“YOU’RE UP!” AUDITION SEASON IS HERE!

Here at OrchKids, we love to shine a spotlight on the success of our students and tell you about their amazing adventures and accomplishments: whether it’s a report on how many OrchKids have been accepted into Baltimore School for the Arts, a story about their adventures at outside programs like the prestigious Interlochen summer music camp in Michigan or the LA Phil’s National Take A Stand Festival in Los Angeles.

One thing we don’t always share with our readers, however, is how they get there. So, we thought we would take you behind the scenes and share a bit about a vital — and often invisible — component of OrchKids programming that happens every year at this time: auditions!

By the time you read this, and over the next couple of months, many OrchKids students will begin the journey of applying to, and auditioning for, opportunities that have the potential to change the course of their lives. And this year, we have added college auditions and interviews to the list! Most auditions take place after school and on weekends, and OrchKids’ dedicated staff and music teachers are with students every step of the way!

Our staff work side-by-side with students and families to prepare them for these important appointments and auditions. Some of the ways we do this are:

- host special parent meetings to help distribute crucial information that families need in order to be successful in their applications.
- hold mock auditions to help students practice and give them a full understanding of what to expect.
- provide reflective coaching.
- develop comprehensive checklists to help students and parents keep on top of the various application requirements.
- advise and mentor students on how to dress appropriately and carry themselves so that others will be impressed by more than just their musical abilities.
- arrange for transportation needs so that no one misses their audition! Transportation is a major barrier for many of the families we serve, and OrchKids is dedicating providing a full net support.
- follow up with individual parents as needed to see if they need extra assistance.

Additionally, OrchKids students who are auditioning for these valuable slots are often competing against students who are more well-resourced and have had the benefit of years of private lessons. To help our students be as successful as possible, and when we are able, OrchKids may pay for private lessons to ensure that a student can showcase their full musical potential. These private lessons are funded entirely by gifts from OrchKids’ generous donors and would otherwise be out of reach for our students.

Alexis has been in the OrchKids program for three years. He successfully auditioned for and is currently enrolled in TWIGS and attends the Peabody Preparatory on Saturday afternoons through our partnership with the Tuned-In Program. Alexis has aspirations to attend the Baltimore School for Arts and is currently taking private lessons (provided by OrchKids) to better prepare him for this important, upcoming audition. According to Alexis, Mr. Jared Perry, Director of OrchKids Brass Band, has been a notable influence on his life and his music. Alexis would like to be a band director himself and to have the opportunity to conduct the band program at his school before he graduates from eighth grade this June.

You can contact us at ORCHKIDS@BSOMUSIC.ORG or send your contribution to:
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra OrchKids Program
1212 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

orchkids.org /BSOorchkids
Helping to foster youth voice is a core component to the success of our program and to the success of our students. One way that OrchKids creates space for students to express their ideas, visions and goals is through special collective composition workshops. These workshops are facilitated and guided by OrchKids teaching artists, but the content is exclusively driven by students. In order for students to practice and hone their self-expression and communication skills, they need to experience voicing their perspectives in a safe environment that also challenges them to thoroughly flesh out and advocate for their ideas.

Collective composition workshops are a wild, all-original collaborative process from start to finish. Students work together as a group to create their own piece of original music and perform it, all within the span of one week. While OrchKids has long hosted collective composition workshops, this January will be the first of three workshops to feature ALL of our OrchKids after-school and in-school students across Baltimore.

A unique aspect of these workshops is that they attract and recruit teaching artists from around the country to collaborate with OrchKids expert staff and music teachers, creating an inspiring week of musical activities for our students. OrchKids is providing a stipend for two teaching artists to experience this intensive learning opportunity. They will receive hands-on instruction from our team of highly experienced faculty on how to do large-scale collaborative composition projects, as well as how to incorporate similar, smaller activities into their normal classroom instruction.

OrchKids is fortunate to have on its team a number of sought-after, notable professionals in this arena. Dan Taley, who helped start the OrchKids program and currently acts as a creative advisor to the program, leads collective composition workshops around the world. Additionally, OrchKids staff members, Camille Delaney, Mollie Westbrook and Danielle Williams, have all studied and led workshops of their own locally, nationally and internationally!

The workshop weeks will open with a launch event at each of OrchKids hub school sites in order to welcome students, bring the community together and set the tone for the collaborative adventure. The week wraps up with a concert and community celebration, showcasing the newly-composed works performed and created entirely by the students. Last year’s original composition, Better Together, featured lyrics in both English and Portuguese to help illustrate students’ desire to live in a world where people from different cultures – whether in Baltimore City or across the world – can come together in harmony and respect for one another.
For a second year in a row, OrchKids will take DC by storm! At the invitation of friend and OrchKids’ supporter, Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden, our students will travel down to the Library and spend a day going through the stacks, working closely with Library staff to learn all about this year’s theme: Scott Joplin’s *Treemonisha*. *Treemonisha* is an opera composed by the famous African American composer Scott Joplin, who is noted for his ragtime piano works. Joplin was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize for music for *Treemonisha* in 1977. The opera celebrates African American music and culture, while emphasizing the importance of education. *Treemonisha* is the central character and educator heroine of the opera.

The research students do in the stacks will guide and inform them as they later compose an original composition to be performed in the Library’s Coolidge Auditorium this spring. Last year’s theme was the works of Leonard Bernstein, and the students composed a piece entitled, “name of piece,” which they performed at the Library, as well as at the OrchKids 10-year anniversary concert last May.

This year’s project will be extra special because Carmen Balthrop will be participating in the creative composition that students will premiere. Carmen Balthrop is an internationally-acclaimed and award-winning soprano, performing in venues such as La Scala and the Metropolitan Opera. In 1982, Carmen starred in the leading role of *Treemonisha* as a part of the revival of Houston Grand Opera’s original premiere in 1972 and produced for the first time for television with Gunter Schuller’s orchestration.

We hope you will mark your calendars and come out for what is sure to be a memorable performance this spring:

- **Saturday, April 13, 2019**
  - 12 pm-1:30 pm: Pop-up concerts in the Library’s Great Hall
  - 2 pm: Main performance in Coolidge Auditorium, featuring various OrchKids ensembles and a special piece conducted by Maestra Marin Alsop!

**ORCHKIDS ENDS 2018 ON A HIGH NOTE WITH NATIONAL PRESS ATTENTION**

Following a New York Times article in May that landed on the front page of the Arts section, the BSO OrchKids have achieved several high-profile stories in regional, national and international news outlets. In conjunction with the group’s 10-year anniversary in 2018, students have been featured everywhere from *The Irish Times* to ZDF German television to *O, The Oprah Magazine*.

Most recently, OrchKids students and siblings Keith Fleming and Desha Banks were featured in a segment on the nationally-televised *CBS Evening News*. Keith and Desha have both been involved with OrchKids since it launched in 2008 and have gone on to participate in music festivals across the country and around the world.

“I joined OrchKids 10 years ago, and the program has had such a huge impact on my life,” said Keith. “Some kids I know never leave Baltimore, but, because of OrchKids, I’ve had the chance to travel around the country and even to Austria and England for music festivals. It’s really inspired me in so many ways, and my dream now is to start my own music education program.”

Stay tuned for even more OrchKids success stories in 2019 and beyond!