

Dr. Enrique Leon Lasansky, Director

DSAO Handbook and Syllabus for Students and Parents

Welcome to the Denver School of the Arts Orchestra. Congratulations! You are here because you have demonstrated great passion, skill and commitment to musical performance. The purpose of this program is to provide you with the opportunity to continue to improve your musicianship by playing excellent music with outstanding student musicians, perform in local and national stages, and work with the dedicated DSAO orchestra faculty.

Important: If you are not currently receiving the newsletter, go to <http://www.dsaorchestra.org/> on the bottom of the left hand side of the page and or simply click on this link: [Subscribe to our Mail List](#).

The newsletter and the website are our official forms of communication. Please read each newsletter and check our website <http://www.dsaorchestra.org/> frequently! The newsletter comes once a week (on weekends) but sometimes they are sent more frequently. **You are responsible for all the information in the newsletter and website, including all assignments, meetings, concerts and any instructions regarding DSAO activities.**

The concert schedule is set (see below) but sometimes special opportunities arise during the course of the year. All DSAO students are required to participate in both the scheduled concerts as well as any additional concerts or special events that may be added to the schedule.

It is also very important to observe all deadlines in terms of required forms and fees that arise throughout the year. We have an amazing parents' group: the Orchestra Family Association (OFA). The OFA works closely with our excellent DSAO administrative assistant, Ms Carla Mead. They handle all trips, and other special events the orchestra is involved in. **They can only be effective with everyone's cooperation and adherence to orchestra procedures and deadlines.**

If you have general questions about forms, procedures, events etc. please contact Ms. Carla Mead at carlamead@gmail.com

If you have a question about OFA activities please contact OFA president Ms. Alenka Han at alenka720@gmail.com

If you have specific questions/concerns about your child regarding **classroom or musical issues** please contact Dr. Lasansky at: Enrique_Lasansky@dpsk12.net

As a member of a performance-oriented organization with very high standards, you must follow certain procedures and expectations. Most of the requirements are listed below.

One of the highlights of the DSAO experience is the ability to work with professional musicians. All of our guest artists are fabulous, carefully chosen musicians that work with students in various groups such as sectionals and chamber music coaching. They lead in-depth, specialized sessions, in order to complement the director's work in large group settings. **In order to fund these artists we are totally dependent on 100% parent participation in DSA's "Fill the Gap Campaign."** DSA is a unique school with unique needs. The actual cost of educating a DSA student with an extraordinary arts and academic education is beyond the funding that is provided by the district. In order to fully fund DSA's nationally competitive arts and academics, we are faced with a gap. This year the financial "gap" that DSA faces is \$1500 per student for the school year. DSA's Fill the Gap Campaign was launched in 2017, and all DSA parents were asked to come together to Fill the Gap with an unrestricted, tax-deductible contribution. Over the past 5 years this support has allowed DSA to provide quality educational programs in the arts and academics, capital improvements for DSA's unique needs, financial resources for low-income students, programming to increase Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and more. A school-wide culture of philanthropy is essential to the success of our students and fulfilling our mission...and together we will be stronger!

To donate please go to : <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E201119&id=36>

Your support of the Fill the Gap Campaign at a level that fits your budget will help us reach our goal of 100% participation and is 100% tax deductible. Join the hundreds of DSA parents who are already supporting DSA through either a monthly or one-time donation.

If you have not made your contribution for , please visit the link above and contribute at whatever level is possible for you. We need to have 100% participation in order to be successful!

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DSAO will provide students with the experience they need for the next level, including professional orchestras and top college programs. And if you are not planning to be a professional musician the experience of playing in a great orchestra will serve you well in virtually all other fields!

Reminder: Each student and her/his parents or legal guardians are required to read and agree to the terms presented in this handbook. The *handbook acknowledgement contract* at the end of this document should be emailed to Ms. Carla Mead. **This form will constitute the first assignment and it is worth 200 pts if it's turned in on time. If you have any questions regarding the information contained here, please feel free to contact Dr. Lasansky.**

Looking forward to another great year!

