



raúl gómez  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

## For Immediate Release: Metropolitan Youth Symphony Breaks the Classical Music Mold with its 2019/20 Season

PORTLAND, OR (July 11, 2019): The Metropolitan Youth Symphony (MYS) breaks the classical music mold for its musicians and audiences with a 2019-20 season full of genre-defying collaborations juxtaposed with traditional symphonic masterworks. By programming pieces which embrace broader definitions of the classical genre, and by bringing guest artist Regina Carter (photo right) to Portland by way of an unprecedented residency program, MYS helps to recontextualize classical music and widen its audiences and advocates.



Regina Carter, Photo Credit: Christopher Drukker

### Season highlights: *energy, optimism, and infectious grooves...*

- A residency for the world famous violinist Regina Carter, culminating in performances of David Schiff's *4 Sisters* jazz violin concerto with the Symphony Orchestra, and jazz classics with MYS' advanced Jazz Ensemble.
- Three World Premieres by young composers, performed by the Symphony Orchestra and presented through The Authentic Voice commissioning program
- Silent film collaboration with youth from around the world, presented in partnership with the International Youth Silent Film Festival
- A global assortment of high energy dance music, both new and old, bookending the season



*Composers for The Authentic Voice, 2019-20*  
*L to R: Rohan Srinivasan, Matthew Kaminski, and Grace Miedziak*

*“MYS’s 2019-2020 season is all about pushing the boundaries of what an orchestra can do and having a lot of fun while doing so. We will explore a very wide range of music starting with Beethoven and ending with an eclectic assortment of energetic, modern dance music. Along the way, we have collaborations with young filmmakers, commissions of new works by local young composers and a residence by the amazing Regina Carter, a world-famous jazz violinist who has pushed many boundaries herself. And that’s only what our most advanced orchestra is doing! Fourteen other MYS ensembles will perform dynamic, engaging community concerts all season long.”*

- Music Director Raúl Gómez, who is beginning his fourth year with the organization

### **Behind the Music**

By creating a residency for celebrated guest artist Regina Carter, MYS showcases their forward-thinking mission to provide classical music and jazz training under one roof. “Widely considered the finest jazz violinist of her generation,” (*New York Times*), Carter will share her artistry by:

- offering an Advanced String Clinic
- hosting an Introduction to Improvisation Workshop
- guiding Jazz Ensemble and Symphony rehearsals including a rehearsal at Self-Enhancement, Inc.
- soloing in David Schiff’s acclaimed jazz violin concerto, building on the classical cannon with jazz in a way that is unique to MYS

A master improviser with particular voice and style, Carter is a recipient of the MacArthur Fellows Grant and the Doris Duke Award. Her presence offers the young musicians of MYS the phenomenally enriching opportunity to study with and perform alongside musical genius.

Last season, MYS launched The Authentic Voice commissioning program in partnership with Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project to “teach young musicians to use their artistry to empower others and create joy in the world.” (Raúl Gómez, Music Director) 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. Following a tremendously successful initial year, the program expands in this, its second season, to include:

- Three symphonic commissions of new works by local, student composers, developed through Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project “which provides unparalleled training and performance opportunities for promising composers” (*Lake Oswego Review*)
- World Premieres of each of these works performed by the MYS Symphony Orchestra at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
- Eight YCP student arrangements of Nathan Avakian’s pipe organ film scores for full orchestra, with two scores arranged by students from Costa Rica performed to film by MYS at the Newmark Theatre in January
- Further opportunities for readings and performances of works by younger composers with other MYS ensembles, including the Concert Orchestra, Vivaldi Strings, Symphonic Band, and MYSticks Percussion Ensemble

“By way of the unprecedented opportunity that this program provides, **Portland is becoming a leader in the development of the next generation of composers.**” (Jeff Payne, founder of the Young Composers Project) The Authentic Voice program is made possible through the generous support of Ronni Lacroute.

