



REVIVE AND REVITALIZE YOUR ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

Dr. Michael Dalton Board President, Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival Association

Rebooting and Reviving After a Year of Chaos

For many years, high school music programs throughout the state, especially orchestra programs, have fallen victim to budget cuts. Recent COVID-19 restrictions and closures have made this situation worse. Over the past year, some students have abandoned their instrument and/or may not have re-enrolled in orchestra class for another year.

The Festival board's activities are changing this sad state of affairs. In response to this lack of support for high school orchestra programs, the bedlam of the past year, and students not returning to their orchestra class, the Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival provides a set of unique opportunities to help revitalize high school orchestras. One of the primary purposes of the Festival's events is to bring students together to play music without putting any kind of financial barriers or obstacles in their way. Schools participate completely free of charge.

Each year three (3) events are presented: 1) a four-day April Festival for high school orchestras, 2) a Chamber Music Concert Series where high school students and professional musicians play side-by-side, and 3) a Composers' Symposium for high school students.

"I believe that this Festival was a really amazing opportunity and experience – it brought us together as an orchestra, it inspired me to practice more and increase my skills and the whole time myself and others were having fun!!! Thank you for such a wonderful Festival!!!"

- Sophie, student violinist

The future of symphonic music rests in the hands of our young generation. We can only secure its future by finding creative and engaging ways to enable young people to fall in love with symphonic music and to form friendships that will endure for a lifetime.

Through these three activities, the Festival board has established and is building a high school orchestra community based in Newport, centered on young musicians, artistic exploration and collaborative performance that lead to recognition of the power of music throughout one's life. While there are regional and state orchestra competitions, the Festival's non-competitive activities for high school orchestras, small ensembles, and emerging high school composers is unique. The annual April Festival is a unique, 4-day for six high school orchestras. Professional conductors are the instructors. Schools with a high percentage of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch are given priority admission.

The Chamber Music Concert Series features high school quartets and professional quartets playing side-by-side. It provides an opportunity for talented individuals and small ensembles to perform in front of a live audience – outside their home town.

The Composers' Symposium is produced in collaboration with the Oregon Music Educators Association (OMEA) and with faculty in the music department at Oregon State University (OSU). The Symposium is a unique opportunity for high school students to submit an original composition (i.e., score), receive instruction from professional composers, and have it performed. Dr. Dana Reason, founder and director of popular music studies at Oregon State University is the Symposium's clinician. She says,

"In this challenging time, coming together with the students from the Composers' Symposium to exchange musical ideas, stylistic practices, and original compositions has been incredibly rewarding and inspiring. My hope is that more young people in the state of Oregon have the opportunity to not only create but to share with and learn from their peers, communities, and audiences."

4-Day April Orchestra Festival

The Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival is an annual four-day event in April for six (6) high school orchestras. Schools with a high percentage of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch are given priority admission. They join together for the 4-day Festival to learn in small innovative group workshops, play music together, bond with peers in their own and other orchestras, and perform as their school orchestra and also together as the Festival Orchestra for a free public concert as part of the Festival's finale. The Festival also includes a performance by a university orchestra or small ensemble. Professional music directors and conductors are the instructors. One of the primary purposes of the Festival is to bring students together to play music without putting any kind of financial barriers or obstacles in their way. Schools participate completely free of charge.

The 4-day April Festival begins on Thursday evening when the schools arrive for a pizza dinner and then assemble to create the Festival orchestra and rehearse the two pieces they will perform as part of the public concert as the Festival's finale.

Friday, the students break into the various workshops and clinics which last approximately 90 minutes. Workshops continue in the afternoon with three of the high school orchestras performing Friday evening along with a university orchestra.

Saturday, there are additional workshops and the second rehearsal of the combined Festival orchestra. Saturday evening

three high school orchestras perform and the combined Festival orchestra performs as the Festival's finale. All Festival events and concerts are free and open to the public with a donation requested at the door.

Sunday morning, the students receive free admission to the Oregon Coast Aquarium. In exchange for the free student admission, small ensembles from the high school orchestras perform short programs throughout the Aquarium grounds.

As part of evaluation of the Festival, students complete an online survey. The evaluation survey asks the students to rate a number of aspects of the Festival (e.g., overall rating of the Festival, food, facilities, motels, listening to other orchestras, working with clinicians, etc.) and rate each of these aspects on a 1 (low) – 4 (high) scale. Highlights of the student responses are:

1 (low)	2	3	4 (high)
0%	2%	25%	73%

Attending the Festival has encouraged me to continue to play my instrument and be a member of my school's orchestra:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	6%	43%	51%

Chamber Music Concerts

The Chamber Music concerts focus on talented individuals and string quartets. The Chamber Music Concerts are a series of four events featuring high school string quartets performing alongside professional quartets. This Concert Series provides an opportunity for talented high school students to perform in front of a live audience in a real concert hall – outside their home town. This experience is a marvelous learning and growth opportunity, a wonderful addition to the student's resume, brings recognition to the students in their local community, and strengthens and sustains these important high school string orchestra programs.