Thank you!

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Private Instruction

All DSAO students are expected to take private lessons during their enrollment at DSA. It will be extremely difficult to meet the demands of the DSAO program as well as develop proper technique used in orchestras without private lessons. If your child does not have a private teacher, **please contact Dr. Lasansky immediately** to assist you in finding a teacher. In addition, a limited number of scholarships may be available in case of financial hardship.

Supply List

In order to assure the successful completion of the new school year in orchestra, **these items are required:**

All supplies must be purchased by August 27, 2021.

Textbook required of all middle and high school orchestra students:

"The Ensemble Musician by Robin Fountain and Thomas Verrier"

The books have been ordered. Please bring in \$15 to purchase your copy. If this expenditure is a financial hardship, please contact Dr. Lasansky to make other arrangements.

In addition:

Pencils

A binder where you can keep your music. Do not rely on loose sheets of music-you will lose your music this way.

Rosin

A mute

A spare set of strings

A Luggage tag – attached to the outside of your instrument case 3x5 index card w/name and contact info, placed inside of case

Goals

The DSAO Program is designed to work toward four goals:

- Development of students' skills as ensemble players -- concentration, listening, instantaneous adjustment, breathing, following the conductor's visual and verbal instructions, retention of information over the span of rehearsal sequence
- Development of students' professional habits and ethics -- preparation, promptness, mutual support and moral character
- Development of students' knowledge of the orchestra repertoire and of a range of appropriate playing styles
- Development of an ensemble whose performances exhibit a very high level of competence and artistry.

Grading

Grading is designed to encourage students toward the above-outlined goals. Good grades are not given, but are earned through careful adherence to the following ensemble policies:

- Students are expected to attend every rehearsal of every piece for which they have an assigned part.
- **Students are expected to be in their assigned chairs and ready to play at the beginning of the official class time**. Do not congregate with your friends at the beginning of the rehearsal. Please enter the room quietly and get your instrument, music, etc. Then please find your seat and start tuning and warming up. This is the ritual that professionals and pre-professionals follow in any orchestra. You must prepare for the intense concentration needed for an orchestral rehearsal by temporarily putting aside personal issues or anything else which may distract you from being **FULLY PRESENT** at every rehearsal and performance. If you feel like you are not able to participate on any given date, please notify Dr. Lasansky before class to discuss going to the nurse or to your counselor.
- Students are expected to be respectful and supportive of each other's playing. Orchestral playing requires not only musical development as described in this handbook, but also character development. All students are expected to abide by the concepts presented in writings such as "The Four Agreements" By Miguel Ruiz and other materials that will be presented in class. The agreements are:
 1. Be impeccable with your word
 2. Do not make assumptions
 3. Do not take things personally.
 4. Always do your best.

The character traits we will focus upon are CRP:

Courage, Resilience, Perseverance

We will discuss how these concepts pertain to orchestra class.

- Students are expected to become familiar with recordings of all assigned music within the 1st. week the pieces are assigned. Recordings are usually available on YouTube or the J.W. Pepper (middle school) website: <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/welcome.jsp> —

Students are expected to be fully prepared (correct pitch, rhythm, tempo, bowing, breathing, good tone) for each work two weeks after it has been handed out or assigned. From that date onward, students may be asked to play in small groups during rehearsal to check for understanding and playing accuracy.

- Students requiring individual assistance to assure preparedness should contact Dr. Lasansky to seek help. Students are also encouraged to seek preparation assistance from their instrumental teachers and/or fellow students.
- Should the instructor feel that a particular student is inadequately prepared, or failing to adhere to other

ensemble policies, the student's grade will be affected. If this is the case it is important that you take the initiative to speak to Dr. Lasansky to discuss ways to remedy the situation. In most cases the student will be given a time period within which to demonstrate full preparedness or policy compliance, for partial restoration of grade level/participation.

