



Celebrating A Legendary Legacy - A Look Back with Dr. Cobbs

This season we are celebrating the extraordinary legacy of Dr. Paul-Elliott Cobbs' twenty-seven years with the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association. Dr. Cobbs began his conducting career in Detroit, Michigan, where he was the Associate Conductor of the Detroit Metropolitan Symphony, Principal Conductor of its chamber orchestra, and frequent guest conductor of the Michigan Opera. He went to Vienna to study conducting at the Akademie für Musik and then came to Washington State to complete his graduate studies at the University of Washington. His intent all along was to work with adult, professional orchestras. When he first came to the Northwest he worked as Assistant Conductor for Seattle Opera and also conducted the *Discover Music!* community concert series with the Seattle Symphony.

While he was attending UW, the music department got a call from the Everett Youth Symphony. They needed a conductor for one quarter and asked the music department to send their best student, who turned out to be Dr. Cobbs. The one quarter ended up being six years, and he also conducted for Seattle Youth Symphony for eight years.

Dr. Cobbs first came to know about TYSA during the early 90s. In addition to conducting for the Seattle Youth Symphony, he was the chair of the music department for the Northwest School of the Arts. In his chamber orchestra, Dr. Cobbs had students from Everett Youth Symphony, Seattle Youth Symphony, and TYSA. The students all supported each other so, when his concertmaster from TYSA asked her chamber orchestra to attend her Tacoma Youth Symphony concert, they did. After the concert, she introduced Dr. Cobbs to Harry Davidson, her "other favorite conductor" and got a picture with both of them.

In 1995, Dr. Cobbs resigned from the Seattle Youth Symphony, planning on pursuing his goal of working with professional orchestras. Shortly after resigning, he got a call from TYSA Music Director, Harry Davidson. Mr. Davidson was taking a yearlong sabbatical and asked if Dr. Cobbs would be interested in conducting TYS for the winter quarter. Since he had just resigned from Seattle, he didn't feel like he could refuse, so he agreed. TYS was working on the Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 5* that quarter. Charlie Powers (who performed with TYS last season) was one of the student soloists; Janelle Janovich (who will be performing on the TYS concert on November 19) was in the orchestra. His impression was that the students were incredibly nice. During rehearsal, they would look up and smile at him; that was not something he was used to. He also saw the orchestra moving in sync, especially the strings. When the concert he was conducting was over, he thought about his experience in Tacoma being nice but then went back to his plans of returning to working with professionals. That summer, Executive Director Shirley Getzin called to tell him that Mr. Davidson was not coming back and she asked if he would be willing to keep the orchestra together while they conducted an international search for Mr. Davidson's replacement. He agreed, not planning on applying himself. After the Board President asked him to apply twice, he agreed, but really thought after an international search that someone else would be hired. He didn't hear any more until May when the Board President told him there were two other candidates. Dr. Cobbs was asked to audition, mainly so that the students would have someone else to compare the other two candidates to.

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After the audition, the Board President called to congratulate him - the TYS students had chosen him above the other two candidates!

During Dr. Cobbs' first year as Music Director, he chose strong repertoire for TYS, but the students didn't seem to have a lot of confidence. About six weeks into rehearsal, students came to him afraid that they were not going to be ready for the concert. He assured them that they were on track and, sure enough, by the time of the concert, they were well prepared and had a great performance. He sees a quiet confidence in TYSA students now. The students in TYS remain on schedule for each concert, making improvements every week. The most important thing to Dr. Cobbs is students' attitudes. Students can always be taught as long as they have a good attitude and a willingness to learn. The good attitudes of TYSA students follows them to college and beyond. Dr. Cobbs gets letters from colleges that TYSA students attend thanking him for the high quality TYSA alumni.

In 1998 or 1999, TYSA got an invitation to audition to perform at Carnegie Hall. The Tacoma Youth Symphony had just performed Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3 (Eroica)* so they sent the recording from the concert. The representatives from Carnegie Hall were impressed and in the spring of 2000, the Tacoma Youth Symphony performed at Carnegie Hall for the first time. One of the pieces Dr. Cobbs chose for that performance was Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*. During the dress rehearsal the students' excitement caused them to rush and the piece completely fell apart. Afraid that the same thing would happen on stage, Dr. Cobbs began the fast section much slower than he normally would and sure enough, the orchestra began to rush, but the piece ended before they fell apart and the level of excitement that they played with was felt throughout the audience. People were on their feet, clapping, before the final notes and Dr. Cobbs had four curtain calls. This was a turning point in Tacoma Youth Symphony's reputation and since 2000, TYS has performed a second time in Carnegie Hall, at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., in Boston Symphony Hall, and in Los Angeles.

