



Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras return to Orchestra Hall

By Barbara Wright-Pryor

The Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras (CYSO) presented its annual Spring concert this past Sunday in Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center before an enthusiastic audience of longtime supporters and parents. Internationally recognized as one of the foremost youth orchestras, the CYSO Symphony Orchestra consists of 128 of the most talented student musicians from the Chicago area. Symphony Orchestra students develop their skills while performing the most advanced orchestral repertoire alongside exciting new works by contemporary composers.



The concert opened with Associate Conductor Terrance Gray conducting the Chicago Youth Concert Orchestra in a spirited performance of Leonard Bernstein's Overture to his operetta "Candide" which has become a staple of orchestral literature over the years after a not so successful debut in 1957 when it was introduced by the composer. The overture incorporates tunes from songs in the operetta, "The Best of All Possible Worlds, "Glitter and Be Gay," and other melodies with rapidly changing time signatures that the young musicians negotiated with apparent ease, exhibiting performance skills exceeding those normally expected of their age level.. The inclusion of the "Candide" Overture on Sunday's program was most appropriate and a recognizable salute to composer Bernstein due to his dedication to performing young people's concerts during his long tenure with the New York Philharmonic.

Music Director Allen Tinkham conducted the talented CYSO Symphony Orchestra without musical score in the Prelude and Liebestod from Richard Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde;" Michael Daugherty's "Route 66;" and concluded with Igor Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring," in and of itself a difficult task for orchestras comprised of college-age musicians, but the Symphony Orchestra "tossed it off" like the young professionals they are in the process of becoming.

The CYSO is fortunate to have stellar musical leadership from the top down. Its Executive Director, Holly H. Hudak is a professional musician with a solid history of successful involvement in music both as an instrumentalist and an administrator prior to assuming leadership of the Organization. The dedication of its Board of Directors, faculty and staff has insured its success as an outstanding musical training institution for Chicago-area youth. Now in his tenth season with the internationally recognized Symphony Orchestra, Music Director Allen Tinkham oversees all artistic programming and faculty of CYSO and serves as conductor of the Symphony Orchestra and the Encore Chamber Orchestra.

Associate Director Terrance Gray, a violinist, conductor and charter member of the Chicago Sinfonietta, brings much experience and talent with him to the CYSO organization. A native of Racine, Wisconsin and a product of its public schools, Gray is a staunch advocate for music education and performance who dedicates much of his time to mentoring young musicians. CYSO has provided music education through orchestral programs and performance opportunities of the highest caliber for nearly 65 years. The organization currently serves nearly 450 Chicago-area musicians ages 7-18 through six orchestras, chamber music, music theory and composition. It also reaches 2,500 Chicago Public Elementary School students each year through its Music Pathways program, which features presentations and concerts by CYSO musicians, and training for CPS teachers on how to incorporate music into their classroom curriculum.

Story Posted: 05/28/2011

<http://www.chicagocrusader.com/news-detail.aspx?cityID=1&typeID=4&newsid=1005>