

## Metropolitan Youth Symphony Presents Original Songs by Vocal Sensation Jimmie Herrod with New Orchestral Arrangements



**PORTLAND, OR, DECEMBER 8, 2023** – Metropolitan Youth Symphony is proud to present “[Just Jimmie](#)” with special guest and vocal sensation Jimmie Herrod on **January 9, 7:30pm at the Newmark Theatre**. Led by Music Director Raúl Gómez-Rojas, MYS’ Symphony Orchestra will premiere orchestral arrangements of original songs by Mr. Herrod, including *Are You Lonely, Beautiful, I Love You, I Want To Run, Mouche, and Willow Bed*.

While Herrod originally wrote the pieces for piano and voice, student composers from [The Authentic Voice commissioning series](#) (in partnership with FearNoMusic’s Young Composers Project) will work with him to create orchestral arrangements. MYS Symphony Orchestra and

Gómez-Rojas will accompany Herrod as he sings his songs, now expanded to a full orchestral palette.

In 2021, Herrod **was a finalist on America’s Got Talent (AGT) and also competed on AGT All Stars in 2023**. Herrod regularly tours with the highly celebrated international act **Pink Martini** with whom he recorded the EP “Tomorrow.” He’s been featured with the San Francisco Symphony and the National Symphony Orchestra, as well as PBS, and will perform with the Oregon Symphony in March 2024. MYS students had the opportunity to perform with Jimmie Herrod once before at MYS’ 10<sup>th</sup> Annual CRESCENDO Gala in April 2023.

**This concert is part of MYS’ longstanding tradition to spotlight a unique collaboration with other artists and art forms at its January concert.** In past seasons, this has included “The Magic of Eric Carle” with All Classical Radio’s International Children’s Arts Network and Illuminated Films, “Lights, Camera, Music!” with the International Youth Silent Film Festival, and “Cantando” with Pacific Youth Choir.

Rounding out the repertoire, Symphony Orchestra will perform *En la Alhambra* by Spanish composer Tomás Bretón, *Alentejana: Suite no.2* by Portuguese composer Luís de Freitas Branco, and *she flies with her own wings* by acclaimed Oregon composer and MYS artistic team member Kenji Bunch. Symphony Orchestra will perform these three pieces on their tour to Spain and Portugal in July 2024 as well.

Ticket prices range from \$11-\$41. Tickets are now available for purchase, with additional information available at [www.playmys.org](http://www.playmys.org) or 503-239-4566.

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### ***About Jimmie Herrod***

With “a voice like a beacon of hope” (Seattle Times), vocalist Jimmie Herrod brings singular power and expressivity to his globe-trotting career as a singer, songwriter, and entertainer on stage and screen. Herrod first came to worldwide prominence as a finalist on the NBC nationally broadcast television show, “America’s Got Talent,” earning the rare “Golden Buzzer” recognition from actress Sofia Vargara and returning the following year on the AGT All-Stars series.

As a solo artist, Herrod has appeared to critical and audience acclaim with the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and with the symphony orchestras of San Francisco, Houston, and Oregon, including as a featured soloist for the globally televised PBS “Joni Mitchell Songbook” concert at The Kennedy Center with the NSO, where he shared the stage with musical luminaries like Renee Fleming, Lalah Hathaway, Raul Midon, and Aoife O’Donovan.

Traversing many musical styles and genres in many languages, including jazz, pop, funk, and his own original songs, Herrod has headlined concerts at the The Luxor Theater (Las Vegas), New Jersey’s South Orange Performing Arts Center, and Portland’s Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, and has since 2017 toured with world-pop band Pink Martini as a featured vocalist. With two EP’s under his belt – his debut “Falling in Love and Learning” and 2022’s “Elated” – Herrod’s singular style and unique voice is poised to make an ever larger impact in the world of music and entertainment.

Recent appearances include a star turn as Angel in the world premiere symphonic version of the musical “Rent” at The Kennedy Center, where his performance was lauded by Maryland Theatre Guide as “ebullient” and by Broadway World as “moving, textured, and sensitive,” and his 2023-24 season includes a return engagement with the Oregon Symphony, debuts with the Bozeman and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, and a planned solo tour.

Herrod is an alum of the Cornish College of the Arts and Portland State University.

### ***About Music Director Raúl Gómez-Rojas***

Member of the 2018 class of the prestigious Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview (League of American Orchestras), Raúl Gómez-Rojas inspires audiences and artists of all ages and backgrounds to use music as a vehicle to connect, pursue excellence, and spread joy. Lauded as a “visionary conductor” (Oregon ArtsWatch), Raúl has built a reputation as an insightful leader that “captivates both performing musicians and audiences alike,” and whose “positive attitude and enthusiasm make him a joy to be with” (C. Mumm, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, NY).

In high demand as a guest conductor, Raúl is equally at home on stage and in the pit, leading professional orchestras in the USA and Latin America, new music ensembles, youth, and community groups, and collaborating with a vast array of guest artists across many genres and disciplines. Highlights include performances with the Oregon Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Nashville Symphony, Oregon Ballet Theatre, 45th Parallel Universe, Fear No Music, Third Angle New Music, Tilikum Chamber Orchestra, Beaverton Symphony, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the Oregon International Ballet Academy, hip-hop artist Common, jazz violinist Regina Carter, Steward Copeland, Boyz 2 Men, Lyle Lovett, The Tenors, Kermit Ruffins, Rick Springfield and more. Raúl is on his eighth season as Music Director of Metropolitan Youth Symphony.

### ***About Metropolitan Youth Symphony***

With a foundational commitment to making music education accessible to all, Metropolitan Youth Symphony educates, develops, and promotes young musicians of all ages and levels of experience each year, with an enrollment of over 500 ensemble students in a typical season. MYS is one of the nation's largest youth orchestra programs, with students from 130 schools participating in fourteen ensembles including orchestral, band, flute, percussion, and jazz. Together with theory classes, instrumental coaching in small groups, and opportunities to collaborate with performers across artistic disciplines, MYS ensemble programs develop the whole musician.

MYS also provides free beginning string lessons for 70 students, as well as tuition assistance, loaner instruments, and in-school concerts at Title 1 schools. MYS ensembles emphasize development of music and leadership skills, reflect a broad diversity of cultures and life experiences, and foster a tight-knit community through collaboration and peer support.

### ***About The Authentic Voice***

In partnership with Fear No Music's *Young Composers Project*, MYS continues its sixth year of **The Authentic Voice** commissioning series. This first-of-its-kind partnership gives young composers the opportunity to write fully orchestrated pieces that are performed at each Symphony Orchestra concert, while MYS musicians gain the opportunity to play never-performed music written by their peers. Each student composer hears their piece played by MYS students at multiple rehearsals, allowing opportunities for questions, feedback, revisions, and collaboration. While student compositions were initially only performed by Symphony Orchestra, this program has expanded to include MYS Concert Orchestra, Portland Camerata and MYSfits string ensembles, and MYSticks percussion ensemble.