

## WELCOME TO THE ROCKLAND YOUTH SYMPHONY

“Development is really the main thing in life, just as it is in music; because development means change, growing, blossoming out; these things are life itself.”

Leonard Bernstein, Young People’s Concerts, Carnegie Hall

Being young is the most exciting time of life and there is ABSOLUTELY NOTHING MORE THRILLING than performing your favorite music in a full symphony orchestra, surrounded by a hundred of your friends dressed in elegant gowns and tuxedos on legendary stages in the world’s most glorious halls filled with adoring audiences who are applauding and cheering for YOU!!—all while playing masterworks composed by the most titanic geniuses the world has ever known.

Just in time to mark the 100th anniversary of the first youth orchestra in the United States and to continue the venerable culture of creative arts right here in our famed Hudson Valley, the Rockland County Music Teachers Guild and I are pleased to announce the creation of a new [world- class] performance organization:

We invite you and other talented young instrumentalists to [join the] become a member of the Rockland Youth Symphony!

We will perform both new and established works of the orchestral repertoire.

We will rehearse regularly on Tuesday nights.

We have invited our friends and colleagues from The Juilliard School, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra to attend rehearsals and to tutor you and your friends.

We look forward to not only hearing you play your instrument as part of the ensemble, but we will also provide opportunities for you to perform your concerto as soloist, to conduct the orchestra, and to compose music for our symphony. We will invite the community to hear you at our Winter and Spring concerts, and our season will culminate in a final performance in New York City’s famed Carnegie Hall.

I often hear people describe youth orchestras as mere training grounds for professional ensembles, just years of dutiful preparation for a ‘real’ orchestra later in life. I COULD NOT DISAGREE MORE. Rather, I posit that the true measure of an adult orchestra is how well it captures the spontaneity, the wonder, and the irresistible vitality that you deliver so naturally in a youth orchestra.

It's not always inspiring to be an adult—there are no dramatic operas about paying bills, no lush symphonies romanticizing health care, Ira Gershwin never cleverly rhymed 'lyrical effusion' with 'IRA distribution'—but ALL music falls in love, transcends physical limits, and challenges your strength of intellect and infectious bursts of adrenal nerve to plumb the profound depths of spirituality.

Every musician from Gustavo Dudamel to Leonard Bernstein played in a youth orchestra. Bach, Vivaldi, Schumann, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Grieg, Britten—they all wrote music for the young. Jascha Heifetz's best performance is with a youth orchestra (from the fabulous film *They Shall Have Music*). The most exciting moment of my young life was feeling the orchestra all around me playing Gliere's *Red Poppy* on cello in a California youth symphony.

There are many practical reasons to join an orchestra and to become a well-rounded classical musician—to make your [parents/family] and teachers proud, to enrich your college application, to develop a skill that will lead to friendships and promotions in any professional field you may eventually choose, to experience endless international travel and perhaps even attain fame and fortune—but no matter what your reason, the visceral excitement of performing with a symphony orchestra and immersing yourself in great music is to live a dream.

**So I will make you a deal:**

You dedicate part of your youth to our orchestra; in return, we guarantee the time of your life.

Your beautiful, be-YOU-tiful, be-YOUTH-iful life.

Sincerely,

Mr/Dr/Sir/Maestro Michael Fennelly

Music Director, Rockland County Music Teachers Guild's Rockland Youth Symphony