AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY
ANNUAL REPORT
2017/2018 Season

Come as you are. Leave inspired.
Dear AYS Community,

The American Youth Symphony’s 2017/18 Season was a great success, and the Board of Directors and I were excited to share our musicians’ journey with you. The mission of AYS is to inspire our young orchestra members and our audience through the performance of great symphonic works. Achieving this is only possible with the support of our loyal community of funders. Your generosity and belief in our work sustains us.

The 2017/18 season included uplifting and varied programming anchored with Strauss, Brahms, Mozart, Beethoven, and Prokofiev, all of which were met with great acclaim and applause. In addition to these celebrated artistic successes, the 2017/18 season was also a banner year for AYS financially. This season saw the organization’s first million-dollar gift; this multi-year grant was generously donated by my fellow Board Member Peter Mandell, and his wife, AYS Advisory Council Member, Sarah Coade Mandell. Additionally, our 10th Annual Hollywood Project, honoring Board Members David Newman and Steve Linder, and our 53rd Annual Gala, honoring philanthropist and long-time AYS supporter, Edna Weiss, were both lovely events that exceeded their fundraising goals.

Now in our 2018/19 Season, the third under the skilled leadership of Music Director, Carlos Izcaray, we are proud to present a season featuring both beloved classics and award-winning contemporary music. Additionally, we are pleased to introduce the American Youth Symphony’s new Executive Director, Tara Aesquivel, whose expert leadership will help shape the next phase of this great organization.

I am constantly inspired by the artistry and dedication of our hard-working musicians on the verge of their professional careers, and year after year, I am thrilled by success of our brilliant alumni. AYS is without question one of the best orchestras of its kind, and its success is directly connected to the support of its audience.

Thank you for helping us achieve excellence.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Dretzka, Chairman of the Board of Directors
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chairman of the Board’s Letter  02
Music Director’s Report  04
Introducing New AYS Executive Director  05
Who We Are  06
AYS By the Numbers: Financial Growth and Audience Development  07
Alumni Updates  10
Season Highlights  11
Share-A-Stand & Community Engagement  12
Board of Directors & Advisory Council  14
Meet Our Staff  15
Planned Giving  16
Thank You to Our Donors  17
Foundation and Corporate Support  18

AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY
5150 Wilshire Boulevard, Ste 506, Los Angeles, CA 90036
Phone: 310-470-2332   Website: www.AYSymphony.org   Tax ID: 95-2076046
Dear Friends,

The 2017/18 Season was filled with exciting musical experiences that I was thrilled to share with our young musicians, and you, our audience.

After beginning with an electrifying concert featuring our 2017 Concerto Competition winner Aubree Oliverson, I was honored to conduct John Williams’ unforgettable score for *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* for the 10th Annual AYS Hollywood Project Concert. We were proud to be invited back to the LA Phil’s *Sounds About Town* series, for a performance featuring world-renowned soloist Vladimir Feltsman performing Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 1, along with works by John Adams, Jennifer Higdon, and Maurice Ravel. The Gala found us commemorating another successful AYS season with a very special concert, sponsored by the NEA and presented in partnership with Human Rights Watch. Promoting justice and liberty for all, we celebrated the lives of Abraham Lincoln, with Copland’s iconic *Lincoln Portrait*, and classical music’s greatest spokesman for freedom: Ludwig van Beethoven. I personally composed a new piece, *Strike Fugaz*, which I was excited and honored to share. I also had the pleasure of overseeing the inaugural Citizen Musician Concert, which closed out the season by bringing attention to the homeless crisis in Los Angeles, and celebrating music as a force for justice and social change.

Now, throughout the 2018/19 Season, we’ll tackle some of the greatest masterworks of the symphonic repertoire, while continuing our commitment to providing a platform for new voices — this season will be our first where the majority of living composers featured will be women, as will several of our virtuosic solo artists.

I want to thank all of you for being part of this community. From the Board of Directors, to members, volunteers, audience members, and of course, the extraordinary musicians on stage, you are all vital to the American Youth Symphony’s mission to inspire the future of classical music. I can’t tell you how much I’ve enjoyed leading this great organization for the past two seasons, and I look forward to being here with you for many exciting years to come.

Sincerely,

Carlos Izcaray, Music Director
At the start of the American Youth Symphony’s 2018/19 Opening Night Concert, AYS Board Chair, Kevin Dretzka, announced the appointment of Tara Aesquivel as the organization’s next Executive Director. The selection comes after a four-month search led by the AYS Board of Directors. Ms. Aesquivel’s term began on Oct. 8, 2018.

