



HONEY BEE GROUP REQUESTS

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t across the Rogue Valley as well as college
. (Courtesy photo)

The Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon and youth orchestra are returning in mid-May for their Spring Concert Series, with conductor and music director Cynthia Hutton making her final walk to the stage before retiring.

“I’ve had the privilege of working with some of the most enthusiastic and dedicated young musicians in the valley over 30 years and I can think back to the very beginning of it to this day,” Hutton said.

For her finale, the students will perform an array of tunes — from the youth orchestra playing legendary film composer John Williams’ “Raiders March” from “Raiders of the Lost Ark” to the youth symphony performing selections from Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “The Phantom of the Opera.”



Hutton

Cello soloist and 2025 Concerto Competition winner Samuel Severson will showcase his musical prowess with two movements of Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto in E minor performed with the youth symphony.

The musical groups will play at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 17, in the Oregon Center for the Arts Music Recital Hall, 450 S. Mountain Ave., at Southern Oregon University, Ashland; and at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 18, at the Craterian Theater, 23 S. Central Ave., Medford.

Tickets are \$15, \$10 for students with ID, and advance tickets can be purchased at the Artistic Piano store, 112 W. Main St., Medford, at the Craterian box office, or see ysso.org/concerts/may.shtml (<http://ysso.org/concerts/may.shtml>). Tickets for the performance at the Oregon Center for the Arts will also be available at the door.

The program for the concerts includes film music from multiple well-known movies.

The youth symphony will play "Concert Suite" by Alan Silvestri and Glen Ballard from "The Polar Express;" two movements of Eldar's "Cello Concerto" with soloist Severson; "The Mission (NBC Theme)" by John Williams; and film score pieces from "The Phantom of the Opera."

The youth orchestra will perform film score music from James Horner's "Apollo 13" and tunes from "Raiders of the Lost Ark" as well as combining with the youth symphony to play selections from "Star Wars — The Force Awakens," also by Williams.

"I've always wanted to do a concert of light film score music ... I think that music is a lot of fun for the kids," Hutton said.

Youth symphony soloist Severson — a 17-year-old student at Logos Public Charter School — was encouraged to play the cello from his musician mother, and he quickly grew in his love and skill with the stringed instrument.



Severson

“It’s really fun and one of the things I love doing most,” Severson said.

He will demonstrate his talent during the youth symphony portion of the concert.

“It’s a great way to showcase Sam Severson, the principal cellist and a remarkable young musician who plays (the cello) with great musicality and technique; it’s a real treat to work with Sam,” Hutton said.

“One of the things I’m really excited about is just how difficult of a piece and how expressive it is, and I’ve never performed anything like it before,” he said. “Especially with all my peers and friends accompanying me makes it so much more fun and exciting; I’m hyped about this concert.”

Teaching and conducting the student-musicians for the last 30 years, Hutton will leave a foundational legacy on the Rogue Valley’s youth music scene when she lowers her baton for the final time.

“This is all about the kids, working with students and seeing their eyes open and lights go on when they get it,” she said of teaching music. “I’ve heard from some former students of mine over the last couple months and students reflecting back on the experience and how instrumental that experience was in guiding their lives.”

Some of Hutton’s students have gone on to play professionally for esteemed musical groups such as the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and the Indianapolis Symphony.

“My heart will be full of thinking about the great kids that’ve come through the doors and played music with us, and especially the kids on stage that are continuing that right now in the symphony,” Hutton said.

Hutton was also an associate professor at Southern Oregon University’s music department before retiring and is currently playing french horn with the Rogue Valley Symphony.

After hanging up her conductor’s baton, Hutton said she will never fully retire from music as she plans to continue to play with the Rogue Valley Symphony and listen to music.

“(Retirement) will add more opportunities to travel and I’ll also keep going with teaching french horn,” she said. “I just wish the youth symphony the best of luck, and it’s a great mission to offer the kids an opportunity to do something which I love so much.”

The Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon includes young musicians from across the Rogue Valley including Medford, Ashland, Grants Pass and more, with musicians from SOU and Rogue Community College also selected to participate this season.

For more information on the nonprofit organization, now in its 37th season, visit ysso.org (<http://ysso.org>).

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