

April 2017

# Orchestra AMERICA



**Meet BLACK VIOLIN...  
Artists-in-Residence  
at the Music for All  
2017 Orchestra Camp**

**Larry J. Livingston  
Conductor of the  
2018 Honor Orchestra  
of America**

**Christian Howes  
Artist-in-Residence  
at the Music for All  
2017 Orchestra Camp**



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Black Violin  
will be in concert and  
artists-in-residence  
at the Music for All  
2017 Summer  
Symposium  
Orchestra  
Division.



# BLACK VIOLIN

classical  
sounds  
HIP HOP  
BEAT &

“This encouragement to trust oneself would turn out to be a vital source of inspiration for Kevin Marcus Sylvester and classmate Wilner Baptiste. Now known as Kev Marcus and Wil B., the duo has gone on to form the group Black Violin, wowing audiences with a unique musical genre that blends classical sounds and hip hop beats.”

While in high school in the 1990s, Kevin Marcus Sylvester programmed his cell phone to play a Busta Rhymes rap song. The customized ringtone amazed his orchestra-mates, who eventually transcribed the whole piece and played it regularly together in class.

Their director, James Miles at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, encouraged this free-thinking fun. "He was always open to us trying new things," Marcus says. "Some orchestra directors shun the hip hop, shun the alternative stuff ...[but he] allowed us to be ourselves."

Miles trained his students on classical music but taught far beyond the basics. "He made everyone believe in themselves and had confidence in their abilities," Marcus says. "And sometimes that's more important than scales and arpeggios. Most times actually."

This encouragement to trust oneself

his natural talent hadn't been fostered and acknowledged by his teachers. "I started getting really good at it, and I liked the attention that I was getting," Marcus says. "It builds a lot of confidence in you, to become good at things and people recognize you for doing something at a high level."

He was accepted at Parkway Middle School, an arts magnet in Lauderdale, Florida, and eventually landed at Dillard High School, where he transitioned to viola and met Baptiste.

Marcus then received several full-ride scholarship offers for music degrees. He accepted one at Florida International University. However, he was concerned that his options as a professional musician would be limited. "I had just assumed it would have to be under a classical umbrella of some sort," Marcus says. "I really never heard any other kind of violin music before."



ALL PHOTOS © 2016. Colin Brennan. All rights reserved.

would turn out to be a vital source of inspiration for Sylvester and classmate Wilner Baptiste. Now known as Kev Marcus and Wil B., the duo has gone on to form the group Black Violin, wowing audiences with a unique musical genre that blends classical sounds and hip hop beats. At the same time, their music challenges stereotypes and brings people of different generations and cultures together in mutual appreciation.

### Soul Searching

Marcus began his journey with the violin in fifth grade orchestra. His mother enrolled him in music class with hopes that the commitment would keep him away from a troubling group of friends.

At first, Marcus played violin only because his mother wanted him to play. He might not have stayed with music at all if

Marcus's professor, Chauncey Patterson, quickly dispelled this misconception. On Marcus's first day of lessons, Patterson gave him a tape featuring jazz violinist Stuff Smith. The album title: *Black Violin*.

"It really changed my life," Marcus says. "He was playing, but he was doing it in a way I had never heard before. I felt like when he played violin, it spoke to me. It had soul ... I could hear him. I could feel him."

He shared the tape with Baptiste, and the sound stuck with them throughout their college careers.

The eventual blend of hip hop and strings came naturally. "The idea was just something that always was in us," Baptiste recalls. "We were hip hop before we were classical. And hip hop's whole thing is being creative and expressing yourself. For us, it was natural to do that on the violin."

*Reprinted from SupportED, a magazine for instrumental instructors, with permission from Yamaha Corporation of America.*

A failed demo contract with a performer made Marcus and Baptiste decide to form their own group. As for a name, Baptiste had an answer ready: Black Violin, as homage to the man who had sparked the soul behind violin. Within the group, Marcus now plays violin, and Baptiste plays viola.

*Black Violin*, the album, had shifted Marcus & Baptiste's perspectives on what string music could be. Black Violin, the band, would shift the world's perspective as well.

### Dream Bigger

Looking back, Marcus attributes a lot of his success in music to the immense opportunities he was given in school and the encouragement he received from his professors to continue. "Music education is the reason why I am who I am," Marcus says. "I can't understate it at all. Music education has provided a better life for me and my family. I have my career, I have my calling, I do what I love for a living because of it."

Marcus and Baptiste strive to give similar opportunities and encouragement to students. "We know that we have a responsibility...not just to music education but also trying to instill confidence in kids and trying to get them to think in different ways," Marcus says.

While on tour, the duo often invites local youth orchestras to perform a song with them. "We try to do that a lot because those kids will never forget that," Baptiste says. "And dreaming will be a little easier now because of that [experience]."

