



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 5th straight annual **GOLD AWARD** in the *Gazette’s ‘Best of the Springs’* Competition in the *Non-Profit Arts Groups* Category.

BACK TO 'LIVE AND IN-PERSON'!

Following these unprecedented times of global pandemic and recession, the CSYSA has safely returned to in-person activities:

CSYSA 2021 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 safely-socially-distanced audiences! Our performing ensembles include:



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

Uninterrupted Rehearsals – thanks to our spacious new home, exceptional staff, and enhanced safety procedures, the CSYSA has successfully conducted *in-person rehearsals* and is well positioned for a successful 2021-2022 season!

Summer Auditions – following successful remote Auditions due to COVID-19 restrictions in the Summer of 2020, we moved to in-person Auditions in our new YS Home in 2021.

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.

This season 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, in late February 2021 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 or Japan, 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 Is Headed To GREECE! – While world health conditions in 2020/2021 lead us to postpone or cancel all CSYSA in-person tours, plans are now in place to *resume our local, regional, and international Touring*. In the Summer of 2022 the Youth Symphony will serve as international ambassadors with a performance tour to GREECE. Our young musicians will be flying, cruising, and *performing* from Athens to Santorini. Plan include a very special Live Concert featuring John Williams' "*Olympic Spirit*" in the 2000 year-old Roman Amphitheatre at *Ancient Olympia*, our longtime partner city!

Through Music We Are One' – A timeless *Maori Teaching* and *our 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.

New in 2021, 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.

Our 40th Anniversary Celebration

During 2019/20 we celebrated our 40th Season with a Gala Evening honoring *Marcia Hendricks* of the Children's Chorale and CSYSA's *Gary Nicholson* for their lifetime contributions to Youth in the Arts. Then, a live Sunday Concert at the ENT Center where the Youth Symphony premiered '*Alpha and Omega*', a beautiful piece by noted American Composer *Soon Hee Newbold*, commissioned for our 40th, and offered a stirring '*Salute to Heroes*', honoring all who sustain us in these difficult times.



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.

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 Children's Chorale, The Ent Center for the Arts, and the Colorado College Summer Festival.

We are also forging *new partnerships* with: Colorado Springs Philharmonic, Harrison School District, UCCS Music Department (now offering our musicians College Credits), Pikes Peak Library District, *and there are more to come!*

Seeking ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’

Believing that *every young musician must feel welcome in the CSYSA*, we are focusing our training and policies on helping overcome DEI shortfalls in our community.

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’



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