



California Youth Symphony

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CALIFORNIA YOUTH SYMPHONY

Quarter Notes

JIM HOGAN, EDITOR

NOVEMBER 2017

California Youth Symphony Kicks Off 66th Season

The California Youth Symphony, under the direction of Maestro Leo Eylar, opens its 66th season on Sunday, November 12 at 2:30pm at the Flint Center in Cupertino. The concert will be repeated the following Sunday, November 19, at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center. Excitement is high for the entire season for all seven of the CYS ensembles. Maestro Eylar gives us a quick overview of some of the highlights to look forward to inside this issue of Quarter Notes.

CALIFORNIA YOUTH SYMPHONY

66th SEASON

Season Opening Concerts

NOVEMBER 12, 2017 2:30pm Flint Center De Anza College	NOVEMBER 19, 2017 2:30pm San Mateo Performing Arts Center San Mateo High School
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Candide Overture
Leonard Bernstein

Cello Concerto No. 2
Dmitri Shostakovich
Davis You, cello

Feste Romane
Ottorino Respighi

TICKETS: \$15 Adults / \$10 Senior and Student

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Call (650) 325-6666 or Visit www.cys.org
Please no children under age 5.




CALIFORNIA YOUTH SYMPHONY

Leo Eylar, Conductor

Candide Overture.....Leonard Bernstein

Cello Concerto No. 2Dmitri Shostakovich

Davis You, cello

Feste Romane.....Ottorino Respighi

Sunday, November 12, 2:30 pm

Flint Center
DeAnza College Campus
21250 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino

Sunday, November 19, 2:30 pm

San Mateo Performing Arts Center
San Mateo High School
600 N. Delaware St., San Mateo

Available at the door or from any CYS member

CYS, 441 California Ave. #5, Palo Alto, CA 94306 • tel. 650/325-6666 • www.cys.org

No children under five, please • For Senior Citizen Ticket Information Contact: judy@cys.org

IN THE BEGINNING...

We had an unexpected phone call at the CYS office over the summer. We were delighted to hear from Mike McNitt, who, we soon learned, was a member of the very first CYS orchestra. Mike was there at the first rehearsal in March, 1952 at the Burlingame



Recreation Center. Following this extremely interesting and informative conversation, Mike graciously invited us over to his house and then took us to lunch. He shared many reminiscences of those early days playing for founding music director Aaron Sten, as well as his many other adventures from his fascinating life story. Mike was born in Sacramento but soon moved with his family to Burlingame, where his dad taught English at Burlingame High School. Mike began his violin studies in fifth grade with Elmer Young, who was the orchestra director at Burlingame H.S., but his musical progress really peaked when his dad convinced Henri Shweid, concertmaster of the San Francisco Opera and Assistant Concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony, to take Mike as a student. Mr. Shweid said he would accept Mike only if he agreed to practice 3 hours every day. Mike took the challenge. In the meantime Mike's dad, A.L. McNitt, along with Elmer Young and a few others, convinced Aaron Sten, who had founded the Peninsula Symphony a few years earlier, to start a youth orchestra. Mike soon found himself as principal 2nd violin in the brand new CYS, performing in its first concert in the fall of 1952. Mike recalls Beethoven's 7th Symphony as one of the first pieces they played. Mike went on to earn a degree in business administration, serve as a naval officer, marry and raise a family, and eventually found his own marketing/communication business – but he still recalls fondly those early years with Aaron Sten and the California Youth Symphony.

CYS Kicks Off 66th Season

FALL CONCERT SERIES

The season opens in November with a dazzling array of works. Joining the worldwide celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Leonard Bernstein, the orchestra will perform the ebullient and effervescent *Overture to Candide*, one of Bernstein's most beloved concert gems. Our Young Artist Competition winner and Principal Cellist, Davis You, will perform the haunting and mysterious Cello Concerto No. 2 of Dmitri Shostakovich, composed shortly before the composer's death, and the concert ends with Ottorino Respighi's colossal and over-the-top *Roman Festivals*, the final installment of his "Roman Trilogy", composed in 1928.

DECEMBER HOLIDAY CONCERT

Our yearly Holiday Concert, at 2:30pm on December 10 at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center, is a wonderful opportunity to hear three of our top performing groups at CYS: our Wind Symphony, directed by Chris Florio, as well as the Associate and Senior Orchestras. The Associate Orchestra will perform light-classic favorites by Britten, Auber, Saint-Saëns, and Morton Gould. We are delighted to feature CYS Young Artist Competition winner Grace Huh, as she performs Ravel's virtuosic *Tzigane* for Violin and Orchestra. As always, the Senior Orchestra will get you into the Holiday spirit with its selection of holiday favorites such as *White Christmas*, *Deck the Halls*, *Joy to the World*, and selections from the perennial favorite, Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*. There is no admission charge.

SPRING CONCERT SERIES

Our Spring Concert Series features the music of Mason Bates, universally recognized as one of the most important and widely performed living composers. We feature his *Devil's Radio*, a short tone poem for large orchestra composed in 2014. Our Young Artist Competition winner and Principal Clarinetist, Raymond Wyant, will perform Aaron Copland's Concerto for Clarinet, composed for jazz great Benny Goodman. This scintillating work is characterized by both supremely elegant and romantic passages as well as jazz-inspired harmonies and snappy rhythms, with wonderful interplay between the solo instrument and the orchestra. We will round out the program with Serge Prokofiev's magnum opus for orchestra, his Symphony no. 5, described in the composer's own words as "a hymn to free and happy Man, to his mighty powers, his pure and noble spirit".

