

Press Clippings 4/7/2018

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Elgin Symphony Orchestra offers \$10 tickets to youth concerts

SUBMITTED BY ELGIN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Elgin Symphony Orchestra is offering general admission tickets to the Ainsworth Concerts for Youth concerts at 11:15 a.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, April 10-11, at the Hemmens Cultural Center, 45 Symphony Way in Elgin. Tickets are \$10; taxes and fees apply.

Advance purchase is required by 3 p.m. Monday, April 9. For information, see ElginSymphony.org.

The concerts, led by resident conductor Stephen Squires, feature 15-year-old cellist Ifetayo Ali Landing, the junior winner of the 2017 Sphinx Organization Competition and a Chicago native.

The 45-minute program, "Music Emojis: Feelings, Connections, Life," explores how music expresses emotion.

ESO Ainsworth Concerts for Youth are designed to introduce children in second to eighth grade to the fundamentals of music and to generate an interest in learning how to play an instrument.

The 2018 concerts include works by traditional and contemporary composers like George F. Handel, Gustav Mahler, Danny Elfman, Jennifer Higdon and John Williams. It is sponsored by Sterling Ainsworth, James and Ruth Ann Snodgrass and the Elgin Symphony League.

Seven hundred and fifty students from **Elgin Area School District U-46** are able to attend due to a generous grant from the Bear Family Restaurants and the U-46 Foundation.

Guest artist Ifetayo Ali-Landing began her musical studies on violin as soon as she was able to stand. At age 3, she decided that she preferred the mellow sounds of the cello and begged her mother to switch. At age 4, she was playing the cello. Ifetayo was selected as one of the winners of the 2016 DePaul Concerto Festival for Young Performers competition and performed as soloist with the Festival's Oistrakh Symphony Orchestra. Over the years, she has placed or received honorable mentions for the Society of American Musicians competition, DePaul Concerto Festival for Young Musicians competition, and the Music Festival in Honor of Confucius competition.

The Sphinx Competition is held every year in Detroit, Michigan. The competition is open to all junior high, high school, and college-age black and Latino string players residing in the U.S. The competition offers young black and Latino classical string players a chance to compete under the guidance of an internationally renowned panel of judges and to perform with established professional musicians in a competition setting. Its primary goals are to encourage, develop and recognize classical music talent in the black and Latino communities. For more information, visit www.sphinxmusic.org.

Stephen Squires is a musician with a career that blends his passions for conducting, teaching, and performing. Fully committed to conducting the music of living composers, he has premiered more than 80 new works. Squires received his musical training at the Preparatory School of the Eastman School of Music and the Crane School of Music, in his home state of New York. He earned his master's degree in instrumental conducting/trumpet performance at California State University, Northridge. Further conducting studies were with Helmuth Rilling, Maurice Abravanel, Daniel Lewis, Tsung Yeh, and at the Aspen Music Festival. He is professor of conducting in the Music Conservatory of the Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University. Prior to this appointment, he served on the artist faculty of the Northern Illinois School of Music for 19 years, where he received the prestigious "Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award."

Squires' current professional appointments include resident conductor of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, principal guest conductor of the Fox Valley Orchestra, music director of the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra (Rockford), music director of the Millar Brass (Evanston), and music director of the Illinois Brass Band (Arlington Heights). He is the former music director of the Illinois Chamber Symphony.

Now in its 67th season, the ESO offers programming unmatched for an entertaining, informative and relaxing cultural experience. The ESO has won Illinois Professional Orchestra of the Year an unprecedented four times -- in 1988, 1999, 2005 and 2016 -- and works to create an enjoyable entertainment experience that goes beyond the magnificent music performed by some of the best musicians in the Midwest.

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Elgin High Band a mainstay of community events

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



The 120-member Elgin High School band was honored with an Elgin Image Award for its service to the community for more than a century. The band has performed at various community events and parades, such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day and Fourth of July ceremonies. *Courtesy of Elgin High School*

For more than a century, the Elgin High School band has been a mainstay of community events and parades, such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and Fourth of July ceremonies.

Dubbed the "Pride of Elgin," the band also draws community members to the annual marching band showcase and Concert Band Festival.

