



2025-2026 Handbook

Spokane Youth Symphony Mission Statement

To provide exemplary orchestral education and performance opportunities
for the youth of the Inland Northwest.

Website: www.SpokaneYouthSymphony.org

Email: info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org

Mailing Address

SYS
P.O. Box 9547
Spokane, WA 99209

Office

3910 W Custer Dr
Spokane, WA 99224

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SYS Personnel

Board of Directors

Connie Kerbs, President
Julia Salerno, Vice President
Ken Treis, Treasurer
Niki Moore, Secretary
Christina Carlsen
Sharon Cattich
Mary Beth Cullitan
Michael Ebinger
Jason Miller
John Moody
Heidi Sine

Artistic Staff

Philip Baldwin, SYS Artistic Director and Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra Conductor
Roberta Bottelli, Spokane Youth Philharmonic Conductor
Jerilynn Harris, Spokane Youth Sinfonietta Conductor
John Marshall, Spokane Youth Strings Conductor
Vanessa White, SYSA Program Director

Administrative Staff

Jennifer O'Bannan, Executive Director
Joann Matiska, Office Manager
Felicia Bawden, Operations Assistant

Orchestra Aides

Orchestra Aides assist the conductor at each rehearsal, concert, and tour. Orchestra aides record attendance, hand out fliers, make announcements, and communicate with students and parents about SYS expectations and events. Compensation for the position is full tuition for the SYS 2025-2026 season for one child.

Entrance Auditions and Enrollment

To participate in any SYS orchestra, a student must first audition and be accepted into an ensemble. **Only students new to SYS and those who wish to move up need to perform an entrance audition.**

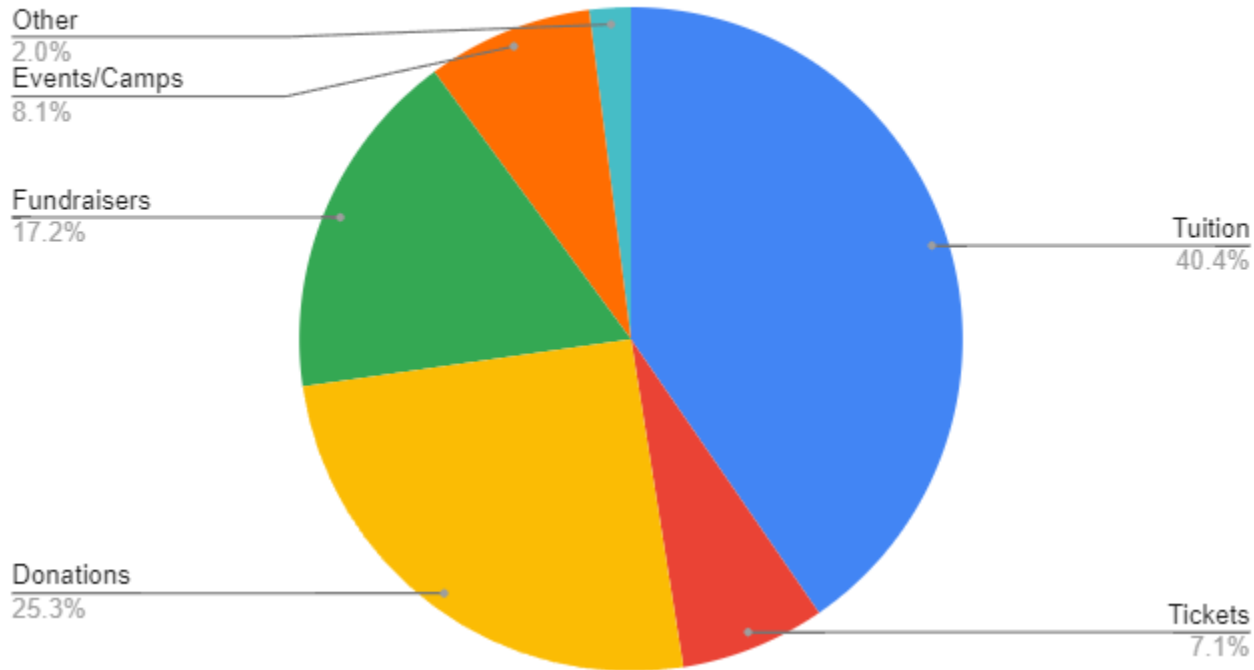
Auditions typically take place in late May and late August/early September for each season. Current SYS members who wish to move up to the next orchestra are expected to audition in May. **Students who plan to remain in the same orchestra do not need to do an entrance audition.** The September auditions are primarily intended for students new to the program and those current members who are asked to re-audition.

