

Metropolitan Youth Symphony Premieres *Pando* by Cellist and Composer Nancy Ives



Select aspen stems of Pando

PORTLAND, OR, JANUARY 25, 2024 – Metropolitan Youth Symphony is proud to present its Winter Downtown Concert “[Rooted](#),” featuring the world premiere of a commission from Nancy Ives, composer and principal cello for the Oregon Symphony, on **March 3, 7:30pm at Newmark Theater**, conducted by MYS Music Director Raúl Gómez-Rojas.

This piece, titled *Pando*, draws inspiration from its namesake Pando, the world’s largest tree. In a high mountain basin in central Utah, Pando is comprised of 40,000 aspen stems that appear as individual trees but are actually part of a massive 106-acre interwoven root system belonging to one identical parent tree.

“The idea of something that looks like many but is truly one organism is a powerful metaphor for an orchestra,”

says MYS Music Director Raúl Gómez-Rojas.

MYS honors Nancy Ives at the concert, as well as Jeff Rice, sound artist and co-founder of the Acoustic Atlas at the Montana State University Library. Jeff Rice helped create the [acoustic portrait of Pando](#), which served as the inspiration behind this commission.

Symphony Orchestra will present Ives’ *Pando* at a variety of concerts across Spain and Portugal, including the famed International Festival of Music and Dance of Granada, as part of its July 2024 International Tour. Each piece performed on tour will embody the theme “Landscapes and their Stories,” with a number of compositions by Oregon composers.

“Rooted” will feature another piece inspired by nature: Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68*, with the full title *Pastoral Symphony, or Recollections of Country Life*. This symphony explores his experiences with and affinity for nature, reminiscent of his walks in the Vienna countryside. Each movement depicts a different nature scene: I. “Awakening of Happy Feelings on Arriving in the Country,” II. “Scene by a Brook,” III. “Joyful Gathering of the Country Folk,” IV. “Thunder. Storm.” and V. “Shepherds’ Song: Happy and Thankful Feelings After the Storm.”

This concert will also premiere *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* by student composer Charlie Martin. This composition is based upon the tragic love story of the same name, written by beloved literary fairytale author, Hans Christian Andersen. Martin presents this composition through *The Authentic Voice*, MYS’ student commissioning series in partnership with [Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project](#).

Adding even more inspiration to the evening, this show will spotlight one of the winners of MYS’ annual Concerto Competition. Held each January, this competition tests students’ mastery of challenging solo repertoire for strings, winds, brass, and percussion.

MYS' Concert Orchestra will also perform in this concert, conducted by Giancarlo Castro D'Addona.

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

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About Nancy Ives

Composer and cellist Nancy Ives is a musical icon, having “built a career of such spectacular diversity that no summation will do her achievements justice.” (*Artslandia*) As “one of Oregon’s most prominent and accomplished classical musicians,” (*The Oregonian*) Ives offers both depth and approachability with enduring and eloquent music inspired by the natural world. “Modernistic but melodic and compelling... [with] a refreshing musical breadth,” her work communicates “a uniquely personal voice.” (*Oregon ArtsWatch*)

A relative of the legendary composer Charles Ives, she carries on the tradition of her namesake with modern relevance. Her music has featured in performances by Portland Chamber Orchestra, Fear No Music, Friends of Rain, Portland Cello Project, Siletz Bay Music Festival, Oregon Bach Festival and OBF Composers Symposium as well as broadcasts on All Classical Portland and KBBI (Alaska). Ives’ projects involve working with indigenous communities to authentically capture, amplify, and relay their stories to wider audiences. Her recent multimedia orchestral work, *Celilo Falls: We Were There*, traces geologic and human history with “stunning, assiduously crafted, and mostly melodic music... a many-splendored artistic experience... universal in [its] artistic, social and political impact.” (*Oregon ArtsWatch*)

Ives is a gracious cornerstone of Portland musical life, “a local treasure,” according to the *Portland Mercury*. With more than 20 years as Principal Cellist of the Oregon Symphony, she’s also a member of the Palatine Piano Trio, Rose City Trio, and Fear No Music, has collaborated with all of the region’s premier performance organizations, and performed as soloist with the Oregon Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Portland Columbia Symphony, Clark College Orchestra, and Cascade Festival of Music. A regular performer on All Classical Portland, Ives was also the “Cellist in Residence” on OPB’s *State of Wonder*.

With a DMA from the Manhattan School of Music, Ives is an Instructor of Chamber Music at Lewis & Clark College and serves on the Board of Directors for All Classical Portland.

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 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.

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.