



Flower Mound Preparatory and Philharmonic Orchestras

Musician Handbook

September 2017 - May 2018

Estéban Rojas and Mark Scott, conductors

Welcome

Welcome to Flower Mound Community Orchestras' twenty-third season! Mr. Rojas, Mr. Scott, and the Board of Directors are excited that you are here. Please read this handbook at your first rehearsal, and refer to it throughout the season if you have questions. Its policies preserve the quality of your experience with FMCO, and maintain the standards for which we are known.

Attendance

Attendance at rehearsals and concerts is vital to your ensemble's success. Arrive early enough to be seated with your music stand, instrument, and music when rehearsal begins. Assume you will encounter delays when traveling to Flower Mound. "To be early is to be on time."

Members may miss two rehearsals per cycle before the conductor considers your removal from the next concert. You are considered tardy if you arrive after the tuning process has finished. Members may be tardy four times per cycle before the conductor considers your removal from the next concert. There are no excused absences.

To report an absence, email your conductor and copy the message to your orchestra's personnel manager. Call or text your conductor only if an emergency causes you to miss rehearsal. Clear and prompt communication is the best way to handle absence notification, and our flexibility is directly related to the amount of notice we receive.

Auditions

Prospective members audition for one of FMCO's three orchestras in August and January of each year. Current Philharmonic and Preparatory Orchestra members need only audition if you wish to advance to a higher ensemble.

At auditions, prospective members will play for a panel of FMCO conductors, Symphony musicians, and board members in a low-stress environment, designed to make you feel comfortable. At auditions, you will play:

Two contrasting pieces of your choice, each two minutes or less, that demonstrate your best playing

Two major scales of the panel's choice

Eight measures of sight-reading, provided at the audition

You will be given thirty seconds to silently study the sight-reading music before you play. Your audition will last five minutes. Auditions take place in the Trietsch UMC choir room each August and January, and at other times by appointment only. Read the handbook pages on "audition tips" and "practice tips" for help. Visit fmco.org to sign up.

Conductors may hold music-specific auditions or chair tests, such as auditions for prominent solos, throughout the season at their discretion.

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Behavior

To ensure productive rehearsals with clear expectations, Philharmonic and Preparatory Orchestra members abide by these guidelines:

1. Arrive early enough to be seated with your instrument and music when rehearsal begins.
2. Silence and put away phones and tablets during rehearsals and concerts.
3. Bring all of your music in its folder to rehearsals and concerts.
4. Bring a pencil with an eraser to rehearsal.
5. Practice your parts at home to show improvement in rehearsal.
6. Do not wear a hat in rehearsal or concerts.
7. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum during rehearsal. You may drink bottled water any time.
8. Do not talk during ensemble tuning, or when the conductor addresses other sections or individuals.
9. Do not play after the orchestra has stopped in rehearsal.
10. Take your music after each concert. You may save or destroy it.
11. If you do not drive yourself, have transportation ready when rehearsals and concerts end.
12. Ask your personnel manager for additional copies of parts.
13. Meet with your conductor at a time other than immediately before or immediately after rehearsal.
14. Speak to your conductor about business in your orchestra, including tuition payment.
15. Respect Trietsch's facilities and equipment, and that of other members, as if it belonged to you.
16. Bring a positive attitude. Respect, encourage, and support each other.

Calendar

First rehearsal	Tuesday, August 29, 2017	7:00pm	Trietsch UMC
Fall Concert	Tuesday, October 10	7:30pm	Trietsch Sanctuary
Off	Tuesday, November 21		Thanksgiving break
Winter Concert	Tuesday, December 5	7:30pm	Trietsch Sanctuary
Off	Tuesday, December 12; 19; 26		Winter break
Off	Tuesday, January 2, 2018		Winter break
Auditions	Sunday, January 7	1:00pm	Trietsch choir room
Rehearsals resume	Tuesday, January 9	7:00pm	Trietsch UMC
Spring Concert	Tuesday, March 6	7:30pm	Trietsch Sanctuary
Off	Tuesday, March 13		Spring break
Chamber Showcase	Saturday, April 28	2:30pm	Flower Mound Public Library
Summer Concert	Tuesday, May 8	7:30pm	Trietsch Sanctuary
Children's Concert*	Saturday, May 12	7:00pm	Trietsch
Off	Tuesday, May 15-August 21		Summer break

*Philharmonic will perform a piece on the Flower Mound Symphony's annual Children's Interactive Concert. The conductor will choose a piece from the Summer Concert for this performance.

Communication

Outside of rehearsal, conductors and personnel managers will communicate with members through email. Facebook and fmco.org may be updated with information about our activities, but emails from the conductor or personnel manager and this document are your most reliable sources of information.

You will receive blind-copy messages at the email address you provide. Adjust your email's spam filter to allow these messages. They will contain rehearsal time changes, room changes, cancellations, sectional schedules, call times, or anything relevant to an efficient and enjoyable FMCO experience.