Product Component of grade: 55%

This grading category primarily reflects your knowledge and ability to play the music we will be performing. You will be formally assessed at least once per marking period in accordance with the performance schedule. Look for "student assignments" and "resources" on our website to know what is expected of you in orchestra class. **It is an expectation of all DSAO students that once music is distributed or posted on the internet you will print and learn your part independently, as quickly as possible. This means you have homework in DSAO every day in order to prepare for the next day's rehearsal.**

Grading for product component:

Playing and Chair Tests:

800 pts.each. This includes the preliminary chair audition. We will use a rubric for playing tests. These will provide you with information about your strengths and areas for improvements. **If you are not satisfied with your score on a test you are encouraged to re-take the test for a higher score (not a change in seating). The important thing is to learn your part to the best of your ability.**

This year we will implement a rotation system during rehearsals. It is important to allow students to have different vantage points within orchestra. In addition, this system will provide students with the opportunity to work with players who are at various stages of development in their artistry.

Concerts 400 pts.

Each concert is performed twice during Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons. **As special opportunities arise additional dates may be added to the schedule. Students are required to attend every concert unless extenuating circumstances exist (please see below).**

Written Assignments: 400 pts. each These will deal with aspects of music history and analysis. **Students are required to listen to multiple performances of the pieces we are playing within a week of their inclusion on our performance schedule.** This is something that students must take care of on their own.

Final Exams: 10% (Product)

1. First Semester- Final (listening test-assignment will be given in class)
2. Second Semester-Jury (2 scales and solo piece)

SECTIONALS ON THURSDAYS

Orchestra students will meet separately with their own sections to work out bowings, fingerings and learn the parts in terms of pitches, rhythms and expression. **Bowings are the responsibility of the section leaders and should be completed and distributed to all the players within the first week of choosing a piece for a concert.** Sectionals are usually run by Master Mentors and/or student leaders. Students who are not prepared for sectionals will have their process grade lowered.

Process Grade: 35%

DPS definition of Process Component: “Reflects the intentional academic behaviors that support 21st. Century Skills and Readiness Competencies (invention, collaboration, critical thinking and reasoning, self-direction, and information literacy that lead to supporting the final product)”.

In orchestra class the above constitutes the class participation grade and is interpreted as follows:

1. All orchestra students are expected to contribute to class discussions and demonstrate an awareness of different orchestral parts, not just their own part. Make sure you listen to various versions of recorded performances of every piece we play. This is the only way you will be able to form a solid impression of the piece and the **style**. You are always expected to listen to the entire orchestra in rehearsals as well as what is said in class by the conductor or other students. **A basic familiarity with the orchestral score**, is a class requirement and will count heavily in your process grade. If you have trouble locating a score, please ask Dr. Lasansky to help you.

2. During rehearsals you must be attentive and ready to play with the conductor at all times. **Your posture, level of concentration, punctuality and general attitude will contribute heavily to your class participation grade.**

3. In order to learn you must be “self-directed”. This means *you need take the initiative for your own learning*. This is one of the most important aspects of being a musician. **Do you have knowledge of and ability to implement “tried and true” practice techniques?** Can you set your personal playing goals? Can you evaluate your playing objectively and make the necessary adjustments?”

4. Do you understand musical terminology (content language) and can you use it to communicate your thoughts about a piece (orally and in writing), as well as understand directions from the composer or conductor?

Process grades:

1. 50 pts. per week throughout grading period.

Students are required to attend the following concerts and possibly complete assignments based on these concerts:

1. **All DSAO concerts. High school students must be in the audience for all middle school concerts and vice versa. No exceptions please. This applies to both concerts in each cycle. DSAO students must be supportive of each other and also practice being listeners and audience members.**
2. **All Chamber Concerts and Full Orchestra Concerts. There are a total of four of these concerts during the entire year.**
3. **At least two senior recitals**

Concert Dates 2021-22

October 9 7p String Orchestra Concert (middle and high schools)

