Musician Handbook

Revised Fall 2026

The Menomonee Falls Symphony Orchestra (MFSO) exists to bring quality music to the greater Menomonee Falls area and to provide an opportunity for capable musicians from all walks of life to continue performing and sharing their love of music with the community. The MFSO is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization.

Membership

Membership in the orchestra is available based on its needs for qualified musicians through an audition process with adjudication by the Music Director, Section Principal, and/or audition committee members. Titled Chairs will be auditioned by the Music Director, sections member(s), and at least one principal from a related instrument family. Depending on section needs, musicians will be placed in the orchestra or put on a substitute list. Some sections rotate part assignments. All part assignments are coordinated between the section leaders, Personnel Manager, and the Music Director. The Music Director has the final decision on part assignments and seating.

Volunteers

Currently, there are no member dues required to be a member of this community orchestra. However, we ask that all members help promote the concerts to family, friends, and co-workers through word of mouth and social media. We also ask that members help promote the ad and sponsorship campaign and to participate in any fundraisers that the board decides to do, including ticket sales for all concerts and the annual raffle baskets for our February concert. Volunteers are essential to support our concert. We ask all musicians to volunteer themselves and to ask their friends and family members to help when needed.

Sheet Music Care and Returns

Members are responsible for maintaining and returning all library sheet music in excellent condition after each concert, as directed by the Librarian. Because music is often rented or borrowed, any replacement fees or fines for unreturned music will be passed on to the responsible member.

To reduce costs, much of our repertoire is available digitally through the website's member portal for printing or use on tablets. While the librarian can print copies upon request, members are encouraged to utilize digital options or print their own copies to help the orchestra minimize printing expenses.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held in the band room at Hamilton High School in Sussex on Monday evenings from 7:00 PM to 9:15 PM, with a 10-minute break. MFSO's season begins August 1st and ends April 30th. Please see the Member Page on the MFSO website for the schedule of rehearsals for this season.

All members are expected to be seated and warmed up before the tuning process begins promptly at 7:00 PM. During tuning and all announcements, members are asked to please refrain from talking or making unnecessary noise.

All members are asked to help with set-up and take-down as directed.

- The Music Director makes every effort to make MFSO rehearsals relaxed and fun, while still upholding professional standards and expecting intelligent and respectful behavior from the musicians. Maintaining focus on the Music Director and the music are key factors.
- We request that members refrain from making critical comments about the performance of other members. Addressing individual members' development needs is the responsibility of the Music Director. If you have an issue with another member, please follow the Grievance Process outlined below.
- If using paper sheet music, bring a pencil with an eraser to rehearsals.
- Questions or interruptions at dress rehearsals should be kept to those of critical importance. We rely on each member's courtesy and good judgement in these matters!
- An occasional joke or "wise crack" is also part of our rehearsal style. Conversations among groups of people during rehearsal or other sideline activities may be disrupting and should be limited to break time or before and after rehearsal.
- Please adhere to the communication protocol hierarchy: Please proceed in the following manner: Section leader; Personnel Manager; Music Director; The Board President or Vice President.
- For musical or technical reasons, additional rehearsals may be scheduled if deemed necessary by the Music Director. Your utmost effort to attend is appreciated.

Rehearsal Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is crucial to the orchestra's success, and all members are expected to attend every rehearsal. While occasional absences are unavoidable, we ask that you prioritize your commitment to the ensemble. Missing two or more rehearsals during a concert cycle may result in the Music Director reassigning your part, adjusting your seating, or arranging for a substitute player.

If you need to miss a rehearsal, please contact the Personnel Manager (mfso.personnelmgr@gmail.com) and CC the President of the MFSO Board of Director's (mfso.pres@gmail.com) as early as possible, but no later than 5:00 PM on the day of rehearsal. Absences can greatly influence the repertoire that can be worked on during a given rehearsal.

If a rehearsal is canceled due to inclement weather or illness, all members will be notified as soon as a decision is made via email (and a notice will appear on the Member Page of the MFSO website). If rehearsal is not canceled, but you do not feel safe driving, please inform the Personnel Manager as outlined above.

