

2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT



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First Lady and President's Committee Recognize Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra at The White House

During the 2014-15 season, Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO) was notified of its selection as a 2015 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award winner—the nation's highest honor for out-of-school arts and humanities programs. Executive Director Linda Edelstein and Malik Johnson, a *Progressions* graduate now performing as Assistant Principal cellist in MYSO's Senior Symphony during his ninth season with the organization, traveled to Washington, DC to accept the award from First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House on Tuesday, November 17, 2015. Only 12 awards are given each year out of a field of 350 nominations and 50 finalists, and only 2 programs from Wisconsin have received the award since 1998. MYSO has been among the 50 finalists for the award six times.

MYSO's selection as a 2015 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award winner recognizes the organization's innovative Community Partnership Programs. The Community Partnership Programs were launched in 2003 to reach and support students with barriers to music study. With the addition and growth of the programs, this initiative now serves 367 students in direct music training and more than 5,000 young audience members in free, educational, peer-to-peer performances each year. The programs include nine diverse offerings that bring transformative music training to youth,



creating equity and access to music study by providing the social, emotional and financial support to excel in their musical training and youth development. These programs are literally changing the lives of young people, as affirmed through statistically-valid research and student testimonials.

The National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award recognizes the country's best creative youth development programs for using engagement in the arts and the humanities to increase academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment. The award recognizes and supports outstanding programs that lay new pathways to creativity, expression, and achievement outside of the regular school day. These programs excite and engage a range of students, cultivating imagination, collaboration, discipline and academic success, with demonstrable results.

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Frank Almond's Master Class with Progressions Students & Graduates

Photo: Emily Lukasek



Almond performed as the featured soloist on MYSO's 2015 European tour

Photo: Laurie Tanel



Jennifer Mattes, Board Chair

Letter from the Board Chair & Executive Director

Since 1956, the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra has been empowering young people from diverse backgrounds to joyfully pursue musical excellence while building crucial life skills. We affirm the founding principles that remain at the core of our organization: to provide life-changing music training opportunities through intensive, participatory education that fosters critical thinking skills, creativity and collaboration.

Here are some of the highlights of our work:

1,000

The number of students MYSO currently serves in direct programming, with an additional 5,000 through peer-to-peer performances as part of our extensive Community Concert Series

75%

of MYSO students make significant gains in cognitive development, including problem-solving, critical thinking and resourcefulness, while 70% make similar gains in character skills including teamwork, self-esteem, focus, discipline and more.

39

The number of programming options available to MYSO members

\$280,000

The amount of financial assistance provided to MYSO members to ensure no student is denied participation due to financial hardship

84

The number of formal concerts MYSO's young musicians present each season

This magnitude of skill attainment places MYSO at the vanguard of local youth arts programming, illustrating as much as a 20% gain over our peer organizations throughout the region.

The 2014-15 season offered many opportunities for our talented young people, including an international tour, the addition of our first Artist-in-Residence, a new full symphony orchestra, as well as national and international recognition. Our 2015 annual report is a reflection of some of that important work. Through written stories, informational graphics, photography and video, we strive to communicate the transformative power of the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra programs and services for our young people and the community. Thank you for your continued support of MYSO.

Jennifer Mattes
Board Chair

Linda J. Edelstein
Executive Director



Frank Almond

Frank Almond Serves as MYSO's First Artist-in-Residence

In our 2014-15 season, Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO) was delighted to add the role of Artist-in-Residence to the organization's already impressive list of teaching positions.

MYSO was honored to have Milwaukee artist, Frank Almond, serve in this capacity. An internationally celebrated violinist who holds the Charles and Marie Caestecker Concertmaster Chair with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (MSO), Mr. Almond also founded and directs the highly-regarded Frankly Music Chamber Series in Milwaukee. A devoted educator, he has held academic positions at San Diego State University, Texas Christian University, and Northwestern University, and recently joined the faculty of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. As part of his MYSO residency, Mr. Almond worked directly with musicians and Music Directors from 11 orchestras including the youngest string musicians and respective instructors in the nationally recognized Community Partnership Programs. In this first season he made an enormous impact and provided important instruction and feedback for our programs' success.