October 10 3p. String Orchestra Concert

November 19 7p Full Orchestra Concert

December 4 7p Chamber Music Concert

December 11 7p. String Orchestra Concert

December 12 3p String Orchestra Concert

March 15 7p Orchestra/Vocal Collaboration

March 16 7p Orchestra Vocal Collaboration

April 14 7p Full Orchestra Concert

April 30 3p Chamber Music Concert

May 14 7p String Orchestra Concert

May 15 3p String Orchestra Concert

Again, lateness to class, eating in class, behavior that undermines the rehearsal process (such as talking, poor posture, using your cell phone, disengaged playing etc). and lack of required materials will lower your process grade! Failure to attend a concert will result in zero points awarded for the concert. Leaving a concert early (see above requirements for concert attendance) will result in 50 Pts. being deducted from your concert grade (400 pts.)

Auditions, Juries

Please be prepared for a placement audition on 9/2/2021 Requirements for the audition are listed below:

Middle School:

- Bb major scale-two or three octaves.
- b melodic minor scale-two or three octaves
- A solo piece demonstrating technical and lyric passages.
- Play scales with full tone. The solo piece should not be played in its entirety.

High School

- Ab Major scale-three octaves
- Bb melodic minor scale-three octaves
- A solo piece demonstrating technical and lyric passages.
- Play scales with full tone. The solo piece should not be played in its entirety

In addition to playing/chair tests interspersed during the semester there will be a final jury at the end of the second semester. This jury will be required of all students. Requirements will consist of scales, and a different solo piece that was used at the preliminary audition. Seniors are required to present a recital during their final DSAO semester.

Attendance in class and concerts:

Students are required to be at all class rehearsals, possible additional dress rehearsals and concerts. It may be the case that at some point, there will be a DSAO concert (particularly chamber music or full orchestra) that you will not be playing in. **You are still required to attend the concert.** One of DSA's strengths is the interaction among students. Students have great camaraderie and often work in groups where they learn a great deal from each other. We are a team of musicians, not an aggregate of individuals who are getting solely personal benefits from the program. Remember your major is in Orchestra. Although your individual progress is a major part of the class our main goal is the success of the entire orchestra. Our goal is to make music as beautifully and as passionately as we can as a group. Supporting all students by attending every DSAO performance event is extremely important and a requirement of this class (see above). **It is strongly encouraged that at least one parent or guardian from every household be present at every concert.** Students need parental support in order to play at their highest potential. At every concert all students must check in with Ms. Tyree in order to receive credit for concert attendance.

The vast majority of events are already on the calendar. Please mark those in your personal calendars as soon as possible. Please do not schedule family events, college visits or any other non-DSA events during concert dates. DSAO is a performing organization and DSAO students are "pre-professionals" that must adhere to the obligations that are customary in the profession. **The only valid reasons for not being at DSAO concerts are severe illness and family emergencies.** All families have signed a contract with DSA that requires attendance at all DSAO concerts and special events. In addition, while DSAO encourages students to participate in community music groups and programs, **DSAO concerts always take precedence over any outside organizations you may belong to.** If you have a conflict not covered in the above description, please contact Dr. Lasansky at least one month before the event in order to discuss the situation.

Please buy tickets for orchestra and chamber music concerts online, well before the concert. This way you will be guaranteed a seat and you will not need to stand in a line for a long time. In addition we will be able to start the concert on time.

CLASS RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Please arrive on time, be in your seat at the exact moment when class begins and ready to play with allequipment and music necessary for the rehearsal.
2. Observe “The Four Agreements” (will be discussed in class)
3. Raise your hand to speak in class.
4. Always ask for permission to leave your seat. Orchestra is not a regular class. When you walk around the room you distract everyone who is concentrating on the orchestra. This includes going to the bathroom. Students should take care of bathroom needs before class or during the break. And No food in the orchestra room unless authorized by the director.
5. **Do not use your phone or other electronic devices during class** unless we are on a mid-class break or you have been given permission by the director.
6. Keep the room clean and tidy. Immediately after the rehearsal put your own chair and stand away. If you see trash or music on the floor please pick it up. Remember: “If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem”.
7. If you are in class you are expected to play and to listen attentively to the rehearsal. If you don’t feel well enough to play please take an absence or see the nurse
8. Students cannot be alone in the orchestra room as per DPS policy. The orchestra room will be locked outside of class times.