Concerts

Typically, the MFSO performs one summer outdoor concert, three traditional concert hall concerts, and our annual Valentine's concert in February at Davian's. Dress rehearsals for the three traditional concert hall concerts are usually the evening before, beginning at 7:00 PM (again, as with regular rehearsals, please be seated and warmed up prior to tuning at 7:00 PM); and concerts begin at 7:30 PM. Unless announced differently for a concert, all members are expected to be at the venue no later than 7:00 PM and ready for tuning before 7:30 PM. Dress rehearsal and concert times for our summer and February concerts can vary and musicians will have these times available in the member portal of the website. Musicians are expected to be in the venue 30 minutes before the concert begins.

Refer to the member page of the MFSO website for the dates of the current season's concerts.

All members are asked to help with set-up and take-down as requested by the Director of Operations. Again, please remember to return all music.

Concert Participation

Our Commitment to the Ensemble: Attendance & Concert Policy
Every musician plays a critical role in our collective success and musical advancement. Because consistency is so important to our ensemble's sound, we ask for the following commitment each year:

- Musicians are expected to participate in at least 3 of our 5 seasonal concerts.
- Section Principals are expected to participate in at least 4 of our 5 seasonal concerts.

Concert Cycle Attendance & Leave

We understand that volunteer musicians may occasionally need to miss a concert cycle. The MFSO's season is from August 1st through April 30th. To ensure well-balanced sections for every performance, we will request your concert availability for the season with a participation survey emailed no later than April 30th. Please return your response by May 15th.

If you know you must miss a complete concert cycle, please note the following procedure:

- Contact the Personnel Manager: All absence requests must be submitted directly to the Personnel Manager (not your section principal).
- First-Come Basis: To ensure we don't leave any section short-handed, excused absences are capped per section and granted in the order they are received.
- Principal & Key Positions: If you hold a leadership or key post, your absence must be coordinated with and approved by the Music Director as well.

Please note that if a musician cannot meet these participation standards, the Music Director reserves the right to reassign parts, adjust seating, or, if necessary, ask the musician to step down for the remainder of the season.

When a substitute musician is needed for a concert, the Personnel Manager will work with the section leader to find and invite a substitute. The Music Director's approval is needed before the invitation is given.

Concert Attire

Please see the Member Page on the MFSO website for details on concert attire.

Additionally:

- **Scent-Free Environment**: Please do not wear perfumes, colognes, or strongly scented products to any rehearsals or concerts.
- **Community & Summer Concerts**: Standard attire consists of an official MFSO logo polo shirt, black trousers or a long skirt, and closed-toe black shoes. Orchestra members are required to purchase their own polo shirt, which can be ordered through the Manager of Business Relations.
- **Themed Events**: For summer and other themed concerts, the dress code may be adjusted to a more casual style at the sole discretion of the Music Director.

Grievance Process

The MFSO wants all musicians to enjoy their experience as a member. If a situation arises, we ask that you please talk to your section leader. If a satisfactory response is not received, please put your grievance in writing to the Personnel Manager (mfso.personnelmgr@gmail.com). The Personnel Manager will talk with the President of the Board and/or the Music Director to determine a course of action. All grievances will be addressed promptly.

Grievance Confidentiality Policy

The orchestra is committed to maintaining confidentiality throughout the grievance process. Access to grievance filings, investigations, and proceedings is strictly restricted to the authorized parties reviewing the matter. All participants are expected to respect and maintain this confidentiality.

Removal from Orchestra

Failure to follow the above expectations, missing too many rehearsals, missing a dress rehearsal or concert without prior permission, and disruptive or negative behavior may result in being placed on probation or dismissal from the orchestra. This notification will be made in writing by the Music Director with input from the Personnel Manager and the MFSO Board of Directors if needed.

A musician may contest this probation or removal by responding in writing to the Music Director. As a final step, the musician may then contact the President of the Board to seek a resolution.

Get Involved!

A community orchestra is dependent on its members and volunteers to be successful. Please consider sharing your other talents to ensure the continued success of the MFSO. Some ways you can become involved: joining the Board of Directors; encouraging someone you know with the correct skills, to join the Board of Directors; publicity; growth of audience; the Side-by-Side Invitational; and grant writing. Please contact any MFSO Board Member if you are interested, and your name will be passed along to the correct individual, who will then get in contact with you.

Website: www.mfso.net (Member Password: mfso)

Facebook: Menomonee Falls Symphony Orchestra