Music has shaped Tara’s life and, through her work, she hopes to share the power of the arts with others. Tara is a classically trained musician, studying oboe and voice while earning a B.A. in Music from the University of Missouri–Kansas City. Convinced that she could have a broader impact offstage, Tara earned a Master’s degree in Arts Management from Carnegie Mellon University, during which she was selected to study Cultural Economics at the University of Bologna, Italy, and conduct a thesis project for Americans for the Arts.

Tara’s professional experience includes strategic planning, fundraising, board development, marketing, production, and community engagement for Pittsburgh Opera, LA Opera, A Noise Within, Antioch University Los Angeles, The Lukens Company, and Invertigo Dance Theatre. Tara’s volunteer commitments include serving as a mentor and Advisory Board member for Emerging Arts Leaders/Los Angeles, mentor and instructor for the Cal State Dominguez Hills Innovation Incubator, and contributing editorial content to the Tafter Journal.

Tara is thrilled to bring her experience and passion for music to the Executive Director role at the American Youth Symphony. Tara’s other adventures include travelling, camping, hiking, and being a mom.

“The board is confident that AYS will continue expanding its success under Tara’s leadership, given her experience as an Executive Director and musician.” - Kevin Dretzka, AYS Board Chair

“I’m so honored to have been asked to join the American Youth Symphony. Classical music and supporting the development of young artists are both very important to me. I’m excited to combine these interests and work with the staff and board to elevate the next generation of artists and audience members for orchestral music.” - Tara Aesquivel
The American Youth Symphony’s mission is to inspire the future of classical music by providing landmark fellowships to virtuosic young adults and exceptional, innovative, and free concerts to the Los Angeles community.

Competitively selected, our orchestra is comprised of 100 musicians in high school through doctoral programs, and beyond, who represent extraordinary talent from all over the world. By offering our community remarkable concerts at world-class venues, we remain committed to creating access and opportunity for everyone to experience the inspiration of this beautiful art form.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

- Access to world-class classical music fellowships should be based solely on merit, not financial means.
- Exceptional orchestral performances should be accessible to all members of the community.
- Classical music is not only alive and vibrant, but is relevant to all audiences.
- Musicians have a responsibility to be engaged citizens in the communities they serve.

WHAT’S NEXT

As we continue forward, we strive to:

- Engage a younger and more diverse audience.
- Deepen our professional training of musicians by providing the very best in musical education.
- Continue our commitment to musician citizenship.
- Increase the scope and impact of mentoring activities between AYS musicians and younger musicians from underserved communities.
# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

**DATA FROM THE AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY’S 2016/17 AUDIT, COMPLETED IN 2018**

## ASSETS

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## NET ASSETS

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## EXPENSES

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### YEAR-END REVENUE & EXPENSES
*From Statement of Activity*

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<td>1,043,955</td>
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<td>921,840</td>
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<td>858,680</td>
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#### Notes:
* FY16 Accrual revenue reflects a donor's decision to terminate an outstanding, multi-year pledge to AYS, sponsoring our former Music Director. The remainder of the pledge balance of $310,000 was written off in the FY16. Without this write off, AYS’s revenue was $1,210,919.

** FY17 revenue reflects a donor’s pledge to donate $1,000,000 to AYS over eight years. AYS has received 400,000 of this pledge to-date.

### AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

#### TOTAL ANNUAL AUDIENCE SIZE:

![Graph showing audience growth from 5,002 in 2012/13 to 12,036 in 2017/18.]

*140% Audience Growth!*

#### Quotes:

“*What you do is so meaningful to the community, to us. The Family Concert was really special and the music was beautiful. Thank you for making a space for young kids enjoy your music!*”

- AYS Audience Member (February 2018)
AYS AUDIENCE BY THE NUMBERS

RESERVATIONS FOR MULTIPLE AYS CONCERTS
29%

FIRST-TIME ORCHESTRA CONCERT ATTENDEES
up to 38%

CONCERT ATTENDEES
12,036

HOUSEHOLDS NEW TO AYS
56%

94% TICKETS RESERVED

AYS AUDIENCE BY THE NUMBERS

DIVERSITY

“IT was the best concert we have ever attended there. Best concert anywhere.” - AYS Audience Member (September 2017)

AUDIENCE AGES

Under 30 Years of Age
22%

Above 60 Years of Age
22%

30-39 Years of Age
20%

50-59 Years of Age
14%

40-49 Years of Age
24%

AUDIENCE ETHNICITY

Alaskan Native or Native American
2%

Asian or Pacific Islander
33%

Hispanic or Latinx
22%

White/Caucasian
41%

Black or African American
2%
Accomplishments of AYS Alumni during the last year include:

