



**2011-12**

**STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK**

**(305) 667-4069**

5275 Sunset Drive  
Miami, FL 33143

**[www.gmys.org](http://www.gmys.org)**

Fax (305) 402-0272

[info@gmys.org](mailto:info@gmys.org)

## i. COMMUNICATION AND GMYS

Communication between GMYS and students and parents is often quite challenging, mainly because we typically interact only once a week. Here are a few tips on how to be updated on all GMYS activities, events, schedule changes, etc:

**\*Check the webpage, [www.gmys.org](http://www.gmys.org) regularly\***

(forms, schedules, news, board meetings, parent meetings are all posted here)

**\*Make sure GMYS has your current email address\***

(GMYS regularly sends out e-newsletters to parents and students)

**\*Visit the information table on Sundays during rehearsal\***

(Forms, schedules, and other information is available)

*More questions:*

**\*Send us an email, at [info@gmys.org](mailto:info@gmys.org)\***

*(We'll forward your email to the person best suited to help you out)*

*or the old fashioned way:*

**\*Give us a call, 305-667-4069\***

*(sometimes this is the only option when inquiring about hurricane cancellations. We will record any cancellations on the voicemail machine unless the line is down)*

## ii. WHO'S WHO AT GMYS

Artistic and Administrative Staff

*Huifang Chen, Music Director      Melissa Lesniak, PhD, Executive Director*

*Lakeisha Frith, Executive Assistant*

*Vivian Ventura, String Orchestra Conductor*

*Besnik Hashani, Young Mozarts Conductor*

*Eugene Timmons, Concert Band/Jazz Band Conductor*

*Oliver Diez, Young Sousas Conductor*

*Laura Wilcox, Chamber Music Coordinator*

*Carol Nicholson, Symphony Librarian*

Executive Board Officers, Committee Members, Volunteers

*Laurie Hill, President*

*Walter Busse, Vice President*

*Dinora Casanova, Treasurer*

*Jennifer Mendoza, Recording Secretary*

*Wallace Kerrick, Past President*

# I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Greater Miami Youth Symphony (GMYS) is an independent, not for profit organization that was founded in 1958 to foster a love of music in young people and enrich the cultural foundation of the community. Each week, GMYS unites talented young musicians from all aspects of the diverse culture of South Florida, representing dozens of public, private and parochial schools. These musicians accept the challenge of striving for musical excellence and experience the pride of achieving that goal through teamwork, dedication and individual practice. GMYS members are given the opportunity to work with professional conductors, composers, guest artists, sectional coaches and chamber music coaches. In return, GMYS expects a professional commitment and attitude from each individual member.

GMYS can provide this quality experience at a nominal fee because of extensive volunteer support. Therefore, GMYS asks every parent member to do three things:

1) **Encourage** your child:

- \* Diligent practice and maximization of private lessons
- \* Regular and prompt attendance at rehearsal and concerts
- \* Participation in your child's respective school music programs

2) **Contribute:**

- \* Your time at rehearsals, concerts or on committee work
- \* Your special skills or talents, which could benefit GMYS

3) **Attend:**

- \* GMYS parent meetings
- \* GMYS rehearsals
- \* GMYS concerts (the entire concert; not just your child's performance)

A Music Director, Executive Director, professional music staff, Board of Trustees, and volunteer Executive Committee administer the activities of GMYS. However, the additional support and volunteer efforts of each parent are crucial to making our program a success.

# II. THE ORCHESTRAS

Four orchestras, a concert/jazz band, and a preparatory division exist within the framework of GMYS. These orchestras provide the greatest opportunity for each student to play, learn and be challenged by other students closely matched to their individual abilities. Each orchestra has a designated conductor who is responsible for repertoire, rehearsing, and conducting and overall leadership.

1) **Preparatory Division** –this program, funded by the Children's Trust provides initial instrument training for children. There is no tuition for this program. Children are required to attend all rehearsals, follow the guidelines of GMYS and will perform at GMYS Gala Concerts.

2) **Young Mozarts Ensemble**- A training program for string players with some instrumental experience, but little large ensemble experience.

2) **String Orchestra** - An orchestra for young beginning string players who have basic music reading skills and the ability to follow a conductor.

- 3) **Concert Orchestra** - An orchestra for intermediate level players who have had some large ensemble experience.
- 4) **Symphony Orchestra** - The flagship ensemble of GMYS. A full orchestra which performs professional level music with players of advanced ability
- 5) **Concert Band/Jazz Band**- Wind ensemble for intermediate students.
- 6) **Chamber Ensembles**- Through an audition process, the artistic staff will form small chamber ensembles at the String, Concert, and Symphony level. These ensembles will work in small groups with GMYS music staff and other guest artists and will have additional performing opportunities in the community.
- 7) **Young Sousas**- A training program for wind players with some instrumental experience, but little large ensemble experience.