MAY CONCERT SERIES

Our final concert series of the season features one of the iconic American works of the 20th Century: Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid*. A concert favorite since its premiere in 1939, the work makes use of numerous American folk tunes as it narrates the life and times of one of the most famous outlaws of the Wild West. We are also excited to present Nathaniel Stookey's *The Composer is Dead*, a brilliant work in the tradition of *Peter and the Wolf* and Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, in that it introduces all of the instruments of the orchestra with narrator. The text, written by Lemony Snicket, adds a twist by weaving a murder mystery into the scenario, to hilarious effect. Our guest narrator, Omari Tau, will both entertain and enlighten you with his skills and oratory. We will also feature our Senior Soloist competition winners on the concert. Be sure to attend this very special and unusual final concert series!

TOUR PREVIEW CONCERT

You will definitely want to mark your calendars for this event, as CYS prepares to travel to Latvia, Estonia, and Russia for the very first time in its 66-year history. Gershwin, Copland, and Bernstein, three of the titans of American music in the 20th century, are highlighted in our tour preview concert. Our featured soloist on tour, Parker Van Ostrand, delighted CYS audiences last year with his brilliant performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 2. He returns to the CYS stage to play Gershwin's Concerto in F, long considered to be Gershwin's magnum opus for piano and orchestra. The orchestra will also play selections from Prokofiev's Symphony no. 5. Please join us as we say "Farewell" (in three languages, no less!) and head to the Baltics with this stunning program of American and Russian masterpieces!



Ensembles Holiday Concert



As most of you know, CYS offers instruction and performance opportunities on all symphonic instruments, for beginners through advanced players. Our String Ensembles, under the direction of Kati Kyme, and our Wind Ensembles, under the direction of Rosita Amador, provide a vital resource for beginning and intermediate players. Please join us on Sunday, December 3 in the Smithwick Theatre at Foothill College, Los Altos Hills to support these fine young musicians at their Holiday Concert. There is no admission charge.



Davis You, Cello Soloist

Fifteen year old cellist Davis You, one of the winners of 2017 CYS Young Artist Competition held last April at Stanford University, performs the Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 2 on our November concert set. Davis studies cello with Jonathan Koh and previously studied with Irene Sharp. His awards include first place in the 2016 California ASTA solo competition and five invitations to perform in the Junior Bach Festival. He has served as principal cellist in CYS and is a former winner of the CYS Associate Orchestra's concerto competition. An avid chamber musician, he plays in a piano trio with Young Chamber Musicians during the school year and spent three summers studying chamber music at California Summer Music. Last summer he studied at the Meadowmount School of Music and was a semifinalist at the Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians in Astana, Kazakhstan. He has performed in master classes of Martti Rousi, Kirill Rodin, Sergei Roldugin, Laszlo Mezo, Ruslan Biryukov, Andrew von Oeyen, and the Horszowski Trio. Davis also has studied composition since he was seven and has participated in the San Francisco Conservatory's Summer Music West intensive composition workshop. He is a sophomore at Palo Alto High School.



Grace Huh. Violin Soloist

Violinist Grace Huh, 15, was a winner of the 2017 CYS Young Artist Competition. She will perform Ravel's *Tzigane* at our Holiday Concert on December 10 at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center. Grace began playing the violin at the age of five and is currently studying with Ian Swensen of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Elbert Tsai of the Pre-College division. Her previous teachers include Li Lin and Wei He. At the age of nine, Grace won Grand Prize at the Korea Times Youth Music Competition. She made her first solo debut in May 2015 with the Palo Alto Philharmonic Orchestra. She also won first prize at the Pacific Musical Society Scholarship Competition in 2015 and at the CMTANC Youth Music Competition in 2010. She has received numerous awards such as the DVC/HNU Young Artist Competition in 2015, the Menuhin-Dowling Competition in 2013, the CMTANC International Youth Music Competition in 2013, and the Pacific Musical Society Scholarship Competition in 2013. She has also played in the Junior Bach Festival. Grace has performed in master classes led by Midori Goto, David Kim, Jan Sloman, and Mack McCray. Additionally, she worked with Susan Bates, Jinjoo Cho, Debra Fong, Eric Gaenslen, Minju Kim, Joseph Kromholz, Jeffrey LaDeur, Lisa Lee, Pasha Sabouri, and Nancy Zhou. Grace enjoys playing the violin and singing at local hospitals and retirement homes with her friends. She is a freshman at Lynbrook High School.

2018 TOUR UPDATE

As our loyal readers are regularly reminded, the California Youth Symphony was the first American youth orchestra to perform overseas with our 1963 tour to Japan. CYS will continue this proud tradition next June. Here is a report from Music Director Leo Eylar on what is sure to be another historic musical adventure:

Carmina and I arrived back from our highly successful inspection trip to the Baltics and Russia this past week, and I am happy to report that things are shaping up to be an amazing cultural and musical experience for the orchestra members. The orchestra will perform in Riga, Tartu, Tallinn, and St. Petersburg, with concerts in some of the most famous concert halls in Europe, including Shostakovich Hall in St. Petersburg and the Lielā ģilde Concert Hall in Tallinn, Estonia, home to the National Symphony Orchestra of Estonia. We visited many of the cultural sites that the orchestra will be touring: The Hermitage Museum and the Fortress of Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg, the famous medieval "old city" in central Tallinn, as well as visits to the Baltic coastline and the fabulous new National Museum of Estonia, an ultra-modern hands-on interactive technology/history center. The Encore Tours European representatives were incredibly helpful and accommodating, and also very excited to be bringing CYS to this amazing part of the world. It is going to be a stellar tour!



Leo Eylar meets with legendary Estonian conductor Neemi Järvi