Making the instrument your own is an important theme that Marcus tries to pass along to young musicians. "Try to find ways to educate kids and make this (Article continued on page 12)



# ORCHESTRA

Orchestra students perform with Time for Three at the 2016 Summer Symposium



(Photos courtesy of Jolesch Photography)

# MUSIC FOR ALL **SUMMER SYMPOSIUM**

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**YAMAHA**



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## ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

Music for All Summer Symposium offers string students an exciting experience, learning from award-winning faculty and internationally-recognized artists. Students develop skills and musicianship working in diverse styles, from classical and jazz to pop and world music. The hands-on curriculum uniquely integrates collaborative learning side-by-side with world-class performers such as Yamaha Performing Artists **Black Violin** during both instrumental workshops and on-stage concert performances!

2017 camp Artist-in-Residence, Yamaha Performing Artist Jazz violinist, educator, and producer **Christian Howes** brings jazz and improv to the Music for All Orchestra Division. One of the world's most respected jazz violinists, Christian studied classically from the age of five, performing as a soloist with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra at age 16 and he received his bachelor's degree in Philosophy from The Ohio State University. In 2013, he was voted among the top three violinists in *JazzTimes'* Expanded Critics Poll and ranked as the #1 "Rising Star" violinist in the *Downbeat* Critics Poll. Learn more about Christian at christianhowes.com.



Christian Howes – Artist-in-Residence – Yamaha Performing Artist

*I really enjoyed being able to play and learn from/with world-class professionals.*

*I loved the friendly environment, it made me feel like I was welcome to learn & develop as a musician & leader*

*It was great working with excellent teachers and learning so much more about my instrument!*



Black Violin – Artists-in-Residence – Yamaha Performing Artists

## 2017 ORCHESTRA FACULTY WILL ALSO INCLUDE:



### Douglas Droste

Director of Orchestras, Ball State University; Artistic Director, Muncie Symphony Orchestra; Symposium Orchestra Coordinator, Conductor



### Nicole Deguire

Fishers High School; Violin



### Doug Elmore

Louisville Youth Orchestra; Director at Floyd Central H.S. and Highland Hills M.S., IN; Bass



### Andre Gaskins

Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne; Fort Wayne Philharmonic; Cello



### Katrin Meidell

Ball State University; Viola



### Joel Powell

Carmel Schools, IN; Violin

# FINDING THE COURAGE TO CREATE

By Christian Howes

Most artists follow a curve in their development that rises, peaks, plateaus, and eventually declines. The inevitable question we all face is regarding how to keep growing.

## What have you done lately to be inspired and how have you followed through on that inspiration?

No matter how good you are at what you do, you've got to keep creating if you want to keep growing, and this requires finding courage to put yourself out there again and again, to stretch beyond what you've done before and continually reinvent your work. Rehashing what you've done before isn't really being creative, and you're only as relevant as your last project.

For more established artists, this means you can't rest on your laurels. For developing artists, it's a reason to get busy, because if you have the drive and energy to be prolific, generating a bulk of material could take you far, fast.

Supposedly, most visionaries make their greatest innovations before they become experts, i.e., when they are novices. Once recognized as experts, once we are "trained," we become less willing to go into that vulnerable space of the "novice," where real exploration happens. We become afraid that we will lose our status as experts and be revealed for the bumbling, fumbling human beings that we really are.

I can think of many artists who made their biggest statements at a relatively early age, when they had nothing to lose.

It could be said that each of us is at the same time both immeasurably powerful and incredibly insignificant. To focus on

our "smallness" is to wallow in despair. To focus on our power is to become obsessed with delusions of grandeur. The trick is to truly accept this contradiction by both owning your power and accepting your weakness. Ride the wave! Artists who create every day are optimistic in their ability to transcend their limits, and are at the same time able to be realistic about their limitations and constructively critical of their work, maintaining a skeptical confidence without succumbing to the uncritical denial of arrogance or the paralysis of insecurity.

If you can't overcome your insecurity, or if you have trouble acknowledging any limitations, I recommend sublimating through exercise, meditation, reading, or other activities that allow you to lose yourself in something totally unrelated to your art. (One of my favorite activities that helps me sublimate my feelings is hacky sacking.)

I take inspiration from my students. They haven't "proven" themselves yet, so they have nothing to lose. Their lack of experience is unrelated to the courage they are capable of employing to reach their goal. I must have demonstrated courage at some point when I was young, but now it's my students that lead by their example, reminding me that I need to step up to the plate with the kind of fearlessness they demonstrate. "The curve" of development suggests that our willingness to display creative courage diminishes as we get older and more established, and I don't want to suffer the fate of having my work become stale, like yesterday's news.

Many of my students are aspiring jazz violinists and cellists. I meet other jazz string players around the U.S. who complain about the difficulties of "breaking in" the jazz scene. It's hard to gain acceptance in the jazz community for various reasons. And then there are infinite reasons that each person has for why it's

even harder for them, whether it be their training, race, gender, geography, financial position, physical handicaps, something that happened to them when they were a kid, their Zodiac sign, and so on.

Today I listened to the new CD of one of my former students, Tomoko Omura, and I was humbled by the realization of what she has overcome, and the courage it must have taken to produce such a great creative work of art. She came from Japan, learned a new language, a new culture, and overcame tremendous odds to get where she is now.

