

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2018

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METROPOLITAN YOUTH SYMPHONY'S 2018/19 SEASON ENERGIZES PORTLAND YOUTH THROUGH ARTISTIC PARTNERSHIPS AND ITALIAN TOUR

PORTLAND, OREGON (September 13, 2018) - Metropolitan Youth Symphony (MYS) announces MYS Symphony Orchestra programming and highlights for 2018/19 - the 45th season of programs for Portland's young musicians. The series showcases the radical multiculturalism of the Americas, blending traditional classical repertoire with contemporary and classic American and Latin American works. The four Portland-area concerts culminate in a summer residency in Italy.

"Our 45th season is all about collaboration and diversity as we set the scene for our international tour in the summer of 2019," says Music Director Raúl Gómez, who is beginning his third year with the organization.

2018/19 Season Highlights

- MYS Symphony Orchestra takes a thirteen-day residency at the Musica Riva Festival in northern Italy (summer of 2019) and 3-day concert tour in Slovenia.
- Young Composer's Project from Portland's cutting-edge new music ensemble fEARnoMUSIC and MYS collaborate on three of the four 2018/19 concerts to present world premiere compositions by local students.
- *Viva Italia!* celebrates the extraordinary musical legacy of Italy, the host country of the Musica Riva Festival. The concert features colorful Italian works, as well as Italy-inspired compositions by Tchaikovsky and Berlioz (November 11, 2018)
- MYS presents *Cantando*, a showcase of Latin American choral and orchestral music in collaboration with Pacific Youth Choir (January 6, 2019).
- MYS partners with the puppet troupe "The Starlings" from Northwest Children's Theater & School for a vividly choreographed concert titled *Firebird*. The program features large-scale works by two musical giants of the 20th century: Ottorino Respighi and Igor Stravinsky (March 3, 2019).
- With a nod to the Tuscan capital of Florence, Italy, MYS celebrates *America's Florence, the season finale*, in honor of the acclaimed 19th-century African-American symphonist Florence

Price. The concert includes two of her compositions, as well as a medley of jazz tunes by Louis Armstrong (May 21, 2019).

Behind the Music

Throughout the coming year, MYS Symphony Orchestra musicians will prepare and perform music in anticipation of their summer residency at the 2019 Musica Riva Festival at Lago di Garda, Italy. A unique aspect of their programming will be new music written by American youths, including works by local students.

“It is rare to see student musicians perform the fully orchestrated works of student composers over an entire season. This is a fantastic opportunity to inspire audiences with the tremendous power of the creative process. We are thrilled to work with fEARnoMUSIC’s Kenji Bunch, Jeff Payne, and Ryan Francis to make this happen,” says Mr. Gómez.

The partnership between MYS and the Portland-based contemporary music ensemble fEARnoMUSIC will produce three world premiere compositions by Portland high school students - all developed through fEARnoMUSIC’s Young Composers Project.

The Musica Riva Festival, located on the banks of Italy’s Lago di Garda, engages world-class artists to collaborate with student musicians. During the Festival, the players of the Symphony Orchestra will collaborate with these teaching artists, and give a total of four daytime performances, while enjoying faculty concerts by night.

In addition to celebrating the diversity of the Americas before an international audience, the MYS 2018/19 season cultivates a spirit of innovative collaboration among pillars of Portland’s arts community. Over the course of the year, the young musicians from MYS ensembles will share the stage with Pacific Youth Choir; with the rainbow-hued puppet troupe "The Starlings" from Northwest Children’s Theater & School; with Oregon International Ballet Academy (November 17), and with BodyVox’s Junior Artist Generator (JAG) (May 18-20), an elite training and performance program in ballet and jazz technique.

MYS’ March and May concerts will also feature orchestra and soloists in programs showcasing winners of the MYS Concerto Competition.

2018/19 Concert Season

VIVA ITALIA!

Metropolitan Youth Symphony
November 11, 2018, 7:30 pm
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Rossini Overture to *The Barber of Seville*
Safirstein Tone Poem No. 1: *Orpheus and Eurydice*
Ponchielli *Dance of the Hours* from *La Gioconda*
Berlioz *Roman Carnival Overture*
Tchaikovsky *Capriccio Italien*

Italy has long been a hotbed for original music. As Mr. Gómez and the young musicians prepare for their own Italian sojourn, they open the 2018/19 season with a program titled Viva Italia. The concert includes Italian inspirations by Tchaikovsky and Berlioz, and - of course - Italian classics from Rossini and Ponchielli.

As music and youth are central to the MYS mission, both Italian classics come from a body of works that have enchanted generations of young Americans: Rossini's Overture to The Barber of Seville, famously parodied by Bugs Bunny in *Rabbit of Seville*; and Ponchielli's *Dance of the Hours*, a highlight from Walt Disney's 1940 animated film *Fantasia* (with the famous pas de deux between the hippo-ballerina and amorous alligator).