Classroom Attendance Policy

Tardies – In order to run a professional level organization you must be in your seat with all your materials at the beginning of the class period.

Sickness-if you are sick please stay home and take care of yourself or go see the school nurse. If you are in class you are **always** expected to play as a member of a professionally-run orchestra. **If you need to leave the room for any reason during class you must ask Dr. Lasansky for permission.**

Absences – Students are permitted to make up work missed during an *excused* absence. Excused absences are determined by the school administration. It is *the student’s* responsibility to contact Dr. Lasansky to obtain make-up work. Unexcused absences will be reported to the office and dealt with according to school policy. Please see the school handbook for more information.

Music

In most cases, the music will be available on our website: <http://www.dsaorchestra.org/students/#>

Password is Beethoven2017! You are responsible for printing your own parts and having them at every rehearsal. Do not depend on anyone else to bring your music to rehearsal. Failure to have your music will result in a process grade of zero for the week.

Do not interrupt the rehearsal by getting up while the orchestra is playing (or about to play) to try to find forgotten or lost music in the filing cabinet. This must be done before class.

Instrument Maintenance

Each student is responsible for keeping his or her instrument in proper working order **at all times**.

You are required to keep a set of spare strings in your case (see the orchestra supply list) at all times, in case of an emergency string break. If your instrument is in the shop being repaired please have a secondary instrument ready to play during rehearsal. If this is not possible, please see Dr. Lasansky, in advance of any situation in which you may find yourself without an instrument, so that he may help you find a temporary solution.

Instrument Storage Lockers

There are instrument storage lockers in the hallway outside the orchestra room where students may store their instruments during the school day. Cellos and basses are stored in the orchestra room directly. Lockers will be assigned the first week of school. All instruments must be properly identified with a luggage tag on the outside of the case and a 3x5 index card on the inside of the case – this includes all rental instruments. Instrument storage lockers are for instruments and music only. They are not for personal storage since space is an issue.

Principal Positions and Seating

Principal players are chosen by audition and playing tests. Therefore, principal assignments may change throughout the year. Principals must be exemplary members of the orchestra. In addition, they should arrive at rehearsals early, work together and be responsible for bowings, and lead their sections.

Chamber Music Class

This year the chamber class will offer alternative string repertoire opportunities as well as the classic repertoire. All orchestra students should have chamber music experience. Chamber music fosters the development of personal responsibility (usually there's only one person on a part), listening skills and social skills. **If you have not participated in chamber music at DSA it is highly recommended that you sign up for this class.**

DSAO Dress Code for Performances – Middle and High School

All orchestra members are required to purchase appropriate concert attire; the cost of which is borne by the student and/or parent/guardian. Failure to adhere by these guidelines will result in lowering of your grade.

Boys' Dress Guidelines

- 🕒 Black tuxedo
- 🕒 White dress shirt – clean and pressed!
- 🕒 Black socks
- 🕒 Black cummerbund or black tuxedo vest
- 🕒 Suspenders are permitted, but must be either black or white
- 🕒 Black bow tie

Girls' Dress Guidelines

- 🕒 Discrete length black skirt or black dress slacks with a blacktop
- 🕒 black dress shoes (No open-toed shoes or sandals)

Black or neutral hosiery

🕒 No plunging necklines, rising slits, low-cut backs, or displays of midriff. Dress and skirt slits must not exceed six inches in length. Wear a slip if the outfit requires it.

Students will need to purchase a DSAO t-shirt to wear for fundraising functions, special days at DSA, and service projects, as instructed by Dr. Lasansky.

DSAO Handbook Acknowledgement Contract 2021-22

I agree to follow all the requirements and procedures of the DSAO as stated in this handbook.

Student name, signature and email

Date

Parent name, signature and email

Date

Please e-mail this contract to Ms. Mead at carlasmead@gmail.com by August 27, 2021