### III. MEMBERSHIP

Students wishing to participate in GMYS must be between the ages of 5 and 18 and play an orchestral instrument. Every student, except students in Prep Division, must complete an admission audition to be accepted. Once accepted, the student will be placed in one of the orchestras. This placement is based on playing ability and musical maturity, as determined by the music staff.

Admission auditions are normally held in August and periodically during the course of the season. All candidates for admission are expected to play a piece of their choice demonstrating their highest level of musical achievement, scales and a short sight reading example during the audition. Interested students can view the audition requirements on line at [www.gmys.org](http://www.gmys.org) or should contact the GMYS office regarding specific requirements for the instrument and level. All orchestra members are expected to maintain the current standards of the organization, including a positive attitude, professional commitment and good attendance. Students not maintaining these standards will be placed on probation and may be asked to leave GMYS.

### IV. TUITION AND FEES

#### Tuition for the Young Mozarts, Strings, Concert Orchestra/Band, and Symphony

- \* The annual non-refundable tuition is \$350. 10% discount prior to August 15.
- \* For families having more than one child participating in GMYS, the tuition for each additional child is reduced by \$90.
- \* The tuition entitles each student to participate in all GMYS activities, including rehearsals, sectionals and chamber music ensembles (if applicable).
- \* Refund Policy- 100%- first week, 75%- 2<sup>nd</sup> week, 50%- 3<sup>rd</sup> week, 25%- 4<sup>th</sup> week, 5<sup>th</sup> week- 0%.

#### Tickets

- \* Individual concert ticket prices may vary between \$10.00-\$20.00.
- \* Children up to 12 years old receive a special discount rate.
- \* Senior Citizens receive a discounted rate.
- \* Tickets may be purchased through the GMYS office. Additionally, tickets may be made available during rehearsal and one hour prior to each performance at the theater door.

\* Since the sale of tickets accounts for a substantial portion of the GMYS operational budget, all members are strongly encouraged to sell extra tickets.

## V. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND FUNDRAISING

Financial aid to assist with tuition is available to those families who qualify. To apply for assistance, a Financial Aid/Scholarship Application Form must be completed with registration. Those families who demonstrate financial need will also be given the option to pay the tuition in separate installments. Mandatory student commitment and parent involvement is required for each scholarship recipient.

Each year GMYS publishes an Annual Concert Program. These playbills are distributed at every GMYS event throughout the year. GMYS members are encouraged to sell advertising space in the program to local businesses and individuals. GMYS families may also participate by purchasing non-business advertisement in the Annual Concert Program.

One of the primary purposes of the fundraising committee is to raise funds for student travel, scholarships, and instructor fees. Parents and students are responsible for staying apprised of fundraising opportunities by reading **Fundraising E-Newsletters** (please make sure GMYS has your most current email), **attending scheduled fundraising meetings** on Sundays, regularly checking the **Fundraising Board** posted at Sunday rehearsals, and checking the **Fundraising Link** on the GMYS website. Via the newsletter, board, website link, and meetings, you and your child will be able to participate in fundraising activities and earn funds for your student's travel account.

## VI. REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE

Attendance to **ALL** rehearsals and concerts is vital to the success of the GMYS program. The true musical and educational experience of the organization is dependent upon having every child at every rehearsal. Students should arrive **15 minutes prior** to the scheduled start of each rehearsal to tune and warm up. Rehearsals will end on schedule unless otherwise notified. Please report all absences in advance to the GMYS office 305-667-4069 or by email at info@gmys.org. Unexcused absences are those absences not reported to GMYS before rehearsal, excluding emergencies and extenuating circumstances. **Students with more than two unexcused absences in one semester will not be eligible to perform in the December or May concerts, will not be able to apply for summer camp employment, will be ineligible for current and future scholarships from GMYS programs, and will not receive community service hours from GMYS.**

. Students with an unexcused absence at a concert will be dismissed from GMYS. Students can be placed on probation for the following reasons. The orchestra director will establish terms of probation.

- Students that were ineligible to perform in a concert because of attendance.
- Tardiness or absence from dress rehearsal
- Excessive tardies (more than three tardies) to weekly rehearsals

Any student placed on probation can be declared ineligible to advance to the next orchestra, i.e. a Concert student with poor attendance might not be eligible to audition for Symphony.

