



ASPEN MUSIC
FESTIVAL
AND SCHOOL

Student Orchestra Manual

2025



Aspen Music Festival and School

STUDENT ORCHESTRA MANUAL

Compiled by AMFS artist-faculty and staff, this manual will detail the AMFS educational goals and expectations for our orchestra students, along with the policies and procedures that contribute towards that end. This content has been updated for the 2025 season.

Overview

The Aspen Music Festival and School's mission is to be the preeminent summer institution of classical music education, performances, and presentations; to be transformational and inspirational for all involved; to be innovative and a catalyst for change in the world of music, while drawing on and respecting its great traditions.

- A school unique in its teaching practice and philosophy, inspiring every student through study and performance;
- A magnet for the highest-quality students, artist-faculty, and guest artists;
- A center for great musical performances, where listeners enrich their enjoyment of music;
- A force for positive change in the world of music.

All in the context of respecting and nurturing the Aspen Idea and the Aspen community, celebrating the union of mind, body, and spirit through the art of music.

EXPECTATIONS FOR AMFS ORCHESTRA STUDENTS

The Aspen Music Festival and School expects all orchestra students to adhere to all rules, regulations, and policies stated in this manual; take responsibility for their own schedule and to put their musical education first; be honest and respectful and ensure that they represent the AMFS well, both on and off campus; interact professionally with colleagues, artist-faculty, conductors, guest artists, and staff; promote excellence on stage and work as a force for positive change in the world of music.

AMFS ORCHESTRAS

Aspen Chamber Symphony (ACS) is a chamber-sized symphony comprised of AMFS artist-faculty and students in side-by-side performance. It is led by world-renowned conductors and joined for most concerts by star guest soloists. Repertoire consists of standard and contemporary works for chamber orchestra.

For each weekly concert cycle, ACS has rehearsals on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday with the dress rehearsal and concert on Friday. ACS students will play in a repertoire reading led by the ACA conducting fellows on one Saturday morning during the season.

Aspen Festival Orchestra (AFO) is comprised of AMFS artist-faculty members and students in side-by-side performance. It is led by world-renowned conductors and joined for most concerts by star guest soloists. Repertoire consists of standard and contemporary works for symphony orchestra.

For each weekly concert cycle, AFO has rehearsals on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday with the dress rehearsal and concert on Sunday. AFO students will play in a repertoire reading led by the ACA conducting fellows on one Friday morning during the season.

Aspen Conducting Academy Orchestra (ACA) is comprised of ACA fellowship students and nine conducting fellows, who play in the orchestra when off the podium, and is led by an artist-faculty concertmaster. Students in AFO or ACS may be assigned to play in ACA from week to week depending on repertoire needs. It is guided by Music Director Robert Spano and visiting guest conductors.

Performance activities include weekly orchestral concerts on Wednesdays, repertoire readings, and composer readings.

Aspen Opera Theater and VocalARTS (AOTVA) Orchestra is comprised of students and led by an artist-faculty concertmaster and world-renowned conductor. Students in AFO or ACS may be rotated into the AOTVA Orchestra to form the orchestra for one of the opera productions in the Klein Music Tent or the Wheeler Opera House.

Aspen Contemporary Ensemble (ACE) is comprised of eight ACE fellows and led by artist-faculty members Tim Weiss and Donald Crockett. Students in AFO or ACS may be assigned to play in ACE from week to week depending on repertoire needs.

ACE performs on the Saturday afternoon Chamber Music recitals in Harris Concert Hall, along with additional performances scheduled at various venues throughout Aspen. For each weekly concert cycle, ACE has rehearsals on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday with the dress rehearsal and concert on Saturday.

Specials are recitals or special events featuring a guest artist performing repertoire that will require a small ensemble comprised of students and sometimes artist-faculty. These ensembles will typically have 2-3 rehearsals before the performance. Students in AFO or ACS may be assigned to play in a Special.

AMFS ORCHESTRA STAFF

Each orchestra will be assigned an Orchestra Manager, Orchestra Librarian, and Orchestra Stage Manager. They are members of the AMFS seasonal staff— over 100 exceptional employees working at the highest levels of production and arts administration with top professionals in the field. The Orchestra Manager, Librarian, and Stage Manager team is vital to the success of each orchestra and team members should be treated with respect and professionalism.

