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Timeline and Steps to Audition for the 2025/26 HYS Season

1. February 20, 2025: Visit www.houstonyouthsymphony.org/auditions to download the Audition Guide by Instrument. This will include all information you need including the required excerpt for each instrument.
2. February – April: Practice the required audition components found in the Audition Guide.
3. April 1, 2025: Online applications open. Visit <http://www.houstonyouthsymphony.org/auditions> to start your online application.
4. April 1–May 5, 2025: Submit your online application and \$55 audition fee. The deadline for submissions is May 5, 2025, at 10:00 AM. *For those who have financial hardship and would like to request an audition fee waiver, you must follow the instructions below BEFORE May 1st at 9:00 am. If you do not request a fee waiver before this day, you will not be considered for a waiver.*
5. Mid to late June 2025: Audition placement notifications sent by email. No phone calls, please.

To apply for a fee waiver, email hys@houstonyouthsymphony.org with one of the following options for documentation:

1. Documentation of free/reduced lunch program
2. College Board SAT or ACT fee waiver documentation
3. Proof of SNAP benefits
4. Proof of Medicaid insurance
5. First page of the most recent income tax return (not preferred but this will be required if you are accepted into HYS and apply for financial aid for the season tuition.)

If you cannot provide one of the above, email hys@houstonyouthsymphony.org to explore other options.

AUDITION COMPONENTS GUIDELINES

- Scales (Select one major, one minor)
 - Must be memorized and played in 16th notes at a tempo of quarter = 80. Play three octaves, hands together.
 - Play each scale twice, once *piano* and the other *forte*.
- Solos (Select two contrasting solos)
 - All solos should be well-played, polished and in the appropriate tempo and style.
 - Solos should be selected from major concertos or sonatas/solo works by two different composers, contrasting in style and tempo.
 - Equivalent to Salzedo, *Song in the Night*, or Dussek, *Sonatina in C minor*.
 - All-State and Region etudes may not be used.
 - You do not have to start at the beginning of the piece.
 - Solos should demonstrate current technical ability and musical maturity.
 - Do not play multiple movements from the same piece.
 - Difficulty level of each solo will be considered.
- Excerpt (**All auditionees will prepare the same excerpt**)
 - Excerpt should be played at the marked tempo.

ORDER OF AUDITION VIDEO COMPONENTS

Audition Video Components for all applicants

All components must be performed in one continuous, uninterrupted take in the following order:

1. 2 scales of your choice, two hands. One major, one minor.
2. Approximately 2 to 2.5 minutes of the first solo piece.
3. Approximately 2 to 2.5 minutes of the second solo piece.
4. Prepared Excerpt.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Each video component (scale 1, scale 2, solo 1, solo 2, excerpt) will be judged on:

1. Rhythm
2. Intonation
3. Tone
4. Musicality and Style (Solos and Excerpt Only)
5. Technique
6. Difficulty Level

EXPECTED SKILLS FOR EACH ORCHESTRA

To gain a better understanding of our varying orchestra levels, we recommend you [watch past HYS concert performances on our streaming platform, A440](#). Videos are free to stream and will give you an idea of the level of music at which each orchestra performs.

SYMPHONY	PHILHARMONIA	SINFONIA	STRING ORCHESTRA/ DEBUT STRING ORCHESTRA (If assigned)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full tone with clean articulation. • Mature musicality. • Excellent rhythm and ensemble awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full tone with clean articulation. • Developed musicality. • Proficient rhythmic confidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat developed tone. • Most clear and clean articulation. • Basic rhythm and ensemble skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat developed tone. • Mostly clear and clean articulation. • Basic rhythm and ensemble skills.

NOTE: Harpists are utility players and will be given specific assignments based on repertoire needs in each concert cycle. If accepted, you will be assigned a primary assignment for the first cycle. If you are not needed for a concert cycle, your tuition is adjusted accordingly.

Scenario: For cycle 1, you are assigned to play in Philharmonia. For cycle 2, the Philharmonia orchestral repertoire does not require a harp. You may be asked to play in Sinfonia or one of the String orchestras, or given the cycle off, and will be placed in an ensemble for cycle 3.

2025/26 AUDITION GUIDE

VIDEO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Failure to follow the guidelines may result in your submission being disqualified.

- All components of the video must be performed in ONE continuous, unedited take in the correct order. Do not stop and start the camera between components.
- If you do not like a take, you may try again, as long as your final submission is in one continuous, unedited take.
- You may not edit, cut, splice, or otherwise alter your performance.
- The picture must remain stationary: no panning, zooming, multiple cameras, or fading in/out.
- Video framing: Place the video recording device so that you, your instrument, and your full range of motion are always in the frame, filling out the frame as much as you can. Make sure your music stand does not cover your face, instrument, arms/hands, and range of motion. (See *sample videos on the [HYS YouTube Channel](#)*.)
- Video must not exceed 8 minutes. The judge will stop watching at 8 minutes. Make sure all the components of your audition fit within 8 minutes. It is ok if your video is less than 8 minutes.
- Tune your instrument to A=440.

