What orchestral ensembles are available in the University of Rochester River Campus Orchestra Program? Which ensemble is right for me?

The University of Rochester Orchestras are for the River Campus students and community. Our focus is on River campus music majors and minors, as well as non-majors that are passionate about continuing to play and perform music.

In the past, the University of Rochester Chamber Orchestra has been the smaller of the two orchestras and, therefore, more competitive. Since beginning as Director of Orchestral Activities in 2017, I have tried to even the field between the two orchestras so that one is not “stronger” than the other. Instead, you should choose to audition for the ensemble that you feel is a better fit for you and aligns with your personality and musical goals.

This year, due to overwhelming interest in our orchestra program, we are in the process of re-considering developing our chamber orchestra into a second, large-scale full orchestra with a full complement of winds, brass, percussion, and strings. As part of this process, we may consider moving the rehearsal times of our chamber orchestra to better fit member’s schedules. All URCO members will be involved and consulted in this process.

Below you can find more information about our two orchestras, which will help you to make a decision about which to audition for. And, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at rwaddell@ur.rochester.edu.

Sincerely,
Dr. Rachel L. Waddell,
Director of Orchestral Activities

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (URCO)

Rehearses: Mondays, 4:50-6:00 pm EST and Wednesdays, 4:50-7:00 pm EST, In-Person

Note: Due to increasing class conflicts during our rehearsal period, some flexibility is available for students with overlapping or other class conflicts during this time. You are still encouraged to audition if this applies to you.

Open to:
Students
Faculty, Staff, and Community Members (with permission from or at the request of the Music Director)

Characteristics:
- Open by Audition Only
- Student-Focused
- Medium to Large Symphony Orchestra (Usually 40-75 People)
- Usually One Woodwind/Brass Player per part
- Performs chamber orchestra repertoire as well as large-scale symphonic works
- Travels Annually through the “Around the Town” Concert Series
- Has toured domestically/internationally in the past. We are in the process of planning a large-trip post-pandemic.
- Collaborative, Education and Community – Driven
- Sectionals by Eastman School of Music Students/Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Members
- Participating students may audition for the annual Concerto Competition.

**A Good Fit for Someone Who:**
- Enjoys performing a variety of symphonic repertoire, including some chamber and smaller orchestral works.
- Wants to improve and grow as a musician with more personalized and concentrated feedback in rehearsals and sectionals.
- Is passionate about music education, community involvement, and collaborating with dancers, visual artists, and other partners.
- Wants the opportunity to travel.
- Wants to build close-knit relationships with similarly minded students and make friends in a large (but slightly less overwhelmingly large) ensemble.
- Is interested in being a part of an orchestra as it grows in size and re-examines itself and role in the Rochester community.

**UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (URSO)**

Rehearses: Tuesdays, 7:30 – 10:00 pm EST, In-Person

Open to:
Students
Faculty
Staff
Community Members

**Characteristics:**
- Open by Audition Only
- Large Symphony Orchestra (usually 90-120 people)
- Several Woodwinds/Brass may double one part
- Performs large-scale symphonic works, and occasionally movie scores or more popular works.
- Currently does not perform works by Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, etc.
- Does not Travel/Tour
- Sectionals by Eastman School of Music Students/Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Members
- Participating students may audition for the annual Concerto Competition.

**A Good Fit for Someone Who:**
- Prefers larger symphonic works, contemporary, or pops music.
- Doesn’t mind being part of a larger (and slightly more crowded) ensemble.
- Doesn’t mind doubling on parts with other musicians.
- Is okay with (or feels they don’t need) as much individual feedback.
- Wants the opportunity to meet and work with community musicians from Rochester and beyond.

Auditions:

Please note that while auditions will take place virtually, both URCO and URSO plan to rehearse fully in-person this academic year.

Auditions for the 2021-22 school year will take place virtually on Monday, August 23 from 11:00 to 5:00 pm EST and Tuesday, August 24 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm EST.

