



## **BRAZOS VALLEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** **MUSICIAN MANUAL OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Table of Contents:**

1. **Personnel** (Page 2)
2. **Rehearsals and Performances** (Page 3)
3. **Player Chair Assignments** (Page 3)
4. **Principal Player Responsibilities** (Page 4)
5. **Audition Procedures** (Page 4)
6. **Tenure Process** (Page 4)
7. **Orchestra Representation** (Page 5)
8. **Orchestra Member Voting Rights** (Page 5)
9. **Dismissal Procedures** (Pages 5-7)
10. **Player Grievances** (Page 8)
11. **Schedules** (Page 8)
12. **Leave of Absence** (Page 8)
13. **Dress Code** (Page 9)
14. **Library Policy** (Page 9)
15. **Performance Recordings** (Page 9)
16. **Updates to Contact Information** (Page 9)

## **1. PERSONNEL**

The Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra (BVS0) is comprised of professional musicians contracted for musical service. Every player who agrees to perform in the Orchestra throughout its concert season shall enter into a written contract agreeing to abide by the rules and regulations of the orchestra as set forth in this document as well as all conditions set forth in the individual contract. A signature on the individual contract indicates agreement to the conditions as set forth.

The Personnel make up of the BVS0 will consist of the following classifications:

1. Tenured Musicians: Those who have achieved Tenure status through a process that is outlined in section 6 of this manual
2. Probationary Musicians: Those who have recently been hired by the BVS0 through an audition for a tenure-track position (see section 5: Auditions and Section 6: Tenure Process)
3. Substitute Musicians: Those who are hired on a concert-by-concert basis and are not guaranteed any set number of performances with the BVS0.

The minimum number of Tenured Musicians shall be as follows:

- 8 First Violins
- 6 Second Violins
- 4 Violas
- 4 Cellos
- 4 Double Basses
- 2 Flutes
- 2 Oboes
- 2 Clarinets
- 2 Bassoons
- 4 French Horns
- 3 Trumpets
- 3 Trombones (including Bass)
- 1 Tuba
- 1 Timpani
- 2 Percussion

Each of the vacant tenure-track chairs after the 2013 Season will be filled by auditions (section 5). Musicians that are already tenured as of 2013, or are in the process of becoming tenured, are grandfathered as tenured despite the number of available tenured positions available. If those musicians in the process of becoming tenured successfully complete this process, they too will be granted tenure. In this manner, any position that exists as tenured may be reclassified, at the discretion of the Music Director, if that position fits outside of these established minimums.

## **2. REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES**

- a. Players are expected to arrive at the hall at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time and must be seated in their chairs five minutes before the rehearsal begins.
- b. Rehearsals shall begin with announcements and communications to the orchestra (as needed).
- c. A professional attitude is expected from all players and the Music Director throughout all services associated with the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra. Preparation of musical material is expected of each member of the orchestra before the first rehearsal of a series.
- d. All rehearsal services, including dress rehearsals, are 2.5 hours in duration with a scheduled 15-minute break. If overtime is necessary at any given rehearsal it will be called by the Music Director. Musicians will be compensated for overtime according to the guidelines set forth in the individual contract.
- e. If an orchestra member accumulates an unexcused absence from any rehearsal service for which they are contracted, the Music Director, with sole authority, can determine whether that musician will perform with the orchestra. Failure to meet any or all of the above requirements may result in an individual's dismissal from the orchestra as outlined in section 9 of this document.

## **3. PLAYER CHAIR ASSIGNMENTS**

- a. Assignment of players to specific chairs is up to the Music Director's judgment. The Music Director may change the seating within a section at his/her discretion. A principal player can only be rotated with mutual agreement between the Music Director and the individual musician.
- b. Emergency substitutions of individual players will be made by Management (Executive Director or Designee) in consultation with the Music Director.
- c. Any form of reduction or enlargement to the orchestra, on a concert per concert basis, is at the sole discretion of the Music Director.

