

# *Welcome to the New River Youth Symphony & Chorus!*

## *Mission Statement*

The mission of the New River Youth Symphony and Chorus is to provide fine-arts students in Southern West Virginia with ensemble-rehearsal experiences and performance opportunities.

## *Goals*

- ◇ Inspiring young people to strive for excellence in the fine arts.
- ◇ Promoting cooperation and leadership through group endeavor.
- ◇ Developing musicianship and improving technical skills through the study of orchestral and vocal literature.
- ◇ Encouraging an understanding of music in relation to history and culture.
- ◇ Providing musical outlets for the young people of Southern West Virginia, as well as pleasing concerts for the general public.

## *History*

The New River Youth Symphony & Chorus began in June 2006 with auditions for the summer season. The Chorus began in the fall season of 2006. The conductor of the New River Youth Symphony is William Bailey, currently the band director at Woodrow Wilson High School in Beckley, West Virginia. The conductor of the New River Youth Chorus is Judith Arnold, formerly a teacher of voice and choir in the Charleston area, as well as an accomplished soloist.

“Choosing to live and raise our families in rural West Virginia does not mean that we have to tell our children that performing in an ensemble with other serious young musicians is not a possibility. Music is very much a part of our heritage, and southern West Virginia produces many serious young musicians. We simply need to think ‘outside the box’ and look for ways to bring these young people together on a regular basis to experience the power and camaraderie of practicing and preparing for a ‘bravo’ performance.” ~ Agnes Casto, General Manager

## *Ensembles*

The New River Youth Symphony is for intermediate and advanced young musicians, ages 8 to 24. Chamber groups include the Woodwind Quintet, the Brass Quintet, and the String Quartet.

The New River Youth Chorus is for ages 8-24, and the Beginner Chorus is for ages 5-8. When a student in the younger choir advances sufficiently, he/she will graduate to the higher choir.

As opportunities arise, and students develop musically, smaller ensembles will be established to present small group and solo opportunities.

## *Music*

The music chosen by our directors will support the mission and goals of our organization. If a Chorus book or a Symphony folder is not returned at the end of the season, the student will be charged \$25 to replace the book/folder and the music.

## *Rehearsals*

The New River Youth Symphony and Chorus meets for weekly rehearsals during the three seasons, fall, spring, and summer, with a break during the winter months when harsh weather often makes for hazardous travel on the roads. During the school year, rehearsals are held on Monday nights at Oak Hill High School. During the summer, rehearsals are held at Fayetteville Christ Fellowship Church.

Students are encouraged to join NRYSC for the entire year, so that their musicianship can grow and students can better contribute to the ensembles. Season breaks are entry points for new members to join. Concerts are the culmination of each season.

Rehearsal Schedule	5:45-7:00	Chorus Regular Rehearsal
	7:00-8:30	Symphony Regular Rehearsal

Occasionally, the Chorus Director may require a section to come for extra rehearsal 15-30 minutes before regular rehearsal begins. The Symphony Director may call for extra sectionals or chamber-group rehearsals. If needed, a special Saturday rehearsal may be called prior to the concert.

Rehearsals are for coordinating the various voices and instruments together, for developing balance and blend. Daily practice at home is for learning the notes and rhythms. You are expected to learn your part at home before you come to rehearsal.

During the week ... Chorus – look at your music every day, have your parents help you to learn the notes and words. Chorus music will be memorized for the concerts. Symphony – practice your music every day; work on the difficult parts; do not just play through each song.

## *Attendance*

1. If a student needs to miss all or part of a rehearsal, he/she is requested to notify Agnes Casto, 304-574-3567, before the rehearsal so that the Directors can plan the rehearsal accordingly.
2. After three absences, a letter may be sent to the parents and student. Excused absences include illness, family vacation, summer camp, and family emergency. Any other reasons will be excused or unexcused at the discretion of the Directors.
3. Tardiness to rehearsals is not acceptable. Students will be conferenced for repeated tardiness. Three tardies will equal one absence.
4. With four absences, a student may not be allowed to perform in the concert. If a student misses the dress rehearsal for a concert, he/she may not be allowed to perform.

## *Snow Days*

Because the different counties have such varying degrees of winter weather, we will have to evaluate the conditions for each county in order to decide whether or not to call off a rehearsal. This decision will be made by 3:30 pm, and each family will be contacted by 4:00 pm. If you do not receive a phone call by 4:30 pm, then call Betsy Cole (304-254-9190) if you live in Greenbrier, Mercer, or Raleigh Counties, or call Agnes Casto (304-574-3567) or Kathie Kiser (304-658-4329) if you live in Fayette, Kanawha, or Nicholas Counties. The decision by the NRYSC Executive Board will be whether or not to hold the rehearsal. Ultimately, parents will need to judge whether or not to risk locally dangerous road conditions.

## *Directions*

To Oak Hill High School: From Beckley, go north on Route 19 to Oak Hill, and take the Oyler Avenue Exit. Turn left, crossing over the highway past the Holiday Inn. Go straight ahead, passing the New River Elementary School and the Vo-Tech on your right, and curve around to the High School. Do not go in the front door. The band and choir room doors are on the outside of the building near the parking lot.

