TACOMA YOUTH SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION

TYSA'S
ATEMPO
Stay up to speed with all things TYSA

Volume 64 No. 1
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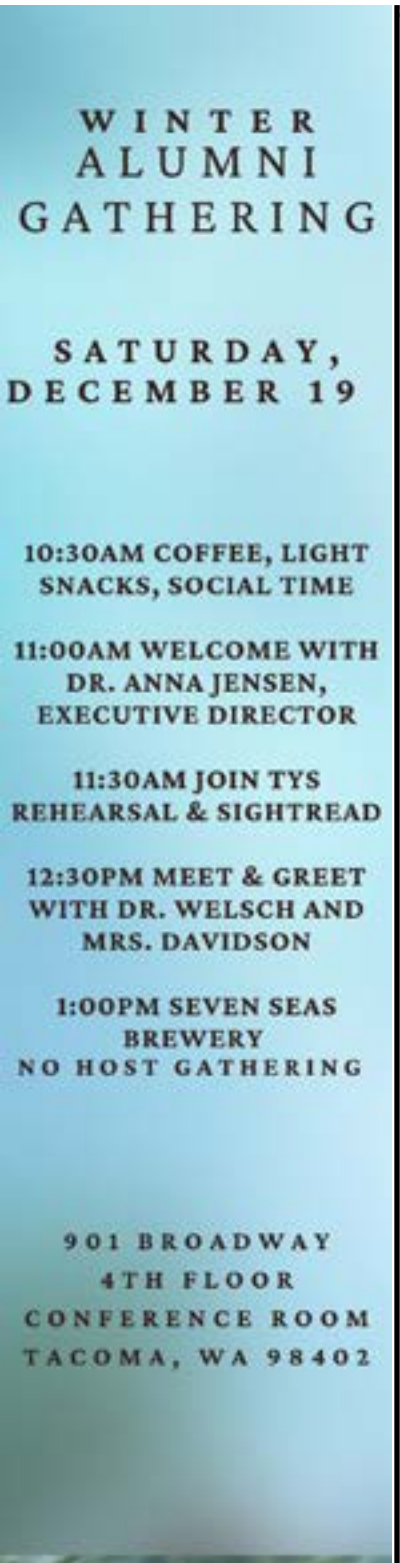


Once TYSA, Always TYSA - Welcome Back TYSA Alumni!

The Tacoma Youth Symphony started in the summer of 1963 as a summer youth orchestra program. The students involved in the summer program loved it so much that they begged their parents to help the program to continue during the school year and TYSA got its start as a full-fledged youth orchestra in the fall of 1963. Now in its 64th Season, TYSA has produced alumni that have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, community advocates, military officers, teachers, politicians, software developers, industry leaders, and of course, professional musicians. Many of our alumni have come back as coaches, board members, and staff members, or they have children who have also gone through TYSA.

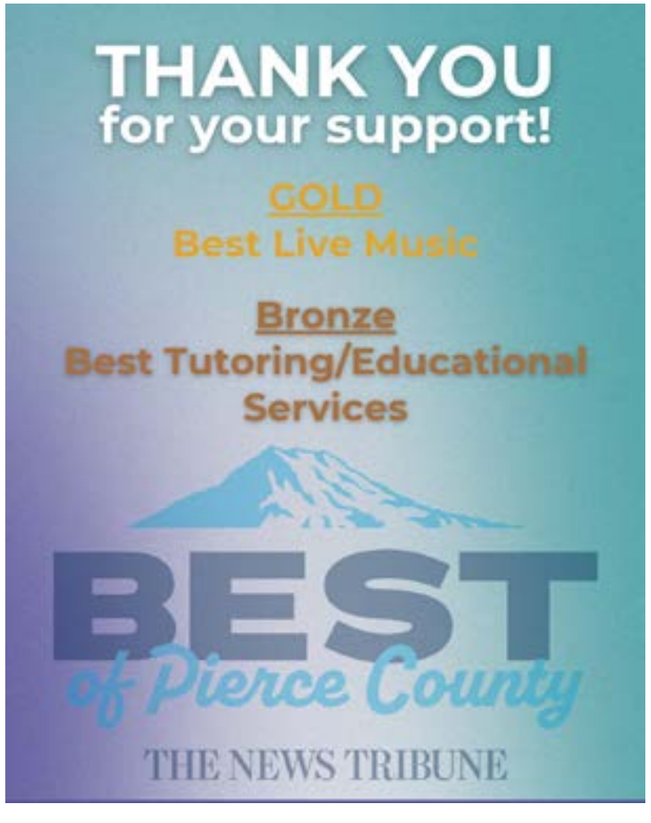
As a family organization, we love when our alumni come back to visit or to help out! TYSA alumnus Kwabi Amoah-Forson emceed the Costume Concert last month. Since his time in TYSA, Kwabi has helped many people in Tacoma and throughout the country through various humanitarian campaigns. He is the creator of the summer feeding program "All Youth Can Eat" which helped to feed over 5,500 hungry youth and college students in the Northwest and Midwest this summer. In 2023, he traveled to Ghana, West Africa, on a humanitarian journey where he gave away food and resources to orphanages. He also strives to educate others about how they can utilize their skills to help others in need through speaking to students, businesses, and organizations. His powder-blue Peace Bus has become a recognizable symbol throughout Tacoma, promoting peace, dialogue, and compassion. Four years ago, Kwabi was awarded the Tacoma Peace Prize, and he was invited to attend the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, Norway. He is also working to develop the *Tacoma Show*, Tacoma's first ever TV sitcom, which will feature the Tacoma Youth Symphony playing the theme song.

