



March 20, 2023

Dear Colleagues and friends of the GRYS&CO:

In just one year, I have seen incredible program we have here at the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony, where student musicians are nurtured and challenged to bring their best to our community. And yet, this organization cannot put on concerts of this caliber without your dedication and support. The Youth Orchestras are composed of students playing professional level music with incredible dedication, passion, and energy! We have over 40 positions to fill next season, so please encourage all qualified students to audition.

I would like to bring to your attention several highlights of our program:

1. Side by Side Concert: We are excited to announce that next season in the fall we will have a side-by-side concert with the Grand Rapids Symphony in Devos Performance Hall.
2. Maestro Experience: In May we will have Marcelo Lehninger, Music Director of the Grand Rapids Symphony give a Master Class Workshop with our students. An incredible opportunity!
3. Collaboration with the Grand Rapids Symphony: We can give unique opportunities that cannot be found elsewhere. To mention a few so far this season: Andrei Ioniță Meet and Greet, Rachel Barton Pine violin Masterclass with Youth Symphony Players, Caroline Campbell Masterclass with GRYS Youth Chamber group, and a Meet and Greet with the Stomp! Cast.
4. Specialized Coaching: We continue to collaborate with Michigan State University and their String Fellows to have their Graduate Students work with our string sections multiple times per season. Corbin Wagner from MSU gave a special horn section coaching while GR Symphony musicians also coached our woodwinds and brass.
5. Chamber program: This year we launched a new opportunity for Youth Symphony Musicians that are interested in playing chamber music. I am coaching the groups and we have had successful performances.
6. Professional Level Repertoire: We continue the tradition of playing incredible stand repertoires while exploring new and contemporary music. This year, we had both the Youth Symphony string section and the Classical Orchestra String section join force to perform Zhou Long's Chinese Folk Songs. Other pieces this season include: Sibelius Symphony No. 1, Borodin Symphony No. 2, (Youth Symphony) Haydn Symphony No. 49, and Mozart Symphony No. 2 (Classical Orchestra)

It has been a great pleasure and privilege to serve as the music director of our Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestra. I get to enjoy being inspired by some of the most talented West Michigan young musicians during every single rehearsal and performance. We will continue the legacy and wonderful traditions of the GRYS&CO, while we continue to explore more opportunities to learn and grow the talents of these student members.

Sincerely,

Duo Shen

Music Director, Grand Rapids Youth Symphony & Classical Orchestra

*GRYS Manager: 57 Courtland Street Box 481, Rockford, Michigan 49341 616 842-6566  
300 Ottawa Ave. N.W. Suite 100, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503 616 454-9451*