In addition, Mr. Almond collaborated with MYSO to produce the first-ever Frankly MYSO Young Artist Showcase, a concert highlighting some of the organization's most advanced students in performance with Mr. Almond. The residency culminated with Mr. Almond's participation in the Senior Symphony's international performance tour to Vienna, Austria and Budapest, Hungary, June 28-July 8, 2015. During the tour, Mr. Almond performed as guest soloist with the orchestra to full houses in some of the world's finest concert venues.

We are pleased that Mr. Almond has agreed to continue in his position with our organization in 2015-16. The Artist-in-Residence position is generously sponsored by the Johnston Family.

Components of Mr. Almond's Residency during the 2014-15 season included:

- Solo work with the Senior Symphony, MYSO's flagship orchestra
- Extensive work with the acclaimed Chamber Orchestra, including a joint concert performance, during which Mr. Almond soloed and led the orchestra
- Coaching in the Chamber Ensemble Program, Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, Sinfonia and String Orchestras
- A private masterclass with *Progressions* students & graduates
- Several visits to *Progressions* to coach and support the student musicians



Senior Symphony Students pose on tour in Europe
Photo: Laurie Tanel

Students Develop Personal & Musical Growth on International Tour

For decades, MYSO's highest level ensemble, the Senior Symphony, has toured internationally and domestically. The Senior Symphony, under the baton of Margery Deutsch, Music Director, and Shelby Keith Dixon, Associate Conductor, has long been recognized as one of the nation's top youth music ensembles, hailed for artistic excellence both nationally and internationally. Over many decades of touring, Senior Symphony has performed in countries such as Italy, Spain, China, Austria, and the Czech Republic, among others.

The organization remains committed to making these once-in-a-lifetime experiences possible, as students who participate in a tour see the greatest levels of personal and musical growth during their time in MYSO. For many students this may be the first and only time to travel abroad—opening their horizons with life-changing cultural perspective and education.

MYSO culminated the 2014-15 season by embarking on an 11 day tour to Vienna, Austria and Budapest, Hungary (June 28-July 8, 2015). Ninety-three of Wisconsin's finest young musicians from MYSO's Senior Symphony and Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra participated in the tour. The orchestra presented an array of performances in some of the world's finest concert halls, including Vienna's Musikverein and Budapest's Béla Bartók National Concert Hall. Frank Almond, Concertmaster of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and MYSO's 2014-15 Artist-in-Residence, was the featured soloist on tour, performing *Havanaise* in E major, Opus 83, by Camille Saint-Saëns.

The tour, which included educational and cultural sight-seeing, allowed students to develop the highest level of artistic excellence in MYSO programs. These students not only see development in musical skill, but also wide-ranging personal skills such as teamwork, discipline, focus, time-management, and confidence.



2015 Tour Performance
Photo: Angela Rhee

MYSO Members in Concert
Photo: Angela Rhee

From *Progressions* to Senior Symphony

For the first time ever, three *Progressions* graduates participated in our 2015 tour to Vienna, Austria and Budapest, Hungary. These students have been with the organization an average of 9 years and reflect the first young musicians who began with MYSO as 3rd graders in our innovative *Progressions* program to experience the once-in-a-lifetime international touring opportunity with our flagship ensemble, Senior Symphony. Thanks to their hard work and community support, they performed in some of the world's greatest concert halls and witnessed cultural and historical sites of substantial significance.