The **Orchestra Manager** is the point person for all personnel issues, where/when logistical questions, rehearsal order questions, and any last-minute emergencies. They will send emails to the orchestra each week with the roster, rehearsal schedule, and any updates as they arise. Their office is in the Upper Studio Building, room 105.

The **Orchestra Librarian** is the point person for all part related issues. The Head/ACE, ACA, ACA/AOTVA Assistant, AOTVA, and Circulation/Chamber Music librarians work in the Bucksbaum Library. If assigned to any of those ensembles, students will pick up parts in that library. The AFO and ACS librarians work in the Klein Music Tent Library. If assigned to either of those ensembles, students will pick up parts in that library. Please find library policies and hours of operation on page 12.

The **Orchestra Stage Manager** is the point person for all stand, chair, and equipment issues. Please direct any equipment requests to the Orchestra Stage Manager. Their office is backstage at the Klein Music Tent.

Orchestra Assignments

Winds, Brass, Percussion, and Harp (WBPH) students will rotate through orchestras, including ACA, Opera, ACE, and/or Specials, with Week 2-8 assignments based on the results of their orchestra placement auditions. The orchestra rehearsal schedules have been adjusted to enable WBPH students to easily rotate between all orchestras. Certain WBPH fellows may be designated as non-rotating by faculty (e.g., piccolo, English horn, 3rd horn, and tuba fellows may be designated as non-rotating members of AFO).

Non-ACA string students will receive an orchestra assignment of either ACS or AFO following their orchestra placement auditions. They will not rotate between AFO or ACS. They can be rotated from their assigned orchestra into Opera, ACE, and/or Specials. Strings will rotate their seats within their assigned orchestra (more on this below.)

WPBH PRE-SEASON ASSIGNMENTS AND PLACEMENT AUDITIONS

Using students' admissions recordings, WBPH faculty will determine orchestra assignments for Week 1. All WPBH students will receive Week 1 orchestra assignments by email in June. All Week 1 WBPH parts will be available in the Campus Library during Registration.

WBPH students will participate in the orchestra placement auditions to determine their orchestra assignments for the rest of the season. Half Session I assignments will be released to students during Week 1. Faculty will then meet again in Weeks 2 and 3 to set assignments for Half Session II, and those will then be released to students during Week 3.

Late auditions are not recommended and must be requested through a leave of absence at the time of enrollment. Orchestra students who are approved for a late arrival will be scheduled for a late audition during Week 1, which will be scheduled either directly with their teacher or by Manager of Personnel. In the case of a late arrival, the student understands that any missed opportunities cannot be made up or re-created. The administration will take reasonable measures to ensure optimum use of the student's time while in residence at Aspen. There will not be an opportunity to re-audition for orchestra placement.

STRING ASSIGNMENTS AND PLACEMENT AUDITIONS

String orchestra assignments will be determined based on faculty review of the student's admission audition recordings. String Orchestra Faculty Coordinators will assign students to specific orchestra tracks, which will specify ACS or AFO, and if/when students rotate out of those orchestras to play in Opera, ACE, or any Specials.

All string students will receive their season-long orchestra assignment to either AFO or ACS and their Week 1 assignment by email in June. All Week 1 string parts will be available in the Campus Library during Registration.

AFO weekly rosters will be released on the Monday one week before the first rehearsal of that concert cycle. For example, the AFO 3 roster will be released on Monday of Week 2.

ACA weekly rosters will be released on the Tuesday one week before the first rehearsal of that concert cycle. For example, the ACA 3 roster will be released on Tuesday of Week 2.

ACS and ACE weekly rosters will be released on the Saturday two weeks before the first rehearsal of that concert cycle. For example, the ACS/ACE 3 rosters will be released on Saturday of Week 1.

Specials and Opera rosters will be released 10 days before the first rehearsal.

STRING SEATING AND THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL POOL

Following the results of faculty review of student admission audition recordings, a student can earn a spot in the Assistant Principal Pool. These students are selected to sit assistant principal for a certain number of weeks, matching up with one artist-faculty member principal and then rotating back into the section once a new faculty principal comes into that orchestra, or for one Half Session. The Assistant Principal Pool has an unspecified number of members, encouraging selection based only on students who are qualified. When not sitting Assistant Principal, these students will rotate through the second and third stands, depending on the number of members in the Pool. Assistant Principal Pool members may be also rotated out of their assigned orchestra and into a Specials orchestra for one week during the season.

