



Peer to Peer Musician Guide

WELCOME

We are delighted to welcome you to Peer to Peer! At the core of Peer to Peer is community building around a shared love of music, connecting people of different cultures and experiences. One of the strongest avenues of musical growth is playing alongside someone as dedicated to music as they are. The support that comes from peers working together is a powerful force. Our hope is that together, participating students from Gateway Music Outreach (GMO) and the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra (YO) will grow in their musicianship and build rapport based on a shared experience that extends beyond the music.

Please read through this brief guide carefully. It is essential that you understand the commitment and responsibilities that come with being a participant in this unique program.

Your GMO and SLSO Peer to Peer Team

Joseph Hendricks
St. Louis Symphony Orchestra
Peer to Peer Program Leader

James McKay
Gateway Music Outreach
Music Director

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Peer to Peer uplifts and supports young Black and Latine musicians. For the musicians of GMO, Peer to Peer will:

Build Community

Peer to Peer creates a supportive environment where musicians from GMO, the YO, and the SLSO share experiences, learn from each other, and build meaningful connections.

Advance Musicianship

Musicians strengthen their musicianship through practice sessions, coaching sessions, performances, and opportunities to observe music professionals in their field.

Provide Support

Peer to Peer is committed to supporting musicians long term. Musicians from GMO are encouraged to participate in the program from their entry until they graduate high school. Peer to Peer provides financial assistance for camps, ensembles, and enrichment activities.

YO musicians are a key component of Peer to Peer. For the musicians of the YO, Peer to Peer will:

Build Community

Peer to Peer creates a supportive environment where musicians from GMO, the YO, and the SLSO share experiences, learn from each other, and build meaningful connections.

Advance Musicianship

Musicians strengthen their musicianship through practice sessions, coaching sessions, performances, and opportunities to observe music professionals in their field.

Foster Leadership

YO musicians will receive opportunities to observe SLSO musicians as teachers and performers. Musicians will cultivate their mentorship skills as they lead their chamber groups.

Peer to Peer's meetings will consist of weekly sessions, large group events, and a chamber recital.

1. Weekly Sessions

Weekly sessions, the core activity of Peer to Peer, are held on Tuesday evenings at Grand Center Arts Academy (711 N. Grand Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63103). These sessions are a combination of practice sessions (GMO musician and YO musician) and coaching sessions (GMO musician, YO musician, and SLSO coach).

2. **SLSO Concert Attendance and Special Events**

Attending SLSO concerts is a great way to stay inspired and deepen your connection to music. It's especially meaningful to see your SLSO coach performing on stage alongside their colleagues. Duos are encouraged to explore the concert program beforehand and come with questions—your coach will be glad to share their insights!

In addition to attending select SLSO concerts, Peer to Peer will host special events such as masterclasses, lectures, or rehearsal observations, that may occur outside of the Tuesday night sessions.

3. **End of Year Recital**

In early May, Peer to Peer ensembles will perform in a chamber recital. Pieces will be assigned by the GMO Music Director and Peer to Peer Program Leader. This recital will be a public, free event for you to share the music you've worked so hard on with your friends and family.

See the full calendar on slo.org/p2p-resources for details.

Weekly Session Format

Peer to Peer weekly sessions are a combination of practice sessions (GMO musician and YO musician) and coaching sessions (GMO musician, YO musician, and SLSO coach).

Format of coaching sessions with your SLSO coach:

- On select weeks throughout the year, GMO/YO pairs will be coached on their assigned chamber piece. The piece will be assigned by the Peer to Peer Program Leader.
- Session with SLSO coaches will run a maximum of 60 minutes, and your start and end time will be assigned by the Peer to Peer Program Leader before your first session. Be prepared for temporary schedule changes when needed.
- During the last five minutes of each session with your SLSO coach, you will work together to complete the **Practice Plan** which will direct your practice and goals between then and your next session with your SLSO coach.

