

Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra

Handbook

2008—2009

Why an Orchestra Members' Handbook?

This handbook has been prepared by the Brooklyn Heights Music Society Board of Directors to help orchestra members understand the structure and some of the behind-the-scenes goings-on of our orchestra. In the handbook, you'll find information including:

- A brief history
- The orchestra's current operations
- Players' responsibilities
- The season schedule

Please take the time to read it through to find out how our orchestra is run and to think of ways that you might be able to contribute.

Handbook Coordinator
2008-2009
Sarah Richards, Recording Secretary

All locations, dates, and times are subject to change.
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1. Overview of the Organization

Mission statement

We are a volunteer and self-governing group whose aim is to play music for our own pleasure as well as for the enjoyment of our audience.

History

In 1972 a group of Brooklyn Heights residents, business people, music lovers, and performers met and formed an organization designed to promote great music (both classical and modern), to inspire our youth with a love of culture through music, to give credit to the many men and women who are dedicated to the world of music, and to bring enjoyment to the entire community. With these goals, the Brooklyn Heights Music Society began its work.

The Society was incorporated in 1973 as a not-for-profit corporation. The original by-laws mandated that the Society be governed by a Board of Directors comprising community members as well as players from the orchestra. The orchestra became entirely self-governing (i.e., run solely by the players) at the beginning of the 1993/94 season.

From 1972 through 2000, the Brooklyn Heights Orchestra performed at the historic Church of St. Ann and The Holy Trinity, located at Montague and Clinton Streets in Brooklyn Heights. When the church closed its doors in late 2000, the orchestra began playing concerts at Walt Whitman Hall at Brooklyn College, and changed its name to the Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra. We returned to St. Ann's Church for all the orchestral concerts of the 2004/05 season. Nicholas Armstrong has been the Music Director/Artistic Director of the orchestra since our 1995/96 season. Arturo Delmoni served as Music Director from 1983 to 1993, and Joe Eggers led the orchestra before that.

In addition to the five symphony orchestra concerts each season, the Society sponsors chamber orchestra concerts at various locations, including Garfield Temple in Park Slope and the Poly Prep School in Bay Ridge. We also participate in an array of annual festivals, street fairs, house tours, and fundraising activities. Thanks to a generous start-up grant from the Double-R Foundation, the Brooklyn Heights Music Society is pleased to be able to sponsor a Youth Orchestra beginning in the 2008-2009 season. You can learn more about this group through our website.

Current Operations: Musical Logistics

Symphony Concerts

Our five orchestral concerts each year are held at St. Ann's Church in Brooklyn Heights. Our programs feature selections from the standard classical music repertoire, balanced with occasional 20th century pieces. We often program a work by a living, local composer.

Orchestra concerts are held on Sundays and start at 3 pm. Concerts are free, with a suggested donation of \$15 (students free). It has become our custom to hold a post-concert reception. Players are asked ahead of time to sign up to bring food or drinks.

Personnel

Artistic Director

The Artistic Director, Nicholas Armstrong, is responsible for the musical leadership of the orchestra and is instrumental in planning the overall vision of the group. He conducts four of the five orchestral concerts each season plus at least four of the summer reading rehearsals, proposes additional concerts and events, and oversees orchestra personnel. The Board of Directors appoints the Artistic Director, negotiating tenure and terms of a contract.

Concert Master/Mistress

The concert mistress, Kelly Howard, leads the first violin section and provides musical leadership on bowings and musicianship to all string instruments. She collaborates with the Artistic Director on musical interpretation and issues prior to each concert, and contributes artistically in numerous other ways.

Players

New string players are asked to audition by playing a prepared section of any piece for the Artistic Director and string section leaders at the beginning of the fourth rehearsal in a given concert cycle. The Artistic Director makes the judgment of acceptance into the orchestra. The orchestra has a core of wind and brass players according to traditional classical period orchestra scoring. When we program pieces that call for a larger group, the extra players are contacted and arranged for by the principals of each section, according to the wishes of the Artistic Director. We get to know new players through recommendations or by having them sit in at rehearsals and summer readings.