All other string players in the section may rotate each week, though exactly where and how will be based on the results of the seating auditions. If a student is assigned to a fixed chair or a rotating chair, they still may be rotated out of their assigned orchestra and into a Specials orchestra for one week during the season.

NOTIFICATION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PART AVAILABILITY

Below are the 2025 dates by when students can expect to receive their assignments.

	Strings
Orchestra Assignment + Week 1	June 23, 2025
AFO Weekly Rosters	The Monday one week before the first rehearsal.
ACA Weekly Rosters	The Tuesday two weeks before the first rehearsal.
ACS and ACE Weekly Rosters	The Saturday two weeks before the first rehearsal.
Opera and Specials Rosters	10 days before the first rehearsal.

	WBPH
Week 1	June 9, 2025
Weeks 2-4	July 4, 2025
Weeks 5-8	July 16, 2025

Orchestra Managers are responsible for sending emails to their orchestra with the weekly rosters, rehearsal schedules, and any updates as they arise.

Please note that if a student chooses to subscribe to their personalized ArtsVision iCal feed (login details to be sent in June), any assignments that happen to appear on that feed are not confirmed until the student has received an official assignment email from an orchestra manager.

Each orchestra's bowed and prepared parts will be available in the library for musicians to pick up 10 days before the first rehearsal. Digital practice parts will be available on Dropbox as they become available, oftentimes sooner than the 10-day deadline.

Orchestra Policies

REQUESTING A CHANGE TO AN ORCHESTRA ASSIGNMENT

Students are not permitted to make assignment adjustments under any circumstances. If a student has a question or concern about a specific orchestra assignment, they should contact the Manager of Personnel in writing, copying their private teacher. Any adjustments will be at the discretion of the Orchestra Faculty Coordinators.

SUB POLICY

Students are not permitted to send a substitute musician to any rehearsal or performance under any circumstances, including illness or injury. If a student will likely have a prolonged absence from an orchestra cycle, it will be up to the discretion of the Orchestra Faculty Coordinators and the Administration to determine whether that student should be removed from the cycle and another student assigned in their place.

Furthermore, depending on a particular week's repertoire needs, students may be rotated out of their assigned orchestra and given the week off from orchestra. However, if an assigned student needs to be released due to an emergency, then the released student should be aware that they may be called to take their place. Such a change would only occur in emergency situations and the Orchestra Manager will work as quickly as possible to notify the student of their new assignment by email and phone. Attendance at these newly assigned orchestra services will take priority over any other prior commitments and the Administration will work with the student to make any necessary arrangements.

CONCERTO COMPETITION WINNERS

Concerto Competition winners will be cycled out of orchestra during the week of their performance to allow them to rehearse with the accompanying orchestra.

DOUBLE ASSIGNMENTS

A double assignment is defined as assignments to two different orchestras rehearsing during the same week(s) but at different times.

For WBPH students, double assignments may need to occur with faculty approval, and for a student to maximize their orchestral experience. This can include an assignment to an opera production in which the student is only required to play a few numbers. If double assignments occur, these instances will be limited for each student. Participation in orchestra every week is not guaranteed.

String students are exempt from having to play double assignments unless special approval from the student's teacher is received. In those cases, the Manager of Personnel will thoroughly examine the students' schedule and consult with the Orchestra Faculty Coordinators to ensure a positive performance experience.

String students assigned to the AOTVA opera at the Wheeler should anticipate performing in both their assigned orchestra and the opera for one to two out of the three weeks of the AOTVA opera orchestra schedule.

AUXILIARY INSTRUMENTS

AMFS aims for all woodwind students to have the opportunity to perform at least once on an auxiliary instrument in orchestra (this excludes the auxiliary instrument fellows.)

