



ETHOS

YOUTH ENSEMBLES

Parent/Student Handbook 2024-2025

Ethos Preparatory Choir
Ethos Apprentice Choir
Ethos Reading Orchestra
Ethos Chamber Orchestra
Ethos Camerata Orchestra
Ethos Wind Symphony
Ethos Jazz Ensemble
Ethos Music Academy



Letter from the Executive Director

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2024-2025 Season of the Ethos Youth Ensembles. This Handbook outlines procedures that will make this organization run smoothly. Please take time to read through this as a family and share all important information with the stakeholders who will help each student musician succeed. Also, please make sure to complete the Registration/Tuition Form found at EthosMusic.net.

Of course, this wonderful music would not be possible without the generous financial support of many individuals, corporations, and foundations. If you know of an individual or business who would support Ethos with financial or in-kind donations, please contact me and we will reach out to them!

Finally, please thank your school-based music teachers! We are all indebted to their service and Ethos exists to supplement what they do for our community every day. Take what you learn here and become leaders in your school and church-based ensembles!

I look forward to seeing you throughout this year!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian T. Russell".

Brian T. Russell, DMA

Executive Music Director, Ethos Youth Ensembles

brussell@ethosmusic.net

History of the Ethos Youth Ensembles

The Ethos Youth Ensembles were founded in 1997 as the **Murfreesboro Youth Orchestra** with seventeen string musicians. The Orchestra rehearsed in a portable classroom at Middle Tennessee Christian School and performed two concerts. Under the expertise of MYO Founder and *Conductor Emerita* Susan Mullen, the organization quickly grew in number and quality, and in only one year expanded the MYO to include winds/percussion and established the Preparatory String Orchestra.

During the 2000-2001 season, both ensembles began rehearsing and performing at Middle Tennessee State University, beginning a long and fruitful relationship with the MTSU School of Music. The combined membership of both ensembles grew to nearly 100 students in grades 3 through 12.

In 2008, Sara Beth Geith was named the second Music Director of the Murfreesboro Youth Orchestra. The Murfreesboro Youth Jazz Orchestra was founded in 2011, expanding the artistic footprint of the organization.

In 2014, Brian Russell was named the third Music Director of the Murfreesboro Youth Orchestra, further expanding the organization's offerings to include a Wind Symphony. The organization changed its name to the **Ethos Youth Ensembles** in the fall of 2015, adding Children's Choirs to the list of ensembles. In 2016 the Ethos Music Academy was founded, offering beginning-level group instruction for strings. The Ethos Children's Choirs join the listing of musical offerings in Fall 2024.

Over the years, the Murfreesboro Youth Orchestra/Ethos Youth Ensembles have commissioned new works, performed alongside the area's finest performing ensembles, and achieved high levels of artistic excellence in performance and programming. Over two thousand students have gone through the organization's ranks, establishing the Ethos Youth Ensembles as an important cultural and educational institution in Middle Tennessee.

What does “Ethos” mean?

Ethos is most well-known as one of Aristotle’s three types of appeals – ethos, pathos, and logos – that a writer/speaker may use as a means of persuasion. However, the ancient Greeks also used this word to refer to the power of music to influence its hearer’s emotions, behaviors, and even morals. According to a belief system they held called *The Doctrine of Affections*, they believed that music could restore balance and literally heal the body. In Aristotle’s philosophical work *Politics*, he argued that **music should be a part of every student’s education because of its power to influence the soul.**

ethos (n.): the effect of musical study on one’s guiding beliefs and character

Mission Statement

The mission of the Ethos Youth Ensemble is to promote the optimum musical development and education of young musicians through the study and performance of a diverse curriculum of challenging ensemble music. The Ethos Youth Ensembles aspire to increase community awareness of and participation in the musical experiences of the youth in our area.

Academy Classes

Year One Beginning String Classes Grades 2-5. August through April. Group lessons designed as the first exposure to string instruments. Students will perform at the December and April Concerts.

Year Two String Classes. Grades 3-6. August through April. Group lessons for those who have already successfully completed the Beginning string classes. Students will perform at the December and April Concerts.

