



## 2025/2026 Important Dates

- Fall Semester begins: First ensemble rehearsals Saturday, Sept. 6
- Fall Semester ends: December 12 (last day of large ensemble rehearsals 12/6)
- Spring Semester begins: First ensemble rehearsals Saturday, Jan. 10
- Spring Semester ends Sunday, April 26

### No rehearsals, classes, or lessons on the following dates:

- November 27 - 30, 2025 (Thanksgiving)
- March 30 - April 4, 2026 (Spring Break)

## Fall Semester Concerts and Recitals

- Violin & Cello Choir Concert: Saturday, Nov. 15 @ 4pm, Nelson Music Room
- Orchestra Concert: Sunday, Nov. 16 @ 4:30pm, Baldwin Auditorium
- Solo Recitals: Saturday, Nov. 22, 1-8pm (Dress Rehearsals: Sat, Nov. 15)
- Holiday Concert and Book Harvest Fundraiser with Duke Chorale & Durham School of the Arts for YS students: Tuesday, Dec. 2 @ 7pm, Duke Chapel (Dress @6pm), *optional event*.
- Chamber Music Concert: Saturday, Dec. 6 @ 5:00pm, Nelson Music Room

## Spring Semester Concerts and Recitals

- Violin & Cello Choir Concert: Saturday, Feb. 21 @ 4:00pm, Nelson Music Room
- Orchestra Concert: Sunday, Feb. 22 @ 4:30pm, Baldwin Auditorium
- Solo Recitals: Saturday, March 14, 2-8pm (Dress Rehearsals: Sat, March 8)
- Chamber Music Concert: Wed, April 22 @ 6:30pm, Nelson Music Room
- Violin & Cello Choir Concert: Sat., April 25 @ 4:00pm, Nelson Music Room
- Orchestra Concert: Sunday, April 26 @ 4:30pm, Baldwin Auditorium

### *Other important dates*

- Concerto Competition: Saturday, October 18 @ 1-4pm, Nelson Music Room, *Application due 9/27*

Visit [www.stringschool.duke.edu](http://www.stringschool.duke.edu) for master class, workshop,  
& special event updates!

## Who do I contact about..?

See list below for who to contact:

- **Katharine Whitmore, Staff Assistant**, [katharine.whitmore@duke.edu](mailto:katharine.whitmore@duke.edu)
  - Registration, payments
- **Nonoko Okada, Administrative Assistant**: [nonoko.okada@duke.edu](mailto:nonoko.okada@duke.edu)
  - New student questions, policy questions, scheduling trial lessons, auditions, solo recitals
- **Ensemble Conductor (ISO/CSO)**
  - Seating questions (leadership, moving up, changing instruments), repertoire
  - Note: YS students should email Erica Shirts not Prof. Davidson
- **Orchestra Parent Volunteer** to report absences
  - ISO students email Pengfei Song: [song.pengfei@me.com](mailto:song.pengfei@me.com)
  - CSO students email Anna Lorenz: [ahmlorenz@gmail.com](mailto:ahmlorenz@gmail.com)
  - YS students email Huifang Zhang: [jasonjennyjill@icloud.com](mailto:jasonjennyjill@icloud.com)
    - YS assistant parent volunteer: Cassandra Anderson
- **Ensemble News Blog**
  - Regular updates on music, concerts, notes from ensemble conductors
- **Private Teacher**
  - Rescheduling Lessons, individual progress, how to move up ensembles
- **Erica Shirts, Director**, [erica.shirts@duke.edu](mailto:erica.shirts@duke.edu)
  - Scholarships, concerto competition, donations, parent volunteers

## DUSS Policies

All DUSS policies are listed in more detail online at:

<http://stringschool.duke.edu/apply/policies>

### Payment and Refunds

- All Fees are payable in advance for the entire semester and are not refundable after the first day of instruction. No lessons will be given until payment is received.
- Payments may be made by check or online with a credit card.
- If requested, payments may be made in 2 installments. Late payments will incur a \$30 late fee.

### Expectations for Orchestra, Ensemble and Group Class members

- All students participating in DUSS ensembles are enrolled in weekly private lessons with either DUSS faculty or area teachers.
- Attendance at all rehearsals and concerts.
- Arrival 10 minutes early to have time to tune and be ready to play at the start time for each orchestra, ensemble, and group class.
- A student cannot play in the concert if he or she misses the dress rehearsal or more than 2 rehearsals without prior explanation and agreement between the conductor, parents, and the student. If the conductor allows a student to perform in a concert after missing a dress rehearsal or more than 2 absences, the conductor has the discretion to adjust their seating assignment.
- The conductor has the discretion to individually hear students who have missed 2 or more rehearsals before a concert. This applies to excused and unexcused absences.
- All students must email conductors/parent assistants ahead of a projected absence from an orchestra rehearsal.