Seating can be affected by any unexcused absence or tardy and can also be affected by probation.

Students are responsible for signing in at rehearsals with the designated personnel.

Students with perfect attendance will be eligible for various gifts or honors.

Rehearsal cancellations by GMYS due to severe weather conditions will be posted on the website and recorded on the office telephone.

## **VII. DRESS REHEARSALS AND CONCERTS**

Dress rehearsals for concerts will take place the day of each concert prior to the performance. These rehearsals are the only opportunity for each orchestra to adapt to the acoustics and logistics of the stage. It also gives vital opportunity for each player to experience the venue in which the concert will take place. Please note that:

- \* Dress Rehearsals and Concerts are **mandatory**.
- \* Anyone who misses Dress Rehearsal **will not be allowed to perform in the concert**.
- \* Any member who has an un-excused absence from a Dress Rehearsal or Concert **will be dismissed from GMYS for the remainder of the year**.

## **VIII. ORCHESTRA SEATING**

GMYS recognizes the reality and importance of competition as a component for growth. To this end, various positions of leadership are available for orchestra members of exceptional talent. All judgments pertaining to seating will be made as objectively as possible.

As with most auditions, judgments for seating express an opinion based on musical ability and musical maturity. Age and previous status do not necessarily ensure the results of an audition. Music is a skill: industry and preparedness are the best tools for gaining the best results. GMYS applauds student members, parents and families who encourage achievement and foster belief in mutual respect and understanding. Please note that:

- \* Seating auditions are mandatory
- \* Failure to attend a seating audition will automatically disqualify the absent orchestra member for eligibility as Principal.
- \* Failure to attend a seating audition will automatically disqualify the orchestra member's current seating.
- \* Designated Principal and Assistant Principal players are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of conduct and performance during rehearsals and concerts.
- \* Dress Rehearsal and Concert seating will be based on the results of the seating auditions.

## **IX. CONCERT DRESS**

Concert dress is strictly enforced. Failure to comply may result in a performer's loss of privilege, at the Conductor's discretion.

### **Young Mozart, Sousas, String and Concert Orchestra/Band**

Girls: Long sleeved white blouse, long black skirt, black shoes.

Boys: Long sleeved white shirt and tie, black trousers, black shoes and socks (NO tennis shoes, jeans or white socks!)

### **Symphony Orchestra**

Girls: Long black dress, skirt, or pants, long black sleeves, black shoes.

Boys: Black tuxedo, black shoes and socks, white shirt, black bow tie.

## **X. COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS**

Members may earn community service hours by participation in GMYS. Members are responsible for providing the required school form to the GMYS staff for verification signature. Hours will be awarded for rehearsal and performance time, and service at beginning instrument classes. The GMYS staff reserves the right to deny community service hours for tardiness, improper conduct or lack of preparedness for rehearsal or concerts. Service hours are only available at the end of each semester. Community service hours will not be given to students that are on probation for attendance based on the conditions set forth in the above attendance policy. **Community Service Hours will only be given out at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Service hours are not given to students violating the attendance policy.**

## **XI. GENERAL CONDUCT**

In an effort to provide an environment for musical excellence and one that will enhance the student's experience, GMYS requires certain commitments from the students including regular attendance, reasonable work and a high level of discipline including respect for other members. If at any time the music staff feels that a student is not meeting the required commitments, the parent or guardian will be notified and the student will be placed on Probation. The student may be subject to dismissal from GMYS if the necessary steps are not taken to correct the situation.

## **XII. ROBERT SMIDDY SCHOLARSHIP**

The Robert J. Smiddy Scholarship was established in 2004 in memory of a dedicated and talented young musician and member of the Greater Miami Youth Symphony. This scholarship will be awarded to a deserving graduating senior that meets the criteria set forth by the Scholarship Committee and Robert's family.

To qualify for consideration of this scholarship, a musician must:

- \* be a member in good standing of the GMYS 2011-12 Season
- \* be a current senior in high school with plans to attend an accredited college.
- \* submit a letter of request, postmarked by **April 1, 2012** to: GMYS, attn: Robert J. Smiddy Scholarship, 5275 Sunset Drive, Miami, FL 33143

\* attend a brief interview on Sunday, **April, 22, 2012** – you will be notified of the time of your interview.

The letter of request must include name, address, telephone number and email address of the applicant. The letter should also incorporate the applicant's music resume including the instrument(s) played, years of study, number of years with GMYS, future plans to continue with music, music competitions, honors and summer music camps attended. The college choice and chosen major and minor should be indicated.