To enroll, a parent or guardian must submit the online **2025-2026 Enrollment and Payment Agreement** form, found www.spokaneyouthsymphony.org, and provide the required payment. The student needs to be a returning SYS member or have been accepted by audition into one of the SYS orchestras for the 2025-2026 season. The online enrollment and payment agreement form includes agreement to the **2025-2026 Handbook, Liability Release, and Media Release**, along with the agreement to pay full tuition or monthly payments.

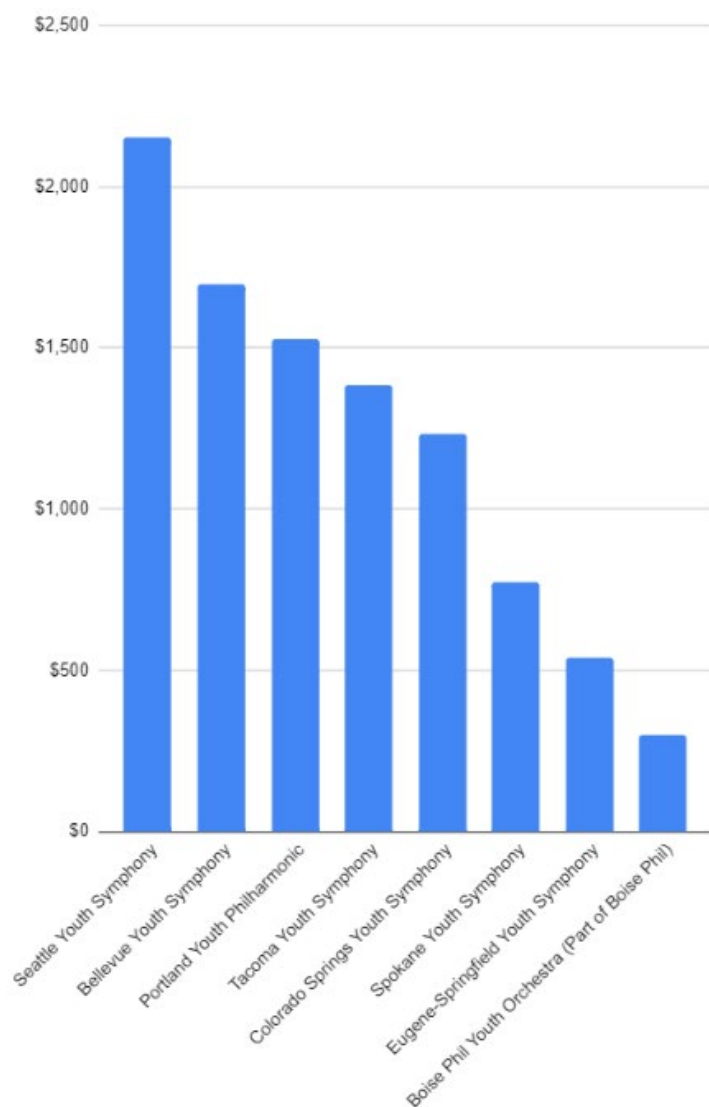
Tuition and Fees

The Spokane Youth Symphony is funded by tuition, grants, donations, concert ticket revenue, and group fundraising events. *The tuition fees only cover 40% of the yearly expenses of the organization.* Our expenses include paid conductors, administrative staff, music specialists for workshops and sectionals, rent for rehearsal space and the SYS office, rent for the Fox Theater, music, instruments, equipment, printing costs, and general organizational expenses. We strive to be conservative with our expenditures while dedicating our organization to providing an enriching educational experience.