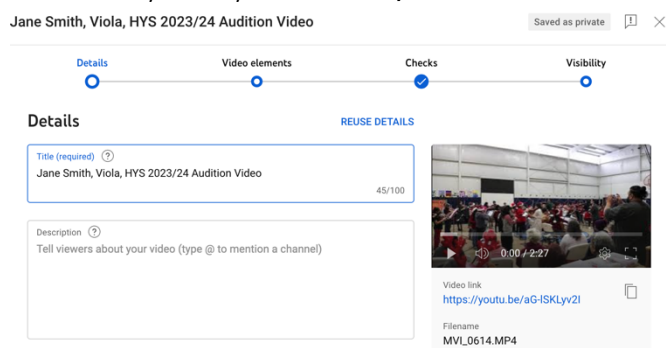
RECORDING TIPS

- Recording on a phone or tablet device is fine. A special camera is not necessary.
- You may want to have someone else press the record and stop button for you.
- Record in a neutral acoustic in your home. Not in your closet (not enough echo) and not in your bathroom (too much echo). A living room or other open space should be ok.
- Record when you can have quiet and no interruptions.
- Film in a well-lit space. Make sure there is more light in front of you rather than behind you so that you are not backlit.
- For string instruments, make sure your f-holes are directed toward the video recording device.
- Place the video recording device on a flat surface with the microphone area unobstructed.
- Check sound levels to make sure sound is not distorted in loud passages and inaudible in soft passages.
- It is best to use the rear camera rather than the front-facing (selfie) camera as the rear camera is typically a higher resolution. Front selfie cameras can also result in the video being flipped.
- Time your solo pieces ahead of time so you know where to start and stop. You do not have to start at the beginning of your solo piece(s). You can go over/under the required number of minutes in order to finish a phrase.

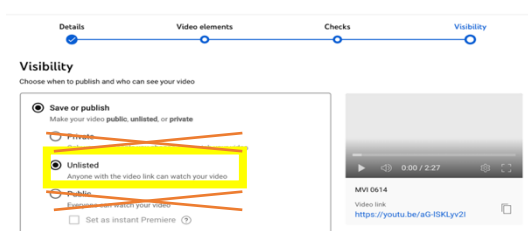
2025/26 AUDITION GUIDE

HOW TO SHARE YOUR VIDEO LINK

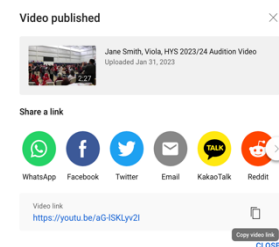
1. **Record your audition video**, following the audition video submission guidelines.
2. **Go to <http://studio.youtube.com/>**
3. If you already have a Gmail account, log in to your account. (Gmail and YouTube have the same login information.) You may use a parent/guardian account. Note: Gmail/YouTube does not allow children under 13 to have their own accounts.
4. If you do not have a Gmail account, create an account. You must be over 13 to create a Gmail account.
5. Once you are logged into YouTube Studio, **go to the upper right corner, and click “Create.”**
6. **Upload your video.**
7. Your title should be your **First Name, Last Name, Instrument, HYS 2025/26 Audition Video** (i.e. Jane Smith, Viola, HYS 2025/26 Audition Video)



8. **Click Next to get to Step 4: Visibility and select Unlisted.** Then click Save. Note: Selecting “Private” does not create a shareable link. You must select “Unlisted.”



9. **Copy the video link.** If you navigate away from this screen, the video link can be accessed again by visiting the “Content” in the left side menu of the YouTube Studio landing page. Click on your audition video and copy the video link again.
10. **Test your video link in a private browsing window to ensure the link works.** Watch your video from beginning to end to make sure it is the correct video and has all of the required components. Incorrect/incomplete video links may jeopardize your application to HYS.
11. **Paste your video link into the HYS application.**



2025/26 HARP AUDITION EXCERPT

Audition Video Components for all applicants:

All components must be performed in one continuous, uninterrupted take in this order.

1. 2 scales of your choice, memorized. One major, one minor.
2. Approximately 2 to 2.5 minutes of first solo piece
3. Approximately 2 to 2.5 minutes of second solo piece
4. Prepared excerpt

If you have questions about the appropriateness of your prepared pieces, please email us at HYS@houstonyouthsymphony.org. Allow 7 days for a response.

Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*

quarter note = 60

(excerpt on next page)

2025/26 HARP AUDITION EXCERPT

Arpa.

$\text{♩} = 60$

15

The image shows a musical score for Harp, consisting of seven systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The score is annotated with various performance instructions and chord markings in red ink. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 60$. The score begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic and a *p dolce* instruction. A red bracket labeled "5#s" spans the first few notes of the first system. The second system includes a *poco cresc.* instruction. The third system features a *dim.* instruction and a red line connecting the chords A# and B# in the bass line. The fourth system includes a *pp* instruction and a sequence of chords: F# Bb, E#, F# D#, and Bb. The fifth system is marked *sempre pp* and includes a red chord marking of D# in the bass line. The sixth system includes red chord markings of C# and G# in the bass line. The seventh system includes red chord markings of Bb, F#, and Ab, with the instruction *morendo*. The score concludes with a double bar line and the number 5 in the bottom right corner.