Ensembles

The Ethos Chamber Orchestra. Grades 7-12. September through April. The Chamber Orchestra is a small, elite ensemble of advanced string players who specialize in standard repertoire for chamber string ensemble. Allison Cowan, conductor.

The Ethos Camerata Orchestra. Grades 3-8. September through April. Camerata is a string orchestra of elementary and middle school students that performs arrangements of standard literature. Laura Shaw, conductor

The Ethos Reading Orchestra. Grades 3-8. September through April. Camerata is a string orchestra of elementary and middle school students that performs arrangements of standard literature. Laura Shaw, conductor

The Ethos Jazz Ensemble. Grades 8-12. November through April. The Jazz Band is an ensemble specializing in traditional jazz literature for big band and focusing on jazz techniques and improvisation. Bob Chandler, conductor.

The Ethos Wind Symphony. Grades 8-12. November through April. The Wind Symphony performs literature for symphonic band and wind ensemble with an emphasis in contemporary works by living composers. David Aydelott, conductor.

The Ethos Preparatory Choir. Grades 3-5. September through April. The Preparatory Choir focuses on sound vocal technique, music literacy, and piano skills. Brian Russell, conductor.

The Ethos Apprentice Choir. Grades 6-8. September through April. The Preparatory Choir focuses on sound vocal technique, music literacy, and piano skills. Brian Russell, conductor.

New Member/Seating Auditions

Auditions are required for the Ethos Children's Choirs, Camerata Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, and Wind Symphony.

Audition dates, requirements, and sign-ups for all ensembles are found on the Ethos website.

Personal Conduct/Rehearsal Procedures

Each member of an Ethos Ensemble will approach each rehearsal, concert, and event with a level of respect and professionalism deserving of the Art we produce. This means students will:

1. Treat conductors, administrators, guests, and all adults with respect.
2. Treat your peers as you would wish to be treated.
3. Be in their seats and ready to begin rehearsal at least ten (5) minutes prior to the start of each rehearsal.
4. Avoid chewing gum or eating food in rehearsal.
5. Turn OFF and put away electronic devices during rehearsal. (No texting, audio or video recording is to take place).
6. Be prepared with his/her folder and a pencil at rehearsals.

First Offense to these guidelines:

Warning by the Conductor

Second Offense:

Parent contact by Conductor

Third Offense:

Removal from the Ensemble

Students removed from the Ensemble for disciplinary reasons are not entitled to a tuition refund.

Students shall be provided a learning environment free from sexual, racial, ethnic, disability, and religious discrimination, bullying and harassment.

The bullying of other students or persons, regardless of the method or medium use (including social or other electronic media, within our outside of Ethos events) is strictly prohibited. Students violating these policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal from Ethos.

Attendance Policy

All Ethos students must attend and remain for the duration of each rehearsal, dress rehearsal, and performance. Two or more absences during a concert cycle (all rehearsals, including special and dress rehearsals, through each concert) may result in the student's not participating the concert. Arriving late or leaving early will count as 1/2 of an absence. Two (2) tardies will be counted as one absence.

The Ethos Youth Ensembles exist to supplement the school-based ensemble and curriculum. As such, students should never miss a required rehearsal or concert for his/her school-based ensemble for an Ethos rehearsal. Absences caused by school-based ensembles will always be excused, but if they exceed two absences per concert rotation then the student should contact the conductor for an individual consultation regarding the student's eligibility to perform in that concert.

Students removed from a concert rotation due to excessive absenteeism are not entitled to a tuition refund.

Students/Parents must email conductors as soon as a conflict arises. Knowing about absences in advance enables the conductor to structure the rehearsal for those attending.

Dress Rehearsals

Dress rehearsals are mandatory! This is the last full ensemble rehearsal before the performance. The dress rehearsal usually takes place in the concert hall. Musicians who miss a dress rehearsal, for any reason, may be excluded from playing the concert. The conductor will make the final decision as to whether a musician will or will not play the concert. Unlike its name, you need NOT be dressed in performance clothes for dress rehearsals, unless otherwise directed by your Conductor.

Concerts/Tickets

Concerts are held at various locations and dates across the area. Tickets are \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for students (college students and minors).

Tickets will be available online or at the door.

The 2024-2025 Concert Season is outlined in detail at www.EthosMusic.net.

