



Houston Youth Symphony

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK 2018/2019

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About Houston Youth Symphony 2018/2019 Season

Established in 1946, Houston Youth Symphony (HYS) is a nationally recognized nonprofit music education program whose mission is to recruit, educate, develop and nurture young musicians and provide them the opportunity to train under professional musicians and perform in professionally conducted concerts.

HYS holds annual auditions for young musicians between the ages of seven and 19. Each season, approximately 400 students are placed in one of five HYS orchestras based on the level of skill shown in that audition. HYS's young musicians come from across the greater Houston area; this season members come from 168 different schools and nine counties.

Professional conductors and instrument section coaches rehearse HYS orchestra members on Sunday afternoons throughout the school year to prepare them for at least three scheduled concerts. The HYS artistic staff has the experience, expertise and knowledge needed to work with repertoire that challenges each member's musical ability. The artistic staff consists of an artistic director/conductor and five conductors. In addition, HYS hires outstanding music professionals on a per session basis to coach members in each of their specific instrumental groups. Young musicians in the two most advanced orchestras are extended opportunities to enhance their orchestral experience through the annual HYS Concerto Competition and the HYS Chamber Music Program.

Many of our members continue their education at some of the country's top music schools and conservatories. Each year, approximately 65% of HYS graduating seniors go on to be music majors at such notable conservatories as Curtis, Juilliard, Eastman, New England, Colburn and Oberlin and highly respected universities including Rice, Houston, Texas, Baylor, Indiana, Southern California and Michigan, to mention only a few. Others take their love of music to prestigious academic institutions such as MIT, Harvard and Stanford, and pursue music as a lifetime commitment in addition to their interests in other fields.

HYS also provides quality free music instruction in the community to 150+ children through two programs targeting low-income families. For more than 10 years, the HYS Melody Program has provided free private lessons to talented youth without the financial means to further their instruction, so that they can become better musicians while helping to improve their school music programs. In January 2015, HYS launched the Coda Music Program, an *El Sistema*-inspired after-school music education and community-building opportunity in Houston's Near Northside neighborhood.

Houston Youth Symphony has been recognized with numerous national awards, including the 2017 American Prize – Youth Orchestra Division and the 2017 Mark of Excellence presented by the Foundation for Music Education. Visit www.houstonyouthsymphony.com and click on "Listen" to hear recent HYS performances.

POLICIES and PROCEDURES**Website**

The website address is **www.HoustonYouthSymphony.com**. All information for members can be found under the “Members” tab located in the top right corner of the home page. This section contains important announcements, all forms including the Absence Form and the season calendar. The e-newsletter *Clef Notes* is sent weekly to members and their designated parent or guardian. *Clef Notes* contains important information regarding rehearsals, concerts and special opportunities. If you do not receive the weekly *Clef Notes* email, or if you prefer to receive information by mail or hard copy, please inform the office staff at rehearsal.

Tuition & Financial Aid

Tuition covers such costs as rent for rehearsal space and concert hall, fees paid to the conducting and coaching staff, music purchase, rental and copying costs, and administration. Tuition rates vary depending on the orchestra:

- ***Symphony, Philharmonia, Sinfonia and String Orchestra:*** Tuition for the season is \$975, which breaks down to approximately \$12 per hour of instruction and performance time.
- ***Preparatory Orchestra:*** Tuition for the Preparatory Orchestra is \$575 for the season, which breaks down to approximately \$10 per hour of instruction and includes two concert performances.

No one is turned away from Houston Youth Symphony because of an inability to pay the tuition. Tuition assistance is available in the form of payment plans and full or partial tuition waivers for qualified Financial Aid applicants through a work-study program. To be considered for financial aid, complete the Financial Aid Form (available on the website or upon request) and mail it with a copy of the first two pages of your 2017 Federal Income Tax Return to Houston Youth Symphony. Each request is reviewed promptly and under the strictest confidentiality.

School Band or Orchestra Participation Policy

In order to support public school music programs, HYS requires all members to have written approval from their school band or orchestra director when such a program exists. In order to uphold this policy, HYS has a School Participation Form that your band or orchestra director must sign. A student who is unable to participate in his/her school band or orchestra program may join Houston Youth Symphony only if the band or orchestra director chooses to sign the School Participation Form. This form is included on the website or upon request, and **must be turned in by August 31**. If the form is not received before the first rehearsal, the musician will not be eligible to participate until the form is signed by the appropriate person and submitted to HYS.

