



## Knoxville Symphony Orchestra Musical Story Time Programs



**What:** The mission of the KSO Story Time program is to provide young children with their first experience with live classical music. Children who attend Story Times at local public libraries (which partner with the KSO to present the program) are engaged by the combination of children's literature and music. The KSO Story Time quartet provides live music (excerpts of classical works, arrangements of well-known children's songs, sound effects), and some narration to enhance the reading of three children's books in a half hour program designed for pre-school aged children. A KSO Education & Community Partnerships staff person prepares the performance space, reads the books and facilitates interaction with audience members, following a script based on an annual theme. At the conclusion of the scripted program, musicians personally greet the children and assist them in playing on student instruments (provided by the KSO). This added experience usually takes fifteen additional minutes. The KSO has graduated multiple students from the Knoxville Symphony Youth Orchestra program who had their first experience with string instruments live through this program. This program lays the ground work for participation in Very Young People's Concerts, the Knoxville Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Penny for the Arts ticket program. It is also the most popular program that educators request to visit their classrooms.

**Where:** The program takes place in either public libraries (free and open to the public), or in pre-k and kindergarten classrooms in Knox County Schools, or occasionally in schools in surrounding counties. (School performances are closed to the public.) To see a video clip from a KSO Story Time performance, go to the KSO website:

<https://knoxvillesymphony.com/education-community/story-time-programs/story-time-in-public-libraries/>

**How Many:** In a typical season, KSO quartets present Story Times at thirteen Knox County Public Library branches in the fall (October-December), and in ten public libraries outside Knox County in the spring (January-May). They also share responsibility for performances in up to twenty school classrooms in the spring. This program serves over 1,500 through public story times and an additional 1,500 through school story times.

**Process:** A collaboration between KSO staff and two core string quartets results in the development of the script each season. In September, quartets receive rehearsal credits for this purpose, and it is expected that the musicians arrive with suggested musical excerpts and sound effects to fit the program (a draft of the program will be sent by email prior to the first meeting). KSO staff will assist with scanning and/or making copies of the music for each member of the quartet, and will edit the script after each run-through to incorporate the quartet's creative input. The final rehearsal meeting culminates with the fully developed script that will be performed beginning in October.

**Responsibilities of the KSO Staff** include:

- Scheduling Story Time programs in public libraries and schools
- Selecting books based on the theme
- Preparing a draft script that is sent to core string quartets in August (some suggestions for musical excerpts and sound effects will be included)

- Assigning rehearsal credits and coordinating a schedule of rehearsals with the quartets to develop the script in September, including making copies of music for read-throughs and/or inclusion in the final script
- Setting up performance spaces at each venue and providing KSO student instruments
- Facilitating the program and addressing any issues that may arise
- In the case of performances more than sixty miles from the KSO offices, driving a van to transport a quartet and their instruments
- Providing and being receptive to feedback and evaluative comments to/from the quartets, including (but not limited to) a meeting for that purpose at the end of each season

**Responsibilities of the Core Musicians include:**

- Responding promptly to staff communications to schedule September rehearsals
- Reading through the script and coming to the first rehearsal with suggestions for musical excerpt and/or sound effects that might be incorporated (if a musician has copies of music to bring to the rehearsal that is always helpful; if staff needs to make copies available, as much advance notice as possible is also helpful)
- Engaging in the creative process to develop the script and rehearse the program in September
- Arriving at rehearsals and performance venues in a timely manner (on their own when venues are less than sixty miles from the KSO offices) and attired according to the applicable KSO dress code
- Bringing to each performance their instrument, music stand, and binder containing script and music
- Greeting children (and the accompanying adults) after each program and assisting the children in playing the student instruments provided by the KSO
- Providing and being receptive to feedback and evaluative comments to/from KSO staff

