

The Newport Symphony Orchestra Personnel Policy for Musicians

The Newport Symphony Orchestra (NSO) is a musical organization. Its musician personnel include Core Members and Substitute Players. Personnel for each concert will vary depending on availability of Core Members and programming requirements.

Core Members

Musicians are invited to be Core Members of the orchestra if selected by the Music Director in one of two ways to fill open positions:

- By audition
- After serving as a Substitute Player for at least one season.

After being designated as a Core Member, musicians must pass a probationary period of four concert series. During probation new core members are expected to abide by all performance standards. At the end of each probationary period, the Music Director meets with the musician and either removes or extends their probationary period as appropriate.

Subject to instrumentation needs, Core Members will be the first ones asked to play for each season or individual concerts. Only if a Core Member is unavailable for a particular concert will a Substitute Player be used.

Substitute Players

The Personnel Manager will maintain an NSO-internal and private list of qualified Substitute Players who have been approved by the Music Director and relevant Section Leader. The Personnel Manager will consult with Section Leaders on an ongoing basis about their preferred Substitute Players and will make all reasonable efforts to hire accordingly, subject to the approval of the Music Director. As the Personnel Manager reports to the Music Director, acting as his agent, the Personnel Manager may hire “off-list” or “out of order” when under time constraints or other appropriate circumstances without consulting Section Leaders through every step in the process in filling the orchestra.

Invitations to Substitute Players may come only from the Personnel Manager, acting as agent for the organization. Section Leaders can not contract Substitute Players.

Section Leaders shall be kept informed about who is on the Substitute Player list for their section.

Musicians Interested in Playing with the NSO

Interested musicians should contact the Personnel Manager and submit a resume to the Personnel Manager. The Personnel Manager will consult with the Music Director and Section Leaders as needed in regard to contracting Core Members or Substitute Players. The resumes will be kept on file until an opening occurs and auditions are held. Musicians who wish to become a Core Member or Substitute Player may be required to audition.

Auditions

Auditions will be held at the discretion of the Music Director whenever needed.

When a Section Leader position becomes vacant, Core Members of the orchestra will be notified as well as Substitute Players and interested musicians outside of the orchestra. The selection process will be determined by the Music Director, and except in extraordinary circumstances will be by audition.

Attendance

Core Members are the heart of the Orchestra and consistency of attendance is an artistic fundamental. As important elements in the Orchestra's musical continuity and growth, Core Members are expected to be available for all concert series during the season.

In the event of a conflict, the Core Member must communicate his or her unavailability to the Personnel Manager in writing as soon as possible after receiving notification of the concert schedule. In the event a Core Member is not available for more than two regular season concerts in which they are called to play within a season, their status as Core Member will come under review by the Music Director, with advice from Section Leader and Orchestra Committee (including the Personnel Manager, who is an ex-officio member of the Orchestra Committee).

Unless formally excused, a musician contracted for a specific series shall not miss a rehearsal or a performance in that series except for emergency reasons. In the event such an emergency does occur and the musician must miss a service, the musician shall (unless physically unable):

- Give as much notice as possible to the Personnel Manager
- Suggest a qualified Substitute Player(s) to the Personnel Manager if requested to do so

All contracted musicians are expected to arrive in time to adequately warm up prior to rehearsals and performances. Tardiness may result in docked pay commensurate with the degree of tardiness. Responsibility for determination lies with the Personnel Manager in consultation with the Music Director, who has the final approval for any actions taken. If such action is deemed necessary, the musician will be informed.

Performance Standards and Termination

A Core Member may be considered for termination for either:

- The quality of his or her musical performance. Concerns over musical performance are the primary responsibility of the Music Director, and originate with the Music Director in consultation with the appropriate Section Leader.
- Missing a service without notification, being repeatedly late to rehearsal, failing to meet the attendance requirements or disruptive or unprofessional conduct. The initial responsibility in this case would lie with the Personnel Manager, in consultation with the Music Director, who has final approval of any actions taken.

When the Music Director determines that a Core Member's performance or behavior does not reach the standard of the Orchestra, he/she will notify that person in writing about specific areas of

deficiency and need for improvement. The Music Director will send a copy of the letter to the Orchestra Committee. The musician's status in the Orchestra will then be considered as probationary for the next three concert series starting with the first concert at least thirty days from the date of the letter. The Committee or the musician or both can ask for a meeting with the Music Director for further verbal clarification of the Music Director's concerns.

After the second concert in the three-concert probationary period the Music Director will meet with the musician and any Core Member of the musician's choice, along with the Chair of the Orchestra Committee, to discuss the situation as it lies at that point in the perception of the Music Director. After the third concert period in the probationary period, the Music Director will notify the musician and the Committee in writing as to whether the probation will end with reinstatement to core membership or termination.

If the Music Director terminates the musician, the musician can appeal to the Orchestra Committee. The Committee will vote to either uphold termination or to extend probation for another two concert series beginning with the next concert of the Orchestra, along with soliciting another written and/or verbal description from the Music Director of deficiency and needed improvement. At the end of this second probationary period the Music Director will decide to terminate or reinstate the musician. The Music Director's decision will then be final.

If the musician in question is a Substitute Player rather than a Core Member, the Music Director may request that the musician be dropped from the Substitute Player list without notice or probation period.

Leave of Absence

Musicians who have been a Core Member for at least 5 years and are in good standing (no disciplinary action considerations) are eligible for a one-year leave of absence upon request. They can return to their same position without being required to audition. For absences of more than a year, an audition may be required.

Following a Leave of Absence, musicians may request additional such leaves after another 5 or more years, per the above description.

Obligations of the Newport Symphony Orchestra

- Advise Core Members of the following season's concert dates as early as possible, with every effort made to do so prior to the end of the previous season
- Send contracts to Core Members by September 1.
- Make every effort to provide a comfortable, ergonomic and safe environment for rehearsals and concerts.
- Provide a 15-minute break at approximately halfway through the rehearsal

Home stays

Home stays will be provided when a homestay request form has been submitted to the Office Manager in advance, and as long as there are spaces available. Home stays are for the musician only. They do not include spouses, family, friends, or pets.

Questions, Problems and Grievances

Any questions, concerns or problems from musicians should be referred to the appropriate Section Leader, the Personnel Manager or the Orchestra Committee.

If a musician has a grievance, the matter should be discussed with the Section Leader and/or the Personnel Manager. If, after approaching both of them the issue is not satisfactorily addressed, the musician should bring the matter to a member of the Orchestra Committee.

If no resolution has been found, the grievance will proceed to the Orchestra Committee for resolution.

Revisions to this Policy

The Orchestra Committee, Music Director or Board of Directors can propose revisions to this policy. Once the proposed revisions have been approved by the Orchestra Committee and Music Director, the proposed revised policy becomes adopted. Upon adoption the revised policy shall be sent to the Orchestra Office, the official “keeper” of the policy, as well as to all Core Musicians, the Music Director and the Board of Directors. If a musician objects to any change they shall bring that objection to the Orchestra Committee for consideration.

Revisions

5/15/05: Changed name from Yaquina to Newport Symphony; added revisions section.

1/17/08: Changed Attendance section to add expectation of making all concert series and jeopardizing core status for more absences. Combined Performance Standards and Termination sections and added details of probation process prior to dismissal. Changed hiring to contracting.

4/10/08: Minor edits for clarity.

1/21/10: Additions/clarification regarding absence/tardiness to rehearsals & programs.

3/4/14: Rewritten for clarity and consistency of terms. (Adopted 3/4/2014)