

April 15, 2016

Dear MYS Community,

As many of you know, we have been engaged in a search for a new Music Director for Metropolitan Youth Symphony (MYS) for the past seven months. Recently, the search reached a successful conclusion, which we wanted to share with you. It is our great pleasure to announce that, based on the recommendation of the Search Committee and approval of the MYS Board, Raúl Gómez-Rojas has accepted the offer from the Board of Directors to become MYS' next Music Director, effective August 1, 2016.



Mr. Gómez is a conductor and accomplished violinist whose artistry, commitment to excellence and passion for music education is undeniable. He received his Master of Music in Violin Performance and Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting, studying with Carlos Riazuelo, at Louisiana State University, and was a conducting fellow at the Aspen Music Festival in 2011. He is currently the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Mississippi Youth Symphony Orchestra, and conductor with the Premier Orchestral Institute. He has had multiple appearances with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, where he receives the unqualified support of Music Director Carlos Miguel Prieto. Other highlights include appearances with the Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio and Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, as well as conducting engagements in Mexico, Brazil and Costa Rica.

During his years with YOA Orchestra of the Americas (YOA), an orchestra consisting of young professionals from top universities and conservatories in North and South America, Mr. Gómez served as Head of Music Programs and Education Advisor. The leadership and program experience that he gained from this experience will be very beneficial in his role as Music Director. He is currently on the YOA conducting staff and will be touring the Baltics, northern Europe and Scandinavia with YOA in July.

Mr. Gómez remains active as a violinist and violist with a special interest in chamber music, jazz and Latin American music. His significant experience with chamber music will enhance his work with MYSfits, our advanced chamber ensemble, our mid-winter chamber music program, and our weeklong summer camp, Portland Summer Ensembles. His interest in jazz is a special benefit for the organization. "One of the aspects of MYS that excites me the most," says Mr. Gómez "is that it has a jazz program. Having lived in New Orleans, jazz is close to my heart, and I even occasionally sat in at jazz gigs on Frenchmen and Bourbon Streets myself. This unique offering sets MYS apart, and I can't wait to help it grow over the next few years."

A firm believer in the power of music to transform lives, in 2011 Mr. Gómez served as the founding Artistic Director of Kids' Orchestra, a year round program designed to foster social change and nurture promising futures for youth in Baton Rouge. In the first year alone, Mr. Gómez led a team of teachers that impacted nearly 100 students. Today he continues his involvement as Artistic Advisor. His work with Kids' Orchestra made him the recipient of the Hildegard Behrens Foundation Young Artist Humanitarian Award in 2012.

Throughout his career, Mr. Gómez has worked with musicians from renowned institutions such as the Berlin Philharmonic and Julliard, who have been consistent in their high regard for his musicianship and leadership. We would like to share some of the feedback that we have received:

*"I have known Raúl...through our work together at YOA. At first meeting, he immediately impressed me with his enthusiasm, integrity, calm yet strong leadership skills, trustworthy and reliable personality but most importantly his tremendous knowledge and love for music. Raúl is an enormously accomplished musician and a highly gifted conductor. His ability to inspire children and young adults to make music to the best of their*

*ability is astonishing. He is a very rare breed indeed.”* Dominic Seldis, Principal Double Bass-The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Professor of Double Bass-The Royal Academy of Music, London.

As Music Director, Mr. Gómez will not only conduct the Symphony Orchestra and MYSfits, he will oversee the artistic integrity and expansion of MYS programs, build collaborative partnerships within the local community and beyond, represent MYS to its many constituencies, and most importantly, lead through his passion for youth and music. We look forward to joining with him, our artistic and administrative teams, and the Board in building on the rich legacy left by founder Lajos Balogh, outgoing Music Director Andres Lopera, and Interim Music Director William White.

We are grateful for the work of the Search Committee, chaired by board member Mary Ann Coggins Kaza, in working through more than 50 applications. The committee, comprised of musicians from the Oregon Symphony, and representatives from MYS’ artistic team, staff, parent and alumni communities, and teachers, brought great wisdom and clarity to the process. Thank you as well to the students who played so willingly with each candidate, and students and parents alike who gave such insightful comments after each audition.

Finally, we want to extend to Mr. White our deep appreciation for the interim year that he has given the organization. He is a friend and mentor to many at MYS and a talented conductor and composer who has inspired us all. Mr. White will finish the concert season as well as conduct the Symphony Orchestra on its concert tour to China this June.

Please feel free to contact Diana with any questions.

Sincerely,



David Ludwig  
President



Diana Scoggins  
Executive Director