

Napa Valley **Register**

Youth symphony performance wows audience

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Saturday evening, May 24, was the most exciting musical performance in my recent memory. The Napa Valley Youth Symphony performed a more-than-acceptable version of Antonin Dvorak's Quartet No. 6, along with J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, where Helena Herber distinguished herself as the solo violin.

But the "dark horse" of the evening was, to my taste, the remarkable original composition by 19-year-old Napa resident Raja Orr, "Ballade for Flute and Strings." Melodic and thoughtfully composed, it was hard to believe that one his age could have produced so sophisticated a classical composition. Speaking with him afterwards, my judgment was validated by his report that on June 17 another of his compositions will be included in a concert by the Napa Valley Youth Symphony — but this time at Carnegie Hall in New York City, renowned for its tradition of early identification of the best in classical performance.

And so, for those who missed Saturday's concert at the Jarvis Conservatory, there is another chance to hear a piece by an impressive young composer and to enjoy a concert by the Napa Valley Youth Symphony.

But why go to New York, when on July 26, they will play again here in Napa at the Jarvis Conservatory? At \$10 a ticket and with complimentary wine, my guess is that Napa will trump New York for accessibility and affordability.

Without a doubt, the Napa Valley Youth Symphony, its music director Yasushi Ogura, and the pre-college musicians it is producing, not to mention the Jarvis Conservatory itself, are jewels of the Napa Valley and yet another reason why living in the valley is so rich an experience. They deserve the support of an appreciative audience.

http://napavalleyregister.com/news/opinion/mailbag/youth-symphony-performance-wows-audience/article_38ceabe7-2c41-5b30-8593-9665f29ff1dd.html