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**The Albany Symphony and the Empire State Youth Orchestra are Excited to Present “Symphony Side by Side,” a Free Pops Concert and Thrilling Afternoon of Collaborative Music-Making for the Capital Region, supported by the Innovation Partnership of the Albany County Executive and MVP Health Care**

ALBANY, NY – The GRAMMY Award-Winning Albany Symphony and the Empire State Youth Orchestra (ESYO) will present “**Symphony Side by Side**,” a Pops Concert and day of collaborative music-making, on **October 13, 2025 from 1:00pm to 4:30pm** at the MVP Arena, thanks to the **Innovation Partnership of the Albany County Executive and MVP Health Care**. This special event invites student and amateur musicians – and now, this year, singers too! -- of all levels to perform with the Albany Symphony and ESYO. Together, the groups will rehearse and perform a free family-friendly concert for the community, gaining invaluable insight into the professional symphonic process.

The Albany Symphony and ESYO students will sit literally side-by-side and perform a dynamic selection of music, ranging from blockbuster hits from film and television, and beloved symphonic classics. The program includes sizzling selections from ***Wicked***, ***Jurassic Park***, ***How to Train Your Dragon***, ***Moana*** and many, many more!

Student instrumentalists (elementary, junior and senior high school, and college) are invited to join the two orchestras for *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Wicked Highlights*, and the theme from *Spirited Away*. Students must RSVP by October 3 and be able to arrive at MVP Arena by 11am on October 13 for a special students-only rehearsal.

New this year, singers can join the Side by Side for two sing-along numbers! Come to the 1pm vocal rehearsal to sing in Moana's "How Far I'll Go," and to practice pronunciation for the original German "Ode to Joy" chorus. RSVP by October 10 to join the vocal rehearsal.

The concert will conclude with a grand finale in which community members of any skill level (instrumentalists and singers, from amateur to professional) are invited to play and sing with us, celebrating the uniting power of music. Participating audience members will join in for a monumental performance of John Williams' iconic "**Imperial March.**" Then, this year, for the very first time, any and all singers are invited to join us for Beethoven's glorious "**Ode to Joy.**" RSVP by October 10 to play in the finale.

Adding to the day's festivities, families are invited to enjoy a variety of activities on the MVP Arena Concourse, including an "Instrument Playground" where children can discover and try out different musical instruments. The Activities Fair will feature other interactive options, information, and artwork displays from community partners. This event will be an enriching experience for the entire family. Doors to the Arena and Activities Fair will open to the public at 12:30pm.

Singers, and all community musicians can RSVP to join Symphony Side by Side here: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSch5dp\\_8Yd8eD28rl6\\_\\_-eOXp1o3KKurPiU0u-XZg-9LjRAEQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSch5dp_8Yd8eD28rl6__-eOXp1o3KKurPiU0u-XZg-9LjRAEQ/viewform) Sign up to participate by October 10!

Students and music teachers can RSVP to join the special student section here: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSch5dp\\_8Yd8eD28rl6\\_\\_-eOXp1o3KKurPiU0u-XZg-9LjRAEQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSch5dp_8Yd8eD28rl6__-eOXp1o3KKurPiU0u-XZg-9LjRAEQ/viewform) Students must RSVP by October 3.

General information about the concert event can be found here:

<https://www.albanysymphony.com/upcomingconcerts/symphony-side-by-side-2025>

“The positive response the Innovation Partnership has gotten over the last two years to this event convinced us we needed to make it happen again this year,” said Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy. “The Symphony Side-by-Side concert has proven to be a great way to attract new audiences to the arena and that is what Albany County and MVP Health Care have been striving to achieve. Engaging and educating the community is what this is all about.”

“We are excited to open our doors for an event that brings together young musicians with the professionals in the industry. It gives such an amazing opportunity to everyone involved, from the talented musicians who are a part of ESYO, to the seasoned professionals of the Albany Symphony,” said MVP Arena General Manager Bob Belber. “With the generosity of the Innovation Partnership, MVP Healthcare and Albany County we are able to host this event and allow the general public to come in for free to witness all of this talent the capital region has to offer, and then to be able to let the people in attendance join in and play with them is really something to see. We are honored to be able to be a part of this for a third year.”

“At MVP Health Care, we believe in the transformative power of community and creativity,” said MVP Health Care’s Chief Market Strategy and Product Officer, Augusta Martin. “Symphony Side by Side is a shining example of what happens when we invest in experiences that bring people together across generations, backgrounds, and skill levels. Through the Innovation Partnership with Albany County, we’re proud to once again support this inspiring collaboration between the Albany Symphony, ESYO, and the incredible young and amateur musicians of the Capital Region. It’s a celebration of unity, talent, and the joy of making music together and we’re honored to help bring this unforgettable experience to life for our community.”

“It is a privilege to once again open the door for our young musicians to sit side by side with the outstanding professionals of the Albany Symphony, student musicians from schools across our region, and community members. For the third year, this partnership will give our students the chance to experience the joy and energy of playing as part of a professional orchestra, and to be inspired by artists they greatly admire. We are deeply grateful to the Albany Symphony for this collaboration, and to Albany County and MVP for making it possible. And this year, with the addition of a community sing-along, the celebration becomes even more special—what could be more meaningful than raising our voices together in harmony?” said ESYO Music Director Etienne Abelin.

“We are so proud to join our ESYO friends, student musicians from public schools across our region, and amateur musicians from throughout our community for this thrilling day that celebrates the incredible power of orchestral music and collaboration,” said Albany Symphony Music Director, David Alan Miller. “Hundreds of people coming together to perform great music is the most magnificent, life-affirming way to build and celebrate our beautiful community! The final two pieces will include hundreds of student and community musicians who will join our two orchestras in an unforgettable performance of John Williams’ “Imperial March” from Star Wars and Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy.” So, dust off your violin, trumpet, voice, or whatever, and come play or sing with us! We want to give a big “thank you” to Albany County Executive, Dan McCoy and all our friends at MVP Healthcare and MVP Arena for making this incredible musical event possible.”

“I’m excited to be part of the Side-by-Side this year because it gives young musicians and professionals alike an opportunity to come together and learn from each other. Many of my friends at school participate in the event each year, and it’s great to see this experience being brought to students who don’t get many opportunities to play music on a stage this big. The Side-by-Side brings together music I love and people I love, and I’m looking forward to another day full of music-making and memories, said Kingston Czajkowski, a senior at Cairo-Durham High Durham High School who is a percussionist with ESYO.

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