



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **PLAYATHON IS BACK! ESYO MUSICIANS SHARE THEIR LOVE OF MUSIC AT CROSSGATES MALL FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE START OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

*Hundreds of Young Musicians Perform a Musical Marathon to Raise \$65,000 for Empire State Youth Orchestra*

**WHEN:**

Saturday, March 26, 2022  
11:00am - 5:30pm

**WHERE:**

Crossgates Mall - Lower Level near Burlington

**WHO:**

Hundreds of Young ESYO Musicians in Many Ensembles!

**Albany, NY** - Hundreds of young musicians in the Empire State Youth Orchestra will share their love of music with the community during Play-a-thon, its annual musical marathon on Saturday, March 26, 2022, from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm at Crossgates Mall in Albany, NY. The event, which is ESYO's most important friend-raiser and fundraiser, features 9 musical ensembles that include everything from classical to percussion to jazz. This year, the goal is to raise \$65,000 online and in-person at the event. Since mid-February, ESYO musicians have collected donations from friends, family, and neighbors online using Peer-to-Peer Fundraising technology and three ESYO Conductors are auctioning off their collective talents. The highest bidder will get a 45-minute concert at their home with Keith Pray, Peter Bellino, and Mark Foster. Friends and audiences alike can bid online at [esyjo.org/playathon](http://esyjo.org/playathon). Even though the event is designed to raise money, it is free to anyone in the community who wants to enjoy music on that day.

"Playathon is much more than a fundraiser," said Rebecca Calos, ESYO's executive director. "It's a fun all-day event and a chance for ESYO to perform outside the concert hall. It brings us closer to our neighbors, future members, and the entire community. It's the only performance that features all aspects of the ESYO program." she continued.

Anne-Marie Gorman Doyle, ESYO's director of development, is leading the effort and hopes that the community will come out and show their support. "Our young musicians look forward to performing for the community each year at Playathon. It's something they truly missed over the last two years" said Anne-Marie. "This year, the need to raise \$65,000 in support of

our young musicians and ESYO's ongoing efforts to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic is greater than ever," she continued.

The day also includes live auctions to conduct an ESYO ensemble, including for the first time ever, one of ESYO's Jazz Orchestras. ESYO's new music director, Ettienne Abelin will conduct ESYO's Symphony Orchestra and provide conducting tips and tricks to auction winners.

Additional information about ESYO's program and concerts can be found at [esyo.org](http://esyo.org).

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## PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

11:00 AM - 11:10 AM Chamber Percussion Ensemble	Wind Orchestra
11:15 AM - 11:30 AM Concertino Strings	1:35 PM - 2:15 PM Symphony Orchestra & Auction
11:35 AM - 12:05 PM CHIME	2:25 PM - 3:00 PM Repertory Orchestra & Auction
12:10 PM - 12:20 PM Chamber Percussion Ensemble	3:15 PM - 3:35 PM Repertory Jazz Ensemble
12:30 PM - 12:55 PM String Orchestra & Auction	3:40 PM - 4:10 PM Youth Jazz Orchestra & Auction
1:05 PM - 1:25 PM	4:20 PM - 5:00 PM Symphony Orchestra & Auction

Auctions to win conductor's baton & opportunity to lead an orchestra.

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**About Empire State Youth Orchestra:** Empire State Youth Orchestra (ESYO) challenges and inspires young people to achieve excellence through music in a progressive learning environment leading to high-level performance opportunities. More than 500 youth from New York's Capital Region and western New England are selected by audition each year to perform in ESYO. With 13 performing ensembles and orchestras suiting a range of playing levels, members receive training from outstanding conductors and coaches, and tutelage from extraordinary guest artists.

In 2015, ESYO launched CHIME (Creating Harmony Inspiring Musical Excellence) in Schenectady to address fundamental inequities preventing universal access to high level music opportunities for youth. Today, this free after school program serves more than one hundred K-12 students in partnership with Capital Region school districts.