Below are the profiles of these three students:



Alisha Bowen
Joined *Progressions*: 2005
Years with MYSO: 10
Years in Senior Symphony: 3
Instrument: Bass
School: Graduated from Brookfield Academy in 2015, currently attending Hamlin University



Giselle Oliva
Joined *Progressions*: 2006
Years with MYSO: 10
Years in Senior Symphony: 2
Instrument: Viola
Grade: Senior
School: Divine Savior Holy Angels H.S.



Malik Johnson
Joined *Progressions*: 2007
Years with MYSO: 9
Years in Senior Symphony: 2
Instrument: Cello
Grade: Junior
School: Pius XI H.S.

“Where I live, most people have never even been out of the city of Milwaukee... It is now my goal to make it back to Europe and play in even more beautiful and famous concert halls.”

– Malik Johnson

PHOTOS: Alisha with the bass section during the orchestra's concert at Gödöllő Castle, Hungary // Giselle during the orchestra's rehearsal for the Gödöllő Castle performance, Hungary // Malik on the orchestra's boat tour of the Danube River, Austria

Tour Sponsors

Without generous tour sponsors, MYSO would not be able to provide this life-changing opportunity, nor would we be able to provide the necessary resources for the many students who require tour scholarships. Collectively providing more than **\$48,000**, we are grateful to the following individuals, corporations & foundations:

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Introducing The Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra

MYSO added its third full symphony orchestra, the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, in 2014-15. Under the baton of Artistic and Music Director Carter Simmons, the orchestra became the organization's second most advanced ensemble. The addition of the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra allows MYSO to address the continuing enrollment growth witnessed across the organization.

The creation of this new ensemble allows more effective instruction and music-making, greater focus on the individuals in the orchestra, and increased opportunities for leadership – all crucial to the artistic excellence and student impact experienced at MYSO.

With the addition of Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, MYSO was pleased to welcome Mr. Daniel Duffy as Music Director of Philharmonia, a position previously held by Mr. Simmons. Mr. Duffy has been Director of Bands at Waukesha West High School since 2000 and adds to the artistic excellence upheld across the entire MYSO team.



Community Partnership Programs Outcomes

At MYSO, we empower young people from diverse backgrounds to joyfully pursue musical excellence while building crucial life skills. Instrumental in changing lives since 1956, MYSO's programs foster critical thinking skills, creativity and collaboration through more than 25 ensembles, ranging from symphony and string orchestras, to jazz and steel pan bands. Inclusive in these efforts are the innovative Community Partnership Programs (CPPs), which include an array of initiatives designed to bring the transformative benefits of music study to urban youth with barriers to participatory music training.

Every aspect of the CPPs and their design is rooted in our mission of using music study as a tool for youth development. Countless studies, including our own, verify the role music plays in the development of important life skills. MYSO uses these programs and music study as a vehicle for creating more competent, capable young people.

The program effects are assessed by an extensive, outcomes-based program evaluation, which continues to validate the significant impact of these efforts. The evaluation was designed and implemented by MYSO's administrative staff, in partnership with UW-Milwaukee and Reinders Research. It includes survey analysis at season-start and end by student participants, and three co-evaluators including parents, school teachers and music teachers. Questions align specifically with an area of personal, cognitive or musical growth, assessing development in these areas from season start to season end. It has been in use for the past three seasons, evaluating more than 300 students each year. Reinders Research is retained annually to evaluate the tool and analyze the results.

Not only did Reinders Research find the evaluation 95% statistically-valid, they discovered growth throughout all Community Partnership Program student participants (in time-management, discipline, leadership, self-expression, and more) and statistically significant growth in 50% of students during the 2014-2015 season. Alumni feedback gathered through a statistically-valid sample over the summer of 2014 underscores both the sustainability and applicability of skills gained at MYSO. Based on Ms. Reinders' research and other studies on Emotional Intelligence, it is most common to find advancement in the 30-40% range throughout youth arts serving organizations in the region.

The impact of MYSO's Community Partnership Programs places it in the vanguard of local youth arts programming.

"What impact do you think MYSO has had on you/this child?"

