

# FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

If the answer to your question is not listed here, or if you would like more information, feel free to email us at [orchestra@umich.edu](mailto:orchestra@umich.edu).

## What is the LSO?

The LSO is an outlet for amateur musicians and a way to build community among the health and life sciences areas of U-M. Its members represent:

## Who can join the LSO?

Entry into the LSO is by audition; all members must audition each year. Priority is given to members of the University of Michigan life sciences community.

We define the U-M life sciences community as:

- Michigan Medicine
  - University of Michigan Health (clinical care and clinical administration/support services)
  - Medical School (research, education and administration)
  - Shared Services (administrative functions serving all of Michigan Medicine)
- Health-sciences schools including Dentistry, Kinesiology, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health and Social Work
- Biomedical Engineering program
- School of Natural Resources & the Environment
- Individuals from other areas of the university whose professional work or studies directly involve health and life sciences (for instance, individuals in the College of Engineering or Literature, Science & the Arts who are studying or performing research in life science-specific topics)

Anyone who has an affiliation with these units – faculty, staff, graduate/professional students, alumni, retirees and volunteers – is welcome to audition, as are their adult family members.

We ask that undergraduates at U-M audition for other groups on campus, although those who have obtained junior status and have a declared major in the life sciences may audition for the LSO if their schedule does not permit participation in other campus groups. No course credit is offered for participating in the LSO.

*In very limited cases, individuals who are not members of the U-M life sciences community, as defined above, may be allowed to audition after the main audition process has concluded, if their instrument is needed for the next performance. In subsequent seasons their ability to audition will be determined again on similar criteria regardless of past playing with the LSO. We encourage such individuals to pursue performance opportunities with other amateur groups on campus and in the community*

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## **How competitive is the LSO?**

The level of competition varies from year to year. In general, we have been able to admit most interested string players. Wind positions are more competitive. Where possible, we may increase the number of people we accept on a particular instrument and assign them to play the concert on only one or two pieces, while allowing them to take part in rehearsals of the other piece(s) in order to learn the part and cover for absent section-mates.

## **Can you tell me more about auditions?**

[More details about our audition process, and downloadable excerpts of music that all auditionees must play, are available here.](#) This page will also have a link to the audition signup sheet for the main audition dates during the two weeks preceding those dates.

## **How much experience do I need to join the LSO?**

To see a list of the repertoire the LSO has played during its past seasons, [click here](#). Although the repertoire is sometimes difficult, we have had some members play in the orchestra after years away from their instrument who have really loved their experience. We encourage you to email us at [orchestra@umich.edu](mailto:orchestra@umich.edu) to see if the LSO might be for you.

## **I can't make it to the main auditions. Can I still join the LSO?**

It depends. We welcome you to complete a [prospective musician form](#). If we can use your instrument, and if it is early enough in the season, we will contact you. Otherwise, we will add your name to an "interested in the LSO" email list and contact you when future auditions take place.

## **What are your COVID-19 protocols?**

In general, because we are a program of Gifts of Art which is part of Michigan Medicine, we adhere to Michigan Medicine guidance for non-clinical facilities and for post-exposure and post-illness requirements. We also make sure to abide by [School of Music, Theatre & Dance protocols](#) for the performing arts because we are led by SMTD graduate students.

## **Does the LSO provide instruments?**

Unfortunately, the LSO does not provide instruments, except for a piccolo for a flute player who does not own one, and access to U-M percussion instruments for percussionists accepted to the orchestra.

## **What is expected of me if I join the LSO?**

We understand that members of the Life Sciences community are very busy. However, the members of the LSO work very hard in preparing two performances a year.

We ask that you are professional and respect the hard work of your colleagues by being ready to play your part in rehearsal and to attend most, if not all rehearsals. We typically rehearse on

Sunday evenings 7-9:30 at the School of Music. You can check to see how many rehearsals you will miss by [checking the schedule here](#). We also expect you to attend the dress rehearsals or pre-concert sound checks, and concerts.

If you can attend one entire half of a season, but not the other, you can email us at [orchestra@umich.edu](mailto:orchestra@umich.edu) to see if this can be accommodated.

### **What is it like being in the LSO?**

LSO Musicians work hard, but they are also part of an incredible community of faculty, staff, students, and volunteers from all over the university's life sciences community.

The musician next to you may be a neuroscience student studying Alzheimer's disease, an epidemiologist, an administrative assistant from dermatology, or a surgeon developing artificial organs. Although we come from across campus, we are unified in our common goal of growing as individuals and an ensemble, playing beautiful music, and providing a great performance for our audience. The LSO is a place to make new connections, and share a fulfilling experience outside of work and studies.

### **What happens to the prospective form information I submit?**

The information you submit is kept in our database for the purpose of contacting you when the next auditions take place. If you receive a copy of the form, then you have successfully submitted your information. [Click here to proceed to the webform.](#)

### **Who runs the LSO and what's its relationship to Michigan Medicine and the School of Music, Theatre & Dance?**

The LSO is a program of Gifts of Art, Michigan Medicine's arts-in-healthcare unit, which handles all official business functions. The LSO has a longstanding partnership with the School of Music, Theatre & Dance; the Director of University Orchestras provides the music director and assistant conductor and guides music selection. The LSO uses SMTD space for auditions and rehearsals, and draws from its student body for a lead percussionist and other musicians as necessary.

The LSO's operations are overseen by a volunteer committee made up of current and past members of the orchestra, and the director of Gifts of Art, whose staff provide business and communication services.

The LSO's costs are supported by a combination of member dues and donations, including an endowment created in 2023.