MYS’s annual Concerto Competition inspires the organization’s most ambitious students to hone their craft through the mastery of challenging and mature solo repertoire. Each year, a winner is chosen among the strings, and also among the combined category of winds, brass and percussion, with both students being presented in performance with the Symphony Orchestra in spring concerts at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. Aside from providing these students with tremendous experience and opportunity, these performances serve to introduce some of MYS’s star players to the community, strengthening audience connection to the orchestra.

Through strong partnerships and collaboration among pillars of Portland’s arts community and beyond, MYS continues to expand the impact of its programs. In the 2019-20 season, MYS collaborates with Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project; the International Youth Silent Film Festival; BodyVox’s Junior Artist Generator; the Oregon International Ballet Academy; and Boston’s Grammy-nominated, self-conducted chamber orchestra A Far Cry.

## **2019/20 Concert Season - Downtown Series**

### **BEETHOVEN 7**

**Sunday, November 10, 2019, 7:30 pm; The Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall**

MYS Symphony Orchestra, Music Director Raúl Gómez

Kevin Tsai (MYS Concerto Competition Winner, Strings)

Joan Tower, *For the Uncommon Woman*

Matthew Kaminski, World Premiere TBA (part of The Authentic Voice program)

Henryk Wieniawski, *Violin Concerto No. 1* (movement 1)

Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 7*

Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*, nicknamed "The Apotheosis of the Dance," kickstarts the season's momentum with the ultimate symphonic dance experience. The lilting themes of the first movement give way to the slow and steady but captivating pulse of the second which develops with swirling, layered melodies. The forward motion continues to build through the raucous and unrelenting 3rd and 4th movements.

Music Director Raúl Gómez also leads the Symphony Orchestra in a world premiere by Matthew Kaminski, the first of three symphonic premieres by young composers which comprise this season's Authentic Voice program, presented in partnership with Fear No Music's Young Composers Project (see above for more information). A pianist and multiple award-winning composer, Matthew is a member of Cascadia Composers and is active on his student council at Mountainside High School.

Lake Oswego High School senior Kevin Tsai solos in the highly romantic first movement from *Violin Concerto No. 1* by Polish violin virtuoso Henryk Wieniawski. The piece's especially impressive cadenza features multiple-stopping, harmonics, and lines reaching into the highest stratosphere.

Dedicated to adventurous, risk-taking women, Joan Tower's *For the Uncommon Woman* makes a clear statement in reference to MYS's commitment to inclusive programming.

## **LIGHTS, CAMERA, MUSIC!**

**Sunday, January 12, 2020, 7:30 pm; The Newmark Theatre**

MYS Symphony Orchestra, Music Director Raúl Gómez

International Youth Silent Film Festival

MYS Concerto Competition Winner

Film music medley overture

Nicole Buetti, *Odyssey Overture for Orchestra*

Concerto TBD, featuring MYS Competition Winner

Nathan Avakian, film soundtracks, arranged by Young Composers Project students

This unprecedented collaborative concert with the International Youth Silent Film Festival celebrates new voices in film and composition. Ten award-winning short films by young filmmakers from around the world receive an airing in concert with MYS's Symphony Orchestra performing brand new arrangements of Nathan Avakian's soundtracks. Young composers from Portland and beyond will adapt these scores, originally for pipe organ, for full orchestra.

The concert also includes *Odyssey Overture for Orchestra* by Portland's own Nicole Buetti . In addition to being a composer, Nicole frequently coaches MYS's woodwind students. This new work is dedicated to Buetti's father, who instilled in her a love for science, *Star Trek*, and *Star Wars*. Following its premiere last fall with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the piece received a glowing review in *Oregon ArtsWatch* which noted its "colorful, confident orchestration" and "gorgeous melody... If Bartók had Gone West to write music for action movies, it might have sounded like this."

Additionally, MYS performs a concerto featuring a solo performance by one of Oregon's gifted pre-collegiate musicians: a 2020 MYS Concerto Competition winner.