I can imagine how many times she was NOT invited to play on stage at a jam session after waiting for hours just to play one song. I can imagine how many times she must have thought, "Why am I even trying to do this? It seems impossible!" And now, she's created one of the most beautiful, important, creative and relevant works of jazz violinists in the recent past.

Shu Mei Yap lives in Singapore and has worked with me now on the production of two CDs. She is another example of an artist who refused to allow barriers to get in the way.



Watch Shu Mei Yap video example at [christianhowes.com/2013/12/23/finding-the-courage-to-be-creative/](http://christianhowes.com/2013/12/23/finding-the-courage-to-be-creative/)

My daughter Camille is one of the most inspiring examples to me of courage. She's gone through her whole life with a dad who might have seemed a little bit bigger than life at times. Every year I surround her with all my favorite jazz string players at my annual "Creative Strings Workshop," a week during which all the world's hottest players jam and show their stuff. I'm thrilled that she's gotten to know all these cool people and amazing artists, except that she's also got to deal with measuring herself against that standard, and I can only imagine the kind of pressure she may feel sometimes!

Every day that she picks up her violin and keeps going for it, I feel immensely proud and take inspiration from her because that takes courage.

My students make me humble. They make me remember that it's not how much knowledge or experience you have, but whether you're willing to keep pushing through your own fears, re-engaging continuously in the creative process, no matter what form that process takes for you, because you know that wherever you fall on life's curve is a function of the strength of your last project.

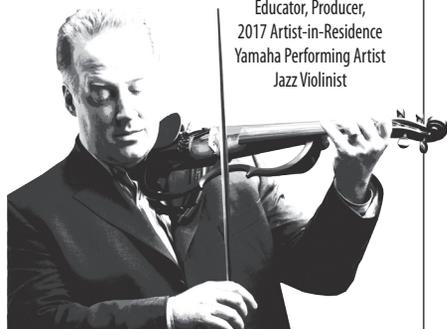
**Here are some quick tips for getting engaged creatively:**

- Narrow down/compartmentalize: Instead of writing "a song," be specific: Write a 12-bar song, a bass line in 4/4, a song in a certain style/tempo, a melody, etc. Instead of writing "an essay," write a "persuasive essay" about a specific subject, with a specific duration.
- Limit the scope; write just one paragraph, one sentence, or 4 bars of a song.
- Schedule: Schedule time in your calendar for working on your project.
- Keep notes: Use your phone to keep voice memos or keep a journal.
- Review: Listen back to your work at various stages – listen uncritically at first, and listen critically later, allowing for your insights to change over time.
- Try different processes: For a musician, you may work better with pencil and paper, or improvising into a recorder, or using a different instrument, or employing software.

**What is your take on "courage and the creative process?"**

**CHRISTIAN HOWES**

Educator, Producer,  
2017 Artist-in-Residence  
Yamaha Performing Artist  
Jazz Violinist



## SCHOLARSHIPS - 2017 SUMMER SYMPOSIUM

### National Honor Ensembles Instrumental Scholarship – \$200 savings

For members of the 2016 or 2017 national honor ensembles, including the Music for All Honor Orchestra of America and ensembles like ASTA's National Honor Orchestra and NAFME's All-National Honor Ensembles.

### All-State Instrumental Scholarship – \$150 savings

For members of 2016 or 2017 All-State Orchestra. Certificate or letter from teacher required for verification.

### All-City/District Instrumental Scholarship – \$75 savings

For members of 2016 or 2017 All-City or All-District Orchestra. Certificate or letter from teacher required for verification.

## ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Register online today at [musicforall.org/camp](http://musicforall.org/camp). Questions? Call 800.848.2263 or email [info@musicforall.org](mailto:info@musicforall.org).

## REGISTRATION DEADLINES & FEES

PAYMENT OPTIONS	DEADLINE	RESIDENTIAL
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Instrumental Merit Scholarships are available for selected members of national, All-State, All-Region, and All-District Honor Ensembles enrolling in the Orchestra Division, learn more at [www.musicforall.org/camp](http://www.musicforall.org/camp).

\* See registration form for more details.

See commuter pricing at [www.musicforall.org/camp](http://www.musicforall.org/camp)

**Ball State University** - The Music for All Summer Symposium features some of the newest and most recently renovated residence halls on the beautiful Ball State University campus. Housing facilities feature state-of-the-art technology and first-class amenities. Dining facilities offer a wide variety of food choices and service styles. BSU's culinary-trained chefs put a lot of time into preparing the healthiest and tastiest food possible.



**Leave the driving to us...** Music for All has developed routes scheduled to transport students to the Summer Symposium.

**Learn more at [www.musicforall.org/bus](http://www.musicforall.org/bus)**



Photos courtesy of Jobst Enterprises



# 2018 ORCHESTRA AMERICA NATIONAL FESTIVAL

part of the Music for All National Festival

## Application now open!

presented by  **YAMAHA**

**Application Deadline: June 5, 2017**  
**March 15-17, 2018 • Indianapolis, Indiana**

The Music for All National Festival, presented by Yamaha, celebrates outstanding music-making by the nation's finest scholastic ensembles. The Music for All National Festival is an integral part of Music for All's mission to create, provide, and expand positively life-changing experiences through music for all.

