

# **Brindabella Orchestra**

## **Organisational Principles and Procedures**

The Brindabella Orchestra is a Course offered by U3A ACT - it has been running every year since 1997.

The Course aims to provide an opportunity for U3A ACT members who have attained the required standard to belong to a full orchestra, and to play music in an enjoyable, relaxed, friendly and inclusive environment. It also aims to support musical activity in the ACT and surrounding areas, possibly by performing together.

The Orchestra meets for practice on most Saturday mornings from February to December, and usually gives public performances three times per year, on Sunday afternoons. The Orchestra's activities provide a social and learning experience for its players. Concerts and public performances are to enhance enjoyment and develop performance skills, and are not ends in themselves.

Over the years, the Orchestra has evolved from having a Course Leader, to having a Leadership Group, headed by the Orchestra Manager. The Group is renewed annually with orchestra players who are U3A members having a vote if there is any disagreement about who should be in the Group. Details are given in Appendix 1.

There are 3 types of players in the Orchestra.

1. Players (who are all U3A members);
2. Guest Players; and
3. Special Guest Players.

U3A members are invited to express their interest in enrolling in the Course at any time during the year, and will be accepted as a Player provided that their skills are at an appropriate level and that the instrument they play is not already overly represented in the Orchestra. Details of the procedure for admitting new Players are given in Appendix 2. Orchestra Players are required to abide by the responsibilities of players set out in Appendix 3, the U3A ACT Objects and Rules and members Terms of Service and subsidiary documents available at <https://www.u3acanberra.org.au/terms.html>

If the instrumental balance of the Orchestra is not being met from within the ranks of U3A ACT, the Leadership Group may seek non-U3A members to fill the shortfall as Guest Players for a specified term, extending no further than the end of the current calendar year. Such Guest Players will be required to complete the Orchestra's Player application form (Appendix 4), indicating that they undertake to abide by the same responsibilities as normal players. At the discretion of the Leadership Group, these players may be asked to pay fees equivalent to the annual course fee plus the standard U3A ACT membership fee, but will not be regarded as either U3A ACT members or formal Orchestra Players.

Special Guest Players may be invited to fill gaps in the orchestra at a particular concert and a few preceding rehearsals and these players would not pay fees.

It should be noted that the Orchestra's current method of communication is via website ([www.brindabellaorchestra.net/](http://www.brindabellaorchestra.net/)) and email, and all players should have ready access to the internet.

### **Revision history**

- The original orchestra rules were approved at a meeting of Orchestra members on 10 December 2016
- The rules were completely rewritten in 2018. These were approved by the U3A ACT Committee on 7/5/2018 and accepted by members of the Orchestra on 14/7/2018
- The rules were modified to update the roles of members of the Leadership Group, on 20/10/2020
- The rules were revised on 1/11/2024 to make cosmetic changes to the membership form in Appendix 4
- The rules were revised on 24/02/2025 to include a provision that Orchestra funds and assets must not be distributed to individuals or players in order to meet Australian Tax Office requirements for income tax exemption.

## Appendix 1 – Leadership Group (LG)

The Leadership Group (LG) is responsible for the functioning of the Orchestra in accordance with the Orchestra's aims, U3A ACT's policies and procedures, and, in particular, the Guide for Course Leaders, see <https://www.u3acanberra.org.au/members/courses-leaders.html>. It can do all things that appear to the LG to be necessary or desirable for the proper management of the affairs of the Orchestra. For example it can co-opt other players to join the LG at any time. The LG will try to reach consensus on all matters, but if necessary a vote will be taken, with the Orchestra Manager having a casting vote. Where a vote is necessary, all members of the LG will be given at least a week's notice as to the time and place of the meeting. Proxies will be accepted.

All players in the LG must be members of U3A ACT, except for the conductor. The LG will usually consist of the following positions, with no person filling more than two of them, except that the conductor could hold two other positions:

### Orchestra Manager

1. provides overall leadership to the Orchestra
2. acts as Course Leader when dealing with U3A ACT
3. is the primary contact with external organisations
4. coordinates day-to-day operational matters
5. coordinates the selection process for conductors, new LG members, volunteers and new players
6. takes a lead in resolving complaints.