Attendance Policy

An orchestra is a unique team requiring faithful attendance by every one of its members. Any absence has an adverse impact on the quality of preparation and performance. Check your calendar **before** the first rehearsal of each concert cycle and notify the office staff if you are unable to meet the requirements. To help you plan, please review the season schedule posted on the website. Abuse of the attendance policy is grounds for a member to be dismissed from the organization without a tuition refund. Therefore, please abide by the following policies:

- Attendance at all concerts and concert-day dress rehearsals is required. In addition, all members are required to attend the Sunday rehearsal the week prior to each concert. Please schedule college visits or other extra-curricular activities accordingly. If for an unexpected reason a member cannot perform at a concert, it is up to the conductor to decide whether or not the member may continue to rehearse that particular concert cycle.
- Attendance at all rehearsals is expected. However illness, school activities or other extenuating circumstances do allow for a member to miss up to two (2) rehearsals per concert cycle. Seniors in high school are allowed one (1) additional absence per concert cycle to visit out-of-town colleges. Members of the Preparatory Orchestra are allowed to miss up to three (3) rehearsals per concert cycle, because their concert cycle is longer.
- Any student unable to meet the attendance requirement can be asked not to play the remaining rehearsals or the corresponding performance. Students may contact the office and appeal the decision if extenuating circumstances exist, such as death in the family, injury or extended illness.
- Absences that can be anticipated in advance, such as school music programs or trips, must be reported to the administrative office by completing and submitting an Absence Form as early as possible and at least two weeks before the affected rehearsal. Forms are available at every rehearsal and in the “Members” section of the website under forms. Absence forms must be signed by your conductor. If you are ill on a rehearsal day, notify the office by email (HYS@houstonyouthsymphony.com) or phone (713-785-2422) and leave a message for Ms. Worrell. Any undocumented absence is followed-up with an email or phone call.
- Arriving late, leaving early, returning late after the break or failure to sign in may be counted as one-half of an absence.

Rehearsals

Members should:

- **Arrive at least 15 minutes before rehearsal start time** to tune and warm up.
- **Check in with the volunteer orchestra manager and sign the attendance book.**
- **Always bring a pencil and your music stand.**
- Be ready to begin rehearsing before the conductor steps onto the podium.
- For sectionals, find your room and do not move anything until your coach arrives. Do not touch anything in the room.
- Please respect the rehearsal rooms by picking up around your chair. This includes your belongings and all trash.
- No food or beverages, except bottled water, are allowed in the building.

Equipment

Required: All musicians must provide their own music stand at each rehearsal (with your name marked on it).

Required: A mute is required for all string and brass (straight mute) musicians.

Required: Sharpened pencil for marking music.

Recommended: For Preparatory and String Orchestra musicians, we recommend a D'Addario NS Micro tuner for violin/viola and an Eclipse Clip-on tuner for cello/bass.

Music

- Music is distributed to members by mail or at rehearsals.
- Mark parts in pencil only.
- All music must be returned at the end of each concert cycle.
- Music is provided to members for educational purposes only.

Chair Tests and Sectionals

Chair tests are held each concert cycle to determine seating assignments for the upcoming concert. If a member is absent for a chair test, they are placed at the back of the section for that concert cycle. A member can make arrangements to take a chair test early, but under no circumstances may a chair test be taken after the designated date. Chair Test schedules are noted in *Clef Notes*.

Sectionals are conducted during scheduled rehearsals, with specific room assignments available on the bulletin board at the staff table in the main lobby. Feedback from chair tests is available upon request by submitting an email to hys@houstonyouthsymphony.com.

Cancellation of Rehearsal

Houston Youth Symphony might cancel rehearsals due to inclement weather or other natural disasters. In the event of a weather emergency or other situation where a rehearsal might be cancelled, please check the HYS website or tune to KPRC-TV Channel 2 or KHOU-TV Channel 11 for information. If possible, HYS will send email notifications. HYS uses the REMIND application to send important rehearsal text notices. See *Clef Notes* for instructions on how to sign-up for REMIND.