## **REGINA CARTER PLAYS 4 SISTERS**

**Sunday, March 8, 2020, 7:30 pm; The Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall**

MYS Symphony Orchestra, Music Director Raúl Gómez

MYS Jazz Ensemble, Director Ryan Meagher

Guest Artist, Regina Carter

Grace Miedziak, World Premiere TBA (part of The Authentic Voice program)

World Premiere TBA (from the Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble young composers program)

David Schiff, *4 Sisters* violin concerto (West Coast Premiere)

This very special concert brings guest artist Regina Carter to Portland audiences, as she joins the advanced MYS Symphony Orchestra as soloist in the West Coast Premiere of David Schiff's *4 Sisters* jazz violin concerto. The acclaimed work honors musical greats Aretha Franklin, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday and Sarah Vaughan in signature style:

*David Schiff's engaging jazz violin concerto... allow(s) Carter to announce her charismatic presence by painting the air with swing... Schiff is clever... Four Sisters is a jazz piece, period — but written by a composer on intimate terms with Stravinsky and Ives as well as Ellington."*  
- Mark Stryker, *Detroit Free Press*

Composer Grace Miedziak, a 17-year-old attending early college classes at Central Oregon Community College, composes the second of this season's three Authentic Voice symphonic commissions. Also a pianist and vocalist, Grace's interests extend to music as a therapeutic tool for the elderly. She plans to pursue a college degree in composition and has been recognized twice as an Honored Composer by OMTA.

Finally, audiences enjoy the rare treat of watching MYS's advanced Jazz students perform with Regina Carter herself in an amazing set of jazz classics, and a brand new piece written for this program from the Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble young composers program.

## **DANCE PARTY: THEN AND NOW!**

**Sunday, May 24, 2020, 7:30pm; The Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall**

MYS Symphony Orchestra, Music Director Raúl Gómez

MYS Concerto Competition Winner

Johann Strauss, Jr., *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*, op.314

Rohan Srinivasan, World Premiere TBA (part of The Authentic Voice program)

Concerto TBD, featuring MYS Competition Winner

Johannes Brahms, *Hungarian Dance No. 5*

Antonín Dvořák, *Slavonic Dance Op. 46. No. 1 in C major: Presto*

José Pablo Moncayo, *Huapango*

Aram Khachaturian, *Sabre Dance*

William Grant Still, *A New Orleans Street*

Leonard Bernstein, *Mambo from West Side Story*

Gabriela Lena Frank, *Mestizo Waltz*

Kenji Bunch, *Groovebox Fantasy*

This groove infused, high energy program features dance music from the past 150 years, from countries including Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Armenia, Mexico, Brazil, and the US.

Celebrating young leaders in music, the season's three-part Authentic Voice collaboration between MYS and the Fear No Music concludes with a world premiere by 16 year old Rohan Srinivasan, a sophomore at Sunset High School. A jazz drummer and former cellist, Rohan is active in clubs including racquetball, speech and debate, and the National Honor Society and enjoys painting, hiking, and biking.

In addition, Mr. Gómez brings out one of Portland's most accomplished young musicians, a winner of the 2020 MYS Concerto Competition, to take a solo turn with the orchestra.

**Tickets: \$5-45 at [www.playmys.org](http://www.playmys.org) or call 503-239-4566**

### **Metropolitan Youth Symphony**

*The Metropolitan Youth Symphony "offers not only a chance to encounter some excellent music we should all be hearing more often on classical concerts, but also these accomplished young musicians and their visionary conductor." - Oregon ArtsWatch (January 2, 2019)*

With a foundational commitment to access, the Metropolitan Youth Symphony educates, develops and promotes over 500 young musicians of all ages and levels of experience each year in one of the

nation's largest youth orchestra programs. 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-nominated chamber ensemble A Far Cry, Friends of Chamber Music and the Brooklyn-based PROJECT Trio, and 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.