Rehearsals

All rehearsals take place on Monday nights, from 7:15 to 10 pm, at St. Ann's Church, located on the corner of Clinton and Montague Streets. A dress rehearsal (usually on a

Thursday) is also scheduled prior to each concert.

Please enter through the box office door on Montague St. Feel free to eat in the parish hall, but please refrain from bringing food or drinks into the church itself. We recommend players bring a stand and a pencil to each rehearsal.

We usually take a refreshment break from 8:45 to 9:00. The refreshment coordinator provides refreshments, and monetary donations to the cookie jar are encouraged. Announcements are made prior to the refreshment break. Players help set up and clear the chairs and tables before and after each rehearsal.

Guest Conductors

Each season, we invite a guest conductor to lead us for one of our concerts (and for all the rehearsals leading up to that concert). The Board selects the guest conductor, and he or she proposes a program, which the Board approves before the schedule is finalized.

Program Selection

Each spring, the Artistic Director and the next season's guest conductor propose programs for the upcoming year. The Board of Directors votes on these proposals, suggesting changes where it seems necessary. Players may make program suggestions to the Artistic Director. It has become our policy to not repeat any pieces we have played within the previous five years.

Current Operations: Running of the Society

There are a variety of activities and initiatives that support the day-to-day operation of the Society. The Board of Directors carries out and oversees these activities, enlisting broad participation from orchestra members.

Local Composers

We occasionally play pieces that are written by a living local composer. Interested composers submit a score and a tape of their piece, if available. The pieces generally

run about 10 to 15 minutes.

Chamber Orchestra Concerts

From time to time, we organize chamber orchestra concerts. A fall concert is sometimes held at Garfield Temple in late September or early October, and a chamber group has been enlisted for the Borough Hall June fundraiser for the past two years. Generally, five rehearsals are scheduled for each chamber orchestra concert. The Artistic Director chooses players; people who are interested in playing in these concerts can approach the Artistic Director for an audition. Programs for these concerts are usually from the Baroque/Classical repertoire, and usually feature the string sections.

Chamber Music Series

Various self-directed chamber music groups (quartets and the like) have performed at branches of the Brooklyn Public Library, particularly the Cadman Plaza location. Chamber groups have also played at house tours, the annual Party on the Barge, fundraisers, and street fairs. Such chamber groups are excellent emissaries for the Society and may include outside players.

Summer Reading Rehearsals

On six Mondays each summer (usually early June through late July), the orchestra holds reading rehearsals from 7:30 to 9:30 PM in order to read through new pieces. These are more casual sessions, with no obligation (or opportunity!) to prepare the music ahead of time. Guest conductors are often invited to lead us for two sessions of each summer; this gives variety in musical leadership and an opportunity to evaluate candidates for the regular season's guest conductor spot.

Publicity & Outreach

The orchestra's website (www.brooklynsymphonyorchestra.org) provides up-to-date information about all activities, and is a primary resource for audience and interested musicians. We are always making an effort to build our mailing and e-mail lists, which are maintained in a database.

Concert Publicity

In advance of each of our five symphony concerts, we carry out:

- Poster distribution by zip code
- Poster distribution by mail with a letter explaining intent to churches and synagogues

- Inter-library approval and dissemination to all public libraries in Brooklyn
- Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra website
- Mail distribution of postcard concert announcements to BSO mailing list
- Concert announcement e-mail blasts to addresses on e-mail list
- Exposure on BRIC (Brooklyn Tourism Council) website and e-mail blasts to BRIC e-mail list
- Press releases for the concert to publicity outlets, including local papers in Brooklyn
- Television listing on BCAT
- Word of mouth from individual orchestra members

Players are encouraged to add their interested friends' names and contact info to the BSO mailing list. You may email the information to Emily Malinowski, at emilymalinowski@gmail.com.

Festivals and Street Fairs

Each year there are several street fairs throughout Brooklyn, including:

- Atlantic Antic, late September/early October
- Back to Brooklyn, early June

The Society frequently sponsors a table at these events, which is an excellent way for us to conduct outreach to the community. We hand out our season mailer and sell CDs and other merchandise. Our table is generally staffed by two volunteers, usually working in two-hour shifts.