Inclement Weather Policy/Holidays

All Ethos Youth Ensembles follow Rutherford County Schools' cancellations for inclement weather. However, exceptions will be made for various reasons. Thus, **Ethos Ensembles will not meet when RCS is closed for weather UNLESS you hear differently from an Ethos Conductor or Administrator.** The primary means of notification when a rehearsal is cancelled will be Remind alerts (see below), so it is recommended that all students and parents/guardians sign up for this free service.

The Ethos Youth Ensembles do not always observe the same holiday calendar as some school systems. Please take note of the calendar on the Ethos Website.

Communications

Communication is a two-way street. To contact your conductor:

- Email (see each conductor's page at EthosMusic.net)
- Call Ethos at 615.274.9647

Conductors/Staff may contact students/parents via:

- Email addresses you submit on the online registration form
- Phone numbers you submit on the online registration form

- Social Media
 - Facebook.com/EthosYouthEnsembles
 - Twitter.com/EthosYouth
 - Instagram.com/EthosYouth
- Text messages via Remind.com
 Remind is a free service whereby students and parents can ‘enroll’ in a text messaging group for each Ethos Ensemble. Conductors can send text blasts to the entire group confidentially; nobody sees your cell number or the conductors’ numbers. All students and every parent/guardian is encouraged to sign up for Remind text alerts to ensure you get last-minute cancellations, etc. Instructions on how to sign up for Remind alerts will be available at the first rehearsal and on the Ethos website.
- The Ethos website will be the central hub of information for the Ethos Youth Ensembles.

Attire

Chamber Orchestra, Camerata Orchestra, & Wind Symphony:

Formal Black Dress with sleeves

Black/Nude Hosiery

Black closed-toe dress shoes

OR

Black Pants and Black Shirt/Blouse (coat optional)

Black closed-toe dress shoes

or

Full Black tuxedo or Black Suit (pants and coat)

Wing-Tip Tuxedo Shirt

Black Bow Tie

Black Cummerbund optional

Black dress socks

Black dress shoes

Ethos Jazz Band:

- Concert Black:
- Black Dress Shirt/Blouse
- Black Dress Pants
- Black Dress Socks/Hosiery
- Black Dress Shoes
- Black Sportcoats optional but encouraged

Academy Students and Children’s Choir:

- White button-down shirt/blouse
- Black Dress Pants/Slacks/Skirt
- Black Dress Shoes and Appropriate Socks/Hosiery

Tuition

Tuition rates for Ethos classes and ensembles are as follows:

**Ethos Academy Classes, Chamber Orchestra, Camerata
& Children’s Choirs**

\$365 up front *or* \$48.00 per month (September through April)

Ethos Wind Symphony and Jazz Band

\$272 up front *or* \$48.00 per month (November through April)

Since Ethos is a long-term program and commitment, tuition is based on what it takes to fund the program for the year. Therefore, the monthly pro-rated amount exists as a convenience to families to spread out the yearly tuition rate over a period of time. It’s important to note that some months will have 4-5 Ethos rehearsals and events; others (October, December, and April, for example); will have fewer. When families pay the first monthly payment at their first rehearsal, the remaining monthly tuition payments will automatically come out on the 1st of each month.

In order to minimize the handling of paper materials during the global pandemic, **Ethos will only accept tuition via automatic bank draft (no checks or cash).** Payments should never be given to conductors, with the exception of the Executive Director.

Families with multiple students in one or both orchestras are eligible for sibling discounts. The discounts are as follows:

1st student: Full Tuition

2nd student: 20% discount

3 or more students: 40% discount

Failure to pay tuition according to the schedule above will result in a student's removal from the concert. Tuition is non-refundable.

Kroger Community Rewards

Do you shop at Kroger? The Kroger Community Rewards Program is an easy way you can help support the Ethos Youth Ensembles! Simply visit www.kroger.com/communityrewards and register your Kroger Plus Card for the Ethos Youth Ensembles (at the time of this handbook's printing, the organization is still listed under "Murfreesboro Youth Orchestra." Both names will support us.). Then, whenever you shop and use your Kroger Plus Card, a percentage of your purchases will come back to Ethos!

