



Giving Back



(left) Violinist D. Paul Woodiel guides a young listener at the orchestra's Instrument Petting Zoo event last February. (middle) Teaching artist Tim Kiah brings music to a Tarrytown elementary school. (below) The brass quintet performs in Katonah last July.



Westchester Philharmonic

This venerable institution is keeping the sounds of the symphony alive and well. By **Kristan Zimmer**

WHEN 1,200 CHILDREN JUMP to their feet and start clapping at the trumpeting of the William Tell Overture, it reminds Joshua Worby that music appreciation has no race, age or other boundaries—something that always excites him as executive and artistic director of the Westchester Philharmonic. “The perception of symphony orchestras is that they can be a little elitist,” said Worby. “The Westchester Philharmonic is far from that.”

Now in its 34th season, the Philharmonic

is the largest group of professional performing artists in Westchester County. With five main stage concerts held at the Performing Arts Center at Purchase College each season (the most popular of which is the Winter Pops coming up soon on December 18), open rehearsals when everyone, including families, can listen for free (and enjoy doughnuts backstage with the musicians!), educational outreach programs with schools and small ensemble visits with senior citizens, it is also one of music's key presences in the local community.

How to Help

DONATE

Ticket prices only cover a portion of the philharmonic's expenses. They depend on donations to make ends meet. Visit westchesterphil.org.

BRING YOUR SCHOOL

Ask that your school is added to the Classroom Music Education program, which includes a classroom study guide, optional musician visit, excerpts from the live programming and tickets to a live show. Call 914-682-3707, ext. 11.

VOLUNTEER

Help in the office or volunteer at performances or special events. Email volunteer@westchesterphil.org.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

“It's heart-lifting, spirit-lifting work that goes on,” says Worby. Among their various outreach programs, the Philharmonic brings music to the kids of the Greyston Child Care Center in Yonkers, NY, a learning center that caters to low-income parents and their families. “Children diagnosed with behavioral and speech delays have become engaged,” says Eric Watkins, Greyston Child Care's program director. “This program brings a level of excitement and interaction we rarely see.”

It's that connection with children, says Worby, that shows you don't have to have a

degree in Chopin to appreciate and enjoy music. Each time his musicians go into a school, a classroom or a senior center, that notion is reinforced. “The art form itself is vibrant and vital,” he adds. “The industry has to do a better job at knocking the crust off.”

The Westchester Philharmonic prides itself on promoting young talent like Julia Bullock (who will perform in the February concert), a diverse roster of guest conductors (including women, who are a small minority in the field) and cutting-edge programming. Ted Sperling, guest conductor for the upcoming Winter Pops and February concerts, said this year's soloists include Broadway darling Ashley Brown, who returns by popular demand, and pianist Ji, whose appearance on an Android commercial during the Grammys went viral. A midday encore for children the next day draws more than 1,000 students from area schools each year. “I'm very eager that audiences continue to come to concerts and not retreat to the privacy of their headphones,” said Sperling. “It's so important to expose them as kids. It influences the rest of their lives.”



CONTACT: Westchester Philharmonic
123 Main Street, 9th Floor, White Plains, NY
914-682-3707, westchesterphil.org

\$1 from each subscription purchased in December goes to the Westchester Philharmonic.

LEFT AND RIGHT: LOUIS VACCARO; MIDDLE: LENORE EGGLESTON