metropolitan youth symphony
ORCHESTRA BAND JAZZ

raúl gómez-rojas
MUSIC DIRECTOR CONDUCTOR

Metropolitan Youth Symphony Announces 52nd Season: "Voices Unbound"



PORTLAND, OR, OCTOBER 15, 2026 – Metropolitan Youth Symphony is proud to announce its 2026-27 Season **"Voices Unbound"** with concerts on **November 15** and **June 20** at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, and **February 28** at Newmark Theatre.

Led by MYS Music Director Raúl Gómez-Rojas, season repertoire includes **Shostakovich's** *Symphony No. 5,* **Georges Bizet's** *L'Arlésienne Suites No. 1 & 2,* **Arturo Márquez's** *Danzón No. 2,* and works from **Leonard Bernstein, Jennifer Higdon, Kenji Bunch, Florence Price, George Gershwin, and Louis Armstrong.** Audiences can also expect to experience the winning performances of MYS' annual Concerto Competition, a collaboration with **Portland Taiko,** and world premieres by local young composers through **The Authentic Voice** in partnership with Fear No Music's Young Composers Project.

Across generations and continents, composers have found ways to turn cultural traditions, personal experience, and even political constraints into bold and unforgettable art. From the folk customs that inspire composers to the daring creativity of American artists across decades, **"Voices Unbound"** celebrates music as a powerful expression of who we are and the limitless possibilities of the human spirit.

In July 2027, MYS students will take a curated selection of the season's repertoire across Japan, including Kyoto, Toyama, Tokyo, and Setagaya, as part of MYS' 2027 International Tour.

Tickets for the "Voices Unbound" concert series are available for purchase at www.playmys.org, ranging in price from $14-$61.

The program lineup for the season is as follows:

A Defiant Voice: Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5

November 15, 2026, 7:30pm at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Shostakovich's powerful artistic statement reveals the triumph of the individual against the forces of oppression, even under strict censorship.

Repertoire:

- ***Symphony No.5, op.47, D minor*** by **Dmitry Shostakovich**
- ***Candide Overture*** by **Leonard Bernstein**
- World premiere ***Coalesce: Fanfare for a Living River*** by student composer Skye Neal, as part of The Authentic Voice commissioning series in partnership with Fear No Music's Young Composers Project.

MYS Concert Orchestra, also conducted by Raúl Gómez-Rojas, opens the concert.

By the People, For the People: Bizet & Márquez

Feb 28, 2027, 4:00pm at Newmark Theatre

Two composers, separated by 120 years and thousands of miles, use their genius to bring folk songs and dances of their people to the concert stage.

- ***L'Arlésienne Suite No. 1 & Suite No. 2, op.45*** by **Georges Bizet**
- ***Danzón No. 2*** by **Arturo Márquez**
- The world premiere of a collaborative project by student composers from The Authentic Voice, setting classic silent films to brand new music.
- This concert will also showcase one of the winners of MYS' annual Concerto Competition.

MYS Sinfonietta Orchestra, conducted by Marian Gutiérrez-Curiel, opens the concert.

The American Imagination: Gershwin, Higdon, Bunch, Price & Armstrong

June 20, 2027, 7:30pm at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

A celebration of the infinite creativity and daring imagination of American artists across generations.

- ***Dango Jiru*** by **Kenji Bunch,** in collaboration with **Portland Taiko.**
- ***Peachtree Street*** by **Jennifer Higdon**
- ***Adoration*** by **Florence Price,** arr. Thomas Taylor Dickey

- ***An American in Paris*** by **George Gershwin** (Revised F. Campbell-Watson)
- ***Satchmo! - A Tribute to Louis Armstrong*** (arr. Ted Ricketts)
- World premiere of a piece by student composer Alejandro Belgique, 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.

MYS Interlude Orchestra, conducted by Erica Boland, opens the concert.

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About Metropolitan Youth Symphony

Now in its 52nd season, Metropolitan Youth Symphony celebrates its mission to educate, develop, and promote young musicians (6-21 years old) at all musical levels and from all backgrounds. With some of the nation's most comprehensive programming, MYS serves 400+ students from 168 schools in 15 orchestra, string, jazz, band, and wind ensembles. Together with free beginning string lessons, tuition assistance, loaner instruments, and in-school concerts at Title 1 schools, MYS is driven by a foundational commitment to make music education accessible to all.

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 who "captivates both performing musicians and audiences alike," and whose "positive attitude and enthusiasm make him a joy to be with." Raúl is a passionate music educator, and 2025-2026 marked his tenth season as Music Director of Metropolitan Youth Symphony in Portland, OR. He has led the organization to new artistic heights while creating "concert programs that any forward-looking orchestra should envy." (Willamette Week). Raúl is a regular guest conductor with the Oregon Symphony and multiple other professional ensembles, and also currently serves as Music Director of YMA: Young Musicians and Artists.

About The Authentic Voice

In partnership with Fear No Music's *Young Composers Project*, MYS continues its ninth 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 across MYS ensembles including Concert Orchestra, Portland Camerata, MYSfits String Ensemble, MYSticks Percussion Ensemble, and more.