It's been a great twenty-seven years for Dr. Cobbs! Looking back, he realizes that working with Tacoma Youth Symphony Association was one of the best things he could have done. He feels that you can make all the plans that you want, but life is going to present you with opportunities that you never saw coming. His advice is to be open to opportunities and to ask yourself, "how does this make me feel?" What he will remember most from his time with TYSA is looking into the faces of the first orchestra he conducted here and seeing the joy the students had, and the joy that TYSA students still have. Their joy gave him joy and he sees that rubbing off on audiences as well.

He is also impressed with the family atmosphere of TYSA and the way students support each other, no matter what the differences are in background, financial situation, and more. Other organizations talk about being supportive and familial environments, but he feels that TYSA truly "lives" this philosophy instead of just being a talking point.

Dr. Cobbs will be retiring from the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association at the end of the 2023-2024 season. Come celebrate his legacy this season! His farewell concert will be on Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Pantages Theater. Tickets are on sale now at www.tysamusic.org.



Congratulations Dr. Cobbs! 2023 Governor's Arts & Heritage Legacy Award Honoree!

The Washington State Arts Commission recently announced the honorees of the 2023 Governor's Arts & Heritage Awards, including our very own Dr. Cobbs! The nine honorees' work spans glasswork, music education, community murals, and more. Established in 1966, the Governor's Arts & Heritage Awards are the highest honor bestowed by the Governor's office for accomplishments in arts and culture.

"These awards are a true community celebration," said Karen Hanan, Executive Director of ArtsWA. "Nominations poured in from across the state with a clear message: Washington is home to outstanding artists, organizations, and culture bearers that deserve to stand up and be recognized. Their work enriches our communities and enlivens the entire state."

The Governor's Arts & Heritage Awards will be presented on November 15, 2023.

To read the full press release go to <https://www.arts.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-GAHA-Press-Release.pdf>



The Tacoma Youth Symphony Association is proud to be a part of Tacoma Arts Month this October. Tacoma Arts Month is dedicated to showcasing the very best about our community. Celebrate art. Create community. Find out more at www.TacomaArtsMonth.com

Music Director Search Update

While we can never replace Dr. Cobbs, there is a search committee actively working to recruit and hire the next TYSA Music Director. Our priority application deadline was August 28th, and we received responses from interested individuals from around the world as well as our local area. It is wonderful to have a robust and talented candidate pool. We will be working through the selection process over the next few months, and we are confident that we will select a candidate who will help ensure we are positioned to thrive for another 60 years.



Igniting Fate!

November 19, 2023 3:00 P.M.
Rialto Theater

*Featuring the music of Richard Wagner
and Ludwig van Beethoven.*

MID-SEASON AUDITIONS!



AUDITION
THIS
JANUARY
2024!

Now is your chance: Be part of one of the best musical youth organizations in the country!
AUDITION FOR TYSA!



253-627-2792



www.tysamusic.org

Mid-year placement auditions will occur throughout the month of January. Come join TYSA for the rest of the 2023-2024 season! Apply now to schedule your audition for this January!

SO MANY GREAT EVENTS THIS SUMMER!

It was a busy summer for TYSA! The **TYSA - Hammond Ashley Bass Workshop** took place July 5-8 at Pacific Lutheran University. Over 40 double bassists attended the workshop. The workshop concluded with a performance on July 8.



Session 1 of the Evergreen Music Festival ran July 17-21 at Pacific Lutheran University. The festival featured string orchestras and a band program for students in grades 3-8 and a combined festival orchestra for the final concert. **Session 2 of the Evergreen Music Festival** returned to Central Washington University for an overnight camp for the first time since 2019! This camp for students in grade 9 through age 21 ran July 30-August 5. There were two orchestras, a chamber music program, daily theory classes and music history lectures, masterclasses, and students had the opportunity to perform in a student recital, participate in the EMF Talent Show, and hear incredible performances by EMF faculty members.