The Orchestra America National Festival is a non-competitive experience for outstanding high school, middle school, and youth orchestras. It is a celebration of musical excellence, combining world-class performance and evaluation opportunities with an exhilarating atmosphere of camaraderie in music.

### The Festival includes the:

- Orchestra America National Festival
- Chamber Music National Festival
- Music for All National Choir Festival **(NEW!)**
- National Concert Band Festival
- Middle School National Music Festival
- Sandy Feldstein National Percussion Festival
- National Honor Ensembles: Honor Band of America, Honor Orchestra of America, Jazz Band of America

### A non-competitive, supportive experience

The non-competitive atmosphere of the Orchestra America National Festival provides a place for growth, cooperative encouragement, and mutual respect among music programs, students, parents, boosters, and administrators.

Directors select their own programs; there is no required repertoire. There are no ratings or rankings so directors and their ensembles are free to stretch themselves, reach for new heights and strive for innovation, growth, and excellence, instead of focusing on a rating or placing.

Participating students experience an atmosphere of mutual respect while enjoying concerts from other outstanding ensembles. The Festival's dress code and standards of conduct enhance the world-class

atmosphere of the Festival. Ensembles that perform at the Festival are recognized as being among the finest in the nation and participation is a "credential" worth having. The preparation process itself for the Festival can have a positive effect on your music program.

**"Amazing experience for our students. It exceeded their expectations."**

# Highlights of the Orchestra America National Festival

**Concert Performances & Clinics**-Each orchestra performs a concert before a knowledgeable audience, including the Festival evaluation panel, music educators, and fellow student musicians. Orchestra conductors receive recorded and written comments from the evaluators on their performance, as well as on their conducting. Following the performance, each ensemble has a private clinic with one of the Festival Clinicians.

**One-on-one Mentoring for Conductors**-Each orchestra conductor will receive a one-on-one mentoring session with one of the Festival evaluators or clinicians. This mentoring session affords the conductor the opportunity to engage one-on-one with the evaluator about the program and topics of interest to both the conductor and the mentor.

**Scheduled Observation**-Concert observation time is scheduled and required for each ensemble, ensuring that all ensembles perform for a knowledgeable, appreciative audience who in turn enjoy outstanding performances of quality literature.

**Instrumental Workshops**-All students participate in instrumental workshops led by top applied faculty and professional musicians, including musicians from the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. These workshops provide opportunities for interaction with outstanding performers whose insight and experience exemplify musical achievement.

**Social Events for Students & Directors**-The Festival socials give students the chance to relax, have fun, and get to know students from other programs across the country. The director and evaluator reception and hospitality opportunities offer networking and informal interaction with colleagues, guest artists, and icons of music education.

**Gala Awards Banquet**-The Festival culminates with a formal banquet for students, directors, parents, staff, and evaluators that exemplifies the Festival's first-class standards. Guests enjoy a plated dinner, recognition, and presentation of awards to each ensemble. With over 2,500 guests, the banquet is sure to be unforgettable for you, your students, parents, and supporters.

**World-Class Venues & Facilities**-Orchestras perform at beautiful Hilbert Circle Theatre, home of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Featured Bands perform at Clowes Memorial Hall and Invited Bands at the Howard L. Schrott Center for the Performing Arts, both on the Butler University campus. Percussion ensembles perform at Warren Performing Arts Center. Choirs will perform at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, and Chamber Ensembles at the Indiana Historical Society.

**Recording & Photo Package**-Each student and director will receive a professionally-recorded CD and a photo from the event.

**Festival Hotels**-Festival ensembles stay at outstanding hotels, including the Marriott Place Indianapolis, featuring the JW Marriott and four Marriott hotel properties, and additional downtown hotels, surrounded by numerous cultural and recreational attractions.

**Ensemble Hosts**-Each ensemble will be assigned a host, who will help guide you through the Festival weekend. Hosts are not only familiar with the Festival, many of them have also had an ensemble perform at the Festival in the past. All hosts are committed to ensuring that you have the best possible experience before and during the Festival.

**Opportunities for Additional Orchestras**-Many music programs want to travel with all of the students in their school's orchestra program, and Music for All provides educational options to allow as many of your orchestra students as possible to participate. Directors can choose to submit audition applications for multiple orchestras or chamber ensembles from their school. Selected orchestras can choose to bring additional orchestras from their school to participate in additional opportunities during the Festival.

**Festival Invitation Visit & Director "Fam" Trip**-Every invited orchestra is offered a visit to your school from a member of the Festival team. This visit, which is mandatory for first-time participating schools and/or directors, helps your students, parent boosters, and administration understand the magnitude of your achievement.