#### **4. PRINCIPAL PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The principal players will be responsible for establishing high standards for their respective sections. These players must be available to offer assistance to individuals within their sections. The Concertmaster shall receive the string parts from the librarian immediately after the arrival of rented or purchased material for the purpose of establishing bowings. The principal string players are responsible for making sure the bowings have been received from the Concertmaster prior to the first rehearsal of each concert and for imparting any subsequent bowing changes to their sections.

#### **5. AUDITION PROCEDURES**

Player vacancies will be filled by auditions arranged by the Orchestra Committee (section 7) in conjunction with the Music Director. There will be two types of auditions that the BVSO will hold:

1. Audition to fill a vacancy of a Tenure-Track Position.
2. Audition to supplement the pool of substitute musicians that can be called upon on a concert-by-concert basis.

Advertised auditions will specify which type of audition will be taking place. The Chair of the Orchestra Committee will coordinate all logistics as they pertain to these auditions. Duties to include, but not limited to, setting audition dates, assembling listening panels, and general notification of specific vacancies.

#### **6. TENURE PROCESS**

After the 2013-2014 Season, all musicians accepted for membership in the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra through an audition for a tenure-track position will initially be considered Probationary. The Probationary period will not last for longer than two full concert seasons, during which a grant of tenure may be given in the following ways:

1. Written notification from the Music Director of such a grant of tenure, which may be done at any point during the Probationary Period.
2. The signing of a third consecutive season contract shall constitute an automatic grant of tenure.

There is no guarantee that a grant of tenure will be given and at any point during the Probationary Period, the Music Director may ask the musician to re-audition. Notification of this re-audition will be no less than 4 weeks in advance of the proceedings.

Substitute musicians are not eligible for tenure, but are welcome to audition for a tenured position when a specific audition is announced.

## **7. ORCHESTRA REPRESENTATION**

A committee that is selected by vote will represent the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra at Board of Directors' meetings. This committee will consist of not less than three tenured members of the orchestra. Once elected, a Committee member's term will be one full year from the time of election. Members of the Committee can serve multiple terms, either consecutive or non-consecutive, provided that:

1. The Committee member performs his or her duties satisfactorily.
2. The membership of the orchestra is satisfied with their work.

Voting amongst the orchestra membership, whether for new Board Representation or to re-elect current members, will take place during the first Fall concert each season. Voting procedure for the Brazos Valley Symphony is outlined in Section 8.

The Orchestra Committee, once elected, will choose a Committee Chair amongst their membership. Members of the Orchestra Committee shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors as a voting member. The Chair of the Orchestra Committee shall also attend all meetings of the Executive Committee of the Brazos Valley Symphony Society as a voting member.

A member of the Orchestra Committee shall attend all meetings of the Orchestra Conductor Selection Committee of the Brazos Valley Symphony Society as a voting member.

A member of the Orchestra Committee shall attend all meetings of the Concert Development Committee as a voting member.

## **8. ORCHESTRA MEMBER VOTING RIGHTS**

Tenured orchestra members may be asked by the Orchestra Committee to vote on issues pertaining to orchestra governance. Any change voted upon by the orchestra must then be voted upon and approved by the BVSS Board of Directors. A simple majority vote will carry any measure put before the orchestra. Probationary and substitute musicians do not have voting rights.

## **9. DISMISSAL PROCEDURES/ RESIGNATION OF TENURED MUSICIANS**

Dismissal from the orchestra can occur due to musical incompetence or for other reasons. Dismissal due to incompetence would include inability to meet performance standards and/or inability to meet attendance requirements. Dismissal for reasons other than incompetence would include insubordination and/or inability to work with other orchestra members.

### **A. DISMISSAL FOR INCOMPETENCE OF A TENURED MUSICIAN:**

The dismissal and appeal procedure for incompetence is in seven (7) steps and shall be conducted as follows:

**Step 1. Verbal Warning:** The Music Director or the Executive Director shall give the musician involved a verbal warning which includes specific problems to be corrected. This warning will be given in private. A written notice of the warning, including the specific problems to be corrected, shall be given to the Orchestra Committee by the Music Director or the Management (Executive Director or Designee) no later than two weeks after the verbal warning was issued to the musician.

