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Youth orchestra to perform at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High

By Staff reports

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SUDBURY - Metrowest Youth Symphony Orchestra (MetYSO), based at MassBay Community College in Framingham, has developed into a substantial local musical organization that offers a full symphony orchestra, a preparatory string orchestra and several chamber music ensembles.

Unlike most other youth orchestras based within conservatories, MetYSO was created from parents' desire for a high quality youth orchestra experience based in Metrowest, rather than Boston. As such, it is managed entirely by a volunteer board of primarily parents, in a cooperative effort which keeps tuition reasonable. Parents essentially provide "sweat equity" by serving as board members, officers, rehearsal and concert managers, music librarians, and public relations staff.

MetYSO currently claims membership from 25 area towns including Sudbury. As students join from new towns and appreciate the opportunities MetYSO offers, the reputation spreads through the various school districts. As parent Karen Barrett of Hopedale points out, "there are other youth orchestra opportunities in Boston and Worcester, but our girls chose MetYSO in Framingham after auditioning for each. It's a short 30-minute, stress-free trip for us to travel to Framingham. They are enjoying their third year with MetYSO."

The Music Director and Conductor of MetYSO is Paul Surapine, a virtuoso clarinetist, well-known area teacher, and founder and Director of Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra in Milford. Surapine takes special care to choose music that challenges, resonates with and inspires the student musicians. He has high standards, expects hard work, but peppers his rehearsals with historical and often humorous anecdotes.

"Since our son was asked to help out on percussion at his first concert with METYSO a few years ago, we haven't looked back," said parent Cathy Lifschultz. "Every note, every concert is pure joy; [the director's] excitement for the music is contagious, and our absolute awe at the abilities and talents of these young musicians is astounding. We feel privileged to be a part of such a wonderful, warm and welcoming group of people who are so willing to share their love of music with our children."

MetYSO benefits from close association with Mr. Surapine's Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra, with the

professional musicians from CHSO serving as coaches for MetYSO chamber music ensembles and as mentors to all members of the orchestra. Several rehearsals each semester are devoted to sectionals, where one or more mentors will work with specific sections of the orchestra to master the music they will be performing. This close work with professionals allows an attention to detail and subtlety of interpretation that is demonstrated with each concert.

The senior group, Metrowest Youth Symphony Orchestra, is a full symphony orchestra of about fifty middle and high school-aged musicians. The orchestra plays repertoire ranging from Beethoven and Schubert symphonies to movie scores to Duke Ellington jazz arrangements to opera. The May 3rd concert will feature a program of opera music, The Barber of Seville overture by Mozart and Carmen by Georges Bizet. Both pieces require precise, lively playing and Carmen is vigorous and spirited in much of its tempo. The Carmen music is composed of two suites, the second of which is performed less frequently and is technically more challenging; however, Surapine felt the orchestra could benefit from stretching their skills with this music.

The Preparatory String Orchestra (PSO) is in its second year, doubling in size from last season, with 21 students. This orchestra accepts students from about ages 8 - 14 who have at least two years of experience playing their instrument and who are studying with a private teacher.

According to Surapine, "We needed a place for younger string players who might be overwhelmed by the difficult music of the senior orchestra, yet still wanted more challenge than is available in most school systems. We're delighted that clearly this orchestra is successfully filling a need."

PSO is directed by Etleva Hima-Buli, a former child prodigy from Albania, who expects a serious effort from these young students. For this spring concert, PSO is performing the second movement from Mozart's Serenade for String in G Major as well as the final movement from Gustav Holst's St. Paul's Suite, challenging pieces for such young musicians, and each Sunday rehearsal they progress in their performance of the music. These selections present a hurdle for the students because they are not easy and because they are familiar pieces the audiences will recognize. With a month to go before the concert the students, some as young as eight, have made amazing progress.

The MetYSO students stretch themselves musically not only as performers but in other ways. One of the MetYSO musicians, Evan Cadavieco, a trombonist and a sophomore at Westborough High School, wants to learn to conduct. Surapine is offering him a special opportunity to conduct The Barber of Seville at the May 3rd concert.

The next performance of all the MetYSO ensembles will be May 3, at 3: p.m. The concert will take place at the Lincoln/Sudbury Regional High School, 390 Lincoln St, Sudbury in the auditorium. There is ample free parking and the auditorium is wheel-chair accessible. The concert is free (donations welcome) and open to the public.

The orchestra will have openings in the fall for all instruments. Students are expected to be proficient on their instrument (district audition level and above) and to be studying with a private teacher. Auditions for membership will be held on May 17. More information about the orchestra, specific audition requirements and audition scheduling is available on the website, www.metyso.org, or a voice message may be left at 978-631-1114.

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