A mandatory familiarization trip to Indianapolis for directors of all accepted ensembles will take place at the Festival performance venues and hotel facilities. Directors will tour the hotels, performance halls, warm-up, and clinic rooms. The Festival

schedule and pricing will be thoroughly discussed to ensure a complete understanding of pre-planning information for your ensemble. The "Fam" Trip for the 2018 ensembles will be Sunday, November 12, 2017 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Transportation and housing for the "Fam Trip" to Indianapolis is at the participating ensemble's expense.

## How to Apply

**Application is Online**-The Music for All National Festival audition process offers a unique opportunity, as the audition process is a tool you can use to take your program to the next level. All auditioning ensembles receive recorded and written evaluation from the evaluation panel. The evaluation is "blind"—ensembles are not identified in the audition process. Evaluators recommend ensembles that demonstrate an exemplary level of excellence to receive an invitation to perform at the Festival.

**Requirements for Application**-A completed application consists of the completed online Festival application form submitted with the audition recording and application fee. Specific requirements for application and audition recordings are included in the Requirements for Application online at [www.musicforall.org/festival](http://www.musicforall.org/festival).

**Application Fees**-The application fee is \$250 for orchestras, concert bands, and choirs, and \$200 for percussion ensembles.

**Obligation if Accepted**-Submission of your application is a commitment to attend & perform if accepted (unless you select the "Input Only" box on your application). You will be obligated to attend if invited; please be sure that you have booster & administrative support, & approval prior to applying.

## Application is Online

Download the application brochure with full 2018 Festival information, audition requirements, and Festival package pricing online at [musicforall.org/festival](http://musicforall.org/festival)

Completed application, audition recording and all application materials must be received by June 5, 2017.

# MAKING TONE A PRIORITY

Doug Elmore

It may seem overly simplistic, but many times when I have adjudicated an orchestra at festival or been watching and listening in the audience to a student orchestra performance, (and I have run that little mental checklist we as musicians sometimes run) the orchestra doesn't sound good. By which I mean, they don't SOUND good. The string players aren't producing that rich, vibrant, characteristic sound associated with a wonderful student orchestra.



I certainly understand the issue! As string teachers, we are drowning in minutiae... classroom management issues, equipment issues, left hand issues, learning the notes and rhythms; recruiting, programming concert literature....the list is endless.

**It certainly is possible to put tone development on a back burner inadvertently... BUT, if one is to lead their students to great tone quality, it has to be made a priority by you, the teacher.**

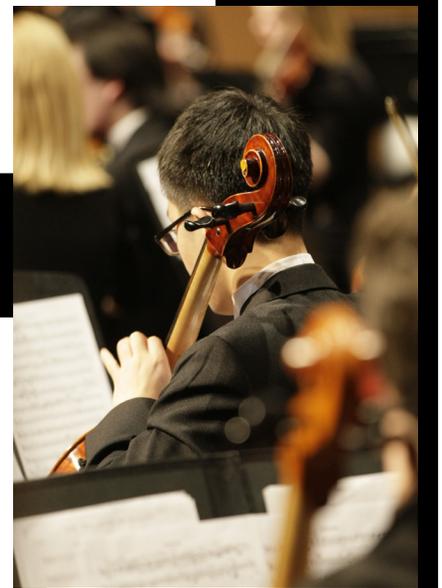
In our warm-up time, which occurs every day in our middle school classes, there are three things I try to prioritize

with my students, going all the way back to the fifth grade beginner's classes. First, we spend a LOT of time in middle school classes on forming a well-shaped bow hand. Much emphasis is put on the bent thumb, or "thumb bump," with thanks to Robert Gillespie, co-author of *Essential Elements for Strings*. Second, we put a lot of emphasis on "bowing lanes," or the concept of tracking the bow specifically in a certain spot on the string. The third key is: I try to instill in my students is the feeling in the bow hand of weight. The right arm should be relaxing and hanging from the bow, and consequently, transferring arm weight onto the string.

All these factors converge when our orchestra warms up every day. We play 5-note scale patterns in the middle of the bow, at the tip of the bow, and near the frog. We play them in 16th note rhythms, 8th note rhythms, dotted rhythms, and in any common rhythm patterns that are featured in our literature. All these warm-ups are executed with an ear for tone. I often ask the students to evaluate their bow usage, evaluate that of their stand partners, and the orchestra as a whole. The final judge of tone quality in rehearsals, however, is the director. The students are often just too occupied with pitch, rhythm, and dynamic issues to also focus on tone. In a recent rehearsal cycle of a local youth orchestra that I conduct, I was addressing bow placement and bow usage (frog, middle, or tip? Heavy weight, light weight, medium weight? Fast bow, slow bow, medium bow?) in "Russian Sailors Dance"...all the way up to the day of dress rehearsal! If the director doesn't make it a priority, the students won't, either. I am happy to report, however, that the students played with outstanding tone that day!

As the students age upward into high school, I try to emphasize every day the concept of matching tone with one's stand partner, then section, then orchestra. (This, of course, demands a higher level of awareness on the part of the student!)

