

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **OREGON SYMPHONY NAMES 2018 SCHNITZER WONDER AWARD WINNER**

(Portland, Ore.) – President Scott Showalter announced today that the Symphony’s 2018 Schnitzer Wonder Award will go to the Metropolitan Youth Symphony (MYS), represented by Music Director Raúl Gómez and Executive Director Diana Scoggins. Founded on the belief that music education is an integral part of childhood development, MYS provides training and performance opportunities for young musicians of all ages and abilities. MYS is committed to access and inclusion and eliminating all barriers to participation. The award will be presented on April 14 at the Oregon Symphony’s Classically Unexpected concert at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. This is a free concert for the Symphony’s partners and the Portland community.

The Schnitzer Wonder Award was created in 2015 by Jordan Schnitzer to honor his parents, Harold and Arlene Schnitzer, and their commitment to philanthropy, fairness, opportunity, education and creativity as the heart of a strong and vibrant community. The award honors an individual or organization that directly works to build community through the next generation of artists and/or student musicians. This award comes with a \$10,000 monetary prize, intended to help further the organization’s work.

“Oregon Symphony has developed a rich and rewarding partnership with MYS which reaches through all levels of both organizations,” said Showalter. “We are delighted to recognize and support MYS in its mission with this award.”

Over the years, Oregon Symphony musicians have served as coaches mentoring MYS students from the beginning levels to those considering careers in music. Maestro Carlos Kalmar along with Associate Conductor Norman Huynh, who holds the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Associate Conductor chair, have led MYS rehearsals while MYS musicians have had opportunities to perform side by side with Oregon Symphony professionals. In its current season, MYS has developed programming to echo the Symphony’s own Sounds of Home project, with concerts exploring themes of immigration and the environment, and a performance at Rose Haven day shelter.

“We are deeply honored to receive the Schnitzer Wonder Award on behalf of MYS, and very grateful to Jordan Schnitzer and the Oregon Symphony. The generous and collaborative spirit that runs throughout the Oregon Symphony and the music-making and mentorship that

takes place with Symphony musicians each season impact the growth of our students in tremendous ways,” said Scoggins

Gómez, who took over as Music Director of MYS in 2016, and Scoggins, who has served as Executive Director since 2010, share a passion to inspire young musicians. Under their leadership the monetary award will be applied toward the organization’s expanding access and equity initiatives and assist MYS in advancing its continued goal of empowering young people to perform music at the highest possible level.

“Every single child who wishes to learn to play a musical instrument should have the opportunity. This award allows us to strengthen our work towards this goal as we inspire our students toward excellence with the high quality of our programs. It will have a powerful effect on our musicians, from our free beginning string students in Portland and Hillsboro, to our most advanced students on financial aid,” said Gómez. “We are extremely grateful to the Oregon Symphony and the Schnitzer family for this honor.”

The Classically Unexpected concert begins at 6pm and is immediately followed by the Oregon Symphony’s annual fundraising gala at the Portland Art Museum. For tickets and information visit [orsymphony.org](http://orsymphony.org).

#### ABOUT THE OREGON SYMPHONY

The Grammy-nominated Oregon Symphony ranks as one of America’s major orchestras. Led by Music Director Carlos Kalmar, it serves over 300,000 people annually through more than 100 performances and award-winning education and community engagement programs. Now in its 122nd year, the Oregon Symphony is the oldest orchestra west of the Mississippi.

An unprecedented 2016/17 Season broke records in virtually every category, drawing historic attendance and revenue. These numbers were propelled by a 20% increase in the number of classical concerts, three groundbreaking SoundSights concerts, and the broadest-ever range of repertoire. The season additionally reached nearly 12 million radio broadcast listeners via All Classical Portland as well as American Public Media’s SymphonyCast and Performance Today, and included two commissioned world premieres. Its 2017/18 Season builds on this success in a trailblazing new series, The Sounds of Home, which combines music and art to reflect on three critical issues in our community – immigration, the environment, and homelessness.

*Season subscriptions, including Choose Your Own packages and Gift Cards, are available through the Oregon Symphony Ticket Office at 503-228-1353. Photos for media use are available at [orsymphony.org/newsroom](http://orsymphony.org/newsroom).*

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