Prior to the performances by the high school students and the professional musicians, the professional musicians conduct a 3-hour "master class" for the high school quartets. Motel rooms and meals are provided for the students, their teacher, and the professional musicians. The Festival also makes a small donation to the high school's music "booster club" and the professional musicians are given a small stipend.

While there are many excellent classical music performances available along the Oregon central coast, attendance at these concerts requires the purchase of a ticket. This limits access to cultural experiences for many. The Festival provides the free

Chamber Music Concert Series to improve coastal communities' access to cultural experiences.

Composers' Symposium for High School Students

The Composers' Symposium, initiated in September 2019, is one of the activities of the Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival. The Festival's Composers' Symposium is conducted in collaboration with the Oregon Music Educators Association (OMEA). The Symposium is a unique opportunity for high school students to submit an original composition, refine his/her work, receive instruction from professional composers and have the work performed.

"I wanted to thank you for providing this opportunity for us young composers to showcase our work; this symposium has been a great way for me to see other people's music and to hear their stories. This was a valuable experience that I will never forget. Thank you so much!"

- Ryan, student composer

The aim of the Composers' Symposium is to provide education opportunities for talented music students by serving as a resource for networking, professional development, and collaboration. There is no similar opportunity in Oregon and only a handful of opportunities for instruction in music composition in Oregon high schools. Composition submissions emphasize themes associated with Newport and the Oregon coastal environment.

Small group and individual instructional seminars are held once a month. Each session students examine areas of process, craft, orchestration (midi/acoustic) and analysis to augment their understanding and continue their development as an emerging composer. More specifically, the goals of the sessions are to:

- Introduce students to a variety of compositional styles, and frameworks to advance their stylistic approach and skill level.
- Develop analytical skills to improve ability to understand and reconstruct building blocks of particular genres and styles.
- Apply and practice music creation skills in order to expand and develop original music. This includes harmony, melody, rhythmic balance, form and function in music (from a range of styles as applicable to each student).

Clinicians and Endorsements

The Festival's music director and lead clinician is Adam Flatt. He is Music Director of the Newport Symphony Orchestra, the Colorado Ballet, and the University of Alabama – Tuscaloosa Symphony. Mr. Flatt also has a notable career in making music with some of our country's most talented young musicians. He has served on the summer faculties of both the Rocky Ridge

Music Center and the Curtis Institute of Music's Summerfest, and recently conducted the springtime residency of the Landes-Jugend-Sinfonie-Orchester Saar.

"What a gift for young orchestra musicians to have some days away from home to devote entirely to music and to each other," Maestro Flatt says. "The high school programs receive a great boost from this intense work, making strides in both music-making and in team-building, and bring home treasured memories of a musical weekend at the coast."

Recent guest clinicians include: Dr. Dan Allcott, Tennessee Technical University and Music Director of both the Oak Ridge Symphony and the Bryan Symphony orchestras in Tennessee; Dr. Blake Richardson, University of Alabama also serving as Music Director of the Alabama Symphony Youth Orchestra; Helen Cha-Pyo, Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts and is the Artistic Director of the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts and the Principal Conductor of the New Jersey Youth Symphony. Guest clinicians for the April 2022 Festival are: Dr. Mark Laycock, Professor of Music at Wichita State University, where he holds the Ann Walenta Faculty of Distinction Endowed Professorship, and Cynthia Woods, New England Conservatory of Music and Music Director of the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra.

The Festival is endorsed by the Oregon Symphony, Eugene Symphony, Rogue Valley Symphony, East Oregon Symphony, OSU-Corvallis Symphony, Central Oregon Symphony, and Newport Symphony.

Reboot and Revitalize Your Orchestra Program

The Festival is addressing a need (supporting and enriching in-school high school orchestra programs) unmet and not addressed by any other organization in Oregon. One of the primary purposes of the Festival is to bring students together to play music without putting any kind of financial barriers or obstacles in their way. Making it completely free of charge to the schools and students is one way to remove the barrier of cost. The opportunities that the Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival affords its participants – the chance to perform for and meet with like-minded and passionate young musicians – are invaluable. In many cases, these kinds of festivals loom as highlights in the musical and social development of people throughout their lives. The Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival encourages them to take it beyond high school to college and into their adulthood. In many cases, these kinds of festivals loom as highlights in the musical and social development of people throughout their lives. Classical music programs must be actively cultivating the next generation of symphonic musicians and audiences otherwise we cannot expect to have symphonies in the future. The incredible experience provided by the Festival activities in Newport will no doubt shape the lives of countless participants and help cultivate the next generation of orchestral musicians.

Join us and let us help you reboot your program and reinvigorate your students interests in classical music, in performing and in composing.

