

Metropolitan Youth Symphony Announces 51st Season: “On the Shoulders of Giants”

PORTLAND, OR, AUGUST 21, 2025 – Metropolitan Youth Symphony is proud to announce its 2025-26 Season “**On the Shoulders of Giants**” with concerts on **November 9** and **June 14** at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, and **March 1** at Newmark Theatre.

Season repertoire includes **Brahms’ Symphony No. 1**, **Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6**, and **Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9**; music by English composer and activist **Dame Ethel Smyth**, a brand new *flute concerto - Spirits of Wildness* by Giancarlo Castro Addona, performed by Adam Eccleston; collaborations with [Portland Art Museum’s Center for an Untold Tomorrow](#), [Oregon Chorale](#), and [Portland Opera](#); and six world premieres through [The Authentic Voice student commissioning series](#) in partnership with Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project.

“**On the Shoulders of Giants**” celebrates the towering legacies of Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Beethoven while lifting up the voices of the next generation. By performing the great symphonies of the past while featuring today’s young composers and soloists, MYS honors the lineage of musical genius and affirms that the future of classical music stands firmly and brilliantly on the shoulders of giants.

This season also marks [Raúl Gómez-Rojas’](#) tenth season as **MYS Music Director**. In this role, he has brought the organization to new artistic heights and developed essential aspects of MYS such as the free Beginning Strings program, in-school concerts at Title I schools, The Authentic Voice student commissioning series, international tours, and Music Theory curriculum, to name a few. Numerous artistic collaborators include Regina Carter, Jennifer Higdon, Jimmie Herrod, Hunter Noack, A Far Cry, Gabriel Kahane, BodyVox, and, most recently, a commission and performance with esperanza spalding. Dr. Gómez-Rojas is a deeply committed leader in the world of youth music education, and MYS students benefit greatly from his ability to inspire excellence, connection, and joy.



Music Director Raúl Gómez-Rojas

Dr. Gómez-Rojas is also very involved in the Portland arts scene and beyond, with other notable roles including Music Director of **Young Musicians and Artists (YMA)**, Resident Music Director of **Oregon Ballet Theatre** (2022-24), Contributing Host and Producer for On Deck with Young Musicians on **All Classical Radio** (2020-24), and regular guest conductor with the **Oregon Symphony** and multiple other professional ensembles.

Tickets for the “On the Shoulders of Giants” concert series will be available for purchase at www.playmys.org in early September, ranging in price from \$13-\$59.

The program lineup for the season is as follows:

Carrying the Torch: Brahms’ First

November 9, 2025, 7:30pm at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Brahms steps into Beethoven’s shadow and transforms reverence into bold personal voice. This concert celebrates the weight and the fire passed from one genius to another.

Repertoire:

- **Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68** by **Johannes Brahms**
- **Symphony for Small Orchestra** by **Dame Ethel Smyth** (performed by MYS Concert Orchestra)
- **Flute Concerto - Spirits of Wildness** by **Giancarlo Castro D’Addona**:
Written for flute and orchestra by award-winning composer, conductor, trumpet player, and MYS faculty member Giancarlo Castro D’Addona and performed by award-winning soloist, orchestral flutist, and MYS conductor Adam Eccleston. Eccleston also commissioned this work, made possible by an Arts3C grant from The Regional Arts and Culture Council.
- World premiere of a piece by student composer Max Evans-McGlothin, as part of The Authentic Voice commissioning series in partnership with [Fear No Music’s Young Composers Project](#).

The Soul Within: Tchaikovsky’s Sixth

March 1, 2026, 7:30pm at Newmark Theatre

Tchaikovsky turns the gaze inward, crafting a symphony that is raw, emotional, and deeply human. This is the giant’s burden: to feel deeply, and to express the inexpressible.

Repertoire:

- ***Symphony No. 6, Op. 74*** by **Pyotr Tchaikovsky**
- World premiere of a piece by student composer James Lee, as part of The Authentic Voice commissioning series in partnership with [Fear No Music's Young Composers Project](#).
- This concert will also showcase one of the winners of MYS' annual Concerto Competition.

Joy Manifest: Beethoven's Ninth

June 14, 2026, 7:30pm at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

From turmoil to triumph, Beethoven's final symphony breaks the mold and sings of universal fraternity. It's not just the shoulders we stand on: it's the future we reach for.

