

Press Release

ORGANIZATION: Midwest Young Artists
878 Lyster Road, Highwood, IL, 60040 www.mya.org

CONTACT: Sarah Barnes
Wk: (847)926-9898 ext. 306
Cell: (847)721-3680
Fx: (847)926-4787
sarahbarnes@mya.org

An Unforgettable Celebration of Youth with World-Renowned Conductor Leonard Slatkin and the Midwest Young Artists

FORT SHERIDAN, IL, November 6, 2004 – Don't miss an unforgettable musical celebration of youth as Midwest Young Artists (MYA, 878 Lyster Road, Highwood, IL 60040, 847-926-9898) presents *All-American Kids Performing All-American Music* at 3:00 and 7:30 p.m., December 12, 2004, at Chicago's new Harris Theater for Music and Dance (205 East Randolph Drive, Chicago Millennium Park, 312-334-7777). For tickets, please visit the Harris Theater at www.madtchi.com.

The musical celebration begins with the **3:00 p.m.** riveting performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* by gifted MYA alum, 19-year-old pianist **Christopher Falzone** and the MYA Concert Orchestra. "From the first time I heard Chris play, I knew he was an exceptional musician. Even at a young age, he was a natural; the music just flowed from him. He has a natural technique which allows him to do whatever he wants to creatively, a desire and drive to be an exceptional musician, and the work ethic to put it all together. Chris is on the brink of becoming a world famous concert pianist. I can't wait to see where Chris is in five years," states Dr. Allan Dennis, Director of MYA. In addition, MYA's younger jazz and choral ensembles will inspire you as they foreshadow the achievements of America's next generation of musicians.

Wine and dine at **5:00 p.m.** at the magnificent Chicago Athletic Association (12 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago). Enjoy a delectable dinner of tasteful food and spirits while the MYA Madrigal Singers provide royal entertainment. Reservations are limited. Call MYA at 847-926-9898 for reservations.

Don't miss the **7:30 p.m.** concert, as celebrated conductor Leonard Slatkin and the award-winning MYA Symphony Orchestra join forces in an extraordinary performance of Dvorak's *Symphony No. 9 "From the New World."* Dr. Allan Dennis is delighted to welcome Maestro Slatkin to the podium. "From his beginnings as conductor of the Saint Louis Youth Orchestra to his post with the National Symphony Orchestra, he has remained a champion of music education," says Dennis. "The opportunity to work with Mr. Slatkin will be a long-lasting memory for MYA's young musicians." The concert line up also includes the MYA Big Band and Chorale, the electrifying MYA Piano Trio, and the talented MYA Rattan Percussion Trio (2004 Fischhoff Gold Medalists). The MYA Rattan Percussion Trio has been featured on WGN-Radio with Rick Kogan, Harry Porterfield's *Someone You Should Know*, and PRI's *From the Top* radio show.

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Highly regarded as one of the premiere young pianists of today, **Christopher Falzone** is a Davidson Fellow, a student at Ravinia's Steans Institute, and a student at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studies with Leon Fleisher and Claude Frank. He made both his orchestral and solo debut in Tokyo in 2002 and, most recently, received the prestigious Gilmore Young Artist Award. Other noteworthy recognition includes first prize in the Bartók-Kabalevsky-Prokofiev International Piano Competition, second prize in the International Stravinsky Piano Competition, and a "Best in Festival" award in the Virtuosi of the Year 2000 Music Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. TV and radio appearances include Public Radio International's *From the Top* and ABC's *Good Morning America*. In 2001, after being selected to participate in Isaac Stern's 3-week workshop, his quartet, the Midwest Young Artists Favre Quartet, performed at Carnegie Hall. Mr. Falzone's ensemble, the Midwest Young Artists Orion Trio, received first prize in the 2002 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition.

Leonard Slatkin began his musical studies on the violin. Born in Los Angeles into a distinguished musical family, his parents were conductor-violinist Felix Slatkin and cellist Eleanor Aller, founding members of the famed Hollywood String Quartet. Mr. Slatkin studied conducting with his father and continued with Walter Susskind at Aspen and Jean Morel at The Juilliard School. Mr. Slatkin has made regular appearances over the last two decades with virtually all the major international orchestras and opera companies, including the New York and Berlin Philharmonics, Cleveland Orchestra, and Amsterdam Concertgebouw, as well as the Metropolitan Opera and the Vienna Staatsoper. Chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, he is also conductor laureate of the Saint Louis Symphony, following his highly successful 17-year music directorship. Celebrating his ninth season as conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Slatkin has been praised by critics and audiences around the world for his imaginative programming and interpretations of a vast range of repertoire. His tenure with the National Symphony has included highly lauded European, Asian, and US tours; numerous national broadcasts; and themed festivals. Other distinctions include a White House celebration honoring the Orchestra and Mr. Slatkin for advocacy of America's artistic heritage; a Grammy for Best Classical Recording; and, most recently, the National Medal of the Arts, the nation's highest honor for a performing artist. Throughout his career Mr. Slatkin has demonstrated a continuing commitment to arts education and to reaching diverse audiences. He has participated in benefit performances for youth orchestras in the Washington area and beyond. His recent advocacy of the D.C. Youth Orchestra enabled 130 children to continue public music education.

Midwest Young Artists (878 Lyster Road, Highwood, IL, 847-926-9898), is the leading youth-music ensemble program in the Midwest. Founded in 1993 by Dr. Allan Dennis with one orchestra, MYA has grown into a full-curriculum music school with a distinguished faculty of 22. Presently, MYA has five youth orchestras, more than 50 chamber music ensembles, three vocal ensembles, an all-inclusive jazz program, as well as classes in music theory and history. The program is for serious young musicians and dedicated amateurs. MYA is housed in its own state-of-the-art facility in the town of Fort Sheridan, which provides its students with large rehearsal halls, classrooms, a recording studio, and music library. MYA graduates are accepted at the most selective conservatories in the country.

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