

MUSIC

Orchestra spotlights young musicians at chamber concert

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER

Bonnie Holyoak believes the support of young artists is important to the future of symphonic music. To insure its survival, the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra hosts a Youth Artist Competition every year, which awards cash prizes and an opportunity to appear with the orchestra.

This year, conductor Russell Reed decided to take the non-profit organization's support a step further by including a duet performed by two young harpists in the Jan. 31 Chamber Concert at the Plymouth-Canton Little

Theatre. The young musicians will step into the spotlight for the program, which features string quartets, a brass trio, bassoon duet, an alp horn solo and flute quartet.

"These young musicians are the ones who will carry on," said Bonnie Holyoak, orchestra executive director. "If they don't become involved, there won't be any symphonic music."

Christina Szolag, a Farmington Hills harpist has performed with the PSO in "The Nutcracker Ballet," for the last two years.

Szolag began studying harp 10 years ago with Ruth Myers,

director of the Detroit Metropolitan Harp Ensemble. A graduate of Harrison High School in Farmington Hills, Szolag is a first year music student at Eastern Michigan University. This is her first appearance with the Plymouth Symphony as a featured artist.

"It's going to be a fun concert," said Szolag. "I've always played with the harp ensemble, so I've been amongst the crowd."

Szolag will perform a duet with Allegra Lilly, a seventh grade student at Bloomfield Hills Middle School. Lilly is the 1997 winner of the Detroit Sym-

phony Civic Orchestra's Concerto Competition, and as a result was a featured soloist on the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Educational Concert Series.

This is also Sarah Hamilton's first appearance as a soloist with the orchestra. Hamilton, first chair flutist at Novi High School, won second place in the Youth Artist Competition, along with Ross Huff, a trumpet player and major at Plymouth-Canton High School. Both will perform with the orchestra and receive a \$300 cash prize.

Five young musicians from Plymouth-Canton, Plymouth-

What! The Plymouth Symphony Orchestra presents light chamber music performed by its members and winners of the Youth Artist competition.

Where: Plymouth-Canton Little Theatre, 8415 Canton Center Road at Joy, Canton.

When: 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31. An afterglow takes place immediately following the concert at the Willow Brook Inn, 44255 Warren, east of Sheldon, Canton. Admission is free.

Cost: Concert tickets are \$9 adults, \$6 for seniors/college students, and \$5 for children K-12. Call (313) 451-2112.

Salem, Belleville, Northville, and Novi high schools entered the orchestra's annual competition in mid-December. First place winner Stephen Goto, a senior at Plymouth-Canton High School, will make a guest appearance in a violin solo at a future concert.

Hamilton, who will perform the first movement of a Poulenc sonata during the Chamber Concert, said she was surprised at winning the competition because she knew most of the other musicians from attending the All-State program at Interlochen and "knew they were really good."

The \$300 cash prize will go into the bank for her college expenses. She hopes to attend either Michigan State University or the University of Michigan as a music major next fall.

"I'm looking forward to the concert because it will be such fun to perform," said Hamilton.

Hamilton's mother Kathy is proud of her daughter, a senior at Novi High School.

"We're very proud of Sarah," said Kathy Hamilton. "I'm probably the only mother of a teenager that comes home and yells about turning down classical music."

Huff, also a second-place winner in the competition, began trumpet studies six years ago at

Arnold Williams Music in Canton. He has attended master classes with jazz trumpeter John Faddis and Kevin Good of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

A winner of the Jeanne M. Allison Scholarship sponsored by the Plymouth Community Arts Council in 1997, Huff has performed with the Michigan State Band and Orchestra Associations' All State Honors Band in the Michigan Youth Arts Festival at Western Michigan University. He is a 5-year veteran of the All State Band Program sponsored by the University of Michigan at Interlochen Center for the Arts.

In 1995 as a member of the Symphony Band at Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, Huff performed for President Clinton at a ground-breaking ceremony for the Metro Airport expansion.

He is a member of the newly formed Wind Ensemble at the Educational Park and the award-winning Plymouth-Canton Marching Band. A student of Jean Moorehead Libs, Huff teaches trumpet to beginning students. He has recorded with Detroit Police Chief Isaiah McKinnon and the "Blue Pigs."

"I didn't go into the competition expecting to win anything," said Huff. "I just went in to do my best."

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