Events

Members of the orchestra sometimes host events in their homes to help introduce the orchestra to the community. For example, Jeff Brous, a first violinist, hosted a "Friendraiser" at his Greenpoint apartment (which was intended to introduce new potential donors to the orchestra) in May of 2008. Please let the Board know if you would like to host or help plan one of these home-based events.

Programs

A program is designed and published for each concert. Program notes are typically written by the Artistic Director or another designated person, and edited by the program coordinator. Members of the orchestra, the Board of Directors, and the Society's funders are listed in the program.

Concert Management

Friends of the orchestra staff the box office at concerts. We always need non-playing volunteers to collect concert donations, sell merchandise, and set up the reception at each concert.

Budget

The Society's fiscal year runs August 1 through July 31. Major expenses include:

rental on our rehearsal and performance spaces; honoraria to the Artistic Director, concertmaster/mistress, and soloists; music rental, postage, publicity, and the printing of our concert programs. The Treasurer makes regular financial reports at Board meetings, and a copy of these reports can be provided to any player who is interested.

Fundraising

The Society raises funds from a variety of sources, and finding new contributors is an ongoing priority. Current funding sources include:

- Member dues
- Generous individuals
- Concert donations
- Contracted services (e.g., chamber concerts at the Brooklyn Public Library)
- Corporate foundation and government grants
- Fundraising events
- Merchandise sales (CDs, T-shirts, tote bags)

Foundations and Government Grants

Foundation and government support has been received from a number of sources, including the New York Department of Cultural Affairs, the Double-R Foundation, the Brooklyn Arts Council, Assemblywoman Joan Millman, and the Independence Community Foundation.

Fundraising Events

At the end of each season, the Society holds a fundraiser. For many years, this was held at Bargemusic on the Fulton Ferry Landing. In June 2007, we held an Italian Serenade evening at Brooklyn Borough Hall, and we returned to this location for an Evening of English Music in June of 2008. No matter which venue we use, volunteers are always needed to perform all sorts of jobs, from decorating the space to picking up the food donations to setting out the food to helping with cleanup.

Annual General Meeting

The Society has an annual meeting, usually in April or May, to discuss officer elections, review the previous year of operation, and discuss the coming season. The election of officers is typically held in May.

Board of Directors and Coordinators

The Board of Directors

The Brooklyn Heights Music Society is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of about twenty individuals who are elected annually. The Board creates the vision for the Society, plans our seasons, sets orchestra policies, makes other decisions (such as program selection), negotiates contracts when necessary, and generally plans and carries out the work of the orchestra.

The Board meets about once a month, on designated Sunday evenings (meeting places to be announced) to consider orchestra business. Non-Board members are invited to attend but aren't eligible to vote until they attend three consecutive monthly board meetings and are elected by the Board; they are then eligible to vote, starting at the fourth meeting they attend. The Board can elect new voting members during the Society's fiscal year.

The Society's governing policies are set out in the by-laws of the Brooklyn Heights Music Society and Policies of the BHMS. Both documents are available to anyone upon request (in print form).

Elected Officers

There are three elected officers on the Board of Directors: President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary. In addition, there are sixteen "Coordinators," who are also elected. Terms are for one year, and are renewable upon reelection. There are no term limits.

President, Stephen Painter

The President of the Board of Directors wears many hats (public spokesperson, organizer, strategist, cheerleader, etc.) and keeps the entire organization focused and in motion. S/he has overall responsibility for running the orchestra, and must make sure that things get done, by delegating and then following up at all levels.

Treasurer, Carlos Camposeco

The Treasurer manages the finances of the orchestra. This includes paying the bills, making deposits, reconciling income with expenses, handling insurance matters, filing taxes for the Society, and presenting regular reports at Board meetings.

Recording Secretary, Sarah Richards

The Recording Secretary takes minutes at monthly meetings and then distributes them to Board members. S/he tallies election ballots and orchestra surveys, and updates the BSO Handbook.