Amazon Smile

Amazon Smile is a program where Amazon.com donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to charitable organizations. You get the same prices and selection, but Ethos will get a donation back from your online purchases! Simply visit smile.amazon.com and register for the Ethos Youth Ensembles. Then, when you go to purchase items, go to smile.amazon.com and shop!

TBR Charitable Giving Campaign

Any employee of the Tennessee Board of Regents can choose the Ethos Youth Ensembles (currently listed as the Murfreesboro Youth Orchestra) as the recipient of the TBR Charitable Giving Campaign. This pre-tax donation will go directly to Ethos.

Scholarships/Financial Aid

Need-based financial assistance is offered to musicians in any Ethos Youth Ensemble who meet criteria established by the Board of Directors. The organization has budgeted funds available and our commitment is to provide financial aid to families in need. Partial and Full tuition scholarships can be awarded; no member of any Ethos Ensemble may receive financial assistance greater than the total of the annual tuition of his/her respective ensemble.

Application forms for Financial Aid Scholarships are available on the Ethos website. The Board of Directors will keep all application information confidential and money will be awarded without regard to gender, race, religion, creed, or nationality.

Students on scholarship are still expected to participate in Fundraising Activities.

Registration Materials

Each student must have a parent/guardian complete the Student Registration Form on the Ethos Website prior to auditioning.

In addition, parents must complete the Handbook Acknowledgement Form, Video/Photography Release Form and the Medical Form. These three forms, available on the Ethos website, must be returned to the ensemble conductor at the first rehearsal of the season.

Calendar

A full calendar with information for all Ethos Youth Ensembles is kept on the Ethos website. Each family is responsible for information kept on that calendar.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is vital to the best possible musical experience for all who participate. Parent volunteers an important part of ensuring the Ethos Youth Ensembles' success. Through their involvement, parents gain a better knowledge of the organization, provide an invaluable parental perspective and motivate the staff. If you are interested in becoming more involved, contact Brian Russell, Ethos Executive Director, at brussell@ethosmusic.net.

Instrument Insurance

Each student is responsible for providing the insurance required for his or her instrument. This is often covered under the family's homeowner's insurance policy. Check with your individual insurance agent to verify such coverage or that your instrument is properly insured. Ethos insurance policies does not cover individually-owned instruments.

Strings Alive!

The Ethos Youth Ensembles provide an instrument lending program for the purpose of assisting string players who may not be able to purchase their own instruments. These instruments are available at no cost to interested students who then assume responsibility for proper care and protection of the instrument assigned to them. Insurance coverage is provided by the Ethos Youth Ensembles. Instruments are assigned on recommendation of the conductor and based on the availability of specific instruments.

The following guidelines have been established for the Strings Alive! program:

- The student must take private lessons or be enrolled in an Ethos Technique Class;
- The student may use the loaned instrument for one season.
- The student assumes responsibility for the care and routine maintenance of the instrument, including replacing strings and supplying rosin for bows.

Contact your conductor for specific information or visit the Ethos website.

Admissions Policy

Any student can be admitted to the Ethos Music Academies. Admission into the Ethos Youth Ensembles (Chamber Orchestra, Camerata Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, Wind Symphony) is by audition only. Membership is open to students in or below grade 12. Ethos exists to supplement the school-based and church-based ensembles, not replace them. We expect students to remain in their school bands and orchestras and school and church choirs. Instrumentalists must be a member in good standing of their school-based musical ensemble when available. Vocal students must be a member in good standing of their school-based ensemble when available and, if feasible, an age-appropriate choral ensemble based in their religious institution. In the absence of these ensembles, students must be enrolled in ongoing private lessons or Ethos Technique Classes in order to remain a member in good standing of the Ethos Ensembles. Membership is based on musical ability. Members are selected without regard to gender, race, religion, creed or nationality.

Staff

David Aydelott	Wind Symphony Conductor
Bob Chandler	Jazz Band Director
Allison Cowan	Ethos Academy Teacher Chamber Orchestra Conductor
Dr. Brian Russell	Music Director/Executive Director Children's Choirs Conductor
Laura Shaw	Ethos Academy Teacher Ethos Camerata Orchestra Conductor Ethos Reading Orchestra Conductor



www.EthosMusic.net