### Music Coordinator

1. has major input in the recruitment of new players, conductors and concert venues
2. In consultation with the Conductor and relevant players, selects the Orchestra repertoire and performance pieces for the Orchestra.  
The choice of repertoire will take into account the following criteria:
  - availability of the music
  - that the piece involves the participation of as many sections of the Orchestra as possible
  - the musical ability of players
  - the suitability of the piece for the target audience
3. In consultation with the Conductor, has the final decision on concert participation by players
4. works with the librarians to make music available for players to download or copy.

### Conductor

1. selected for a specific period (eg for 1 concert) by the other members of the LG and may be a player or someone recruited from outside the Orchestra
2. with the Music Coordinator, has major input into decisions on repertoire, rehearsal schedules and player participation in concerts
3. will be an ex-officio member of the LG
4. does not pay orchestra fees for the period that he/she is conducting.

### Orchestra Secretary

1. keeps brief notes of decisions taken by the LG and at Orchestra-wide discussions, excluding any matters which cannot be shared, including on privacy grounds, with all players. Where decisions are reached via email, these should also be recorded in the notes. All players can request access to the notes.
2. maintains a record of LG members' names and responsibilities
3. maintains a register of all volunteers and their responsibilities
4. maintains the database of all players, and periodically emails this list to all players.

### Orchestra Treasurer

1. manages the Orchestra's bank accounts
2. collects all payments owing to the Orchestra and makes all LG-approved payments
3. keeps correct accounts showing the financial affairs of the Orchestra with full details of receipts and expenditure connected with the activities of the Orchestra. These accounts can be examined by any player at any reasonable time and place, given reasonable notice.
4. provides an annual financial report to the LG and players and other reports as requested by the LG.

### **Ordinary LG members**

1. participate in LG deliberations and decision-making
2. may assist in carrying out the responsibilities of other LG members.

### **Volunteers & Their Responsibilities**

In managing the day-to-day activities of the Orchestra, the LG depends on the contributions of volunteers in a number of important areas, including:

- Leader of the first violins
- Website Coordinator
- Supervisor: set-up of rehearsal venue
- Supervisor: set-up of concert venues
- Maintaining the rehearsal attendance list and expected absence list
- Music librarian for hard copies
- Music librarian for electronic copies
- Publicity
- Production of concert flyers and programs
- Coordinator of concert afternoon teas
- Kitchen supervisor
- Organising the morning tea roster
- Storeroom supervisor
- Coordinator of annual in-house Christmas concert
- Minor maintenance organiser
- PA system organiser
- Percussion transportation

### **Renewal of LG and Volunteer Personnel**

LG and Volunteer positions are automatically considered vacant at the end of each calendar year. At this point the present occupants of these positions will be able to choose to either offer to continue to assist or to stand down.

The outgoing Orchestra Manager will canvas players to find individuals who are willing to serve on the LG or as other volunteers. If there is more than one volunteer for a position, the Orchestra Manager will discuss with the prospective applicants and LG members to see if they can agree as to whom should fill the position. If necessary, the matter will be resolved by a vote by Players (U3A ACT members) present at the end of year discussion gathering.

### **Consultation with players**

The Leadership Group will usually hold a discussion with Players at least once a year. Guest Players may also be invited to give their views. One such informal gathering will usually be held at 9am on the last Saturday morning meeting of the calendar year, immediately preceding the end-of-year party. The LG will:

- provide a report of the year's activities and finances
- inform the Orchestra of any changes to the LG and volunteers and if necessary conduct a vote
- Answer questions from players

### **Dealing with a disruptive player**

The LG will follow the guidance given to course leaders in the U3A ACT Guide for Course Leaders (see <https://www.u3acanberra.org.au/members/courses-leaders.html> )

### **Orchestra Funds**

The Orchestra's income comes from fees of players, donations and any other sources that the LG decides. All money

received must be deposited as soon as practicable into the Orchestra's account at Beyond Bank, and a receipt issued. However, donations received from patrons at concerts need not be receipted.

The funds of the Orchestra must be used to achieve the aims of the Orchestra in the way that the LG decides, but under no circumstances can funds or assets be distributed to players or to other individuals.

#### **Alteration of organisational principles and procedures**

Changes to this document can be made by the LG, but major changes should be referred to all players for consideration and comment before a final decision is made.

## Appendix 2 - Procedure for admitting new players

The LG takes the advice of the Music Coordinator in deciding who is admitted to the Orchestra. In making a recommendation, the Music Coordinator may seek advice from any other person.