Other alumni who have returned over the last few years include: Morris Northcutt, the new Conductor of the TYS-Brass Ensemble (previous Brass Ensemble Conductor, Sarah Viens, was also a TYSA alumna); archivist Anson Martin who is currently compiling repertoire from 60+ years of TYSA programs; Grace Youn, a Los Angeles-based multi-instrumentalist, arranger, producer, and songwriter who lectured at the University of Puget Sound last spring as part of the Susan Resneck Pierce Lecture Series; Conductor and Composer Molly Turner, who composed a work for the Tacoma Youth Symphony and conducted the work in May 2023; and soloists Charlie Powers (cello) and Janelle Janovich (flute), who performed with the Tacoma Youth Symphony during Dr. Cobbs' farewell season. TYSA also has two new staff members who are alumni, Annie Drassal (Engagement Manager) and Marie Hoffman (Education Manager), as well as alumni serving as Board members and volunteers.

We would love to welcome ALL of our TYSA alumni back! Please join us on Saturday, December 19 for a Winter Alumni Gathering. The morning will feature a coffee hour and social time with TYSA Executive Director Dr. Anna Jensen, the opportunity to sit in on a TYS rehearsal and sightread, a meet and greet session with Mrs. Davidson and current TYS Conductor, Dr. James Welsch, and a no host gathering at Seven Seas Brewery. Please RSVP here. Can't make it on December 19? Let us know what you're up to by filling out the TYSA Alumni Form here.



TYSA Voted "Best of Pierce County!"

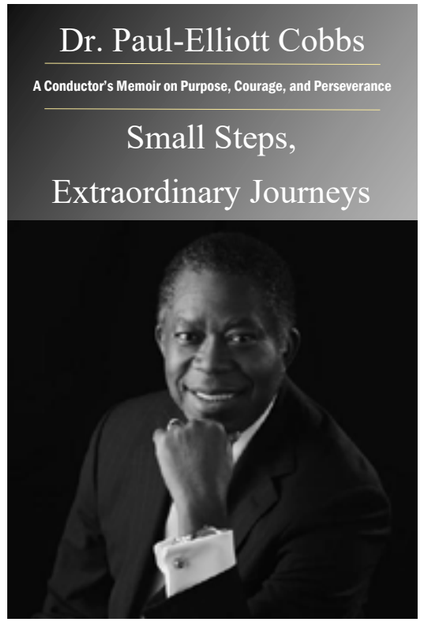


The votes are in, and TYSA has been awarded "Best of Pierce County" in TWO categories thanks to the incredible support of our community! We are so grateful to everyone who nominated us, voted for us, and helped spread the word—you made this possible!

Gold for "Best Live Music"

Bronze for "Best Tutoring/ Educational Services"

Thank you for your support!



Storytime with Dr. Paul-Elliott Cobbs

We are excited to announce that Dr. Paul-Elliott Cobbs has written a book that will be released sometime before the holidays. Dr. Cobbs said, "for years TYS students have asked me to write a book that included educational stories from my life that would serve as life lessons for them . . .The book is directed at high school and university students as well as young professionals. However, it will also resonate with anyone who is working hard to find their way in life and wishes to discover their calling."

