

Napa Valley Register

Napa Valley Youth Symphony performs in Carnegie Hall

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Submitted photo

Valley Youth Symphony members pose for a photo as they head into their June 17 performance at Carnegie Hall, which is in the background.

Nearly 40 young North Bay musicians stowed their instruments in overhead luggage bins and flew from wine country to the Big Apple for the experience of a lifetime.

The Napa Valley Youth Symphony (NVYS) toured New York City from June 14-19, where they enjoyed a young composers workshop offered by the New York Philharmonic, performed at the Band Shell in Central Park, sat in on a closed rehearsal with the New York Philharmonic in Avery Fisher Hall, and finally performed at Carnegie Hall. The performances were in combination with members of the Modesto Symphony Youth Orchestra under the baton of out-going NVYS artistic director Ryan Murray.

While the performance at the legendary hall was a rare opportunity for all the musicians, it was especially so for Raja Orr, 19, of Napa as the Youth Symphony not only performed his original orchestral work, “Colors of Spring,” but Orr was invited to conduct the piece himself.

“Conducting at Carnegie Hall was absolutely thrilling. I feel so honored to have the talented musicians of the Napa and Modesto Youth Symphony perform my piece. I am especially thankful for Ryan Murray for giving me the opportunity to conduct,” Orr said.

Wedged in between these extraordinary musical experiences, the Napa group that ranges in age from 13 to 19 enjoyed sightseeing at New York landmarks, thanks to the leadership of half a dozen dedicated parent chaperones. The packed schedule included visits to the Statue of Liberty, the top of the Empire State Building, Museum of Modern Art and Chelsea’s Highline, as well as a dinner cruise, and seeing the Broadway production of Aladdin, and much more.

“I think we did everything but tap dance across the Brooklyn Bridge,” said Shelley Surh, executive director of the Youth Symphony. “Our mission is to give our students musical experiences they can’t get anywhere else, and it was thrilling to deliver on that promise.”

None of this could have happened without the generous, widespread support from Napa Valley residents, said Surh.

“We are fortunate to live in a community that invests in young people to this degree,” she says.

Napa Valley Youth Symphony, which draws musicians from throughout the North Bay, is an award-winning youth orchestra, providing the highest level of musical training to young musicians and offering them the opportunity to enrich their lives and the community by performing seasonal, full-length concerts and touring both nationally and internationally. Two years ago, the symphony toured Central Europe.

For more information on NVYS, visit NVYSO.org





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