, 2:00 PM
(Call Time: 1:00)

Sunday, May 2, 2027
HPO, HSS, HCS
Hochstein Performance Hall, 2:00 PM
(Call Time: 1:00)

Important Contact Information

	Phone	Email
John Fetter Music Director, HPO/HSS	**(585) 749-9983** Emergencies only	**john.fetter@hochstein.org**
Terry Smith Assistant Director, HSS	**(585) 509-2745** Emergencies only	**terry.smith@hochstein.org**
Hochstein School	**(585) 454-4596** For general/billing questions or concerns and unforeseen absences due to illness or emergency*	
Absence Reporting	**bit.ly/hochabsence** Link is case-sensitive	

Please make sure to fill out the absence form linked above, even if you have had an email or face-to-face conversation with the Director(s). Absences that contradict the attendance policy must be discussed directly with the Director(s)

Hochstein Sinfonia Orchestra (HSS)

Rehearsal and Performance Calendar

note Dress Rehearsals times/places in RED

Date	Day	Event
Saturday 9/12	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 9/19	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 9/26	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 10/3	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 10/10	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 10/17	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 10/24	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 10/31	**11:30 am - 1:00 pm**	**Dress Rehearsal in Performance Hall**
Sunday 11/1	**2:00 PM**	**Concert 1 in Performance Hall (HSS/HPO)**
Saturday 11/7	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 11/14	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 11/21	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 11/28		OFF Thanksgiving Break
Saturday 12/5	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 12/12	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 12/19	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 12/26		OFF Holiday Recess
Saturday 1/2	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 1/9	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 1/16	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal (note: HS Solofest weekend)
Saturday 1/23	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal (note: JH Solofest weekend)
Saturday 1/30	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal (note: Elementary Solofest weekend)
Saturday 2/6	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 2/13	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 2/20		OFF Winter Recess
Saturday 2/27	**11:30 am - 1:00 pm**	**Dress Rehearsal in Performance Hall**
Sunday 2/28	**2:00 PM**	**Concert 2 in Performance Hall (HCS/HSS)**
Saturday 3/6	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 3/13	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 3/20	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 3/27		Off Spring Recess
Saturday 4/3	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 4/10	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 4/17	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 4/24	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Rehearsal
Saturday 5/1	**11:30 am - 1:00 pm**	**Dress Rehearsal in Performance Hall**
Sunday 5/2	**2:00 PM**	**Concert 3 in Performance Hall (HCS/HSS/HPO)**

The Hochstein School

Hochstein Philharmonia Orchestra (HPO)

Hochstein Sinfonia Strings (HSS)

Map

Downtown Presbyterian Church (DUPC)



•Downtown United Presbyterian Church (DUPC)
121 N. Fitzhugh St.
Rochester, NY 14614

From the Hochstein School:
•Turn **right** onto Church Street
•Turn **left** onto Fitzhugh at stop sign
•DUPC will be on your left near the end of the block
•Come through glass door on the left that is set back from the road. All families must buzz into the building.

Parking is available on Saturday in the large lot across from the church.