The program also looks to the future of American music with works by a student composers, including a world premiere presented in partnership with the Young Composers Project, a program operated by the Portland-based contemporary music ensemble fEARnoMUSIC. Developed through a series of workshops, Tone Poem No. 1: *Orpheus and Eurydice* is a new piece by Jake Safirstein, a senior at Grant High School and winner of the Oregon Music Education Association Composition Contest.

CANTANDO

Metropolitan Youth Symphony
Pacific Youth Choir
January 6, 2019, 7:30 pm
Newmark Theatre

Moncayo *Sinfonietta*
Juan David Osorio *Suite de Villancicos Latinoamericanos*
Selections by Pacific Youth Choir
Arturo Márquez *Danzón No. 8*
Carlos Guzmán *Cantos de Guanacaste*

The spirit of collaboration continues as the musicians of MYS join forces with Pacific Youth Choir for *Cantando*, a program of choral and orchestral works celebrating the music of Latin America. Mr. Gómez leads the orchestra in *Sinfonietta* by Mexican composer José Pablo Moncayo, as well as *Danzón No. 8* by Arturo Márquez, inspired by the music and environs of Mexico's Veracruz region. Pacific Youth Choir joins the Symphony to perform *Cantos de Guanacaste* by Costa Rican composer, musician and director Carlos Guzmán, and Juan David Osorio's *Suite de Villancicos Latinoamericanos* representing music from the Dominican Republic, Argentina, and Colombia. The villancico was a common poetic and musical form of the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America popular from the late 15th to 18th centuries.

FIREBIRD

Metropolitan Youth Symphony
Northwest Children's Theater's "The Starlings"
2019 MYS Concerto Competition Winner
March 3, 2019, 7:30 pm
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Ball World Premiere/TBA
TBA Concerto
with the 2019 MYS Concerto Competition Winner
Respighi *Gli uccelli (The Birds)*
Stravinsky *The Firebird Suite* (1919 version)

Mr. Gómez and MYS team up with Northwest Children's Theater & School for a brilliantly hued program of movement, puppetry, and spectacular orchestral fireworks. "The Starlings," an "all-puppet, all-bird acting troupe," takes the stage with MYS for the birdsong-infused showpiece *Gli uccelli* by the master Italian orchestral colorist Ottorino Respighi. The musical pyrotechnics continue with the original suite from one of the greatest ballets of the 20th century: Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird*.

The program entitled *Firebird* is the second in a three-concert series of collaborations between MYS and fEARnoMUSIC's Young Composers Project. Mr. Gómez leads the young musicians of MYS in a world premiere by Max Ball, a violinist and junior at Lakeridge High School in Lake Oswego, Oregon. In addition, MYS performs a concerto featuring a solo performance by one of Oregon's gifted pre-collegiate musicians: a 2019 MYS Concerto Competition winner.

AMERICA'S FLORENCE

Metropolitan Youth Symphony
2019 MYS Concerto Competition Winner
May 21, 2019, 7:30 pm
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Price *Dances in the Canebrakes*

Palka *Letter to Florence Price*

TBA Concerto

with the 2019 MYS Concerto Competition Winner

Price *Symphony No. 1 in E minor, 1931-1932*

Louis Armstrong *Satchmo!*

In anticipation of the upcoming residency in northern Italy, where repertoire from this concert will also be performed, Mr. Gómez and MYS present *America's Florence*, a showcase of America's rich cultural tapestry. Named for the pioneering, mid-20th century, African-American composer Florence Price, the concert features her *Symphony No. 1* and the suite *Dances in the Canebrakes*, plus Ted Ricketts's *Satchmo!*, a tribute to jazz legend Louis Armstrong.

Celebrating young leaders in music, the season's three-part collaboration between MYS and the Portland-based contemporary music ensemble fEARnoMUSIC concludes with a world premiere by MYS violinist Katie Palka. Developed through the Young Composers Project, Palka's *Letter to Florence Price* pays tribute to the 19th-century African-American composer Florence Price.

In addition, Mr. Gómez brings out one of Portland's most accomplished young musicians to take a solo turn with the orchestra. The soloist will be one of two winners of the 2019 MYS Concerto Competition.

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Tickets: \$11-\$40 at www.playmys.org or call 503-239-4566

Metropolitan Youth Symphony (playmys.org/)

In 1974, Lajos Balogh launched the Metropolitan Youth Symphony with just sixteen string players. Now among the largest youth music organizations in the United States, MYS engages more than 500 students across Portland and Southwestern Washington. Operating fourteen ensembles at beginning to advanced levels including orchestra, band, percussion, and jazz, MYS nurtures the whole musician, providing theory classes, instrumental coaching, small groups, and opportunities to collaborate with performers across artistic disciplines.