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

### **Music Director Raúl Gómez**

Conductor, violinist, and violist Raúl Gómez begins his fourth season as Music Director of the Metropolitan Youth Symphony. Recently selected as one of six conductors to be featured in the League of American Orchestra's 2018 Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview, Mr. Gómez competed for the honor with nearly 150 applicants from around the world. Hosted by the Nashville Symphony and music director Giancarlo Guerrero, the Preview selects conductors for their "experience, talent, leadership, and commitment to a career in service to American orchestras."

A native of Costa Rica, Mr. Gómez's recent and upcoming engagements include multiple appearances with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the Oregon Symphony, the Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio and Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, as well as appearances in Mexico, Brazil and Costa Rica. Previously he has held positions with youth orchestras in Louisiana and Mississippi, and at the Orchestra of the Americas. Gómez received masters and doctoral degrees from Louisiana State University where he studied with Carlos Riazuelo (conducting), Kevork Mardirossian and Espen Lilleslåtten (violin/viola). Additional conducting training includes a fellowship at the Aspen Music Festival.

In 2018, Gómez and MYS Executive Director Diana Scoggins received 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. Learn more at [www.raulgomezrojas.com](http://www.raulgomezrojas.com).

## **2019/20 Season Artistic Partners**

### **Regina Carter**

For Grammy-nominated artist Regina Carter, the violin isn't simply an improvisational vehicle; it's a passport to unexpected realms. Her quest for beauty combined with her passion for excellence did not escape the attention of the MacArthur Foundation, which awarded Regina their prestigious MacArthur fellowship 'genius grant.' San Francisco Performances also took note of Regina's exceptional work and appointed her Artist-in-Residence for five years. She also served as one of the Resident Artistic Directors for the discerning SFJAZZ during its inaugural season in its spectacular new home. Most recently, the acclaimed violinist was awarded a Doris Duke Artist Award, and in 2018 was appointed as the Director of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's All-Female Jazz Residency, a unique summer immersion program for aspiring women jazz professionals.

Her albums reflect that singular quest for beauty – in 1995, Regina released her self-titled solo debut on Atlantic Records. She released three more albums in rapid succession after her debut *Something for Grace* (1997), *Rhythms of the Heart* (1999) and *Motor City Moments* (2000). Traveling to Genoa, Italy and making history being the first jazz musician and African American to play the Guarneri Del Gesu violin inspired her next effort, *Paganini: After a Dream* in 2003. *I'll Be Seeing You: A Sentimental Journey* (2006) became a powerful and heartfelt tribute to her late mother. The connection to family, history, and tradition continued into *Reverse Thread* (2010) and *Southern Comfort* (2014), drawing ties between her own African heritage and her family's history. Her most recent release, *Ella: Accentuate the Positive* (2017), celebrates the music and spirit of her inspiration: musical legend Ella Fitzgerald. For more information, visit [reginacarter.com](http://reginacarter.com).

### **Fear No Music, Young Composers Project**

Led by acclaimed composer and violist Kenji Bunch, Fear No Music promotes music education through public performance of modern and contemporary classical music, and groundbreaking youth mentorship in composition. Answering a call to encourage and cultivate musical curiosity and creativity in the next generation, the group established the Young Composers Project in 1997, and now provides training in music composition to young people grades six to twelve. Learn more at [ycp.fearnomusic.org](http://ycp.fearnomusic.org).



## **International Youth Silent Film Festival**

Jon “JP” Palanuk founded the International Youth Silent Film Festival in 2009 after attending a live theatre organ concert which inspired him to “create a competition where young filmmakers can create their own silent movies.” Filmmakers are all under 20 years old, and use one of ten original musical themes composed for the festival by Nathan Avakian. The Festival has grown over the past eight years to include international submissions and screenings across the United States, with the annual Portland award show taking place at The Hollywood Theatre. Discover more at [www.makesilentfilm.com](http://www.makesilentfilm.com).

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