Concerts

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Concerts will follow this schedule:

Philharmonic	Sanctuary	6:45	Call time; set chairs and stands; warm up on your own
		7:00	Sound check begins
		7:10	Sound check ends
		7:30	Concert begins; listen to Preparatory Orchestra
		7:50	Philharmonic performs
		8:30	Concert ends
Preparatory Orchestra	Sanctuary	7:00	Call time; warm up on your own
		7:15	Sound check begins
		7:25	Sound check ends; house doors open for audience
		7:30	Preparatory Orchestra performs
		7:50	Concert continues; listen to Philharmonic
		8:30	Concert ends

A sound check gives orchestras an opportunity to play in the sanctuary before the audience enters. It is shorter than a normal rehearsal, but essential to play before the upcoming concert. Arrive early enough to be seated with your instrument and music when sound check begins.

To maintain a professional appearance and out of respect for the music, we enforce a dress code at concerts. Ladies wear black slacks, a skirt, or a dress that falls below the knees, and black dress shoes. Avoid low-cut blouses, sleeveless and strapless garments, excessive jewelry, and perfume. When in doubt, choose the more formal outfit or ask your conductor.

Gentlemen wear a black dress shirt, black slacks, black socks, and black shoes. For ladies and gentlemen, white tops or shirts are acceptable, but consider purchasing a black one as we wear it at every concert. For everyone, attire should appear more formal than casual. When in doubt, choose the more formal outfit or ask your conductor.

Because our orchestras share concerts, we insist you stay and listen to the orchestra playing before or after yours. Your attendance supports FMCO's educational goals and maintains large audiences for both orchestras. We encourage, but do not require you to attend Flower Mound Symphony concerts. Their schedule is available on our website.

Contact

Philharmonic	Mark Scott	philharmonic@fmco.org	817.823.1973
Preparatory Orchestra	Estéban Rojas	preparatory@fmco.org	617.971.7210
Trietsch Memorial UMC	Church Office	info@tmumc.org	972.539.8547

Folders

Musicians in Philharmonic and Preparatory Orchestras will receive a black folder for storing music, pencils, and items essential for a successful rehearsal. At the first rehearsal, conductors will issue one numbered folder per musician, and collect that same folder at the end of the season. Folders are the property of FMCO, and musicians will be charged \$25 for folders lost or damaged beyond repair.

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Joining

All prospective members must audition to join an FMCO ensemble. Conductors encourage you to bring friends or relatives who wish to play, but they must audition and join before the third rehearsal of each cycle. This helps us schedule auditions, gives us time to prepare parts, and maintains instrumental balance in each orchestra. Because we limit member absences to two per cycle, prospective members arriving after the third rehearsal may not join until the beginning of the next cycle.

Locations

All rehearsals and full orchestra concerts will take place at Trietsch Memorial United Methodist Church:

6101 Morriss Road
Flower Mound, TX 75028

We perform in Trietsch's Sanctuary and Ministry Center. These rooms are in the main church building, whose main entrances and largest parking lot face Morriss Road.

The Chamber Showcase will take place at the Flower Mound Public Library:

3030 Broadmoor Lane
Flower Mound, TX 75022

This concert will feature chamber ensembles within the Philharmonic and Preparatory Orchestras. Conductors will form ensembles of members with comparable ability, and provide repertoire and coaching throughout the season. Pre-formed ensembles are welcome and will receive the same coaching. As playing chamber music fulfills a key component of FMCO's educational mission, many Philharmonic and Preparatory Orchestra members will participate.

Online

Website	fmco.org	
Facebook	facebook.com/FMCO.Edu	P&P Orchestras' page
YouTube	youtube.com/fmppmedia	P&P Orchestras' channel

Philosophy

What makes playing in an ensemble fun? At FMCO, we believe that awareness in rehearsal and individual practice at home lead to fulfilling music-making. We apply this across all our ensembles, each step reinforcing the other.

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Practice Tips

When do we learn how to practice? Is it a skill, like playing, that can be improved?
 Set achievable goals, make enough time to accomplish them, find a quiet place, and:

Decide what material you intend to practice, ensuring that the challenge equals your skills.
 Start with fundamentals: ear training, flexibility, range, long tones, scales, arpeggios, and articulation.
 Continue with etudes, solos, and sight reading.
 End with something you can already play well.

At each step:

Play through the material and assess.
 Isolate passages, especially troublesome ones.
 Slow it down or speed it up to where it is easy, and at the top of your ability.
 Repeat the passage, moving the metronome one click at a time.
 Assess and make decisions as you go: breathe here, intensify this, this pitch could be better, etc.
 Focus on the best concept of the music as it sounds in your head.
 Decide before each repetition where you will focus: pitch, rhythm, intonation, etc.
 When you can no longer focus, take a break, or practice a different passage.

These tools will help:

Singing
 Mouthpiece/bow
 Piano
 Mental practice
 Metronome
 Recording device
 Tuner
 Pencil
 Mirror

Repeat only those habits that will support a musical performance. Eliminate all others.
 Focus on communication, not perfection.