**Step 2. Letter of Jeopardy:** If the problems are not resolved, the tenured musician shall then receive a Letter of Jeopardy from the Management (Executive Director or Designee) stating that his or her position with the orchestra is in jeopardy, and the specific reason(s) for the impending action. A copy of this letter shall be sent simultaneously to the Orchestra Committee and the Music Director.

**Step 3. Meeting with Music Director and Management (Executive Director or Designee):** A tenured musician, having received a letter of jeopardy, may request, within five (5) days, a meeting with the Music Director and Management (Executive Director or Designee), which shall be granted. One Orchestra Committee member of the musician's choice shall be present at this meeting.

**Step 4. Notification of Dismissal:** Written notification of dismissal shall be given to the tenured musician from the Management (Executive Director or Designee) no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the meeting with the Music Director. A copy of this notification of dismissal shall be sent simultaneously to the Orchestra Committee and to the Music Director. If hand-delivery is not feasible, receipt shall be deemed to occur upon the expiration of five (5) days after the mailing by certified mail of such notification of dismissal to the last known address of the musician with return receipt requested. Notification may also be sent via email.

**Step 5. Written Appeal:** Within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the notification of dismissal, a tenured musician may file a written appeal with the Orchestra Committee and the Executive Director.

**Step 6. Hearing with Music Director, Executive Director, and Orchestra Committee:** The Music Director, Executive Director, and all members of the Orchestra Committee shall grant a meeting to the musician within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written appeal. The Musician may be required, at the request of the Music Director or the Orchestra Committee, or may voluntarily choose to perform a playing demonstration at the hearing. The party requiring or requesting the playing demonstration shall inform the Orchestra Committee or the Music Director, who shall then inform, in writing, the remaining parties. The musician shall be given fourteen (14) days advance written notice of the playing demonstration date by the Orchestra Committee. The notice shall include a list of repertoire selected by the Music Director.

**Step 7. Action Following Hearing:** The Chair of the Orchestra Committee shall notify the Executive Director immediately of the decision to uphold or oppose the dismissal. The decision shall be arrived at by simple majority secret vote. The Music Director's vote shall count one (1), and each Orchestra Committee member shall have one (1) vote. In case of a tie, the dismissal shall stand.

B. DISMISSAL FOR REASONS OTHER THAN INCOMPETENCE OF A TENURED MUSICIAN:

If the Management (Executive Director or Designee) is considering termination of a tenured musician for reasons other than incompetence, the following six (6) step dismissal and appeals procedure will apply:

**Step 1. Letter of Jeopardy:** A Letter of Jeopardy shall be sent to the musician by the Management (Executive Director or Designee) stating that his/her position with the orchestra is in jeopardy and stating the facts that have precipitated the letter.

**Step 2. Request for Meeting:** A musician having received a letter of jeopardy may, within five (5) days, request a meeting with the Executive Director or Orchestra Manager, which shall be granted. The musician, if desired, shall have a representative of the Orchestra Committee present at this meeting.

**Step 3. Notification of Dismissal:** Written notification of dismissal shall be given to the musician by the Management (Executive Director or Designee). A copy of this notification of dismissal shall be sent simultaneously to the Orchestra Committee and to the Music Director. If hand-delivery is not feasible, receipt shall be deemed to occur upon the expiration of five (5) days after the mailing by certified mail of such notification of dismissal to the last known address of the musician. Notification may also be sent via email.

**Step 4. Written Appeal:** A tenured musician may file a written appeal with the Orchestra Committee and the Executive Director within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the notification of dismissal.

**Step 5. Hearing with Executive Director and Orchestra Committee:** The Executive Director and all members of the Orchestra Committee shall grant a hearing to the musician within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the letter.

**Step 6. Action Following Hearing:** The Chair of the Orchestra Committee shall notify the Management (Executive Director or Designee) immediately of the decision to uphold or oppose the dismissal. The decision shall be arrived at by simple majority vote. The Executive Director's vote shall count one (1), and each Orchestra Committee member shall have one (1) vote. In case of a tie, the dismissal shall stand. In lieu of dismissal, the Orchestra Committee and the Executive Director may decide on a lesser punishment; i.e., suspension for no more than two (2) subscription concerts.