Committed to providing students with a wide range of artistic experiences, MYS partners with diverse organizations from around the community and beyond. Past collaborators include Oregon Symphony Maestro Carlos Kalmar and members of the Oregon Symphony, Mariachi Una Voz (Hillsboro) and Mariachi Tradición (Forest Grove), composer Gabriela Lena Frank, the Grammy

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nominated chamber ensemble A Far Cry, Friends of Chamber Music and the Brooklyn-based PROJECT Trio, and YOA Orchestra of the Americas.

Uplifting Oregon families across the cultural and socioeconomic spectrum, Metropolitan Youth Symphony provides tuition-free beginning strings, as well as tuition assistance, loaner instruments, and in-school concerts in low-income neighborhoods. MYS ensembles reflect a broad diversity of cultures and life experiences while fostering a tight-knit community through music, collaboration, peer support, and self-expression. In response to rapid growth in the metropolitan area, MYS has established a satellite string program in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Each January, Metropolitan Youth Symphony hosts a concerto competition for the most advanced musicians in the MYS Symphony Orchestra. Each contestant prepares and memorizes a solo to be auditioned with piano. Winners will appear as soloists with the MYS Symphony Orchestra later in the season.

Auditions for MYS ensembles are held in June, August, November, and by appointment. For more information and to register go to: www.playmys.org.

Raúl Gómez

Conductor, violinist, and violist Raúl Gómez begins his third season as Music Director of the Metropolitan Youth Symphony. Recently, he was featured in the League of American Orchestra's 2018 Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview. Hosted in April by the Nashville Symphony and music director Giancarlo Guerrero, the Preview received applications from nearly 150 conductors around the world; Gómez was one of six to receive the honor.

A native of Costa Rica, Gómez holds masters and doctoral degrees from Louisiana State University. Previously he has held positions with youth orchestras in Louisiana and Mississippi, and at the YOA Orchestra of the Americas. Recent conducting engagements include appearances with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio, and the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra. Internationally, he has worked in Mexico, Brazil and Costa Rica.

In May, Gómez and MYS Executive Director Diana Scoggins were awarded the Schnitzer Wonder Award on behalf of MYS by Jordan Schnitzer and the Oregon Symphony. The award honors individuals and organizations that strengthen community through programs for young people and the arts.

2018/19 Season Concert Series Artistic Partners

fEARnoMUSIC's Young Composers Project

Led by acclaimed composer and violist Kenji Bunch, fEARnoMUSIC was founded in 1992 by percussionists Jeffrey Payne and Joel Bluestone. The Portland-based ensemble specializes in

the performance of music by 20th and 21st-century composers. Answering a call to encourage and cultivate musical curiosity and creativity in the next generation, fEARnoMUSIC established the Young Composers Project in 1997, and now provides training and mentorship in music composition to young people grades six to twelve.

In 2013, Portland-native and acclaimed composer Kenji Bunch returned to his hometown after spending twenty years in New York City, becoming fEARnoMUSIC Artistic Director in 2014.

The partnership between Young Composers Project and Metropolitan Youth Symphony will bring three world premiere compositions to the stage during the 2018/19 season; all three works are by Portland-area youth. The partnership gives young composers an opportunity to write for and hear their work performed by full symphony orchestra, while giving ensemble musicians a chance to play never performed music by their peers.

Pacific Youth Choir

Now in its 15th season, the Portland-based Pacific Youth Choir (PYC) serves more than 280 young singers ranging in age from five to nineteen. Headed by founder and artistic director Mia Hall Miller, PYC operates eleven ensembles and draws students from more than sixty schools around the Portland area. The PYC is in residence at Portland's Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and, in addition to working with Metropolitan Youth Symphony, has collaborated with the Oregon Symphony, Pink Martini, and other organizations around the state. During the 2018/19 season, PYC will share the stage with MYS for a concert of sizzling Latin American works.

Northwest Children's Theater & School

Northwest Children's Theater & School (NWCTS) began with one production in 1993 and has grown rapidly into a dynamic, year-round company specializing in theater art and education experiences for young people. Founded by managing director Judy Kafoury, NWCTS brings the wonders of live theater to the entire family, while providing excellent instruction and performance opportunities to young dancers, singers, and actors at every skill level. During the 2018/19 season, NWCTS will bring "The Starlings," a splashy troupe of bird puppets, together with the musicians of MYS for choreographed performances of two 20th-century favorites: the suite from Stravinsky's *The Firebird* and Respighi's *Gli uccelli*.