Here is a sneak peak of one of Dr. Cobbs' favorite stories in the book: "In the spring of 1976, some fellow members of the Christ Church choir and I decided to try a brand-new restaurant that all the Viennese were talking about. It was an American restaurant called "McDonald's." We arrived at McDonald's and ordered our food, then we walked a couple of blocks over to Kärntner Strasse (Kärntner Straße), Vienna's famous pedestrian-only shopping avenue lined with high-end international stores. We found a couple of benches to sit on and ate our hamburgers while watching the hustle and bustle around us, wondering who among them would venture into the high-priced shops.

As we were people-watching, I saw someone who looked familiar. He had a white beard and was wearing a white suit and white shoes. I turned to my friends and said, "That looks like Leonard Bernstein!" My friend said, "No, that's not him. He wouldn't be seen in public like this." We were in what's called a Fußgängerzone, or a pedestrian shopping zone. I said, "Well, it looks a lot like him." Driven by curiosity, I got up from the bench to get a closer look. Yes, that was him! I stepped up and said, "Maestro." He looked at me and said, "Shh. I don't want people to know it's me." Then he asked, "What are you doing in Vienna?" I said, "I'm studying conducting." His eyes lit up! "Oh, that's wonderful!" "Are you coming to my concert?" I said, "Oh yes, definitely!" Then he said, "I want you to come to my party afterward, too." I thanked him, and then the rest of my friends came over and talked to him. He was such a nice man. I couldn't believe it. I talked with my hero, and that was a pivotal moment for me. What was interesting was that he came to conduct Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic. Coincidentally, our conducting class was studying that exact piece, and we were struggling with the famous first downbeat. You get only one chance to deliver it properly, and if you miss it, the orchestra falls apart. We wanted to see what Mr. Bernstein would do. On the day of the rehearsal, some of the conducting students and I were able to sit in the back of the auditorium, but Mr. Bernstein wasn't there. He sent his assistant conductor, who read notes to the orchestra about what Mr. Bernstein was going to do. So, we had to wait until the concert to see how he would handle it.

Finally, the concert day arrived, and we waited in anticipation for the maestro to conduct Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Then, the moment arrived. Bernstein burst from backstage, baton in hand, and literally bounded onto the podium. Boom! That was his downbeat. As it turned out, we didn't walk away with a single technical secret—except the realization that if your name is Leonard Bernstein, your downbeat can simply be an explosive, theatrical burst of energy. We were slightly disappointed, knowing we could never get away with such theatrics in our strict conducting class. Nonetheless, the concert was absolutely amazing!"

The book will be available on Amazon before the holidays, but Dr. Cobbs does not have a release date yet. Stay tuned to TYSA's Facebook and Instagram pages for more information about how to get your copy.



Want an easy way to support TYSA while providing everyday necessities for your family? Smith Brothers is introducing the Milk Fund, which turns everyday grocery shopping into donations for nonprofits that serve kids and families. Every new family that opens a Smith Brothers account and registers with our code gets $15 off their first order and Smith Brothers Farms gives $50 to the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association.

Smith Brothers puts its money where its mouth is: $15 in groceries on them to try the products and the service. That's how confident they are. If it works for you, great. If not, the groceries were on Smith Brothers and you helped a good cause. Dairy and over 600 local products delivered to your porch. No subscription. Pause or cancel anytime. No order minimum. Free delivery over $20.

Pass it on to family, friends, neighbors and coworkers. Every new registration counts for Tacoma Youth Symphony Association. Register with Smith Brothers Farms using our link and the code auto-applies at checkout: https://www.smithbrothers-farms.com/?dc=TacomaYSA

SUMMER MUSIC WITH TYSA!

Summer 2026 was filled with music at TYSA, from the Music Walk to great summer music camps! Here's some of the highlights:

TYSA kicked off the summer with the brand new Puget Sound Percussion Festival. The Percussion Festival was open to percussionists of all levels from age 6 and up. Over the three days of the Festival, students worked on chamber music, samba, drum set fundamentals, marching percussion techniques, hand drumming traditions, and steel pan.