Snack Bar and Break Parties

Each weekly rehearsal includes a 15-20 minute break. Snacks (chips, candy, fruit) and drinks are available for purchase. Prices are 50¢ and 75¢, with exact change preferred. No bills over \$10 are accepted. Each season, at least three Break Parties are planned at which a complimentary snack and drink are provided to musicians. These events are announced in *Clef Notes*.

Houston Youth Symphony Commitment Expectations

HYS members for the 2018/19 season must commit to the following:

Advance Preparation of Parts

- I will learn my part thoroughly **before** the first rehearsal of each concert cycle.
- I will ask my private teacher to help me with difficult passages.
- I will continue to practice my piece(s) outside of rehearsal time.
- I will seek out recorded performances of Houston Youth Symphony repertoire when available and listen as part of my preparation. (YouTube, Amazon.com, iTunes and Spotify are good sources and most libraries carry standard repertoire on CD.)

Regular Attendance and Punctuality

- I have reviewed and understand the attendance policy listed on page 4 in the Members' Handbook.
- I will arrive at rehearsals at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time.
- I will be in the proper place (including sectional rooms) warmed up, tuned and ready to play at the rehearsal start time.
- I will make every effort to attend all rehearsals, especially the Sunday rehearsal the week prior to each concert.
- I will check my calendar at the start of each concert cycle and inform HYS of any schedule conflicts as early as possible and at least two weeks before the affected rehearsal.

Teamwork

- I understand that an orchestra requires teamwork of the highest order and gains its strength from the commitment of each individual member.
- I will faithfully attend every rehearsal (see attendance guidelines) and contribute my share to make the orchestra the best it can be.
- I will rack my chair and clean up my area of any trash at the end of each rehearsal.

The following is for Percussionists only:

Percussion Equipment and Teamwork

- I will arrive at rehearsals 30 minutes in advance to move percussion equipment to the rehearsal areas and get it set up before other orchestra members begin arriving.
- If percussion equipment needs to be moved during break, I will help with the move before taking my break.
- If repertoire calls for small instruments that neither Houston Youth Symphony nor the rehearsal school owns, I will try to bring anything that I have access to.
- I will be responsible for ensuring that all percussion equipment needed for my ensemble's rehearsal is set up, even if I do not play that instrument.
- I understand that I will be called on to fill in on other percussion parts in the event of an absence.
- I will ensure HYS percussion equipment is accounted for and in its proper place/properly stored at the end of each rehearsal.

Dress Code for Concert Days**I. Formal Concert Attire for Gentlemen in the Symphony, Philharmonia and Sinfonia:**

- A. Full tuxedo dress including:
 - 1. White long sleeve dress shirt
 - 2. Black bow-tie and cummerbund
 - 3. Black button studs preferred
 - 4. Black socks
 - 5. Black dress shoes

- B. Hair should be neatly groomed

*Before rehearsal on Sunday, **September 16, 2018**, Al's Formal Wear Tuxedo Company is available to measure any member who would like to purchase a tuxedo. Tuxedos can be purchased from Al's Formal Wear for approximately \$115 and \$55 for shoes, plus tax.*

II. Formal Concert Attire for Gentlemen in the String Orchestra:

- A. Black suits including:
 - 1. White long sleeve dress shirt
 - 2. Black bow-tie
 - 3. Black socks
 - 4. Black dress shoes
- B. Hair should be neatly groomed

III. Formal Concert Attire for Ladies in Symphony, Philharmonia, Sinfonia and String Orchestras:

- A. Full length (**to the ankle**) black dress or two-piece ensemble with long or three-quarter length sleeve (**below the elbow**).
 - 1. No low cut tops, exposed midriffs or backs
 - 2. No ornate designs such as sequins, beading, open weaves, lace, embroidery or see-through areas
 - 3. No long slits to the side, back or front
- B. All ladies must wear black hosiery and black dress shoes with closed toes and closed heels – **no sandals or exposed feet**
- C. Hair should be neatly groomed and any hair ornaments should be modest
- D. Make-up should be simple
- E. Any jewelry should be modest and not interfere with playing the instrument; studs or small earrings preferred
- F. Palazzo pants (**wide leg dress pants**) rather than a long skirt are permitted for those who play cello, bass, tuba, harp or percussion

*New this year, Al's Formal Wear will have a ladies concert attire option available for order on **September 16, 2018** (exact details to be announced in Clef Notes). Other sources include Burlington Coat Factory and online at www.concertblack.com or www.formalwear-outlet.com. Please make sure attire is in line with HYS requirements!*

IV. Concert Attire for Preparatory Orchestra: Preparatory Orchestra musicians (both ladies and gentlemen) should wear long-sleeved black tops, long black slacks or long black skirts, black socks and black shoes. No exposed feet or ankles, please.