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Rehearsals

Rehearsals will follow this schedule:

Preparatory Orchestra	Trietsch Ministry Center	6:45 7:00 8:30	Stage Mgr., Stage Crew, and Personnel Mgr. arrive Rehearsal begins Rehearsal ends
Philharmonic	Trietsch Sanctuary	6:45 7:00 8:30	Stage Mgr., Stage Crew, and Personnel Mgr. arrive Rehearsal begins Rehearsal ends

Adjustments to this schedule, including sectionals and breaks, will occur at your conductor's discretion.

Seating

This section applies to Philharmonic members only.

The Philharmonic uses rotational seating, meaning that the conductor will assign parts on a rotating basis so that musicians gain experience playing different parts. Through this process, members will learn the roles parts play in each section and instrument family, and hear the orchestra from a different perspective. We will physically change chairs for each piece assigned in this way. Your part assignment is not an indicator of your skill level. Every member will have a chance to play both principal (first) and section (2nd, 3rd, etc.) parts.

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Scholarships

Scholarships are available for members who demonstrate financial need. In exchange for lower tuition, members on scholarship will fill one of these positions:

Personnel Manager	One per orchestra	The personnel manager takes attendance, reminds members of outstanding tuition, makes announcements, collects and gives tuition to the conductor, and distributes extra parts. You are a channel between the orchestra and the conductor. You must be 21 or older to apply for this position.
Stage Manager	One per orchestra	The stage manager supervises the stage crew's setting up and removing of chairs and stands needed for the orchestra to rehearse and perform, according to seating charts drawn by the conductor. You must be physically fit and able to lift up to 20 pounds. You must be 18 or older to apply for this position.
Stage Crew	Two per orchestra	The stage crew sets up and removes chairs and stands needed for the orchestra to rehearse and perform, according to directions from the stage manager. You must be physically fit and able to lift up to 20 pounds. You must be 14 or older to apply for these positions.

Members holding these positions trade reduced tuition for increased responsibility. You must come to rehearsal early and will likely leave late. You may miss only one rehearsal per cycle. Excessive absences or failure to perform duties will result in the revocation of your scholarship, and forfeiture of your tuition discount.

Four scholarships are available in each orchestra, and any additional will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If fewer than four members in an orchestra require scholarship aid, members paying full-price tuition may fill these positions. Names of the personnel manager, stage manager, and stage crew will appear in concert programs. All positions have season-long terms.

To apply for a scholarship, ask your conductor for a scholarship form.

Structure

Flower Mound Community Orchestras was founded in 1994 to teach musicians the art of orchestral performance, promote music education, and grow awareness for orchestral music.

Its three ensembles accept musicians at any skill level. The Symphony Orchestra, FMCO's premier ensemble, contains professional and amateur adult musicians with 8 or more years' experience. Its other two ensembles supplement public, private, or home-school music programs, and provide adults with a musical outlet.

The Preparatory Orchestra seeks musicians with 2 or more years' experience, and adult beginners. This orchestra practices the fundamentals of large ensemble playing. The Philharmonic seeks musicians with 5 or more years' experience, and adults who wish to refresh past playing experience. This orchestra practices the discipline, musicianship, and technique needed to perform orchestral repertoire.

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Tuition

Flower Mound Philharmonic and Preparatory Orchestra members must pay tuition. It is \$350 per person, identical for both orchestras, and covers the “season” from September through May.

Members should pay before or after rehearsal with cash, or personal checks made to “Flower Mound Community Orchestras.” FMCO prefers one payment for the entire season (September-May). Members wishing to pay by semester (September-December and January-May) should make two equal payments in September and January. To maintain instrumental balance and ensemble stability, you must make two or fewer payments.

Need-based scholarships are available. If awarded, a member pays lower tuition in exchange for a position with the orchestra. These are described under “scholarships”. You must apply for consideration, even if you have received a scholarship before. Prior awards do not automatically renew. Contact your conductor for an application.

FMCO does not refund tuition. These funds are vital to FMCO’s success and demonstrate your commitment to the orchestra. Read our rehearsal and performance schedule and ensemble policies before investing your time and money.

Failure to pay tuition, or to make arrangements for payment by October 1 (Fall semester) or February 1 (Spring semester), will result in dismissal. If tuition prohibits your participation or circumstances prevent on-time payment, contact your conductor. Clear and prompt communication is the best way to handle tuition issues, and our flexibility is directly related to the amount of notice we receive.

Support

FMCO appreciates all kinds of support. Choose FMCO when you shop at Amazon.com, Tom Thumb, or Kroger, and we receive a percentage of your purchase as a donation. To learn more about this and other ways to support FMCO, visit our website and click “Support Us.”

Weather

FMCO ensembles will not rehearse when Lewisville ISD cancels school, has a delayed opening, or dismisses classes early due to inclement weather. Conductors will email notice of rehearsal cancellation on these days.

Agreement

Please follow the link in a recent email from your conductor. It leads to a Google form, where you or your parents will provide contact information and accept the policies in this handbook. You must complete this form before your second rehearsal. Welcome to the FMCO family!