Play ball!
The Tacoma Youth Brass Ensemble was welcomed back to Cheney Stadium on July 3 to play the National Anthem before the Tacoma Rainiers game. The Rainiers game right before the 4th of July is always the most popular of the season, so we were honored to be a part of such a huge community event. The TYS-Brass Ensemble was also a huge hit with Rainiers mascot, Rhubarb!

The TYSA and Friends Music Walk offered performances by Tacoma City Ballet, TYSA, Tacoma Youth Chorus, Northwest Sinfonietta, PLU Opera, and Puget Sound Revels (pictured here). At the end of the walk, participants were treated to ice cream.





TYSA offered another new music camp this summer, Bassoon Fest Northwest. This three-day summer intensive welcomed bassoonists of all ages and experience levels to build their skills through ensemble playing fundamentals, masterclasses, creative activities, and mentorship from experienced artist-educators.



Session 1 of the Evergreen Music Festival was at Pacific Lutheran University. This fun day camp for students going into grades 2-8 included daily rehearsals, theory classes, recreational time, enrichment programs, and coaching sessions.

Session 2 of the Evergreen Music Festival was at Central Washington University. Musicians in grades 9 and up participated in chamber music, orchestra rehearsals, masterclasses, coaching sessions by artists-in-residence, music theory classes, and daily concerts consisting of faculty and student recitals. The week also included the EMF Talent Show, and many more fun activities!





The TYSA-Hammond Ashley Bass Workshop was at the University of Pugest Sound this year. The Bass Workshop welcomes double bass students of all ages and abilities for an immersive study of the instrument. Forty-four bass students took part in the workshop this summer!

TYSA's Summer Jazz Orchestra returned to downtown Tacoma for a four day celebration of America's greatest art form, jazz! Students learned about the unique history of jazz through hands-on musical experiences and guest performances. The program finished up with a packed performance at the Spanish Ballroom at McMenamins Elks Temple.



Giving Tuesday is December 1, 2026 - Will You Join Us?

