

NEW LONDON COMMUNITY

Orchestra

A decorative graphic featuring musical notation, including a treble clef, a staff with notes, and a large, elegant cursive script for the word 'Orchestra'.

MEMBER GUIDE

Welcome! We're delighted that you've decided to become a member of the New London Community Orchestra. This guide provides an overview of the NLCO, membership expectations, and answers to frequently asked questions.

Our Mission

The New London Community Orchestra (NLCO) has a three-part mission:

1. **Provide adults of all musical levels with an outlet to rehearse and perform orchestral music.** The NLCO accepts players with a wide variety of musical backgrounds and training, from current and retired professionals to accomplished amateurs to adult learners. Our members have ranged in age from high school through retirement and represent a diverse array of careers and life experiences.
2. **Offer accessible, inclusive performances to the city of New London and the surrounding community.** Most of our concerts are donation-optional events for the New London community. We have also performed at a variety of community events and in assisted-living facilities.
3. **Provide free music education to underserved students in the New London area.** We strongly believe in the benefits of music education and have made addressing the disparities in access a core part of our mission. Through our Music City Strings program, we offer free, professionally taught string instrument lessons to students in grades 4 and up at the Public Library of New London.

Rehearsals and Concerts

Rehearsals take place on Wednesday evenings from 7-8:30 PM (occasionally extended to 9 PM) at St. Mary Star of the Sea Church, 10 Huntington St., New London. (We rehearse in Assumption Hall, around the back of the church building.)

We prepare several concert programs each season. Typically, we perform a December concert and two spring concerts: one in March/April and one late May/early June. This schedule may vary from time to time for special events. We sometimes perform a shorter program at assisted living facilities, as well.

Member Expectations

Attendance. Every musician plays a vital role in the preparation and success of the NLCO. Regular attendance at rehearsals is a crucial part of your contribution as an NLCO musician. While we understand that work commitments, family obligations, illness, and other circumstances sometimes interfere, please make every effort to attend each rehearsal where music in which you have a part is scheduled to be rehearsed. *(However, please do stay home if you are sick! Your fellow orchestra members will be grateful.)*

In the event that you are unable to attend a rehearsal, please notify the music director (kevincortlandbishop@gmail.com) and/or orchestra president (cjcharland@outlook.com). The final rehearsals preceding a concert are particularly critical for attendance. If you know in advance that you must be absent from one of the final two rehearsals before a concert, please notify the music director as soon as possible.

Rehearsal etiquette reminders:

- Try to arrive a few minutes early to give yourself time to set up, tune, and warm up before rehearsal begins.
- Please be mindful of your volume when warming up and tuning, as others are trying to do the same.
- Keep side conversations to a minimum during rehearsals. If you need to discuss a musical issue with your stand partner or section, try to do so quietly so as not to distract others.
- Avoid playing your instrument (even softly) when the music director is talking or working with another section.

Concert attire: All black unless otherwise stated. Any of the following are acceptable: black slacks/pants and dress shirt (with or without a black jacket or blazer), black skirt and top (with or without a black jacket or cardigan), or black dress. Concert dress may vary for certain performances.

History and Structure

The New London Community Orchestra was founded in 2011 as a joint effort between the founding orchestra president, Tom Clark, who passed away in 2022, and Joan Winters, a local violinist and music teacher who became the orchestra's first conductor and music director. The two saw the need for a community orchestra to provide a musical outlet for adults of all levels and offer accessible orchestral music to the public. At the same time, Clark and Winters believed the newly formed orchestra should make music education—specifically, free music education for underserved communities—an essential part of its mission.

The orchestra began rehearsing early in 2011 as a strings-only ensemble, with winds, brass, and percussion joining later. In 2013, we launched our Music City Strings program. In 2022, Kevin Bishop assumed the role of conductor and music director.

The NLCO is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Our funding—both for the orchestra itself and for Music City Strings—comes from a variety of grants (both public and private), individual and business donations, and concert proceeds.

Music City Strings

Music City Strings fulfills NLCO's music education mission by offering free string instrument lessons to local students in grades 4 and up who would not otherwise have access to this instruction.

Music City Strings provides students with instruments, supplies, and professional instruction free of charge. The small-group lessons are held on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons at the Public Library of New London, which provides space free

of charge. Jim Hunter, who brings more than 30 years of experience in music education, is our lead teacher; volunteers play a key role in assisting and supporting his instruction.

Board of Directors

Our board consists of the following individuals:

- Chris Charland, President
- Kirk Edwards, Vice President
- Emily Scace, Treasurer
- K. Michael Talbot, Secretary
- Jacquie Booth, Board Member

Frequently Asked Questions

How is NLCO/Music City Strings funded?

We receive funding from several sources: grants, individual and business donations, and concert proceeds/donations. However, we depend on community support to meet our financial needs. Our expenses include rehearsal space/facilities, performance space, compensation for the music director and Music City Strings teacher(s), materials and supplies, and advertising/publicity.

If you are able, we encourage you to consider making a donation. The New London Community Orchestra is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, so donations are tax-deductible.

Donations may be made by check (payable to New London Community Orchestra) or via PayPal using the link on our website (www.nlcommunityorchestra.org). If your employer has a matching gifts/donation program, consider using it to donate to the NLCO. (We are registered on the major donation platforms most of these programs use.)

Is there a cost to join the NLCO?

No, we do not charge dues. However, if you are able, please consider making a donation to help cover expenses (details above).

Are board members paid?

No, the board members are not paid. However, the music director receives compensation, as does the teacher for Music City Strings.

Do you take suggestions for music to perform?

Absolutely! If there's a particular piece you'd like to perform, let us know. We can't guarantee that we'll take every suggestion because of issues around copyright, expense, difficulty level, and instrumentation, but we'll consider it.

How can I help support the orchestra?

If you wish to get involved with NLCO beyond playing in the ensemble, there are many ways you can help. Here are just a few ideas:

- **Publicity.** Like and follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and help spread the word about our performances by distributing concert flyers, resharing our social media posts, and telling your friends/family/coworkers about upcoming events.
 - <https://www.facebook.com/nlorchestra/>
 - www.instagram.com/newlondoncommunityorchestra
- **Setup/breakdown.** We can always use help setting up and breaking down before and after rehearsals and concerts.
- **Concert refreshments.** Following our concerts, we often provide a reception with light refreshments and soft drinks. Contributions of baked goods, veggie trays, and the like are always appreciated.
- **Volunteer.** If you wish to volunteer with our Music City Strings program (helping students tune instruments, setting up, providing general support), contact Chris Charland (cjcharland@outlook.com).
- **Other ideas.** Do you have a special skill or connection that you think could benefit the orchestra? Or do you have an idea for something you think we should be doing? Talk to any of the board members or email us at newlondonorchestra@gmail.com. We're always happy to hear new ideas.

For more information, please visit our website:

www.nlcommunityorchestra.org

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