SYS Sources of Income



Annual Tuition of Large Youth Symphonies in PNW



Tuition Amounts

Orchestra	Monthly	Annual (includes \$100 discount*)
Suzuki Academy	\$60	\$440
Strings	\$70	\$530
Sinfonietta	\$80	\$620
Philharmonic	\$90	\$710
Symphony Orchestra	\$100	\$800

Fundraising Fee (per family)	Volunteering Fee (per family)
\$200	\$200

Multiple Child -\$10 monthly, -\$90 annually per child if 2+ children enrolled

*** Families must pay the full amount by October 1st to get the \$100 discount, otherwise the monthly amount (x9) will be billed throughout the year.**

Please be aware that monthly payments will be invoiced by email at the beginning of each month.

Fundraising

For the Spokane Youth Symphony to keep tuition costs down, each **SYS family will raise \$200** for the organization during the 2025-2026 season through one or more of the fundraising opportunities listed below, or **pay the \$200 fundraising fee** if the family chooses not to raise funds. Note that this minimum fundraising requirement is per family, not per student, and the families have the entire season to raise the funds by way of the four fundraising opportunities listed below. Also, please realize that you will receive credit for the net amount earned, not for the entire price charged to the customer. For example, wreath sales earn approximately 40% of the cost of products, and Flower Power sales earn 50% of the product price.

Any surplus funds raised (beyond the minimum required) will be credited to your family's fundraising account and can be used to pay for camp and tour expenses. ***Families that don't meet the required minimum of \$200 raised will be billed for the remainder at the end of the season.***

Spokane Youth Suzuki Academy students are not required to fundraise.

SYS provides several opportunities for fundraising throughout the year:

- **Holiday Fundraiser:** Students and their families sell evergreen wreaths and other holiday items for delivery around Thanksgiving. Details will be provided at the first rehearsal of the season. Students must sell approximately 10-15 large wreaths to meet the \$200 fundraising requirement.
- **RaiseRight:** Families buy gift cards from participating companies through RaiseRight. These companies donate up to 20% of the gift card value back to SYS. Shipping fees apply if you order physical cards. Purchased e-gift cards are easily accessible through the RaiseRight app. To sign up, visit Raiseright.com and use the **Enrollment Code: 363HCRNB68S8**
- **Flower Power Fundraiser:** Flower Power offers quality bulbs and plants available from growers in Holland and the U.S. and offers an unconditional, 100% replacement guarantee. All items are shipped to buyers directly beginning in April. Students must sell \$400 to raise \$200.
- **Fundraising Contributions:** Families receive credit for fundraising contributions made in their name. Supporters can make checks payable to SYS and include the student's or family's name on the memo line with the words "fundraising contribution." *Please note that a contribution toward a family's fundraising account does not qualify as a tax-deductible donation to the SYS organization since the contribution is given as a payment toward a specific family's fees.*

We greatly appreciate all the hard work that students and their families put into these fundraisers. Tuition fees cover less than half of our ongoing expenses, so we rely on fundraisers to help close that gap. Your effort and contributions make a big difference!

Parent Volunteering

Parent Volunteering for a minimum of nine (9) hours, July-May, is required per family OR pay the \$200 opt out fee for the 2025-2026 season. To volunteer, please visit "Parent Volunteers" under "Member Info" on our website. (Parent Volunteer duties will be posted as our season develops.) If you do not sign up and volunteer for 9 or more hours of volunteer duties, you will be sent an invoice for \$200 in May.

Parents will receive regular email notices alerting them to volunteer opportunities. These will include activities such as rehearsal chair set-up and tear-down, concert chaperones, tour chaperones, program stuffing, rehearsal door guards, wreath pick-up day assistance, etc. Links in the email will direct the parent to a volunteer posting, where they will be able to sign up. You may also access a list of volunteer categories on the website Parent Volunteer page.

Tuition Assistance

The tuition assistance 2025-2026 application is available at www.SpokaneYouthSymphony.org by going to "Tuition Assistance" under "Member Info."

The Spokane Youth Symphony (SYS) strives to provide financial assistance to children in need so that they may benefit from an orchestral music experience. SYS believes that no deserving young musician should be denied participation in SYS orchestras due to inability to meet tuition requirements.

Need is typically established by documented eligibility for the National School Lunch Program. Applicants will be notified of assistance awards within 15 days of application.