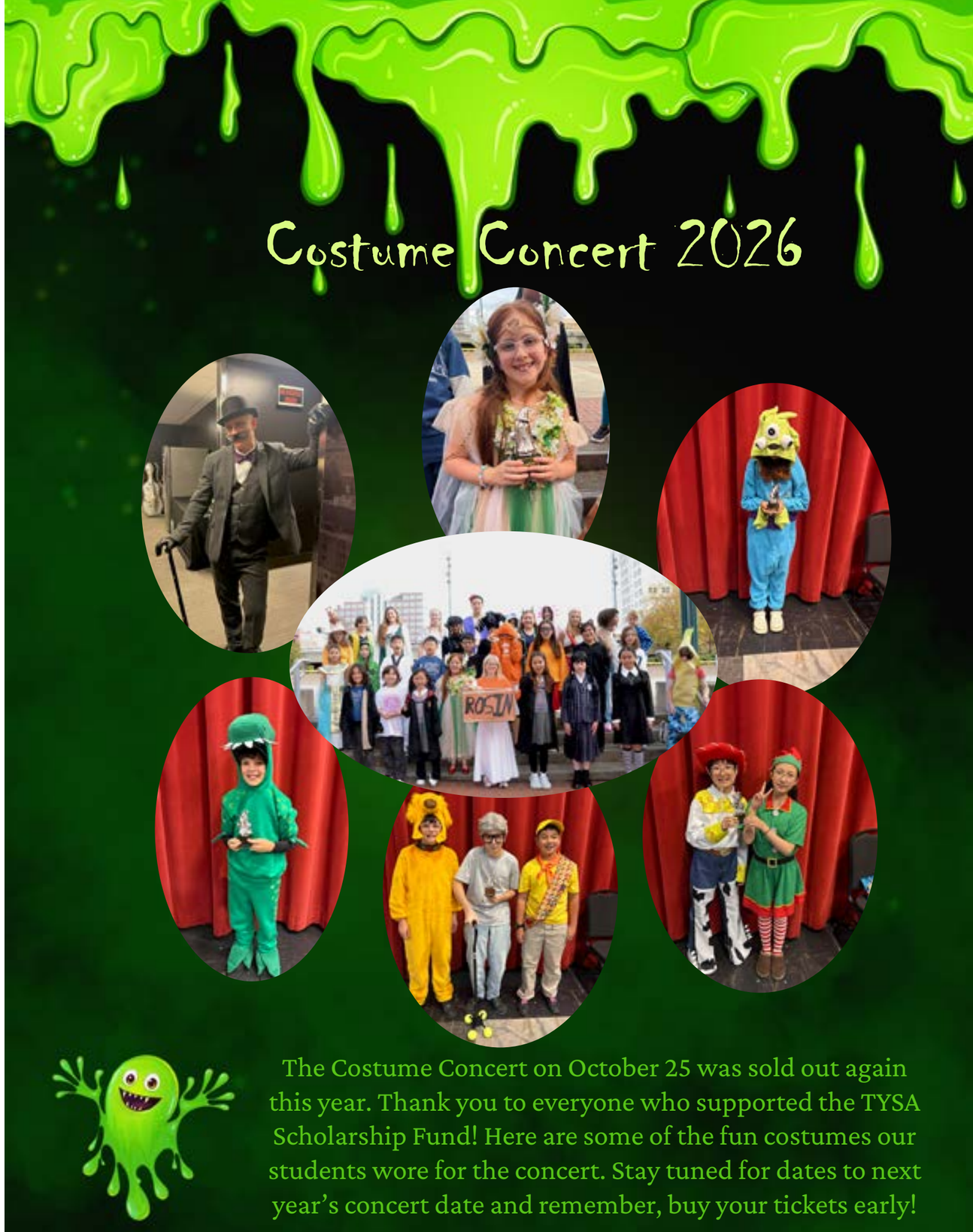


Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Since its start, the idea has grown to a worldwide generosity movement. Not many of us are able to give thousands of dollars to support our favorite causes, but when we work together, we can make a big difference in our community and our world. At TYSA, we are orchestrating dreams. Our orchestras provide safe spaces for kids to find friends who encourage and support them, experience the importance of teamwork, and learn to dream big. We believe that music education is for everyone. In addition to our Saturday orchestra programs, TYSA offers free community classes throughout Tacoma, presents Musical Storytimes in area libraries to introduce our youngest community members to musical instruments, provides musical opportunities to vulnerable youth at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, Remann Hall Juvenile Detention Center, and the Oasis Youth Center, and reaches seniors in our community through programs at Frank Tobey Jones and Eliseo.This year our goal is to raise $5,000 to support our programs. You can help by giving anytime between now and December 1. You can also help by spreading the word about the important work TYSA is doing throughout the community. Together, we can make a difference! Please give today by clicking here or by scanning the QR code at the right.



Everyone to the dance floor for TYSA's Trivia Night Fundraiser & Auction! The Tacoma Youth Symphony Association invites you to boogie down for a night of fun at our TYSA Trivia Night Fundraiser and Auction on Saturday, February 20, 2027! Dust off your platform shoes for three "groovy" rounds of trivia, an array of stellar games, a dessert dash fit for a dancing machine, our silent and live auctions where you can raise your paddle and catch disco fever, student performances that will blow your mind, and delectable bites and drinks to keep your boogie shoes moving. We're dropping the needle to celebrate TYSA's 64th season, and we need everyone on the dance floor to keep our programs grooving ahead! Please note - this is a 21+ Disco! Tickets are on sale now so get your groove on for music. Buy your tickets now by clicking here.

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 14, 2026, 7:00 PM
Tacoma Youth Symphony: *Becoming*
Rialto Theater
Sponsored by Santa for Seniors

December 12, 2026, 1:00 PM
Prelude Strings
Tacoma String Symphony
Tacoma Youth Symphonic Band
Tacoma Youth Philharmonic
Schneebeck Concert Hall, UPS
Sponsored by Floss is Boss Dentistry for Children and
The Violin Studio of Gwen Taylor

December 12, 2026, 6:30 PM
Tacoma Academy String Orchestra
Tacoma Youth Orchestra
TYS Brass Ensemble
Schneebeck Concert Hall, UPS

January 23, 2027, 7:00 PM
Chamber Ensemble Concert
Raynor Chapel, Annie Wright School
Sponsored by M Agency

March 7, 2027, 4:00 PM
Tacoma Youth Symphony: *Flights of Fancy*
Rialto Theater
Sponsored by Troy and April Kyle

March 27, 2027, 7:00 PM
TYSA Rocks!
Featuring all of TYSA's Orchestras
Pantages Theater

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

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