Again, the director has to be deeply involved in the process, as some students come to "tonal awareness" sooner than others. In most rehearsals, I am constantly asking, "Are you in the same part of the bow as your stand partner? As your



Photos courtesy of Jolesch Enterprises

section leader? As the cellos? (or whoever) If not, why not?

Often, if I see an issue with tone or bowing ahead of time, I will mark in the music before passing it out "Frog!" "Middle!" "Fast bow, light weight" "Near bridge", just to remove any ambiguity on the part of the student. If the orchestra doesn't CLEARLY know what the director is looking for, they probably won't be able to give it to you.

In closing, it's important for me to say how wonderfully committed most kids are to playing beautiful music together. They have given us as teachers the greatest gift I can think of: an hour a day of their lives! What we as teachers and students choose to do with that hour every day is completely up to us. With careful

rehearsal planning and time budgeting, great things are possible.



DOUG ELMORE

Conductor, Repertory Orchestra,  
Louisville Youth Orchestra  
Orchestra Director at Floyd Central H.S.  
and Highland Hills M.S., IN

Jeffrey Grogan  
2017  
Conductor  
Honor Orchestra  
of America

Jeffrey Grogan conducted the Honor Orchestra of America, with two evening concerts at the Festival. Grogan is Education and Community Engagement Conductor, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and Conductor and Artistic Director of the Greater Newark Youth Orchestras, the InterSchool Orchestras of New York, and the New Jersey Youth Symphony.

“This year’s Honor Orchestra members bundled with Chabrier and Bernstein made for a wonderful week of memorable music making. It was beautiful to witness thousands of young musicians and revered guest faculty artists share, collaborate, learn, and form new friendships. Transformative!”  
-Jeffrey Grogan

Photos: 1-Jeffrey Grogan conducted the 2017 Honor Orchestra of America, and will be an evaluator at the 2018 Orchestra America National Festival.



Photos: 2-The Honor Orchestra played two concerts, Friday and Saturday evenings, with a program of *Espana Rhapsody* by Emanuel Chabrier and *Symphonic Dances* from “*West Side Story*” by Leonard Bernstein. 3-North Cobb High School Symphony Orchestra, in concert, conducted by Dr. Paula Krupiczewicz. 4, 5, 6-Honor Orchestra of America musicians. The Honor Orchestra of America was comprised of student musicians from 55 schools – and homeschooled students – and 21 states.

# WRAP-UP

2017

## Orchestra America National Festival

Featured four outstanding high school orchestras, selected by audition to perform in concert, receive input from a panel of evaluators, and celebrate excellence in music-making with more than 2,500 student musicians and teachers from across the country.

Orchestra evaluators and clinicians included:

- Sey Ahn – Idyllwild Arts Academy
- Douglas Droste – Ball State University & Muncie Symphony Orchestra
- Franz Krager – University of Houston
- Larry J. Livingston – University of Southern California
- Kirk Moss – University Northwestern-St. Paul.

Learn more about the Festival and how to apply for the 2018 Festival (audition deadline June 5, 2017) at [musicforall.org/festival](http://musicforall.org/festival).

“It’s one of the best performance and educational festivals out there. Students have the opportunity to work with master clinicians, perform in some great halls, and meet students from schools across the United States,” said Dr. Paula Krupiczewicz, whose North Cobb H.S. Chamber Orchestra performed.

• 2017 Festival Orchestras

Bridgewater-Raritan High School Symphony Orchestra, Bridgewater, NJ; Daniel Musacchio, Director of Orchestras

Nashville School of the Arts Chamber Orchestra, Nashville, TN; Glenn Fugett, Director of Orchestras

North Cobb High School Chamber Orchestra, Kennesaw, GA; Dr. Paula Krupiczewicz, Director of Orchestras

Oscar F. Smith High School Chamber Orchestra, Chesapeake, VA; Deanna L. Kringel, Director of Orchestras

Photos courtesy of Jolesch Enterprises

(Black Violin continued from page 3)  
instrument theirs, so it's not just Bach's or Beethoven's; it's theirs," Marcus advises.

"When my instrument finally became mine, I would never let it go. And I would always be working to try different things and trying new ways to make it different and to really take it to another level."

Additionally, Marcus always sends the following message to young musicians: "Use the time you have wisely because when you get older, the time you [used to] have to sit around in a shed and practice, you don't have," he says. "Your time to practice is limited, so use the time you have now."

This perseverance and success is embedded in the way Marcus practices and performs, stemmed directly from his professors. "My teacher would always say five minutes of focused practice is better than an hour of just playing around," Marcus says. "We use every instance that we play to practice. It's all about if you're going to play something or if you're going to concentrate on what you're playing. Right now I feel like my bow isn't going as straight as I would like and my pinky finger is flaring on my right hand. And these are the things that I'm thinking about constantly when I'm playing."

Even when a performance doesn't go as well as he hopes, Marcus keeps his head up. "I just practice, just keep trying to be better," Marcus says. "Those [tough] moments may seem long during it, but they're really quick moments in life, and you move on."

Marcus and Baptiste are currently in the development phase for opening the Black Violin Music Academy in 2017 to provide music lessons in their hometown of Fort Lauderdale. The curriculum will feature classical training as well as help students determine their musical passions. The hope is to gather the students into a full orchestra.