Send applications to:

SYS
PO Box 9547
Spokane, WA 99209

or email to info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org

Instrument Shortage Policy

Students who have not yet enrolled, or current SYS students willing to move down an orchestra to play 'shortage' instruments in the specific orchestra of need, can receive half tuition scholarships for a maximum of one year from the time of acceptance into the shortage position. Positions will be filled on a first-come-first-serve basis once officially accepted by the conductor's approval into the specific orchestra of need. Extensions beyond one year will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Withdrawal from SYS

If a student must withdraw from the program,

1. The parent needs to contact SYS staff by emailing info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org.
2. The student then needs to inform his/her orchestra conductor and orchestra aide.
3. Any SYS music must be returned to the orchestra conductor or orchestra aide within two weeks of the last concert or rehearsal that the student participates in.

4. A fee will be charged for any unreturned music.
5. Tuition refund policy: Monthly tuition payments are non-refundable after the first rehearsal of the month. For families who paid full tuition, SYS will refund a prorated amount.

Rehearsals, Concerts, and Tours

Rehearsals

The rehearsal season for all orchestras will begin on Monday, September 9th.

Rehearsal times and locations:

Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra:

St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th Ave. (Great Hall)
Mondays, 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Spokane Youth Philharmonic:

St. John's Cathedral, 127 E. 12th Ave. (Community Room)
Mondays, 6:30-8:30 PM

Spokane Youth Sinfonietta:

Manito Presbyterian Church, 401 E 30th Ave. (Fellowship Hall, basement)
Mondays, 6:00-8:00 PM

Spokane Youth Strings:

Manito Presbyterian Church, 401 E 30th Ave. (Sanctuary platform)
Mondays, 6:00-8:00 PM

Spokane Youth Suzuki Academy:

Manito United Methodist Church, 3220 S. Grand Blvd. (Fellowship Hall and 2nd floor rooms)
Mondays, 6:00-7:30 PM

The 2025-2026 schedule for concerts and rehearsals is available online. You will be notified via email of schedule or location changes.

Absences

Rehearsals are very important and should take priority over other activities with very few exceptions.

The following are excused absences: 1) illness 2) family emergency 3) religious observance, or 4) school music event. All other absences will be considered unexcused. Three or more unexcused absences may be cause for dismissal or may prevent a student from performing in a concert. In the event that your child must be absent, submit the [SYS Absence Form](#) (found under "Member Info" on the website) within one week of the absence.

In the event of a required school music event, please notify the orchestra aide as far ahead as possible before the rehearsal.

Seating Auditions

Auditions play an important role in the training and development of a musician. While every care is taken to seat students fairly, based on their audition, it is important to recognize that auditions are, by nature, subjective and that there is no perfect system for evaluating students. Audition outcomes are in no way intended to discourage students or to belittle their efforts. Auditions judge a player's abilities on a given day but are not meant as a judgment of a student's character or as a way of assigning their relative value within the organization. The SYS conducting staff endeavors to reward hard work and to value each student's contribution to the organization and the musical product.

Wind/Brass Seating

If there is more than one woodwind or brass player per part, the following seating order will be observed: Principal 1st (#1 rank), Principal 2nd (#2 rank), Assistant Principal 1st (#3 rank), Assistant Principal 2nd (#4 rank). In certain exposed soloist passages, the assistant principals may be asked to not play for artistic and/or balance reasons.

Missed Auditions

If a member is unable to participate in a scheduled seating audition, an audio-only recorded audition must be emailed to info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org at least one day prior to the audition day. The musician must understand that the recording may carry less weight than a live audition. Students who miss a seating audition and do not provide a recording will likely be seated at the back of the section for that concert and rehearsal series.

Performance Standards

If a member does not appear to be meeting performance, leadership or behavioral standards, the director may reassign seating.

All seating decisions are final and at the conductor's discretion.

Photo Night

In the early fall, each orchestra will be professionally photographed. Individual photographs are available for an additional fee. *(All students will be photographed individually to be included in the yearbook.)* All students are required to attend rehearsal in concert attire on their orchestra's picture night, even if they are not purchasing photos. Please register your student for photography, even if you do not plan to purchase photos. This will help with identifying students for the yearbook.

