

LANSING SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

TIMOTHY MUFFITT • MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LANSING SYMPHONY TO PRESENT FREE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERTS FOR 2,500 AREA STUDENTS

Lansing, MI – February 11, 2009 – In one week, over 2,500 area students will have an opportunity to experience the thrill of a live, orchestral performance. On Wednesday, February 18th, the Lansing Symphony Orchestra will present two Young People's Concerts free of charge to students from Lansing, East Lansing, Okemos, Grand Ledge, Waverly, Bath, Dewitt, Linden, Owosso, Webberville, Eaton Rapids, Charlotte, Mason and Ovid school districts. The Young People's Concerts will be held at the Wharton Center's Cobb Great Hall at 9:30am and 11:15am.

Featured on this year's program is Sergei Prokofiev's classic *Peter and the Wolf*, which will combine music from the orchestra, narration by local actor Ken Beachler and a performance by 20 dancers from the Greater Lansing Ballet Company - Barbara Banasikowski Smith, Artistic Director. The dancers will supply a visual component for the performance, representing not only characters from the story, but also scenic elements like water and trees.

In addition to *Peter and the Wolf*, the orchestra, led by Music Director & Conductor Timothy Muffitt, will perform Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee," select movements from Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals* and an excerpt from Offenbach's famous "Can-Can."

"Exposure and total immersion in the arts is vital for the developing minds and spirits of our young people," explains Muffitt, himself a father of two children in East Lansing's schools. "The multi-disciplinary production we will present, including dance, literature and music, will provide students with a large dose of the experiences they need."

This year's Young People's Concerts are presented in collaboration with BoarsHead Theater.

BoarsHead teaching artists provided a study guide that teachers could use to prepare their students for the performance, as well as classroom docent visits, many of which included presentations by LSO musicians.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for students to learn about elements of music, theater and dance – all in one production,” explains LSO Director of Education & Operations Leanne King. “At the same time, this collaboration sends a very powerful message to the community that Lansing’s arts organizations are working to support each other’s efforts and goals.”

The LSO’s Education Programs are sponsored by GM Lansing Operations, East Lansing Rotary Club, the Wilbur & Ruth Wright Charitable Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs and the City of Lansing. The 2009 Young People’s Concerts are sponsored by the Granger Foundation and the Louis & Helen Padnos Foundation.

This is Music Director Timothy Muffitt’s third season with the Lansing Symphony. In addition to his role with the LSO, Muffitt is in his tenth season as Music Director and Conductor of the Baton Rouge Symphony. In the summer, he also serves as Music Director of the Chautauqua Institution’s Music School Festival Orchestra, one of the country’s premier orchestral training ensembles. Previously, Muffitt served as the Associate Conductor of the Austin Symphony and as Artistic Director of the Louisiana Philharmonic’s Casual Classics Series, for which he was awarded a Certificate of Meritorious Service from the American Federation of Musicians. Muffitt has appeared with leading orchestras throughout the country and is recognized as a strong proponent of community arts education. Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Timothy Muffitt studied at the Eastman School of Music, where he earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree.

The Lansing Symphony Orchestra was established in 1929. More than 20,000 people attend LSO concerts each year, and more than 50,000 listeners are able to hear broadcasts of the Orchestra’s concerts by NPR affiliate WKAR-FM Radio. The Symphony’s highly acclaimed education programs reach 15,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade in five counties.

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