TYSA's second annual **Symphonic Jazz Workshop** took place between Session I and Session II of the Evergreen Music Festival, July 25-27. We had nearly 50 students for the workshop. The students were treated to a performance and a clinic with professional jazz artists the Jeff Chang Trio. The final concert this year took place at the Spanish Ballroom at McMenamins Elks Temple and featured the music of George and Ira Gershwin, Cootie Williams and Thelonious Monk, Henry Mancini, plus salutes to Frank Sinatra and Louis Armstrong.



SUMMER MUSIC WITH TYSA, CONTINUED



TYSA hosted its second community arts walk in partnership with Downtown on the Go! The half-mile walk explored the vibrant musical culture of downtown Tacoma and featured mini-performances by the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association, Symphony Tacoma, Northwest Sinfonietta, Tacoma City Ballet, Puget Sound Revels, Tacoma Concert Band, and the PLU Opera program. The walk took place on Wednesday, July 12 and led through the downtown Theater District, Antique Row, and Opera Alley. Participants learned more about the history and programs of each performing group. At the end of the walk, attendees enjoyed ice cream and popsicles provided by the TYSA Board of Directors.

In partnership with Metro Parks Tacoma, the **Tacoma Community Ukulele Project (TCUP)** and **Discover Drums!** offered free weekly classes in community centers and parks throughout the city of Tacoma. These classes were open to anyone who wanted to attend, no matter their skill level or previous playing experience. TCUP will continue to offer free classes in community centers through November and both TCUP and Discover Drums are being offered in retirement centers in Tacoma as well as other community organizations. For the list of upcoming ukulele classes go to <https://tysamusic.org/tysa-programs/tacoma-community-ukulele-project/>



Shop for the Holidays and Support TYSA!

Fall Into Winter!

Now through December 9

Go to **SupportMySchool.org**, then click on the red “Shop Now” button and enter the Seller ID:

6272792



Get a head start on your holiday shopping and support TYSA at the same time! Visit SupportMySchool.org and use the Seller ID 6272792 to shop. Our “Fall Into Winter” online fundraiser is going on NOW through December 9—stock up on Yankee Candles, delicious chocolate and snacks, gift wrap, kitchen items, magazines, and more and have it all delivered directly to your home!

A purple poster for a Trivia Night Fundraiser and Auction. At the top left is the TYSA logo (TYSA with a treble clef). To its right, the text reads 'TACOMA YOUTH SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION'. The main title 'TRIVIA NIGHT' is in large, bold, white letters with a pink and blue gradient. Below it, 'FUNDRAISER AND AUCTION' is written in smaller white letters. The date and time 'FEBRUARY 10, 2024 6:00 PM-10:00 PM' are prominently displayed. At the bottom, it says 'TACOMA YACHT CLUB 21+ EVENT | WWW.TYSAMUSIC.ORG'. There are small heart and musical note icons in the bottom corners.

SAVE THE DATE!

Our third annual Trivia Night Fundraiser & Auction is February 10, 2024! This event will feature three rounds of trivia, a variety of fun games, silent and live auctions, a chance to raise your paddle to support TYSA, student performances, delectable Italian cuisine, drinks, and more! All proceeds from the event will go towards supporting the TYSA scholarship fund, increasing access to music education, expanding programs, and ensuring the future of TYSA. Tickets are on sale now at www.auctria.events/tysatrivianight.

Unable to attend but still want to support TYSA? Please consider donating an item for our auction - more info at www.tysamusic.org/trivianight.

Join Us for These Upcoming Concerts

November 19, 2023, 3:00 P.M.

Tacoma Youth Symphony
Rialto Theater

Sponsored by the Dimmer Family Foundation

December 9, 2023, 1:00 P.M.

Tacoma String Symphony
Tacoma String Philharmonic
Tacoma Wind Philharmonic
Schneebeck Concert Hall, UPS

December 9, 2023, 4:00 P.M.

Tacoma Junior Youth Symphony
Schneebeck Concert Hall, UPS

January 20, 2024, 7:00 P.M.

Chamber Ensemble Concert
Raynor Chapel, Annie Wright School

For more information or to purchase tickets go to
www.tysamusic.org

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