(continued)

Dress Code for Concert Days (continued)

Members must come to the final dress rehearsal on concert day in full concert attire. If attire or any accessory is deemed unacceptable, the HYS staff reserves the right to make changes to a member's attire.

Dress check is scheduled for October 21, 2018. All concert attire must be approved by the administrative staff at this time. No changes can be made to the concert dress once it has been approved. Failure to dress according to the guidelines stated above for a performance jeopardizes your opportunity to perform on that day.

Concert Day**Dress Rehearsals:**

Symphony, Philharmonia, Sinfonia, String Orchestra: Concert day dress rehearsals are held at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. All orchestra members must come fully dressed to their rehearsal in concert attire and must sign in with their orchestra manager upon arrival. Dress rehearsals for each orchestra are scheduled as follows:

Symphony: 12:00 p.m.

Philharmonia: 1:00 p.m.

Sinfonia: 1:45 p.m.

String Orchestra: 2:30 p.m.

Students are expected to ***arrive 20 minutes before*** the scheduled dress rehearsal time. ***Please note timings for the Winter Concert may differ.*** Refer to the weekly e-newsletter *Clef Notes* for the most up-to-date information.

Preparatory Orchestra: The Preparatory Orchestra performs two concerts each season, a December concert and a Spring Concert. Concert details will be announced in *Clef Notes*, including times and locations.

Concert Tickets: General admission tickets to the Fall, Winter and Spring concerts are \$15, or \$10 for children 18 and under. They are available at Sunday rehearsals and on the HYS website starting three weeks prior to each concert date. HYS members do not need a concert ticket to listen to the concert. Group discounts are available for purchases of ten or more tickets. Call the HYS office for group discount details. The Preparatory and Chamber Music concerts are Free.

Concert Video Recording and Photography: HYS engages a professional videographer to record each concert. Videos are made available on the HYS Vimeo page and are free for streaming and available by download for a small fee. ***Absolutely no individual video or photography is permitted in the concert hall at Rice University.***

Concert Parking at Rice University: Each HYS member is provided one FREE parking pass per concert. These are handed out at a Sunday rehearsal prior to each concert. Additional parking passes may be purchased for \$5 at Sunday rehearsals prior to the concert. Parking passes are NOT available on the day of the concert. Visitor parking at Rice University is available at \$2 for each 20 minutes, credit card required for entry and exit (maximum \$12). This information is subject to change.

Concert Etiquette: Houston Youth Symphony is committed to providing its musicians and its audience members with a beautiful and memorable concert experience. To help ensure this, we have a few requests:

- Enter the concert hall during designated pauses only. If you arrive late, please let the ushers help you enter the hall at an appropriate break, and take the first available seat. You can find your party at the next pause.
- HYS concerts are general admission seating. The saving of seats is strongly discouraged.
- A 10 minute pause occurs between each orchestra. This is the time to visit the restroom.
- Young children may not have the attention span or discipline to sit still for 20 minutes or more. Please sit toward the rear of the hall and exit quietly if your child becomes restless.
- Do not text or use tablets or smart phones that might be distracting to others (this includes video games).
- Silence all cell phones and any devices that might make a noise.

*This information is provided as a general guide.
Please refer to Clef Notes for the most up-to-date information.*

Code of Conduct and Grounds for Dismissal

Members of Houston Youth Symphony must conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of the conductors, coaches, staff, parents, volunteers and fellow members. Disruptive, disrespectful or mean-spirited behavior will not be tolerated. This includes all HYS-sponsored activities and in virtual media including Facebook and other social outlets.

Use care and attention in handling of instruments. Respect the property of others, especially the facilities and venues where HYS rehearses and performs.