Directions to Fayetteville Christ Fellowship: From Beckley, go north on Route 19. At the stoplight *after* the Lochgelly Oak Hill exit, just past Fayette Square shopping center (with Kroger and K-Mart,) turn right onto Appalachian Drive. Go one block to the stop sign, turn left, go 0.3 mile and turn left (up the hill) onto Airport Road, also known as Nickelville Road. The first driveway on the right is Fayetteville Christ Fellowship Church. You can see the red roof as you get close.

## *Private Lessons*

Symphony students are strongly encouraged, but not required, to take private lessons on their instrument, and older Chorus students are encouraged to take voice lessons. NRYSC rehearsals are a wonderful way to improve musicianship, but nothing can take the place of a good private teacher to help the student to progress in technical skills and expressiveness.

## *Parent Meetings / Volunteers*

Parent meetings are held from time to time. Parents are urged to make every effort to attend because important decisions may require their vote, policies may be explained, announcements made, and questions answered.

The rehearsal rooms are to be a quiet area. Parents are welcome to sit in on rehearsals, but please refrain from talking or walking through the rehearsal room. Children not participating in rehearsals must be attended and quiet while in the building.

Volunteers, parents or otherwise, are always welcome to help with tasks like setting chairs for a concert, organizing a picnic or social, asking businesses for donations, etc.

## *Bylaws*

The New River Youth Symphony & Chorus is a non-profit corporation, with voting rights residing in the parents of the students. A copy of the Bylaws is available upon request.

## *Tuition*

Each season, the tuition is due three weeks after the season begins.

Symphony - \$30 (1st child), \$20 (2nd child), \$20 (3rd child), free for 4th child in family

Chorus - \$20 (1st child), \$15 (2nd child), \$15 (3rd child), free for 4th child in family

Beginner Chorus - \$10 per child

In the spring and summer seasons, all new Symphony & Chorus students will need to pay \$20 for a NRYSC uniform polo shirt to wear for concert performances.

## *Scholarships*

Limited money is available for tuition scholarships for needy students. If a student would like to apply for a tuition scholarship, he/she may contact Agnes Casto, 304-574-3567.

## *Donations*

A tax-deductible gift to the New River Youth Symphony & Chorus creates something far beyond its monetary value. It enables students to learn to make beautiful music, to work together under inspiring leadership, and to enjoy carrying their share of the load in order to participate in something bigger than themselves. The contribution also provides scholarships, defrays operational costs, assists with the purchase of necessary instruments, sheet music, and equipment, and ensures that finance is never a reason to deny a student membership.

\$25 to \$100 – Friend      \$101 to \$250 – Donor      \$251 to \$500 – Patron  
\$501 to \$1,000 – Sustaining Patron      \$1,001 and more – Benefactor

Each supporting member will receive a special invitation to our concerts along with recognition in concert programs.

## *Auditions*

At the beginning of each season, auditions are held for all new Chorus and Symphony students. In addition, the Symphony Director may at any time call for auditions of an entire section. In general, auditions for new students are held the first week of the new season, and late auditions will continue for the next two weeks.

## *Solos & Ensembles*

For the Chorus, soloists and small ensembles may apply to Mrs. Arnold for permission to perform during any season; she will listen to them and decide the appropriateness of their selection and the readiness of their preparation. For the Symphony, once a year, early in the summer season, any soloists and small ensembles may sign up to perform in the summer concert. A few weeks before the concert, Mr. Bailey will decide who is well enough prepared. This is separate from the Symphony chamber groups who perform from time to time, as directed by Mr. Bailey.

## *Concerts & Concert Dress*

As a culmination of each season, concerts are planned for locations throughout Southern West Virginia. We try to schedule concerts in the various counties where our students live, so that they can perform in their own communities, and more people can find out about us.

Concert dress for the fall and spring season concerts is black pants or long black skirt and black dress shirt or blouse, relatively simple, long sleeved, and modest. The skirt should be below the knee when the student is sitting down. Shoes should be black dress shoes (no open toes) with black socks or black nylons or black tights. Chorus members must have flat heels. Chorus members must not wear dangling earrings.

For our summer concert performances, we will wear our classic blue polo shirts with the NRYSC logo embroidered in white.

At performances, the student is in uniform from the time he/she leaves the car to enter the performance hall and until he/she returns to the car to go home. Therefore, shirts will be tucked in, buttons buttoned, shoes on, etc., the entire time.

Whenever we are in public, we represent our family, our community, and NRYSC to those we meet. It is important that we have excellent behavior and show an attitude of cooperation, respect, and helpfulness.

## *T-Shirts to Wear for Fun*

Occasionally, we will put together a NRYSC T-shirt order; the cost is \$10 each. These are not our uniform shirts that we wear for concerts. Parents and family members may also buy a T-shirt, if they wish.

## *Field Trips*

The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra has generously given all NRYSC students “string cards” which give them free admission to the WVSO Symphonic Series, Family Discovery Series, and Montclair String Quartet concerts in Charleston. Throughout the year, various other field trips will be planned, to provide the students with the opportunity to hear professional musicians and to expand their appreciation of the arts.