Format of practice Sessions:

- Plan to meet for a maximum of 60 minutes at the same time you are assigned to meet with your SLSO coach during coaching sessions.
- Continue to work on your assigned piece.
- Review the Practice Plan together and identify areas where the most practice progress was made and celebrate that!
- GMO musicians are encouraged to identify and share challenges they found during their personal practice time with their YO partner in these meetings. Together, talk about how to tackle those challenges before your next meeting with your SLSO coach.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities	
GMO Musician	YO Musician
• Attend all scheduled sessions prepared and on time. • Practice daily according to the Practice Plan and be intentional in following the course of study given by your SLSO musician coach, YO partner, and Mr. McKay of GMO. • Communicate how things are going in weekly sessions to your YO partner and SLSO coach.	• Attend all scheduled sessions prepared and on time. • (In coaching sessions) take notes on SLSO coach's instruction. • Fill out Practice Plan with SLSO Coach guidance at the end of coaching sessions. • (In practice sessions) reinforce what the SLSO coach last taught; provide practice tips.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Attendance

Every effort should be made to attend all Peer to Peer events. If a participant is running late to an event, they should promptly communicate their late arrival with their duet partner and the Peer to Peer Program Leader via BAND. Participants are allotted three absences per semester. Absences should be communicated either at the beginning of each semester or at least one week prior to the date of the absence. Participants can fill out the [absence notification form](#) as many times as necessary to update the Program Leader of schedule conflicts. If a participant is absent four or more times in one semester, a conversation with the Program Leader will be held to discuss future steps.

Commitment

By choosing to participate in Peer to Peer, YO and GMO musicians are making a meaningful commitment—to their partner, their coach, and the experience of learning and growing together. We're grateful for your participation and excited to share this journey with you.

We ask that all participants honor the time and effort invested in this program by engaging fully and consistently. If circumstances arise that prevent you from continuing, please reach out to the Peer to Peer Program Leader as soon as possible so we can support you.

Communication

Email: Email shall be the primary form of communication for Peer to Peer participants. General questions, questions or information that require follow-up from Program Leader, clarification on upcoming events, etc. should be sent via email. Any emails between participants should have the Peer to Peer Program Leader copied on them.

BAND: In addition to emails, Peer to Peer uses a communication app called BAND. This is a secure platform that will make it easy to share last-minute updates, as well as files, photos, etc. Musicians will receive a unique invite code to join. To learn more, please visit about.band.us.

BAND should be used for communicating last-minute information such as late arrival to both Program Leader and student partner. BAND should also be used for general conversations between students in between Peer to Peer sessions. Note that Program Leader has access to these chats for student safety.

Cellphone: Only call Program Leader in an emergency or where BAND communication would be insufficient. When possible, have your parent or guardian call the Program Leader. Do not text the Program Leader.

Conduct

A respectful and supportive environment makes learning and music-making richer for everyone. Celebrate differences and embrace each person's unique identity. Keeping this statement in mind fundamentally guides our commitment to treating all musicians, staff, and audience members with respect, kindness, and understanding—always.

Just as the SLSO's Community Values Statement emphasizes the importance of celebrating differences, kindness, and maintaining a safe space free from prejudice and harm, this program's culture reflects these same principles. Encourage your peers, share knowledge, and help build a community where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. Practice and coaching sessions flourish when we work together with mutual trust and fairness.

As members of a connected and highly visible community, you are expected to uphold these same values online. This includes how you engage on social media and other digital platforms. Content that harasses, demeans, excludes, or causes harm—whether public or private, anonymous or named—violates our standards of conduct.

Behavior that does not align with our values includes, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability
- Inappropriate or threatening language
- Physical aggression or unsafe conduct
- Any action that creates a hostile or unsafe environment

If you witness or experience harmful behavior, you are strongly encouraged to report it promptly. All concerns should be directed to the Peer to Peer Program Leader and can be done so in person or in writing, with the latter offering the option to remain anonymous. The form for written reports can be found at slo.org/p2p-resources. All reports are taken seriously and will be handled promptly. Confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest extent for both verbal and written reports and the necessary steps will be taken to address the behavior and/or situation. Discrimination, harassment, or any form of harmful behavior will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the program.

RESOURCES

slo.org/p2p-resources provides non-navigable access to:

- Peer to Peer Handbook
- Links to Practice Plan forms
- Event Calendar
- BAND group invite link
- Absence notification forms
- Misconduct report form

CONTACT INFORMATION

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