"MYSO has helped me become a leader. MYSO is a place I can have fun and learn more about music. It made me learn how to express myself."

– Latino Arts Strings Program musician in MYSO

"His musical uncle died four years ago. Dad hasn't played since then, until he found he could play with his son. Music is back in their lives."

– Music teacher of a first year Progressions student

"MYSO is a huge part of his life, and it required him to learn how to better manage his time and organize himself in order to stay on top of his busy schedule."

– School teacher of a Jazz Studies musician

"Oh how I could count the ways to say: I would not have survived high school without the MYSO opportunity to relieve stress."

– Jazz Studies musician

"She started out extremely shy and sensitive (would cover her mouth every time she made a mistake). She has learned that she's very capable, and that we are a safe place where she can make mistakes on the journey to proficiency."

– Music teacher of a second year Progressions student

"She tends to be very quiet and shy. I feel her involvement with MYSO is key to building her confidence."

– School teacher of a second year Progressions student

"She is by nature a very quiet and shy person. MYSO has helped her to connect with other children with similar interests that she would ordinarily not interact with. She also has ADD which makes staying focused a challenge and I can definitely see the progress she has made since joining MYSO a few years ago. She can stay focused without medication for longer periods of time."

– Parent of a String Orchestra-Central musician

"MYSO has helped reinforce the need for disciplines necessary to [succeed] in life."

– Parent of a first year Progressions student



Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra

Our Deepest Thanks to Our 2014-15 Supporters

We are tremendously grateful for these important gifts which allow our organization to serve an ever-increasing number of young people. Our success in changing lives through music depends heavily on the exceptional generosity of individuals, corporations, foundations and government partners.

This list recognizes gifts of \$250 or more that were received between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. Our apologies for any omissions or errors. We encourage you to call Development & Marketing Director Emily Lukasek, at 414-267-2952, with questions or corrections—or to learn how to make a much-appreciated gift to MYSO.

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“energetic, strong”
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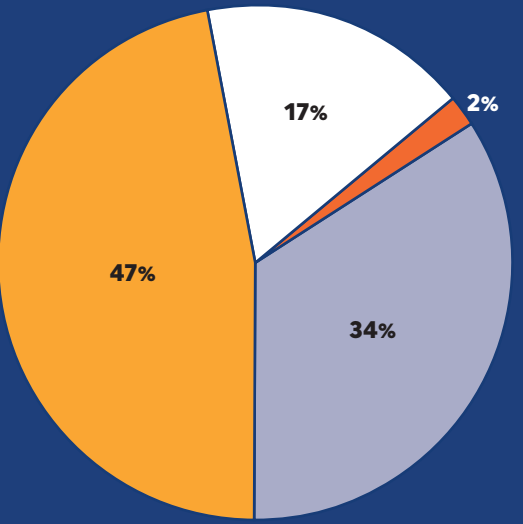
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FY 2014-15 Income - \$2,416,544

- EARNED REVENUE
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- UNITED PERFORMING ARTS FUND
- INTEREST, DIVIDENDS & LOSSES ON INVESTMENTS

91% of expenses support program services.





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Instrumental in changing lives

**MILWAUKEE YOUTH
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At the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO), we empower young people from diverse backgrounds to joyfully pursue musical excellence while building crucial life skills.

MYSO is one of the most successful and respected youth orchestra programs in the nation, regularly recognized regionally, nationally and internationally for its artistic excellence. With 1,000 young musicians ages 8-18 from more than 215 schools, 60 communities and 14 counties throughout Southeastern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois participating in MYSO's many music training programs, it has become one of the largest organizations of its kind in the United States.

Instrumental in changing lives since 1956, MYSO's programs foster critical thinking skills, creativity and collaboration through more than 25 ensemble options, ranging from symphony and string orchestras to jazz and steel pan bands, all providing high quality musical experiences to students at various skill levels.

MYSO is a proud founding member of



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