Founded in 1979, ESYO is a not-for-profit organization that has been recognized as a premier music education/performance program for youth and has received three ASCAP awards. For more information, visit [esy.org](http://esy.org).

**About Etienne Abelin:** Swiss conductor **Etienne Abelin** has been described as a "post-classical pioneer" in the *BBC Music Magazine* and an "icon of new ways in classical music" by the *Musica Viva Magazine Brazil*. His gripping, emotionally charged performances have been hailed as "always unforgettably fine" by eminent conducting mentor Jorma Panula.

Abelin won the exceptional privilege of being a musical collaborator for 18 years with classical music legend conductor Claudio Abbado, who has been described as one of the three greatest conductors of all time by BBC Music Magazine. As such, Etienne was handpicked by Mr. Abbado to be a founding member of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra and the Orchestra Mozart Bologna, where he was the Principal Second Violin for seven years. With these orchestras, he performed in the world's most prestigious concert halls and recorded for labels such as Deutsche Grammophon and Harmonia Mundi.

As a conductor, he has performed with orchestras throughout Europe, including the Beethoven Orchester Bonn, the Musikkollegium Winterthur, the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris and the Orquestra Sinfónica Portuguesa in venues such as the Royal Festival Hall London, Teatro alla Scala Milano, Birmingham Symphony Hall, Teatro São Carlos Lisbon, the the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens and Beethovenfest Bonn. His enthusiasm for new, genre-crossing music led him to conduct world premieres by Gabriel Prokofiev and William Brittnelle as well as Swiss premieres of works by Nico Muhly, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Fabrizio Cassol, and others. Etienne has made headlines in Europe and the United States for co-founding the Ynight-Classical Music in Clubs Series and the Apples & Olives Indie Classical Festival.

A gifted communicator, Etienne Abelin has presented on multiple occasions as a TEDx speaker and performer and has hosted numerous concerts of orchestras such as the Orquestra Sinfónica Portuguesa and the Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra in Lisbon, Istanbul, Milano and Athens with audiences up to 4500. He is a frequent contributor on Swiss National radio and television on a wide range of topics, from genre-crossing music to new concert formats, conductors, and also blind comparison of recordings, a fun feature of Swiss Radio.

Abelin's passion for entrepreneurship, technology, education and social change through music have, over the years, led him to co-found and co-direct the Pan-European [Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra](#), the Swiss El Sistema-inspired program [Superar Suisse](#), the [Apples&Olives Indie Classical Festival](#) Zurich, the [Ynight-Classical in Club](#) series and most recently [Music:Eyes - See what you Hear](#), a music tech-ed platform based on music animation. Recent Music:Eyes projects include collaborations with such organizations as the Berlin Philharmonic, the European Union Youth Orchestra, Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, Columbia University and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen. As an educator, he developed a "7 Dimensions of Musical Excellence" framework for the Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra. With his chamber music ensembles [BachSpace - Bach&Electronics](#) and [Nik Bärtsch's Mobile Extended - Ritual Groove Music](#), Abelin has released albums on the Neue Meister and ECM labels. In 2021 he enjoyed the distinction of being featured as one of five visionary conductors in the Karajan Foundation's documentary series [Conducting the Future](#) alongside Marin Alsop, Paavo Järvi, Lars Vogt, and Miguel Perez Iñesta.

Born in Bern, Switzerland, Etienne Abelin studied the violin at the Musik-Akademie Basel, Oberlin College and Indiana University, executive business administration at the University of St. Gallen and conducting with teachers such as Jorma Panula, Neil Varon, Larry Rachleff, Johannes Schläfli, James Allen Anderson and Don Schleicher at the ZHdK Zurich, the University of Delaware and Eastman School of Music where he's currently on leave of absence from his doctoral studies in conducting.

Etienne Abelin resides in the Capital Region of New York, and outside of music pursues his passion for coffee and gelato all over the world. He particularly enjoys light Ethiopian single origin brews and Stefino Gelato from Bologna, Italy.