



Our Story

If indeed the ARTS are the very Soul of a vibrant and healthy Community, then what could be more important than developing the young musicians and young leaders in each generation?

Youth Symphony History

Started in 1980 as a small junior high school orchestra performing only one concert, who could have foreseen that, led by founder Gary Nicholson, the Colorado Springs Youth Symphony Association would grow into one of the premier Youth Orchestra Programs in the country? Now, in our 42nd year, the CSYSA features nine large Auditioned Ensembles, many high-level Chamber Music Groups, and a strong Mozart Strings introductory grade school program.



It has long been the Mission of the Colorado Springs Youth Symphony Association:

To inspire young musicians in the Pikes Peak Region to become future leaders, to provide artistic and personal development as well as diverse musical experiences for young musicians, and to collaboratively create and share excellent music that bridges cultures and communities.

We are the most comprehensive instrumental music program for youth in this part of the country. Our mission compels us to provide for artistic development through high quality, diverse music experiences that enrich the cultural environment of local, national and international communities.

Our nine Youth Ensembles connect families to the life-altering power of musical performance, here in the Pikes Peak Region and around the world. Our introductory *CSYSA Mozart Strings outreach* for beginning string players, is offered in school districts where there are no string music programs. In all, the Youth Symphony Musical Groups play for thousands of children and adults yearly, including many audiences that have little or no exposure to live orchestral music.

Great Young Citizens making Great Music

Audiences and music professionals alike, here and across the world, agree on the exceptional music quality of the CSYSA groups. According to the Manager of the Sydney Opera House, *“Here listening to the Colorado Springs Youth Symphony, I can close my eyes, and it might be any top City Orchestra in the world!”*

Best of the Springs! - CSYSA is proud to have received its 6th straight annual *GOLD AWARD* in the *Gazette’s ‘Best of the Springs’* Competition in the *Non-Profit Arts Groups* Category.

CSYSA 2022 Concerts, Live and In-Person! – Our ensembles are *Excited* to be performing together again in the concert hall and are pleased to be performing again in front of LIVE audiences! Our performing ensembles include:



*Wolfgang String Orchestra,
Amadeus String Orchestra,
Allegro String Orchestra,
Vivace String Orchestra,
Bravo Winds,
Pikes Peak Winds,
Ascent Big Band,
Ovation Youth Orchestra, &
Colorado Springs Youth Symphony*

Rehearsals – thanks to our spacious new home, exceptional staff, and enhanced safety procedures, the CSYSA has successfully conducted *in-person rehearsals* throughout the pandemic and is well positioned for a successful 2022-2023 season!

Summer Auditions – auditions for the 2022 season were held in-person in our new YS Home.

CSYSA Summer Camps - every year we have brought the musicians from each performing group together with their conductor and teachers to bond and perform musically at a startlingly high level. *Importantly, from the very beginning our Summer Camps focus on personal discipline and responsibility, team-building, and leadership lessons that last a lifetime.*

We were able to *return to the mountains* for in-person overnight summer camps, all while meeting or exceeding CDC & State Safety Guidelines.



NOW IN OUR NEW CSYSA HOME!

After years of efforts to establish a permanent Youth Symphony Home, we purchased the ideal facility – *Village Christian Church* – well-located near the intersection of Union and Fillmore at 3113 Primrose Drive. This exciting venue immediately offered over 18,000sq.ft. of flexible rehearsal, office, and storage space, including two large Rehearsal Halls and numerous Sectional Rooms, allowing us to safely welcome back our young Musicians, Conductors, and Teachers.



Built in 1965, our new Youth Symphony Home is an architecturally-rich building that we envision restoring, upgrading, and restructuring to ensure long-term CSYSA success, and to be a ‘Beacon for the Arts’ in our Community.

The Power of Touring

Every CSYSA performing group tours; some to local schools and some across the state or the southwest, while every second year, the full Symphony Orchestra has historically traveled abroad to share our great music and our talented young role models with the World.



Whether playing here at home in the Pikes Peak or Ent Centers, or far afield in New York’s Carnegie Hall, New Zealand, China, Australia, Bulgaria, Japan, or Greece our students benefit from the comprehensive CSYSA instrumental music program.

Exposing our young musicians to various cultures and music forms is an essential part of the broad CSYSA education. In the process we expose our audiences to the very best of American youth.