You will schedule an appointment online through our system and receive a confirmation email with the Zoom link. Each audition is 10 minutes long. Please double-check your set-up and microphone prior to your audition.

Due to overwhelming interest and retention in the orchestra program, there are very limited spots for the 2021-22 school year. Select all auditions that you wish to take from our drop-down list. "Wait list" auditions mean that we do not currently have an available opening in either orchestra. Audition to be placed on our “wait list” so that you are notified if an opening becomes available for the 2021-22 school year.

You may audition in your dorm room (or other location) or arrange for a practice room by contacting Jimmy Warlick or clicking here.

Audition Requirements:

- A 3-4 Minute Solo of Your Choice
- Be Prepared to Play One of the Following Scales in as Many Octaves as you Comfortably Can (Music Director’s Choice): CM, GM, DM, AM, EM, BM, FM, BbM, EbM, AbM, and the following minor scales (natural, harmonic, and melodic) in 2-3 octaves: a minor, e minor, b minor, f# minor, d minor, g minor, and c minor. This is just to judge student familiarity with music theory and reading, please do your best. If you’re not familiar with all of these scales, you are still encouraged to audition to determine if our orchestras are a good fit for you.
- An Introductory Video (See Requirements Below)

Introductory Video Requirement:

At the University of Rochester Orchestras, we're interested in getting to know our members as whole people (not just as musicians). As part of your audition, you are required to submit a 30 second to a minute video introducing yourself. Upload your video to YouTube, with the privacy setting as "unlisted" (information for uploading to YouTube and privacy settings ["unlisted"] is on YouTube and the web). Copy & paste the video's URL into the required field on the online audition form.
You can film the video on your phone OR edit it as you wish. It should reflect your personality as much as possible (from where you film it, to the clothes you choose to wear, included background music, photos, etc.)

Make sure to clearly state your name as part of your video.

You should include any information that you feel is important for us to know - such as your identifying pronouns, hometown/country, etc.

Answer the questions: What does orchestra mean to you? Why are you interested in becoming a member of the University of Rochester Orchestras? What do you feel you would bring to our orchestras beyond your musicianship?

Make sure your audio is clear and easy to understand.

You are required to submit this video when you register for an audition time.

If you are a current University of Rochester Symphony Orchestras member auditioning on a new instrument or for a higher placement in our orchestra, you are also required to upload a video as part of your audition. Upload your video to YouTube, with the privacy setting as "unlisted" (information for uploading to YouTube and privacy settings ["unlisted"] is on YouTube and the web). Copy & paste the video's URL into the required field on the online audition form.

You can film the video on your phone OR edit it as you wish. It should reflect your personality as much as possible (from where you film it, to the clothes you choose to wear, included background music, photos, etc.)

Make sure to clearly state your name as part of your video.

You should include any information that you feel is important for us to know - such as your identifying pronouns, hometown/country, etc.

Answer the question: What position (instrument) are you auditioning for and why? What do you feel you bring or want to bring to our orchestras beyond your musicianship?

Make sure your audio is clear and easy to understand.

You are required to submit this video when you register for an audition time.

Note: In lieu of a video, you may also submit a one-page introductory application letter introducing yourself. However, the video is preferred.

Available Openings (Please Select All that You are Auditioning For):

URCO – Principal Second Violin

URCO – Section Violin
URCO – Section Viola
URCO – Section Cello
URCO – Section Bass
URCO – Oboe
URCO – Bassoon
URCO – Horn
URCO – Trumpet
URCO – Trombone
URCO – Percussion/Timpani
URCO – Piano
URCO – Harp
URSO – Concertmaster
URSO – Section Violin (Very Limited Availability)
URSO – Section Viola (Very Limited Availability)
URSO – Section Cello (Very Limited Availability)
URSO – Section Bass (Very Limited Availability)
URSO – Oboe
URSO – Trumpet
URSO – Percussion/Timpani
URSO – Harp
WAITLIST – Flute
WAITLIST – Clarinet
WAITLIST – Tuba