Members are not permitted to leave the rehearsal site during the scheduled rehearsal time without proper notification to HYS staff.

All members must silence cell phones upon entering an HYS rehearsal or concert venue, put them in a secure location (purse, pocket or instrument case) and leave them there until leaving the building. This policy is strictly enforced by conductors and coaches, who have the authority to confiscate a cell phone for the duration of rehearsal if necessary.

An infraction of the HYS Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

Immediate dismissal from Houston Youth Symphony could result for any of the following reasons:

- Engaging in undisciplined behavior or illegal activities while participating in Houston Youth Symphony functions. This includes, but is not limited to, vandalism, theft, or the use of illegal substances, including alcohol or tobacco products.
- The possession of a weapon.
- Expulsion from school.
- Missing a concert without properly notifying the conductor or administrative staff.

If a dismissal occurs, there is no tuition refund.

HARASSMENT POLICY

For more than 70 years, Houston Youth Symphony (HYS) has gained Houston's respect as an arts organization that champions the cause of music education for young people. HYS is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for young musicians participating in its programs so that they may study, create, and perform at the highest artistic level.

Policy:

Houston Youth Symphony does not tolerate any inappropriate behavior or contact towards its students, conductors, staff or any other individuals associated with the organization.

Inappropriate behavior or contact includes, but is not limited to, physical, mental, verbal, or sexual harassment of any kind.

Complaint Procedure:

If you believe you have been subjected to conduct that violates this policy or witnessed any such conduct, or otherwise have reason to believe any such conduct has occurred, you must, as soon as possible, report the incident(s) to the Executive Director or other member of the artistic staff, or any member of the Board of Directors of HYS (contact information provided on page 12 of this Handbook).

HYS will promptly investigate all allegations of harassment and take appropriate corrective action where warranted. To the extent possible, HYS will maintain the confidentiality of all information related to the complaint and investigation. (Individuals making reports are protected under the HYS Whistleblower Policy.)

Additionally, any person having cause to believe that a student's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person must immediately make a report of such conduct to appropriate law enforcement and other governmental agencies of the State of Texas as required by Chapter 261 of the Texas Family Code.

No one will be subjected to any form of adverse action for good faith reporting of incidents of harassment or otherwise inappropriate behavior that may violate this policy, or for pursuing any claim in connection with such conductor, or for cooperating in any related investigation. Additionally, no employee will be terminated, or otherwise discriminated against, for: (1) making a good faith report of child abuse or neglect through appropriate channels (including to the person's supervisor, the Executive Director or other member of the artistic staff, any member of the Board of Directors of HYS, a state regulatory agency, or a law enforcement agency); or (2) initiating or cooperating with an investigation or proceeding by a governmental entity relating to an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

Consequences:

If a complaint is found to have merit, appropriate corrective action will be taken. Such action may include immediate discipline, up to and including termination of employment or removal of the individual from all HYS programs. If warranted, including where required by law, information will be turned over to the appropriate authorities.

(Harassment Policy continued)

Communications & Monitoring:

A copy of this policy will appear in the HYS Members' Handbook, and the policy will be made available to parents and guardians of children in all HYS programs.

HYS shall conduct annual background checks on seasonal and part-time staff, to include a national felony database search and sex-offender registry search. All teaching staff will be provided with a memorandum outlining appropriate staff behavior and a copy of this policy and must acknowledge, upon hiring and annually, their receipt and understanding of the HYS harassment policy.

Full-time staff and members of the HYS Board of Directors and Advisory Board will be subjected to a background check every three years. Full-time staff will complete sexual harassment awareness training once every three years.

