

Elementary Honor String Orchestra



What is Honor String Orchestra?

Honor String Orchestra is made up of the most advanced string students selected from each elementary school in the district. It is a group that will provide students with the opportunity to take the skills they have been practicing on their instruments, both individually and in class, and apply them to an orchestral group setting. This performance-based ensemble will give those who are at the head of their music classes an extra set of challenges and motivation that will lend to continued success at the next developmental levels.

Who can join Honor String Orchestra?

Any student currently participating in strings class at school is welcome and encouraged to audition for Honor String Orchestra. An enthusiastic, hard working attitude is essential for any potential Honor String Orchestra member. Students who are accepted must be willing and able to practice additional music that will be more advanced than the music they are receiving in their weekly music class.

Also of note is that, although the Honor String Orchestra is comprised of mixed grade levels, the majority of Honor String students are in the 5th grade. As such, the instructional style and dynamics of our rehearsals are geared toward the maturity level of 5th graders. Additionally, the popularity and audition interest for Honor Strings have been increasing in recent years. In order to maximize opportunities for qualified students to participate, only those enrolled in the fourth or fifth grade school strings program will be eligible to audition for the Honor String Orchestra beginning in the 2014/2015 school year .

When are Honor String Orchestra rehearsals and performances?

For students who are accepted, the Honor String Orchestra will meet to rehearse every Tuesday from 3:15–5:00, beginning on January 7, 2014 through May 6, 2014, excluding any Tuesdays when school is not in session. Rehearsals for the Honor String Orchestra will take place at Mira Costa High School in room 109. Performance dates for this season include: Thursday, February 6 (evening); Saturday, April 26 (all day festival); and Wednesday, May 7 (evening). Attendance at rehearsals and performances is mandatory. Families are expected to clear any potential schedule conflicts.

When are the Honor String Orchestra auditions, and how does my son or daughter sign up?

Honor String Orchestra auditions will take place on Saturday, December 7 at Pacific Elementary School in rooms 7 and 8. Audition sign ups will be available online, and parents will be able to sign their children up for an audition time slot beginning on Monday, October 28. Below is a calendar outlining the audition process and the start of Honor String Orchestra:

- Oct. 28–Dec. 6: Online audition sign up will be open. Links to the online sign up will be posted on the strings class website: www.manhattanbeachstrings.com
- Sat., Dec. 7: Honor String Orchestra auditions at Pacific Elementary, rooms 7 and 8. Audition time slots are 7 minutes each, as follows:
- * Violins) 8 AM to 2:30 PM
 - * Violas) 8:30 AM to 11 AM
 - * Cellos & Bass) 11:30 AM to 2 PM

- Mon., Dec. 9: Audition results mailed to students and families.
- Tues., Dec. 17: 6:00–6:30 PM, Pacific School Room 8, mandatory meeting for parents of students accepted into the orchestra (no students, please).
- Tues., Jan. 7: 3:15–5:00 PM, Mira Costa High School orchestra room (room 109), first Honor String Orchestra rehearsal.

What is the audition process?

The Honor String Orchestra audition is made up of the following three components:

1. Scales: Students must play two one-octave major scales in a half note rhythm pattern.
2. Solo Piece: Students must perform one short solo piece. The solo can be from the song sheet distributed in class **or** a different solo of choice. The solo piece chosen should demonstrate the current ability level of the student.
3. Sight Reading: Students will be asked to play a short excerpt of music that they have never seen before. The sight reading part of the audition makes it possible to assess the students' ability to read notes, rhythms, and other musical notation.

How can students prepare for the audition? Why should students consider auditioning?

Honor Orchestra auditions can be a great motivation for students to practice and improve on their instrument. Music time at school is very limited, and not all of the audition components can be thoroughly covered during class. Therefore, the best way a student can prepare for the audition is through individual preparation and practice.

We are committed to ensuring that every student has a positive audition experience regardless of whether they are accepted into the Honor String Orchestra or not. The process for preparing an audition can in itself help students elevate the level of their individual playing. Please encourage your son or daughter to audition for the Honor String Orchestra, and help him or her understand that the experience of auditioning can be valuable, even if they are not accepted into the group.

Guided Practice Sessions for Honor String Orchestra:

An additional opportunity for students to prepare for the audition will be offered through after school Guided Practice Sessions. Auditioning can be a very new experience for many if not most students trying out for Honor String Orchestra. These sessions are meant to help focus student practice and prepare them for the audition experience. They will be an opportunity to review the scales and songs distributed in class. We will also discuss tips for practicing at home, as well as strategies for approaching sight reading. These sessions are strictly optional! Please note, to avoid the natural distractions and loss of focus caused by students walking in or out, those who choose to attend should plan to be present for the entire time. The dates, times, and location of the sessions are as follows:



Guided Practice Sessions
Violin Session: Tuesday Nov. 5
Viola and Cello Session: Tuesday Nov. 12
3:15–4:15 at Pacific School Room 8



If you have any questions about Honor String Orchestra, please contact Ms. Cavallaro at:
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