Register here: <https://store.scottmartinezphotography.com/pages/index/2449631>

Photo Night Schedule:

Strings: Monday, September 15

Sinfonietta: Monday, September 22

Philharmonic: Monday, September 29

Suzuki Academy: Monday, October 6

Symphony Orchestra: Monday, October 13

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please plan for Photo Night so that the student has all the required clothing items in time. For details, see "Concert Attire Dress Code." Links to online clothing sites are available on our website.

Concerts

The main Spokane Youth Symphony concert series includes four concerts at The Fox, 1001 West Sprague Avenue, Spokane. All SYS orchestras perform four concerts per season. The concerts begin at 4:00 p.m., and dress rehearsals occur at The Fox the day of the concert. Parents need to purchase tickets for any family who is not in SYS to attend. Subscription season tickets provide excellent value since you will save \$10 per subscription ordered if you have at least one child currently in our program. Season ticket prices are as follows for SYS Family members: Adult-\$38, Senior-\$34, Youth-\$24 for all four-season concerts!

2025-2026 Concert Season “United in Music”

All concerts are on Sundays and begin at 4 pm with dress rehearsals earlier in the afternoon.

November 16, 2025 *“Musical Friendships”*

January 25, 2026 *“The Strength of Music”*

March 15, 2026 *“The Power of Persistence”*

May 17, 2026 *“Together We Reach for the Stars”*

Concerto Competition

A yearly Concerto Competition for students in the **Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra** will take place on Sunday, January 18, 2026, at Whitworth University’s Cowles Music Center. Rules and details of the competition will be available in early Fall on the website. Up to three winners will perform as soloists with the Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra at the March 15, 2026, “The Power of Persistence” concert.

Awards

Awards are presented at the final concert of the season. These include (for each orchestra): Most Improved Award, Leadership Award, and Conductor’s Award. The Jessica Sund Camp Scholarship Award is given to a student in Strings and Sinfonietta, and the Angela Armstrong Inspirational Award is to be awarded to a senior string player in Symphony Orchestra.

Tours

Tours for all orchestras typically occur in the Spring. Strings, Sinfonietta, and Philharmonic will have a local tour at no extra cost to families. SYSO may have longer tours outside of the Spokane area. Cost for these larger tours will be determined based on the costs involved for the destination and tour length. Surplus fundraising money may be applied towards these tours.

Musician Responsibilities

Musician Code of Conduct

Membership in the Spokane Youth Symphony is an honor and a privilege. The young musicians chosen by audition to play in these groups are expected to make membership a priority among their many activities. Instrumentation and balance are established at the time of audition and must be maintained. If the orchestras are to provide the highest possible level of performance, preparation of the music and attendance at all rehearsals and concerts for the entire season is of utmost importance.

1. **Attendance is required** at all rehearsals and concerts. Upon arrival, check in with the Orchestra Aide before taking your place. **Students should arrive 15 minutes before rehearsal** to tune and be ready to play before the rehearsal begins. **Late arrival is not acceptable.**

2. **Bring a portable music stand and pencil** to all rehearsals (*music stands apply to Philharmonic, Sinfonietta, and Strings members only*).
3. **Return all music promptly** to the orchestra aide when asked to do so. If a student must leave the orchestra, all music must be returned within two weeks of leaving or a penalty will be assessed.
4. **If you borrow anything, return it.** This is particularly true for borrowed instruments, which must be turned in at the end of the season.
5. **Your complete attention is always required.** The use of cell phones and electronic games is not allowed during rehearsals or concerts.
6. **Students must behave respectfully** to the conductors, staff, volunteers, and fellow musicians. **Speaking out of turn during rehearsals or concerts is not permitted.** (This includes whispering, joking, and otherwise disruptive behavior. A student may be removed from the group by the conductor, orchestra aide, or parent volunteer if such behavior continues.)
7. All students must **respect the property of our rehearsal and concert locations.** Gum chewing is not permitted.
8. We **strictly prohibit the use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.** Any student in violation will be immediately removed from the orchestra.
9. **In matters of seating, the conductor's decision is final.**
10. **At concerts, students must be seated in the theater hall as audience members** when they are not on stage performing. Appropriate audience etiquette is expected while students support their fellow musicians. Such etiquette includes refraining from talking, using personal electronics or phones, or doing homework, and it includes remaining seated. ***Respectful listening is an important part of a musical education.***

A STUDENT'S PARENT WILL BE CONTACTED IF POOR BEHAVIOR IS ONGOING AND, IF NOT CORRECTED, A STUDENT MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE ORCHESTRA WITHOUT TUITION REIMBURSEMENT.