### Qualifications

The preferred level of ability is the equivalent of at least 4<sup>th</sup> Grade AMEB for strings, and at least 5<sup>th</sup> Grade AMEB for winds, brass and percussion. However, U3A members who do not play at an appropriate level may be admitted if they are eager to improve their musical skills, provided they understand that they may not be included in concert performances until they have improved sufficiently. The Music Coordinator, in consultation with the Conductor, has the final decision on concert participation by players.

### Application Process

1. Prospective applicants should first speak with the Music Coordinator to discuss their music qualifications and the Orchestra's needs and vacancies. The Music Coordinator may arrange for the prospective applicant to attend two Orchestra practice sessions, without obligation to either party. The Music Coordinator will then advise the applicant regarding membership possibilities.
2. The applicant submits an application using the form in Appendix 4.
3. The Music Coordinator makes a recommendation to the LG regarding the applicant, noting in writing any specific considerations or conditions as appropriate.
4. The Music Coordinator's recommendation is based on the applicant's musical abilities, and the need to create/maintain instrumental balance within the Orchestra. The Music Coordinator may seek the opinion of other players in this regard.
5. The LG receives the Music Coordinator's assessment and will then consider any other relevant factors regarding the suitability of the applicant to be accepted as a player.
6. The LG's decision is final.

Following the LG's decision:

- the Secretary notifies the applicant of the decision, adds the new player's details into the online player database and files all relevant paperwork
- the Treasurer arranges for the payment of fees.

### Course Fees

Annual fees are payable to the Treasurer in February. Payment in full is preferred (less paperwork), however payment per term can be considered in special circumstances. Players who join the Orchestra part way through a year will pay pro rata fees, as determined by the Treasurer. Players who take leave from the Orchestra for a term or longer will not be required to pay fees for the period they are away.

The LG may decide to change fees under certain situations, but players will be consulted before such changes are made.

## Appendix 3 – Player responsibilities

**Practical Requirements** include:

- maintain currency of your U3A ACT membership (Guest Players excepted)
- Provide your own instrument (except if you play large percussion instruments, which the Orchestra will provide)
- provide your own music stand
- provide your own music. Some of the orchestral music is available for download from websites such as [www.imsip.org](http://www.imsip.org), while other parts are provided at rehearsals for copying. These should be returned to the folder as soon as possible so that other players are able to make a copy. All music borrowed for copying must be **signed out** and **signed in**. All care should be taken not to lose the music, since lost music can be embarrassing and/or costly to the Orchestra.
- Participate on a roster to provide food for the Orchestra's refreshment break.

**Standard of Conduct Requirements** include:

- act in accordance with the Orchestra's aims and U3A's *Code of Conduct*
- encourage and support fellow players in a friendly manner
- follow the leadership of and instructions from the Conductor and/or the Music Coordinator.
- attend rehearsal sessions regularly and practise your parts at home
- For rehearsals:
  1. **Arrive in good time** for a prompt start. Bear in mind that it takes time to find your seat, set up your music and music stand and warm up your instruments.
  2. **Help where possible**, with the setting up and clearing away of chairs and equipment in the rehearsal hall. While certain players have volunteered to carry out and oversee this work, additional help is always appreciated.
  3. **Shhhh please**. Refrain from holding private conversations or practising your instruments while the Conductor is talking. It is important that everyone can hear what the Conductor has to say even when the comments are not directed to your section. Instructions given to one section of the orchestra may well apply to others with similar music.
  4. **Take notes**. Always bring a pencil to make notes on your music regarding instructions given by the Conductor. We will make faster progress if these instructions do not have to be repeated many times at subsequent rehearsals. Make sure that any queries you may have on possible errors or misprints in the music are resolved early in the term.
  5. **Attend regularly**. If you are unable to attend a rehearsal, because of illness, travel or simply taking a break, please let someone in your section and/or the Conductor know. Remember: absences should be noted in the "Notice of Absence Form" available at rehearsals.

**Concert participation.** If you are unable to play in a concert (e.g. travelling) it is important you let the Conductor know as soon as possible so that any necessary adjustments can be made. Players who, for whatever reason, do not wish to participate in a concert (e.g. not feeling confident) should also let the Music Coordinator and the Conductor know in good time.



**APPENDIX 4 (cont.)**

Music Coordinator's Comments

Leadership Group Comments

Leadership Group Decision

Signed by Orchestra Manager

[date]