Adopted by the HYS Board of Directors May 2, 2018

Contact Information for Reporting

Sarah Loudermilk, Executive Director: cell 713/419-9883; sarah@houstonyouthsymphony.com

HYS Board of Directors, executive committee – 2018/19 Season

Cathy Hartley, President: cell 713/398-6503; cathyhartley@me.com

Rose Ann Medlin, Vice President: cell 713/703-3564; roseann.medlin@gmail.com

Blake Wilkins, Vice President-Artistic: cell 281/744-3887; bwilkins@uh.edu

Georgia Struthers, Secretary: cell 914/907-8145; ajassoc2107@yahoo.com

Rusty Guinn, Treasurer: cell 979/864-7900; William.guinn@gmail.com

Ryan Jewett, Asst. Treasurer: cell 713/702-8830; ryanjewett@gmail.com

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

For Symphony and Philharmonia members:

Houston Youth Symphony Chamber Music Program

The HYS Chamber Music Program is offered to members of the Symphony and Philharmonia and is highly recommended for students considering a career in music. The Chamber Music Program allows participants to deepen their skills as musicians and leaders and creates for them performing opportunities that enrich the community and broadens and diversifies Houston Youth Symphony's audience. Each ensemble receives professional coachings and rehearsals on Sundays before orchestra rehearsals. Master classes with guest artists are also made available to ensembles, including an ongoing partnership with the St. Cecilia Chamber Music Society. HYS ensembles perform throughout the season in area public libraries, community centers, hospitals and assisted living communities. The season culminates with a recital in Duncan Recital Hall at the Shepherd School of Music on Sunday, May 12, 2019 (Mother's Day). Additional information, including tuition and an interest form, is available on the HYS website.

For Symphony members only:

Houston Youth Symphony Concerto Competition**Entry Deadline: Sept. 23, 2018*****Up to \$1,000 in total Prize Money for the Winners!*****Entry Fee: \$50**

The HYS Concerto Competition is used to select soloists to perform with the Symphony orchestra at one of the scheduled concerts. Any Symphony member in good standing (all forms submitted) may apply. ***The Symphony conductor must approve repertoire before your application is submitted.*** The conductor checks for suitability of performance by the orchestra, as well as for the availability of orchestral parts. The number of concerto winners is dependent on the season's repertoire. The competition is typically held in October and is adjudicated by a panel of independent judges. The entry form is available on the HYS website.

Concerto Competition Rules:

1. Open to Symphony members only.
2. Concerto Competition Forms and \$50 entry fee must be submitted by September 23, 2018.
3. You may play a single-movement work (like Saint-Saëns *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*) or one movement of a multi-movement concerto. Repertoire must be approved by the conductor prior to the submission of an application. You will be notified if your piece is acceptable by your conductor within two weeks of submission.
4. Pieces must be timed accurately, including all tuttis, and submitted on the entry form.
5. Movements must be **10 minutes or less**, unless approved by the conductor.
6. Works must be memorized. Please provide the original music and two copies for the three adjudicators.
7. Piano accompanists must be used and provided by the applicant.
8. For the purposes of the audition, your accompanist must cut long orchestral tuttis.
9. Each audition lasts approximately 8 minutes, allowing 2 minutes of each 10-minute slot for entering, tuning and leaving. The panel may interrupt you if your piece, as prepared for audition, lasts longer than 8 minutes.
10. The audition schedule, once finalized, is strictly adhered to and you forfeit your opportunity to play if you are tardy.
11. Taped auditions are not accepted.
12. Winners of the Concerto Competition must wait one full season before applying again.

OFFICE PHONE: 713-785-2422

OFFICE FAX: 713-785-5261

MAILING ADDRESS: 4550 Post Oak Place Dr., Suite 245, Houston TX 77027

EMAIL: hys@houstonyouthsymphony.com

WEBSITE: www.HoustonYouthSymphony.com

Administrative Staff

Sarah Duck Loudermilk

Executive Director

Email: sarah@houstonyouthsymphony.com

Amy Chung

Associate Director (including HYS Chamber Music Program)

Email: amy@houstonyouthsymphony.com

Jordon Nickerson

Operations Manager

Email: jordon@houstonyouthsymphony.com

Diane Worrell

Volunteer and Administrative Coordinator (part-time)

Email: diane@houstonyouthsymphony.com

Artistic Staff

Michael Webster, Artistic Director and Conductor of the HYS Symphony

Michael Alan Isadore, Conductor of the HYS Philharmonia

Brad Smith, Conductor of the HYS Sinfonia

Carolyn Vandiver, Co-Conductor of the HYS String Orchestra

Ann Victor, Co-Conductor of the HYS String Orchestra

Jackson Guillén, Conductor of the Preparatory Orchestra and Coda Music Program Director

To contact a member of the artistic staff, email HYS@houstonyouthsymphony.com.

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