Concert Attendance

Musicians will be expected to participate in all scheduled concerts. Our students are required to sit **quietly in the theater as audience members** with the other students when not on stage performing. It is unacceptable to arrive late or leave early. If a parent would like their child to sit with them after intermission, or if the student must leave the building due to an unavoidable circumstance, the parent must submit the **Concert Attendance Release** form found on the **Absences** page of the website PRIOR to the day of the concert. Students are expected to remain in the designated seating or backstage until the end of the concert unless pre-excused by a parent.

Parents are responsible for transporting students to and from concerts. Dress rehearsals take place in the afternoon on the day of the concert. For a Symphony Orchestra (SYSO) student to leave the Fox facility between the dress rehearsal and the concert, a parent must complete the online **Fox Afternoon Release form**. The other orchestra members from Philharmonic, Sinfonietta, Strings, and SYSA must remain at the Fox between the dress rehearsal and the concert unless accompanied by a parent.

Concert Attire Dress Code

Concert attire is an important part of symphony music as a performance art. The audience experiences the harmony of the orchestra not just by what they hear but also by what they see. The Spokane Youth Symphony requires formal dress for concert performances. For all orchestras, this means **no black jeans or cargo pants, no tight pants (leggings), no casual shoes (no boots or athletic shoes) or low-cut blouses**. More specific requirements are as follows:

Spokane Youth Symphony Orchestra

Ladies: Long-sleeved (or three-quarter sleeved) full-length black dress or long-sleeved (or three-quarter sleeved) black blouse and full-length black skirt or full-length black dress slacks, opaque black stockings, black dress shoes and subdued accessories. No athletic wear or jeans.

Gentlemen: Black suit, white long-sleeved dress shirt, black bow tie, black dress shoes and black socks

Spokane Youth Philharmonic, Spokane Youth Sinfonietta, Spokane Youth Strings, and Spokane Youth Suzuki Academy

Ladies: Long-sleeved (or three-quarter sleeved) white blouse with black mid-calf or full-length skirt or full-length black dress slacks, black stockings and dress shoes, and subdued accessories. No athletic-wear or jeans.

Gentlemen: Long-sleeved white shirt, long black tie, black dress pants, black dress shoes and black socks

If a musician arrives for a concert dressed inappropriately, they will not be allowed to play.

NOTE: Reasonable dress code accommodations will be made in accordance with the SYS non-discrimination policy.

The following online retailers may offer performance attire that meets the dress code requirements for our orchestras:

www.concertattire.com

www.stageaccents.com

tuxedowholesaler.com

Please note that many options offered on these sites do not meet the requirements described above. SYS does not recommend or endorse any specific business.

School Music Policy

The Spokane Youth Symphony strongly encourages all its members to participate in their school music programs. We recognize the vital role played by music educators, both private and public, in training our musicians. Youth orchestras, school music programs, and private teachers share the common goal of training the next generation of musicians, audience members, and arts supporters.

Private Lessons

It is strongly recommended that all our orchestra members receive private lessons. The level of playing in our orchestras requires the involvement of private teachers to provide the necessary background in technical matters. A list of teachers who work with our students is available on our website.

For students who cannot afford the full price of private lessons, a **Private Lesson Scholarship Fund** has been established to assist students who qualify for financial assistance. The information and application for this scholarship will be posted on our website by late August. **An application must be submitted each year, September-May, for which assistance is needed.**

Non-discrimination policy

The Spokane Youth Symphony admits members based on musical ability and potential, as demonstrated in audition. Musicians are selected based on playing ability and instrumentation needs to create a balanced orchestra. The Spokane Youth Symphony does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, creed, religion, political belief, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, or ethnicity in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, or other programs.

For questions regarding the SYS program, write to the SYS office at info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org.

If you have questions concerning personnel, policies, and procedures for the Board President, or a question for a conductor, please write to info@spokaneyouthsymphony.org, and your email will be forwarded to the correct person.