**EDUCATION:**
- **ANNIE HYUNG**, Cello (2016-18): Accepted into undergraduate program at Northwestern University
- **JOSEPH MORA**, Principal Tuba (2015-18): Accepted into Masters program at Northwestern University
- **JULIAN SENYEY**, Viola (2016-18): Accepted into undergraduate program at New England Conservatory

**ORCHESTRA POSITIONS:**
- **MAKENA CLARK**, Violin (2017/18): Section violinist with Reno Philharmonic
- **PHILIP MARTEN**, Concertmaster (2015/16): Assistant Concertmaster of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
- **CARRIE REXROAT**, Horn (2013-15): 2nd Horn with Symphony Tacoma
- **STEPHEN TAVANI**, Co-Concertmaster (2011-2014): Assistant Concertmaster of Cleveland Orchestra

**COMPETITIONS:**
- **SERGIO COEHLO**, Principal Clarinet (2015-present): Runner up in the Classics Alive Young Artists Auditions, and finalist in the 2018 Hennings-Fischer Young Artists Competition.
- **COLEMAN ITZKOFF**, Principal Cello (2014-2017): Won Division A of the Classics Alive Young Artists Auditions

**SOLO ENGAGEMENTS & MORE:**

Top Right: Simone Porter, Photography by Emma Bella Holley
Bottom Right: Coleman Itzkoff, Photography by Philip Holahan
2017/2018 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

JOHN LIEBES CONCERT
SEPTEMBER 24, 2017
To begin our 53rd season, Maestro Izcaray led a concert sponsored by the family of late AYS Board Member John Liebes, featuring works by Strauss and Shostakovich; with 20 year-old Concerto Competition winner, Aubree Oliverson performing Bruch's virtuosic Violin Concerto in G minor.

HOLLYWOOD PROJECT
NOVEMBER 19, 2017
AYS performed John Williams’ legendary score from E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial live to picture! Led by Maestro Izcaray, AYS invited audience members to experience this iconic film in a new, unique way.

AYS + BØRNS
OCTOBER 26, 2017
AYS members performed BØRNS chart-topping hits for chamber orchestra, with BØRNS himself providing the original vocals, at the Viaduct in downtown Los Angeles. This unique hybrid pop/classical concert sold out within 30 minutes of going on sale, with 550 people in attendance.

SOUNDS ABOUT TOWN
MARCH 25, 2018
As part of the LA Phil’s Sounds About Town concert series, AYS performed an eclectic array of works by John Adams, Jennifer Higdon, and Maurice Ravel. World renowned soloist Vladimir Feltsman joined the orchestra for Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 1.

GALA
APRIL 21, 2018
The 2018 Gala featured repertoire celebrating the triumph of the human spirit in collaboration with Human Rights Watch, with works by Revueltas, Copland, and Beethoven. We were thrilled to have Maestro Izcaray premiere an original composition, Strike Fugaz, inspired by the humanitarian crisis in his native Venezuela.

CITIZEN MUSICIAN CONCERT
MAY 12, 2018
We ended the 2017/18 season with a special chamber concert. Musician Citizen Fellow, Spencer Baldwin, programmed this event to musically explore the idea of “home,” featuring works by composers with a connection to homelessness, and partnering with a choir of current and former Skid Row residents.
SHARE-A-STAND

The American Youth Symphony’s in-school music education program is now serving three times as many schools, and three times as many students! From performance technique to theory to composition, Share-A-Stand provides students with hands-on musical instruction and is offered at Title 1 LAUSD middle schools in Watts, Granada Hills, and East LA. AYS musicians coach Share-A-Stand participants on everything from holding a bow, to maintaining a successful practice routine, and creating original arrangements of favorite songs. AYS provides over 300 students and their families with free transportation and tickets to two AYS concerts per season, and each school year culminates with a side-by-side performance featuring both coaches and students, presented at the hosting schools for all to enjoy!

HEAR FROM OUR SHARE-A-STAND COMMUNITY:

“Now that she plays music, she has started to take an interest in all sorts of creative hobbies, she plays violin but now she also sings and draws! This program and these field trips are a good influence.”
- Nicole, Parent of an Edwin Markham Middle School Student

“After seeing the emotion and expression a symphony can convey, I am inspired to learn how to arrange and compose my own music and express emotion through it.”
- Jocelyn, Robert Frost Middle School Student
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY CONCERTS

AYS takes classical music outside the concert hall and into the community, welcoming groups from all walks of life.