"We want it to be 40 to 45 minutes of complete fundamental classical...but the last 15 has to be whatever each individual student wants to do," Marcus says. The plans include a studio where Black Violin can record and produce their own tracks and videos, allowing the students to watch. Students will also be able to reserve rooms for practicing, jamming together or even developing their own songs and ideas with teachers and other classmates.

"We would use it to do our professional stuff, but students would be able to come in and see behind the scenes," Marcus says. "They can come see what's up and see the process and see the other things you can do with music."

For students, Marcus already has exceptional advice. "Always try to think about things differently," he says. "A lot of what our focus is and what our mission is, it's more thought process than it is musical mastery...to be everything you could ever be, to reach and dream and think big about everything you could possibly do."

### Stay True

The keys to success for Marcus and Baptiste were persistence and staying true to themselves. When Black Violin started, the idea of hip hop violin was completely foreign. Club promoters and prospective clients would look at the two of them, instruments in hand, and often turn them away without listening.

However, Black Violin strove to break the mold. When shunted from a club, Marcus and Baptiste would camp outside the building before opening, playing on the streets. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that club owners would have no choice but to reconsider.

"We were very ambitious," Marcus says. "We worked very hard. We wouldn't take no for an answer."

They soon found themselves on stage performing Amateur Night at New York's Apollo Theater for the 2004 season. Black Violin took home first place. Serving as their launching pad, Marcus and Baptiste began working on albums and touring.

Black Violin has toured with Linkin Park in addition to embarking on its own tour around Europe, Thailand and the United States. The group has also been featured on numerous television shows and is currently working to develop a program for Fox.

Black Violin also received the honor of playing at the inauguration of President Barack Obama. "That was one of the experiences that you can never really top," Marcus says. "I haven't really been nervous for a show ever since. How can you be, really?"

### A Powerful Message

Black Violin's most powerful message is to think differently, whether it's in music or in life. One of Black Violin's biggest

hits, "Stereotypes," challenges listeners to overcome preconceived ideas.

Whether it's a kid from Florida becoming a world-renowned violist or the concept of violin making a significant break in the hip hop world, the message of Black Violin has always been the same: Be different, value your education, and use it to express who you are.

"It's really interesting to step away and change people's perception of what's possible," Marcus says. "The reason why people pay to see us isn't because we're the best violinists in the world. The reason people pay to see us is because we're thinking about it in a way that most people haven't and won't. And to me, the people in this world that do amazing things...are not necessarily the smartest; they're just the ones that approach it from a different angle."

## From the PAST to the FUTURE...

Kev Marcus from Black Violin learned many valuable lessons from his music teachers throughout the years. He has been able to pass on this knowledge to young musicians.

❶ **Focus Your Practice:** Avoid simply running through your music for an extended time. Instead focus on how you are playing. "My teachers always said, 'It's not about how much you practice, it's about how you practice,'" Marcus says.

❷ **Think Differently:** If there's a really hard passage, incorporate something familiar or likeable instead of getting frustrated. "My college professor was really big on that," Marcus says. "He would always encourage me to give it a hip hop beat, 'cause that's what I like ... It makes you get into the practice more."

❸ **Be Yourself:** You should always be willing to try new things and always be free with your music. It takes away the nervousness. "Let it all hang out and have fun with it," Marcus says.



**Larry J. Livingston**  
 Music Director  
 2018 Conductor,  
 Honor Orchestra of America  
 Chair, Conducting Department  
 Thornton School of Music  
 University of Southern California



*Photos courtesy of Jolesch Enterprises*

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- Educational CD recording of the Honor Orchestra of America concert and group photograph

Selected members participate in a five-night festival package, quad occupancy, \$715 (\$650 for four-night package). Members are responsible for their transportation to and from Indianapolis. Members must be present for first meeting at 7 a.m., March 14, 2018.

**Application/Audition Deadline:**  
**Winds and Percussion - October 1, 2017**  
**Strings - October 1, 2017**  
 deadline to be eligible for the Livingston Scholarship  
**Strings - November 1, 2017** final deadline

