



Julien Benichou, Music Director

Dane Krich, Executive Director

NEWS RELEASE

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Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra Gala Concert Features Award Winning Pianist and Famed Opera Stars

Annapolis, MD - The Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO) will hold their gala concert on March 19, 2022, at the Bowie Performing Arts Center at 2:00pm, 6:30pm, and 7:30pm. 'A Celebration of Expression' gala concert will showcase the 150 student musicians of CYSO and feature award winning pianist and famed opera stars during the evening performance.

The 2:00pm performance will feature five ensembles: Preparatory Orchestra, String Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Junior Flute Ensemble, and Concert Orchestra. Ranging in ages from 8 to 20, the students in these ensembles have dedicated many hours and worked tirelessly with our conductors to building the foundation of their musical technique.

Doors will open at 1pm for the afternoon concert and 6pm for the evening concert so that everyone may view and bid on the auction items and purchase raffle tickets. At 6pm we will have a cocktail hour for the audience of our evening concert.

At 6:30pm in the lobby of the Performing Arts Center, the CYSO's Jazz Orchestra will serenade the audience with a selection of both jazz and pop standards that are sure to keep your feet tapping. Jazz is one of the great American art forms, which celebrates freedom of expression through the means of improvising.

The 7:30pm performance features CYSO's Senior Flute Ensemble and the Symphony Orchestra, which are the most advanced ensembles. During this performance, student musicians have the opportunity to perform alongside some of the most talented performers and soloists on the international stage.

"These opportunities are unique and leave our students with a lasting impression that inspires them to push their boundaries and strive to reach even higher," said Julien Benichou, Music Director and Conductor of CYSO's Symphony Orchestra. "All of our ensembles, led by some of the best pedagogues, amaze me with their talent and enthusiasm."

Maestro Julien Benichou has been highly regarded as a champion for the future of classical music, thanks to his commitment to new music and innovative programming. He is widely recognized for his inspiring musicality, incredibly infectious energy, and creatively fostering the next generation of musicians and audiences.



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Award winning French pianist, Christie Julien will be performing Beethoven's riveting *Piano Concerto No. 3* alongside our Symphony Orchestra. Also gracing the CYSO's Gala stage will be famed opera stars, bass-baritone Kevin Short, and mezzo-soprano Lisa Chavez. Kevin Short, no stranger to the opera stage, has recently appeared as Porgy in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Porgy and Bess*, along with a role in Gounod's *Faust* among others. Mr. Short will be performing selections from *Porgy and Bess*, *Faust*, *Ol' Man River* and more. The Philadelphia Inquirer has gone on to say "His was the voice that steadied ensembles and centered his own scenes, and his expansive ease in the role brought his scenes to vivid life."

Mezzo-soprano, Lisa Chavez has been described as possessing a "plush storm of a voice", "graceful stage presence", and being "a powerhouse both vocally and emotionally". Ms. Chavez has notably performed the title role of Carmen in New York City Opera Company's production of *Carmen* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* performed at the Phoenicia Festival of the Voice. Along with the New York City Opera Company, she has been featured in multiple title roles with the Sarasota Opera Company. The Virginia Gazette, in reviewing Ms. Chavez has said "Without doubt, the hands-down standout of this "Carmen" was mezzo-soprano Lisa Chavez in the title role. Chavez embraced both the vocal and dramatic demands of her Carmen, applying her rich, dark, well-projected mezzo to a well-conceived portrayal, the results being seductive, persuasive and powerful. There was never any doubt as to who was in charge in this Seville setting and the tragic romance that ensued."

Tickets for the 2:00pm performance are \$40 for general admission and \$60 for reserved seating. The 7:30pm evening performance tickets are \$55 for general admission and \$75 for reserve seating. Tickets can be purchased at www.cysomusic.org/gala-tickets. For more information, please email Dane Krich at Execdir@cysomusic.org or call 443-758-3157.

The Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council and the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County.

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About the Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra

For 32 years the Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra has provided young musicians of the Annapolis-Baltimore-Washington region the opportunity to enjoy and refine their musical skills in ensemble performance. CYSO supports eight ensembles that range from preparatory to advanced level musicians and help build the next generation of musicians and music lovers.

Accompanying Photos: Julien Benichou, CYSO Music Director, Kevin Short, Bass-Baritone, Lisa Chavez, Mezzo-Soprano, Christie Julien, Piano