The Youth Symphony excels in GREECE! – In June of 2022 after difficult years with worldwide health issues prohibiting group tours, the Youth Symphony Orchestra resumed International Travel! Our talented young ambassadors flew to Athens and then cruised, toured, and *performed* for two wonderful weeks from Athens to Santorini. One of many musical highlights was a special Live Concert featuring John William’s “*Olympic Spirit*” performed in the Amphitheatre at *Ancient Olympia*, home of the original Olympics, and long-time *partner city* of Colorado Springs!

Through Music We Are One' – A timeless *Maori Teaching* and our CSYSA *Motto*, adopted by CSYSA during the 1998 Concert Tour to New Zealand.

Our Chamber Music Program

YS Musicians are encouraged to form and perform in Chamber Music Groups at no extra charge to parents; we believe that Chamber Music Skills are a key part of music education. The **Manitou Chamber Music Festival** has recently been incorporated into CSYSA,

A Variety of Music Disciplines

While Orchestras traditionally focus on Classical Music, we believe in exposing our young musicians to a broad scope of music from various cultures.

The CSYSA is pleased to have launched our first auditioned Jazz Ensemble, the **Ascent Big Band!** Consisting of 20 of the region's top jazz musicians, the ensemble is performing in jazz clubs and on the big stage alongside our other ensembles!

We have recorded and released an **Orchestral Jazz CD**, composed by YS Alum Sean Hennessey, recorded by the Youth Symphony Orchestra with his 'Hennessey 6' Jazz Group, produced by multiple-Grammy-Award-winning Jesse Lewis and distributed by Summit Records.

Honoring Music Teachers!

The CSYSA Mission would not be possible without the dedicated *Private and School Music Teachers* that instruct and inspire young musicians everywhere. We work diligently to connect and collaborate with all Music Teachers, knowing that the Arts in our Community are at their strongest when every Music Program thrives.



“Participation in Youth Symphony ensembles strengthens my students as players, increases motivation, and helps make them leaders in their school programs. I highly recommend auditioning for CSYSA!”
Nancy Andrew, Flute Instructor

Our annual **CSYSA ‘Inspire’ Teacher Awards** honor all School and Private Music Teachers who inspire young musicians across the world.

Seeking ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’

Believing that *every young musician feels safe and welcome in the CSYSA*, we are focusing our internal training and policies to help overcome DEI shortfalls in our community.

To ensure that all students are comfortable in concert dress, our policy was revised so that all musicians may select their preferred uniform. We have updated enrollment paperwork to honor and celebrate the spectrum of gender identities, preferred names and pronouns, and familial relationships for students and their caregivers. To further reduce socioeconomic barriers to participation, we expanded our financial aid program by 50% and established a subsidized instrument rental program. As we actively seek equitable, accessible participation for all in our community, we ratified our non-discrimination policy to align with our values of inclusion for all musicians, staff, and community members. The organization's website and social media pages now better reflect the inclusive and welcoming nature of the CSYSA.

We are committed to including all segments of our community in our ongoing learning journey and the CSYSA Mission.

Stronger Through Partnering

We continue to strengthen our position in the Pikes Peak Region by partnering with other community artistic and service groups. This includes *long-standing partnerships* with: the Colorado Springs Philharmonic, the Colorado Springs Children's Chorale, the Ent Center for the Arts, the Colorado College Summer Festival, the UCCS Music Department (now offering our musicians College Credit), and we are committed to exploring new partnership possibilities.

Community Support for CSYSA

Like many non-profits, the Youth Symphony is dependent on financial contributions from those who support the Arts and who believe in our Mission of fostering young musician/ leaders.

We enjoy broad community support in local Fund-Raisers like Colorado Gives Day, the 'Celebrate Youth in the Arts' Breakfast, and the CSYSA's annual signature event, the *Night of White Lights*.

Leading Foundations in our community regularly recognize us with Grants and other financial contributions.

Our young musicians and their families also capitalize on several fund-raising opportunities each year to supplement their personal Tuition and Tour Accounts.

Our Dedicated Families

Few youth activities require more of a commitment from young people *and their families* than Orchestral Music and the playing of a Musical Instrument at a high level.



At the CSYSA we work diligently to be supportive and flexible with our families and their efforts to develop their young musicians - within the Youth Symphony and in all available School Music Programs.

Financial Aid for our Young Musicians

We are always focused on our promise that *no deserving musician is ever turned away from CSYSA for financial reasons*.

In short, the Colorado Springs Youth Symphony Association inspires young musicians to be leaders, provides artistic development and diverse musical experiences, and shares exceptional music that bridges cultures.

'Through Music We Are One'



PO Box 7846
Colorado Springs, CO 80933
office@csysa.com
719-633-3901