- Flute Students: It is expected that all flute students will share the piccolo and alto flute opportunities in orchestra. Flute students should bring their own piccolo and/or alto flute if possible. Fellows are expected to bring their own instruments. The ACE flute fellow is expected to bring a piccolo and an alto flute.
- Oboe Students: It is expected that all oboe students will share the English horn opportunities in orchestra. Oboe students should bring their own English horn if possible, as well as the equipment to make new English horn reeds. Bring a device for supporting the weight of the instrument if needed. Fellows are expected to bring their own instruments.
- Clarinet Students: It is expected that all clarinet students will share the B-flat, A, E-flat, and bass clarinet responsibilities in orchestra. Please bring these instruments if possible. Fellows are expected to bring their own instruments. The ACE clarinet fellow is expected to bring an E-flat and bass clarinet.
- Bassoon Students: Not all bassoon students are expected to play contrabassoon in orchestra. However, those that have the ability and interest will be given opportunities. Fellows are expected to bring their own instruments.

If a student has been assigned to an auxiliary woodwind part in orchestra and the student does not have their own instrument, AMFS does have instruments available for students to borrow. It is the student's responsibility to visit the Operations Assistant in the Operations Department located in the Hardy Building as soon as that assignment has been received. The Operations Assistant will then check out an instrument to the student for the duration of the concert cycle. Instruments will not be available to check out for the entire summer.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be taken at all orchestra rehearsals by the orchestra manager. Students are expected to be punctual, which means being unpacked, warmed up, and seated at least 10 minutes before the rehearsal downbeat. For performances, students are expected to check in with the orchestra manager no later than 20 minutes before the performance start time. If a student is going to be late or absent for any reason to any orchestra service, they must contact their orchestra manager. Orchestra rehearsals have priority over all other musical activities, including private lessons, classes, chamber music coachings, and paid or unpaid performances.

An excused lateness or absence is an illness or other related emergency that has been communicated to the orchestra manager prior to the service start time. The student must then submit a doctor's note to the orchestra manager within 7 days of the missed service for the lateness or absence to be considered excused. Artist-faculty members are not empowered to excuse students from any rehearsal.

An unexcused lateness or absence includes oversleeping; missing the bus; going to the wrong rehearsal space; attending or performing in a private lesson, class, chamber music coaching, or unpaid or paid performance; not checking email for any updates to the schedule; forgetting any instruments or music the student will need for that service; not submitting a doctor's note for an illness; or any other last-minute emergencies that were not communicated to the orchestra manager and caused a student to miss or be late to a service. Students will not be excused from rehearsals for religious practices.

Unexcused absences and frequent tardiness will result in disqualification from competition and recital opportunities, and may result in suspension of private lessons, withholding of the security deposit, and/or forfeiture of scholarship. Two unexcused absences may result in expulsion from the AMFS with no refund of fees.

ATTENDANCE AS IT RELATES TO PERFORMANCE INJURY

Temporary rest from practicing and playing is usually recommended when dealing with a performance-related injury. Physical therapy may be recommended and is available in Aspen with therapists familiar with music performance-related injuries. Students who sustain or aggravate an existing performance-related injury while in Aspen must communicate with the Vice President and Dean of Students, who will consult with the student's private teacher, the AMFS health team, and the student to determine what, if any, musical activities will be permitted. Students unable to resume AMFS activities may be dismissed to tend to their injuries in a focused manner, under their regular medical care.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE/EARLY DEPARTURE

Students are expected to attend Registration, take orchestra placement auditions if required for their instrument, and be in Aspen for the duration of their session. Short-term absences may be approved for extraordinary cases. Except in the case of family emergency, all leaves of absence must be submitted through the student online Status Page and pre-approved by the Office of Student Services. In taking a leave of absence, the student understands that any missed opportunities cannot be made up or re-created. The administration will take reasonable measures to ensure optimum use of the student's time while in residence at Aspen.

Orchestra Rehearsal and Performance Information

AMFS TUNING

All AMFS ensembles tune to A=441.

AMFS REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE

The AMFS trains its students to be professionals and runs orchestra rehearsals and performances accordingly. Below are general expectations for all students participating in orchestra.

