



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Empire State Youth Orchestra Applauds \$3 Million Investment in New Youth Music Center**

**Scotia–Glenville, NY** — Empire State Youth Orchestra (ESYO) is thrilled to announce a major step forward in its plan to build a world-class Youth Music Center, thanks to a \$3 million allocation in the FY2025–26 New York State Budget secured by Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara.

“This funding brings our dream closer to reality,” said Rebecca Calos, Executive Director of ESYO. “We’re incredibly grateful to Assemblyman Santabarbara for recognizing the importance of giving young people access to a creative space where they can grow and thrive.”

The funds will support the installation of an acoustically sensitive, energy-efficient HVAC system, replacing outdated infrastructure from 1955 and ensuring a healthy, sound-optimized environment for hundreds of student musicians.

“This project is about more than bricks and mortar,” said Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara. “It’s an investment in equity, opportunity, and the kind of learning that transforms lives. The ESYO Youth Music Center will be a place where kids from every background can feel inspired and included.”

Located on an 8-acre campus in Scotia-Glenville, the Youth Music Center will feature a 4,800-square-foot acoustically designed rehearsal hall, flexible classrooms, a music library, and community gathering spaces. It will allow for a dramatic expansion of CHIME, ESYO’s free after-school music program, and offer inclusive access for students with disabilities, homeschoolers, and early learners.

“This center represents everything ESYO stands for,” said Etienne Abelin, ESYO Music Director. “It’s not just a building—it’s a home for creativity, collaboration, and belonging. It will give our young musicians the space and support they need to grow as artists and as people.”

“The new center will allow CHIME to grow in powerful ways,” added Zoë Auerbach, CHIME Director. “We’ll be able to welcome more students, provide deeper support, and create a space where every young musician knows they belong.”

“Being part of CHIME and ESYO has changed my life,” said Mia Montross, a CHIME percussionist who also performs in Repertory Orchestra and Youth Percussion. “Having a place built just for us—where we can rehearse, learn, and be ourselves—means everything.”

With strong public and private support already committed, ESYO anticipates opening the doors of the new Youth Music Center in 2026.

### **About Empire State Youth Orchestra**

Empire State Youth Orchestra (ESYO) empowers young musicians from across New York’s Capital Region and beyond to discover their voices through collaborative music-making. With a commitment to access, excellence, and innovation, ESYO’s programs—including its nationally recognized CHIME initiative—serve more than 500 students annually through orchestras, jazz and chamber ensembles, and intensive mentorship opportunities.

Learn more at [www.esyo.org](http://www.esyo.org)