2017/18 was the inaugural season of the “Citizen Musician” Fellowship — inspired and supported by a program Yo-Yo Ma developed at the Civic Orchestra of Chicago — teaching leadership in the use of classical music to transform lives and build community. The aim is to bridge the gap between high art and community art, and in the words of Yo-Yo Ma “transcend technique in order to seek out the truths in our world in a way that gives meaning and sustenance to individuals and communities.” In May 2018, Citizen Musician Fellow, Spencer Baldwin, programmed a unique event around the theme of “Home,” with each piece of music possessing a deep connection to the issue of homelessness. In addition to works by once-homeless composers, the concert featured a performance by the Urban Voices Project Choir, an ensemble of current and former Skid Row residents, and an original rap about our local homeless crisis by AYS bassist Mark Gutierrez, set to music by Vivaldi.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ADVISORY COUNCIL

BOARD CHAIRMAN
Kevin Dretzka

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS
Herbert M. Gelfand

HONORARY PRESIDENT
Zubin Mehta

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Krystyna Newman, Vice Chairman
David Papale, Treasurer
Peter Mandell, Secretary*

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Zubin Mehta
Anne Akiko Meyers
Deborah Rutter
Esa-Pekka Salonen
Alan Silvestri
Chad Smith
Jean-Yves Thibaudet
Edward Yim

* denotes AYS alumni
MEET OUR STAFF

ISABEL THIROUX
DIRECTOR OF ORCHESTRA OPERATIONS

Isabel Thiroux has been with the American Youth Symphony since she first joined the viola section in 2001. After seven years in the orchestra, she joined the staff, becoming Orchestra Manager in 2010 and Director of Orchestra Operations in 2015. Isabel studied viola at CSU, Long Beach with LA Philharmonic violist John Hayhurst and maintains an active career as a freelance violist performing regularly around the Los Angeles area.

ALICE DUTTON
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Alice Dutton joined the staff of the American Youth Symphony in Fall 2011, and became Director of Community Engagement in Summer 2015. Alice’s goal for her work at AYS is to build a community of music lovers that reflects the demographics of the city of Los Angeles. Toward this end, she has spearheaded projects that have brought AYS musicians into underserved classrooms, and have brought hundreds of local students to AYS concerts.

MIA MCNEIL
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

Mia McNeil graduated from Loyola Marymount University with a Bachelor’s degree in English and Journalism. She grew up in Chicago, Illinois and quickly fell in love with writing and musical composition. Mia played violin throughout her childhood, studying at the Chicago High School for the Arts and Roosevelt High School in Seattle, Washington.

MAX MUELLER
SHARE-A-STAND LEAD INSTRUCTOR

Max Mueller is a cellist, composer, and music educator. He first became involved with AYS in 2010, working with David Newman to edit scores for the Goldsmith III Concert. He has been an active consultant ever since, and officially joined the staff in January 2016, taking a leadership role in expanding the “Share-A-Stand” program, bringing AYS musicians to music classes in underserved middle schools.
PLANNED GIVING

Make your core values known through a planned gift to the American Youth Symphony. Members of our Legacy Society are generous and forward thinking donors who will support our long-term success and be gratefully remembered.

There are numerous ways to support AYS with a planned gift; many of these options are a win-win for you and for AYS. We encourage you to consult with your financial advisor to discuss the tax implications of these options.

- Bequests
- Life Insurance Policy and Retirement Assets
- Life Income Gifts
- Complex Gifts

Legacy Society members become a special part of the American Youth Symphony contributor family. They are also honored with recognition in all print and digital materials, including our website and bi-annual season program books.

To discuss planned giving options, email Legacy@aysymphony.org or call (310) 470-2332.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS FOR SUPPORTING THE LEGACY OF THE AMERICAN YOUTH SYMPHONY BY MAKING A PLANNED GIFT:

Mr. & Mrs. Herb Gelfand
Dr. Richard Handwerger
Mr. John Liebes
Mr. Steven A. Linder & Mr. Michael Hanel
Mr. Michel Montet
Mr. Richard Rosenthal & Ms. Katherine Spillar
AYS supporters also make our concerts free and accessible to the Los Angeles community, ensuring that anyone can experience the power and beauty of remarkable orchestral concerts. With gratitude, the American Youth Symphony acknowledges all of our individual donors. This publication lists names of donors who made gifts, pledges and in-kind donations of $500 or more from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018.

**WE THANK YOU**

**INDIVIDUAL PARTNERS**

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