- Arrive 15-30 minutes early to rehearsal and be seated at least 10 minutes before the start time. Double check the bus schedule.
- Be sure to share the warm-up time and be sensitive to those warming up around you.
- Arrive to rehearsal prepared, having listened to at least one recording of the work (preferably with a score) and having practiced your part. Do not sight read at the first rehearsal.
- Understand the library policies (detailed below). Students are required to collect their parts as soon as they are made available. In general, it is expected that students will pick up their parts one week before the first rehearsal. Repeat failure to pick up parts one week before the first rehearsal may result in a disciplinary meeting with the Dean of Students.
- Remember to bring parts to rehearsals.
- Bring a pencil.
- Be professional.
- Cell phone use may be permitted during a long tacet if done respectfully and without causing distraction to the student or their section, and at the discretion of the orchestra manager, faculty principals, and conductor. Cell phone use is prohibited in all other cases, including all performances.
- Refrain from distracting behavior, such as tapping your foot, crossing your legs, chatting with your stand partner or neighbor, or turning around to watch someone play.
- Gum chewing is not permitted.
- Dress professionally. Remove distracting clothing, such as hats, visors, hoods, and sunglasses. Wearing perfume is not permitted.
- Address questions appropriately to your section leader. Use the breaks if possible.
- Section leaders will decide whether the timing is appropriate to ask the conductor, or whether the question should wait. When addressing the conductor, please use “Maestro” or as “Mr. or Ms. Last Name.” Do not use first names unless they have requested it.
- Be on time after the break.
- After each rehearsal, please close your black folder and leave it on the stand.

- String players, please also note:
 - If you mark fingerings in the part that will be used for the performance, outside players should mark their fingerings on top of the notes and inside players on the bottom.
 - Avoid playing double stops unless it is specifically printed “non-divisi.” Divide double stops inside/outside unless otherwise instructed by your conductor, concertmaster, or section leader. Some three note chords can be divided on each stand. In some situations, it will be necessary to divide by person. When in doubt, ask your section leader.
 - If you are on the inside, you are responsible for page turns. Make sure you time the page turns so that you and your stand partner are comfortable.
- Woodwind players, please also note:
 - Making reeds in rehearsals (or performances) should be limited to emergencies only.
 - Refrain from cleaning your instrument or using cigarette paper while a neighbor has something important or difficult to play.
 - Use a swab instead of blowing water out of the keys. Cigarette paper can also be very noisy, so keep this to a minimum.

REHEARSAL ORDERS

As rehearsals and concerts are part of the educational environment and process, the AMFS is unable to guarantee that specific rehearsal times will be provided for each work. Any change in rehearsal order will be communicated to ensemble members by the orchestra manager in advance of the service. Students who are not assigned to all pieces must plan to be in attendance for the entire service. Students are engaged for the full rehearsal.

AMFS PERFORMANCE ETIQUETTE

- All rehearsal etiquette applies. Cell phone use on stage is prohibited.
- Students must close their black folder every time they leave the stage. This will help the librarian and stage crew during any stage changes.
- Students should be attentive during the bows in case the conductor asks them to stand alone or with their section.
- Students must leave their music in the black folder on their stand following the performance.

PERFORMANCES

Students must check in with the orchestra manager no later than 20 minutes before the performance start time. If musicians perform only on the second half of the performance, the orchestra manager may email a specific call time. The stage and pit will be available to musicians 30 minutes before each performance. If going out on stage

or into the pit to warm up or set up, students must be in concert dress. In the Wheeler Opera House, any water bottles or reed cups brought into the pit must have a lid.

With a few exceptions, concerts will be performed with intermission. Intermission is 20 minutes long for all performances except for ACA performances which will have a 15-minute intermission.

Cases, jackets, and bags are stored in the orchestra dressing rooms backstage in the Klein Music Tent, Harris Concert Hall, or Wheeler Opera House. In the Klein Music Tent, these are located to the right if entering the Klein Music Tent through the Paepcke Terrace back entrance. Cello and bass players may leave their cases along the sides of the Chunnel. Please note that these areas will not be locked.

The backstage areas of the Klein Music Tent and Harris Concert Hall are closed to the public. Only students who are performing are allowed backstage.

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

All students should bring the required clothing listed below. The AMFS does not provide attire for loan. If performing in the Klein Music Tent, the concertmaster will decide if it is too warm for members of the orchestra to wear jackets.

