

# The Washington Post

## D.C. Youth Orchestra Program celebrates with a concert at the Kennedy Center

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There was ample cause for a gala and packed house at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall Saturday: The D.C. Youth Orchestra Program marked its 50th remarkable year with a free orchestra performance by alumni from the 1960s on.

The organization's director, Jesus Manuel Berard, conducted favorites by Richard Wagner and Edward Elgar. Host Marvin Hamlisch (principal pops conductor for the National Symphony Orchestra) led a delicately nuanced version of Gershwin's "Summertime." In a piece by Howard Hanson, the players responded sensitively to the DCYOP's founder and longtime conductor, Lyn McLain. Berard also drew from the group tender ardor in the Elgar and iridescent colors in a premiere of a beautifully crafted suite by DCYOP's alumnus John Christopher Wineglass.

Though the road has been arduous and subject to thorny challenges, the DCYOP covers lots of territory with its extensive music program for more than 600 children annually. Regardless of income level or musical experience, all Washington area students are accepted into the program. It offers free and partially subsidized tuition and includes six orchestras, instrumental classes for ages 4 1/2 to 21, three wind ensembles, two string orchestras, jazz and chamber ensembles. Admission to each level of the program "depends on musical skill rather than age or grade in school," Gary Carleton, president of the DCYOP board, said Saturday.

The program has moved from Washington's Coolidge High School to the newly renovated Eastern High School, where an open house takes place Sept. 11.

-- **Cecelia Porter**

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