### C. RESIGNATION OF A TENURED MUSICIAN:

If a tenured musician wishes to resign a letter of resignation needs to be sent to the Executive Director. The resignation shall become irrevocable if acknowledged in writing by the Executive Director within 10 calendar days.

#### **10. PLAYER GRIEVANCES:**

a. An orchestra member who believes he or she has been treated unfairly by the Music Director, Management (Executive Director or Designee), or other Orchestra Representative may submit their complaint in writing to the Chair of the Orchestra Committee. The Orchestra Committee shall meet to evaluate the merits of the complaint. Following such a meeting, the Orchestra Committee has fifteen (15) days to respond to the complaining member.

b. For those complaints which the Orchestra Committee deem to have merit, a written request for information and/or explanation will be sent to the involved person(s), if needed. Such persons will have no less than fifteen (15) days to respond in writing to the Orchestra Committee. The Orchestra Committee may invite the complaining Member to appear before it.

c. The Orchestra Committee shall attempt to reasonably facilitate in the resolution of member problems. If a decision is necessary by vote, each committee member receives one (1) vote. A simple majority will carry any measure put to vote.

#### **11. SCHEDULES**

Each musician will be provided with a tentative schedule of rehearsals and concerts annually. When changes in the rehearsal dates/times are necessary, written notice will be mailed or emailed to the orchestra members at least two weeks in advance of the modified rehearsal. Orchestra members shall not be held accountable for rehearsals missed or for being late to rehearsals that have been changed from the original schedule, provided they notify Management (Executive Director or Designee) prior to the rehearsal.

Orchestra members shall notify Management (Executive Director or Designee) at least one month in advance of a scheduled concert if they cannot play or will miss rehearsals for reasons other than illness, family emergency or work emergency. Notification must be in writing and approval must be received to consider the absence excused.

#### **12. LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

A request for a leave of absence by any Tenured Musician shall be in writing to the Executive Director with a copy sent to the Orchestra Committee Chair. The Executive Director must approve the request and agrees to give a written decision within thirty (30) days. Leave of Absence requests may not exceed the equivalent of one full orchestra season.



### **13. DRESS CODE**

A musician's personal appearance is an integral part of his or her performance and has a substantial impact on the Orchestra's general image and reputation. Members of the Orchestra must therefore be neat, well groomed and properly attired at all services in conformity with the customary professional style of regional and major orchestras in the United States. The Management (Executive Director or Designee) shall determine the acceptability of the attire. Perfumes, scented soaps, or any cosmetic that produces a strong scent are also not permissible.

#### FORMAL CONCERTS

WOMEN: Conservative long black skirt or full black dress pants and black blouse or long black dress, black hose, and black shoes. NOTE: Skirt length must be long enough to cover knees while seated and sleeve length must be elbow length or longer. Skirts with side slit openings that expose the thigh when seated are not permissible.

MEN: Black tuxedo pants and coat, white tuxedo shirt with black bow tie. Black dress shoes with black socks. Black vest is permitted, but not required.

#### INFORMAL CONCERTS

MEN and WOMEN: Dress for these types of concerts will be announced prior to concert.

The Management (Executive Director or Designee) is responsible for enforcing the above dress code.

### **14. LIBRARY POLICY**

It is the player's responsibility to keep music and folders in good condition and return them at the conclusion of each concert series as directed by the Librarian. String players should not combine parts from their folder with those of their stand partner. Players are financially responsible for lost music and/or additional fees levied due to late return of rental copies. Fines assessed to the Symphony from publishers will be passed on to the musicians involved. Failure to comply with the above policy may result in dismissal as stated in Section 9 of this document

### **15. PERFORMANCE RECORDINGS**

Performances may be recorded and utilized for concert advertisement and/or Symphony promotion and/or fundraising through all forms of electronic media. Any broadcasts of performances shall be of public service or non-profit nature.

### **16. UPDATES TO CONTACT INFORMATION**

Each player shall keep the Management (Executive Director or Designee) advised at all times of his/her current contact information, which includes address, phone number, and email address.