Coordinators

In addition to the President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary, other Board members hold important jobs and are generally referred to as the coordinators." These jobs and functions frequently overlap. Below is a breakdown of these jobs:

Concert Coordinator, Rachel Coates

Sets up box office, oversees collection of money and distribution of programs at the concerts.

Database Coordinator and Audience Development, Emily Malinowski

Updates database of players' and members' names and contact information, and works to expand the database in a productive manner. Also oversees audience surveys and thinks of ways to expand our audience.

Design Coordinator, Alex Kale

Creates graphic design for season brochure programs, postcards, brochures, website, and invitations.

Flower Coordinator, Mary Louise Geering

Purchases flowers for concerts.

Fundraising Coordinators, Rachel Coates and Carlos Camposeco

Researches and submits funding proposals to government and corporate funding sources.

Librarian, Ryan Teynor

Reserves and picks up library music. Numbers, distributes, and collects parts.

Merchandise Coordinator, Christy Vaughan

Develops and oversees sales of orchestra merchandise, such as CDs, T-shirts, mugs, and tote bags.

Personnel Coordinator, Alan Katz

Works with the Artistic Director and section leaders to staff the orchestra for each given concert.

Program Coordinator, Meghan Zaneski

Creates and edits copy for concert programs. Coordinates advertisements, program notes, performer bios, and personnel list. Coordinates production with the program designer.

Publicity Coordinator, Karen Zuegner

Writes and sends press releases to publicity outlets, and oversees the distribution of flyers and posters.

Reception Coordinators, Sarah Richards and Eileen Kale

Organizes food sign-up, setup, and cleanup of concert receptions.

Refreshments Coordinator, Open

Purchases and sets out snacks for the rehearsal breaks.

Special Event Coordinator, Open

Oversees all details of carrying out fundraising events like the Spring Gala, An Evening of English Music, and the Italian Serenade.

Summer Reading Rehearsal Coordinator, Sarah Richards

Works with Artistic Director on music selection and guest conductor invitations, and helps to publicize schedule.

Website Coordinator, Mo Barrett

Maintains website, overseeing and implementing design and content changes.

Youth Orchestra Manager, Rachel Coates

Works with the BSO Artistic Director and Youth Orchestra Conductor to schedule auditions, arrange rehearsals, distribute music, and perform other duties related to the Brooklyn Symphony Youth Orchestra.

At-large Board Members

Jeff Brouse

Mary-Louise Geering

Jill Jefferson

2. Responsibilities of the Players

Musical Duties and Responsibilities

We come together in pursuit of several common goals: to read and rehearse programs

of music, to present to the public concerts of the highest artistic levels, and to enjoy each other's company socially. In order to achieve these goals, we have agreed on the following guidelines:

Rehearsals

Rehearsals take place Monday evenings from 7:15 to 10 PM as well as the Thursday evening preceding each concert (or as scheduled). Players should arrive at rehearsals at least ten minutes early to set up their chairs and stands, to get their music, and to warm up. Players should be seated and ready to play at the appointed rehearsal time. There should be a pencil with an eraser on each stand, and all musical instructions from the conductor should be notated. Players are expected to practice their parts outside of rehearsal and arrive prepared to work on ensemble issues. Each player is encouraged to bring a music stand, although there are stands at St. Ann's which can be borrowed for the rehearsals.

Attendance

The schedule for orchestra rehearsals and concerts is established prior to each season. It is the responsibility of wind and brass players to provide subs when they are unable to attend a rehearsal. String players should notify their section leaders ahead of time. While it is understood that work obligations and family emergencies occur that will necessitate unforeseen absences, it is important to attend as many Monday night rehearsals as possible. A player may miss no more than two Monday rehearsals for each concert. The dress rehearsal is mandatory for all players.

Section Leaders

Section leaders oversee seating and make sure the section plays as an ensemble. String section leaders are responsible for bowing the front desk parts by the third rehearsal and ensuring their section members copy the bowings correctly into their own parts.