Orchestra Concert Dress (includes Convocation and 4th of July)

- White or cream long sleeve blouse
- White tuxedo shirt with black bow tie
- White or cream tuxedo jacket
- Black long skirt or black dress pants
- Black dress shoes, black socks (hose optional)

Opera Orchestra, ACE, and Specials Dress

- Black long sleeve dress shirt
- Black jacket (optional)
- Black long skirt or black dress pants
- Black dress shoes, black socks (hose optional)
- Black long gown (optional)

AMFS Music Libraries

The AMFS has two music libraries. The Tent Library is located backstage of the Klein Music Tent and issues music for Aspen Festival Orchestra and Aspen Chamber Symphony. The Bucksbaum Library issues music for all other performing ensembles as well as chamber music, solo music, scores, and perusal parts.

Please note that the copy machine in the AMFS music libraries are not available for student use.

LIBRARY HOURS

Bucksbaum Library

Monday: CLOSED

Tuesday*-Friday: 9 am-5 pm

*Closed at 4pm on Tuesdays for weekly staff meeting.

Saturday-Sunday: 9 am-1 pm

Klein Music Tent Library

Monday: CLOSED

Tuesday-Friday: 9 am-5 pm

*Closed at 3:30pm on Tuesdays for weekly staff meeting.

Saturday-Sunday: 9 am-1 pm

CHECKING OUT ORCHESTRA PARTS

Before going to the appropriate library to pick-up music, students should know:

1. Which orchestra they are in
2. What their part assignment is
3. What piece(s) they are playing, and
4. When the first rehearsal is

To check out music, students must sign for it with the understanding that it is a borrowed part and should be taken care of appropriately. WBPH and outside string players are issued original parts. Inside string players have the option of sharing music with their stand partner or requesting a practice copy from their librarian.

AT REHEARSAL

Students should pick up their music before the first rehearsal and must remember to bring it to rehearsal. In general, it is expected that students will pick up their parts one week before the first rehearsal. Repeat failure to pick up parts one week before the first rehearsal may result in a disciplinary meeting with the Vice President and Dean of Students.

Students must remember to bring their parts to rehearsals and performances. If music is not picked up in advance, it will be on the stand 30 minutes before the first rehearsal. The black folders used for all ensembles must not be taken from rehearsals or concerts.

Parts may also be left after rehearsal, but please leave them in a closed folder on the stand.

AT CONCERTS

Please leave all music and folders on the stand after the performance. Any music not picked up by the librarian immediately after the concert is subject to a fine of \$1 per part, per day. Replacement costs for parts not turned in range from \$25-\$75 or more.

INDIVIDUAL PART REQUESTS

If a student would like to look at an orchestral part for an audition, or just for fun, they should contact the Circulation/Chamber Music Librarian. To request a part, students must send an email (requests of up to three parts at a time are permitted) and allow at least three days for the parts to be prepared. Copying of music is not allowed due to copyright policies.

CHECKING OUT CHAMBER MUSIC

The online chamber music catalog can be found at 18523.rmwebopac.com

Please visit the Bucksbaum Campus Library to request and check out parts.

- Students must present their AMFS Student ID to borrow items.
- No more than three items on loan at a time.
- All student library loans are for two weeks.
- Items may be renewed if there is no “hold request” for the item.
- A student borrowing ensemble chamber music will be held responsible for all parts and folders.
- A student checking out ensemble music must take all parts at the time of check-out. Parts cannot be left at the library for another group member.
- Students who have fines or overdue items may not check out additional items.

CHAMBER MUSIC HOLD REQUESTS

Students may place a hold on a checked-out item and will be contacted when the item is returned. One held item is permitted at any given time. The student will then have 24 hours to pick up the request before the item is returned to circulation. Hold request items are not renewable.

CHAMBER MUSIC RETURNS AND OVERDUE ITEMS

An overdue fine of \$0.25 per day per item will be charged for all late returns. Items must be returned during hours of operation. Students who leave materials by the door will be fined \$2.00 in addition to any overdue fines.

- Items will not be checked-in unless all parts are in the folder.
- In the event of an incomplete return, the borrower will be charged for a complete set of new parts, plus \$15.00 to cover processing costs.

Library materials will not be available for check-out after the last Wednesday of the season.