- ***Symphony No. 9*** by **Ludwig van Beethoven**, featuring Oregon Chorale and four Portland Opera artists.
- World premiere of a piece by student composer Elaina Stuppler, as part of The Authentic Voice commissioning series in partnership with [Fear No Music's Young Composers Project](#).
- This concert will also showcase one of the winners of MYS' annual Concerto Competition.

Furthermore, in an MYS Community Concert on February 22 at the Newmark Theatre, Concert Orchestra will present the world premiere of a collaborative project between student composers from The Authentic Voice, and young animators from [Portland Art Museum's Center for an Untold Tomorrow](#) (PAM CUT). MYS is proud to enter into its third season of this collaboration, helping bring the creative genius of the community's youth to the stage. Concert Orchestra, MYS' second most advanced orchestra, is also under the leadership of Raúl Gómez-Rojas for the first time this season.

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About Metropolitan Youth Symphony

For fifty years, Metropolitan Youth Symphony has celebrated its mission to educate, develop, and promote young musicians (6-18 years old) at all musical levels and from all backgrounds. With some of nation's most comprehensive programming, MYS serves 400+ students from 142 schools in 15 orchestra, winds, jazz, strings, and percussion ensembles. MYS conductors are exceptional artists and educators, with instrumental coaches from the

area's top music organizations, including the Oregon Symphony. MYS provides a multi-level music theory program where composition is integrated at the earliest levels, as well as a summer chamber music program with faculty from the Oregon Symphony and Grammy-nominated Boston-based chamber orchestra, A Far Cry.

Access and inclusion are core values for the organization. MYS provides free string lessons for underserved children, tuition assistance for students enrolled in its ensemble program, loaner instruments, small group coaching across its ensembles, and free in-school concerts at low-income schools that reach over 5,000 children each season. With foundational commitments to excellence and access, MYS ensembles reflect diverse backgrounds while fostering a tight-knit community through mentoring, peer support, and the joy of playing and performing music.

About 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.**” Under Raúl's leadership, the Oregon Ballet Theatre Orchestra's “**precise, yet effortless playing and beautiful cohesion were both breathtaking and steadfast through the show's final note.**” (Amy Leona Havin for Oregon ArtsWatch).

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. Recent highlights include performances with the [Oregon Symphony](#), [Rochester Philharmonic](#), [Nashville Symphony](#), [Louisiana Philharmonic](#), [Oregon Ballet Theatre](#), [Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio](#), [Portland Chamber Orchestra](#), [45th Parallel Universe](#), [Fear No Music](#), [Third Angle New Music](#), [Beaverton Symphony](#), [Tilikum Chamber Orchestra](#), the [Oregon International Ballet Academy](#), esperanza spalding, jazz violinist Regina Carter, Steward Copeland, Boyz 2 Men, Lyle Lovett, The Tenors, Kermit Ruffins, Rick Springfield and more. After a performance together in Portland in 2023, hip-hop artist [Common](#) immediately engaged Raúl to join his band on violin for their next performance in Seattle. In 2025, Raúl commissioned and conducted esperanza spalding's first-ever orchestral composition, with Metropolitan Youth Symphony (Portland, OR).

Raúl is a passionate music educator, and his skills to **“inspire children and young adults to make music to the best of their ability are astonishing”** (D. Seldis, The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra). 2025-2026 marks Raúl's tenth season as Music Director of the [Metropolitan Youth Symphony](#) in Portland, OR, where he leads a team of 12 conductors serving over 500 students in 14 ensembles. He has led the organization to new artistic heights while creating **“concert programs that any forward-looking orchestra should envy.”** (Willamette Week). Raúl also currently serves as Music Director of [YMA: Young Musicians and Artists](#) and served as Resident Music Director (2022-2024) with [Oregon Ballet Theatre](#).

A native of Costa Rica, Raúl received full scholarships for graduate studies at Louisiana State University in violin/viola (MM, Kevork Mardirossian) and conducting (DMA, Carlos Riazuelo), and was a Conducting Fellow in the **American Academy of Conducting at the Aspen Music Festival** (2011). In 2021, Raúl was a recipient of the **Carlos Miguel Prieto Conducting Fellowship**. Beyond the podium, his work extends to frequent engagements as a violinist/violist, clinician and public speaker. From 2020 to 2024, he served as a Contributing Host and Producer for On Deck with Young Musicians on [All Classical Radio](#).

About The Authentic Voice

In partnership with Fear No Music's *Young Composers Project*, MYS continues its eighth 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.