Section leaders should communicate freely with the Artistic Director to discuss appropriate seating of players, to identify suitable substitute and adjunct players, and to maintain a list of substitute players in conjunction with the personnel coordinator.

Music Policy

A \$10 annual music fee is required from each player, to help cover rental costs and lost part fees for the music we play. Each player needs to sign out musical parts and return the music after each concert. If a numbered part is missing after the concert, the signee will be billed for the cost of replacing the part.

Concerts

Players are asked to arrive at 1:15 on Sunday afternoons prior to each 3 PM concert for a warm-up. Concert dress is black attire for women; dark suit, white shirt and long tie for men. Men and women should wear dark shoes and black hosiery.

Nonmusical Duties and Responsibilities

Dues

All active players are expected to pay annual \$50 dues. Those who cannot pay because of financial hardship should notify the president, who will assign an orchestra job in lieu of dues. Only those paying dues are considered members of the Brooklyn Heights Music Society. Dues payers are listed as “Sponsors” in concert programs.

Serving on Committees and Helping Out

While playing music together is our main purpose, the success of the all-volunteer Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra is ultimately dependent on the non-playing contributions of our members. Therefore, in addition to playing and paying dues, players are asked to contribute substantively outside of rehearsal time. Throughout the year, Board members will ask people to help with various projects, and everyone is encouraged to contribute time to these activities.

There are many nonmusical ways players can help in the running of the orchestra. Each player should get involved in an area that utilizes his or her talents and interests. In addition to these established jobs, we also need people who can donate special services as they arise. These may include: legal counsel, accounting, graphic design, providing vehicles to help transport instruments to rehearsals or concerts, or providing food for fundraising and special events. You may have a special talent or hobby that might be an asset to the organization. Don't be shy: talk to any Board member if you have an idea you would like to share.

Bring your Friends and Family

Orchestra members should be active in expanding our audience, contributing names to our mailing list (you can send new contact info to Emily Malinowski, emilymalinowski@gmail.com), and putting the orchestra in contact with potential contributors. Audience surveys consistently show that word-of-mouth from orchestra members is the number one draw to our concerts.

Having Your Say

This is your orchestra, and you can have a voice in how we operate. Orchestra members are involved in the selection of the Board of Directors through an election

process held every spring. All players are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting, also held in the spring. All players and members who attend three consecutive monthly board meetings and are elected by the Board are then eligible to vote, starting at the fourth meeting they attend.

Rehearsal and Concert Schedule, 2008-2009 Season

CONCERT 1: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 at 3 pm

Rehearsals:

Monday September 8

Monday September 15

Monday September 22

Monday September 29

Monday October 6

Tuesday October 14

Monday October 20

Thursday October 23

CONCERT 2: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 at 3 pm

Rehearsals:

Monday November 3

Monday November 10

Monday November 17

Monday November 24

Monday December 1

Monday December 8

Thursday December 11

CONCERT 3: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22 (AT ST. ANN'S) at 3 pm

SUNDAY, MARCH 8 (AT POLY PREP) at 3 pm

Rehearsals:

Monday January 5

Monday January 12

Tuesday January 20

Monday January 26

Monday February 2

Monday February 9

Tuesday February 17

Thursday February 19

Monday February 23 (Rehearsal for Poly concert, at St. Ann's)

Monday March 2 (Rehearsal for Poly concert, at St. Ann's)

CONCERT 4: SUNDAY, APRIL 19 at 3 pm

Rehearsals:

Monday March 9

Monday March 16

Monday March 23

Monday March 30

Monday April 6

Monday April 13

(Tuesday April 14)

Thursday April 16

CONCERT 5: SUNDAY, MAY 31

Rehearsals:

Monday April 20

Monday April 27

Monday May 4

Monday May 11

Monday May 18

Tuesday May 26

Thursday May 28

Friday May 29

**BROOKLYN SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA CONCERT: SUNDAY,
JUNE 14 3 p.m.**

SUMMER READING REHEARSALS 2009

June 15

June 22

June 29

July 6

July 13

July 20