



March 31, 2020

Dear Colleague:

At the beginning of March, the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestra played their second concert of the year. What an incredible performance that was. The Youth Symphony performed Mahler's *First Symphony* (wow!) and the Classical Orchestra performed Mozart's *Symphony No. 25*, and Haydn's *Symphony No. 44*. As I repeatedly tell the students, the professionals perform this same music. These are *your students* playing professional level music with energy, passion, and excitement. They are a testament to your teaching and your program.

Less than two weeks after that remarkable concert, everything has come to a grinding halt because of the coronavirus. Like you, I'm stuck at home, frustrated that I'm not working with our wonderful students.

However, we are plowing ahead with plans for next year. That means auditions! Our program relies on you recommending us to your very best students. I appreciate your advocacy on our part. We have a large number of graduating seniors, which means there are plenty of openings. This is a great time to audition for the Youth Symphony.

**AUDITIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS FOR NEXT YEAR'S ORCHESTRA WILL BE HELD MAY 18 and 19. (Actually, we plan on having students submit video auditions.)** These dates are the only dates for auditions. There are no auditions later in the summer. Please find some audition brochures enclosed. Will you please pass them out to your best students and encourage them to audition? It is a real honor for students to play in this orchestra, and I sincerely feel that we compliment the fine music programs in our schools.

**Students will need to apply on-line at our website ([www.grys.org](http://www.grys.org)).**

**We work hard to make sure that all of our students participate in their school music ensembles. It is a requirement for enrollment in the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony.** *I appreciate your willingness to make it possible for students to be active members of both the school ensembles and the Youth Symphony.*

Please encourage your most talented students to audition. This really is an exceptional program designed to inspire and challenge your best students. It is our hope that they take the excitement we engender back to their schools, and that your program is better because of us.

Sincerely,

John P. Varineau  
Conductor, Grand Rapids Youth Symphony Orchestra  
Associate Conductor, Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra

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