**Application is Online**  
[www.musicforall.org/honorensembles](http://www.musicforall.org/honorensembles)  
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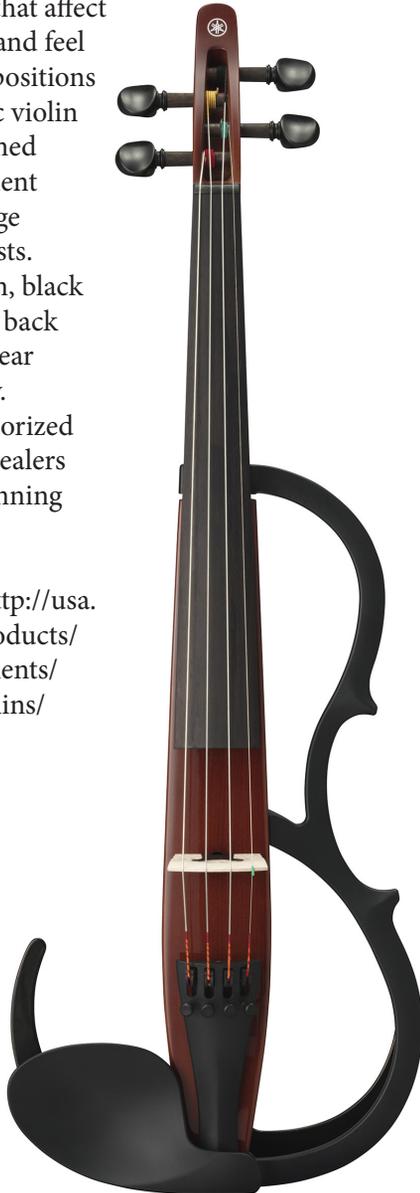
# NEWS

## The YSV104 Silent Violin Returns to the Original Silent Violin Concept as a Refined Practice Instrument

The YSV104 employs the Yamaha SRT (Studio Response Technology) Powered system that has been a highly acclaimed success in Silent Guitar models. Although the solid-body Silent Violin does not have a resonant body, SRT Powered simulates the natural response, body resonance, and sound that the player would experience with an acoustic instrument.

True to the original Yamaha design the bridge, chin rest, tailpiece, neck, and other parts that affect playing posture and feel are in the same positions as on an acoustic violin and frame designed to allow attachment of standard bridge type shoulder rests. Offered in brown, black and red it is also back by a Yamaha 5-year limited warranty. Available at authorized Yamaha String dealers nationwide beginning in May of 2017.

Learn more at <http://usa.yamaha.com/products/musical-instruments/strings/silentviolins/ysv104/>



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Photo courtesy of Metch Enterprises

# Announcing the Music for All NATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL

March 15-17 2018  
Indianapolis, Indiana

## Spotlight: United Sound National Ensemble

With chapters in school music programs across the United States, United Sound is paving the way to help ensure that music education is an experience for all students. United Sound's mission is to provide musical performance experiences for students with special needs through peer mentorship.

On March 11, the United Sound National Ensemble performed at the Music for All National Festival, presented by Yamaha, as part of the Honor Band of America concert. United Sound new musicians and peer mentors performed with an orchestral ensemble comprised of musicians from the United Sound chapter programs

of Carmel HS Orchestra (IN), Centerville HS Band (OH), North Cobb HS Orchestra (GA), and North Cobb HS Band (GA).

Music for All is a proud sponsor of United Sound. In addition to our sponsorship, Music for All recently provided performance opportunities for United Sound musicians on a national stage.

Dedicated to promoting social involvement through shared ensemble performance experience, United Sound joins students with and without disabilities to learn and perform in the band or orchestra together. Learn more at [unitedsound.org](http://unitedsound.org).



Music for All is proud to expand our programs to serve scholastic choirs with the premiere of the Music for All National Choir Festival at the Music for All National Festival, presented by Yamaha, in 2018.

Like all of the ensemble components of the Festival, the National Choir Festival is a non-competitive performance and evaluation opportunity that features the most outstanding scholastic concert and chamber choirs from middle schools and high schools across the nation. Choral evaluation performances will take place in the beautiful St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. Choirs will stay in the official Festival hotels in downtown Indianapolis, walking distance from the choir performance venues and other attractions.

The application fee is \$250 for choirs. All applying groups receive recorded and written evaluation from the evaluation/selection panel. Completed application, audition recording and all application materials must be received by June 5, 2017.

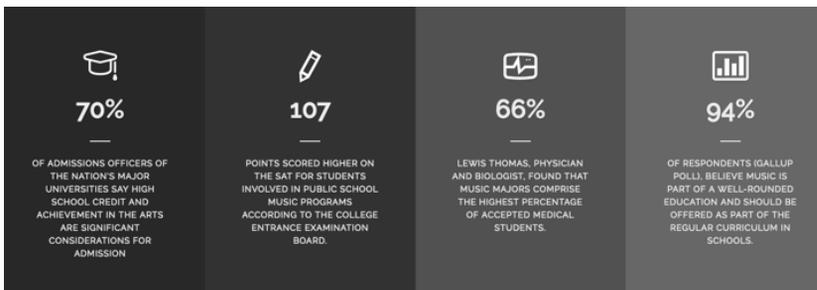
Visit [musicforall.org/choir](http://musicforall.org/choir) to download the full Music for All National Choir Festival application brochure and audition requirements, and to apply online.

## Be Part of the Orchestra helps directors advocate and recruit

Music does more than just make sounds, it changes the way we think and act. The skills your child will learn in music will help them be successful on the stage, in the classroom, and for the rest of their lives. The Be Part of

the Orchestra project was created to get more students involved in music. Access a wealth of videos and materials that will help you recruit new students and affect retention as they continue to play throughout their school years and beyond.

Visit [bepartofthemusic.org](http://bepartofthemusic.org) to learn more and see the wealth of resources that you can use put to use now!



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