"We are good people and we represent our community," band director Robert Sanchez said.

The band was recently honored with an Elgin Image Award by the city's Image Advisory Commission. It was among 10 individuals, organizations and businesses recognized for their hard work and dedication throughout 2017.

"It's validation for Elgin High School as a community brand," said Sanchez, who has taught band for 13 years -- the last three in Elgin. "We kind of represent a certain core value system and hope that system of values aligns with what the expectations of the city are. Most of the things that we've done as a program, at least in the last 20 years or so, have really been local. Our resources and our opportunities have been such ... that's really been the focus. We don't really invest in competition. We are keeping it at home here and people are noticing."



The Elgin High School band during an ABC 7 Chicago Friday Flyover in October. The band was recently honored with an Elgin Image Award. - Courtesy of Elgin Area School District U-46

Sanchez said being recognized among this year's group of Image Award recipients speaks to the band's service to the community.

"It's important for our survival too," Sanchez said. "If things don't have value, when resources are strained, those things with the least amount of value, they go away. Our music programs are still going and they are doing all right. The community has seen the value in it to ensure that it keeps going. That's not the case everywhere."

This year, the Elgin High band has about 120 members.



Elgin High School 1911 Orchestra

Elgin High School's 1911 orchestra before the school's first band was formed in 1915. After more than a century of serving the city, the band recently was honored with an Elgin Image Award. - Courtesy of Elgin High School

Since its inception in the early 1900s, the band has shown an unwavering commitment to the city, said Trisha Dieringer, chairwoman of the Elgin Image Advisory Commission.

"The Elgin High band every year has done a Veterans Day program, and without fail whether it's rain or snow, it doesn't make any difference, they come," said Dieringer, a veteran who served as the Veterans Day master of ceremonies for about 16 years. "They are so passionate about helping the veteran community. They play the military medley. Every time they play one of the songs of the military branches, the veterans are so excited they jump out of their seats. To me and the veteran population in Elgin, they mean the world."



Elgin High School Band - 1935

The Elgin High School band in 1935. - Courtesy of City of Elgin

The band has a long history of supporting Memorial Day and Flag Day programs, and serving the city in other ways, she added.

"Up until 1963, they were the only high school ... they have been there to answer the call for bands that the city needed," Dieringer said.

Elgin High band today shares the responsibility of performing at community events on a rotating basis with Larkin High School in Elgin.

"I personally have such admiration for these kids," Dieringer said. "They always come out strong every year. They serve us well as a successful organization of the city of Elgin."



Elgin High School drum major Alex Podlasinska, 18, left, and fellow drum major, Chris Kinsey, right, head the band before the halftime show during the last football game of the season in October. The band recently was honored with the Elgin Image Award. - Courtesy of Alex Podlasinska

Drum major Alex Podlasinska, 18, said teenagers often can feel disconnected from their communities, but band participation gives her a sense of belonging.

"It really makes me feel like I'm part of the community," she said. "When we participate in the Memorial Day and Veterans Day parades, that really makes me feel like I'm one of the people. It's really been an important part of my high school career. It really shaped my experience here."

Press Clippings 4/8/2018

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Elgin middle school to remain demonstration site for national college readiness program

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO



Students at Kimball Middle School in Elgin discuss Martin Luther King Jr. and his philosophy of nonviolence to encourage social change to a class in January. Kimball will remain an AVID National Demonstration School through 2019. (Rafael Guerrero / The Courier-News)

Elgin's Kimball Middle School will remain an AVID National Demonstration School for two more years, a distinction the school has held since 2015.

AVID, short for Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a college-readiness system used by more than 6,000 schools nationwide, according to the nonprofit's website. A smaller number of schools are demonstration sites whose approaches can be observed by other schools.

Kimball was certified a National Demonstration School in 2015, at the time only the third school in the state to have the designation. Its re-validation means it will remain a demonstration site through 2019. The recognition places Kimball in the top 2 percent of schools nationwide to achieve this designation, a District U46 news release said.

Kimball Principal Al Tamburrino said every classroom in the school has some of the college-readiness system in place. For instance, students in all classrooms use flexible-note taking strategies, which Tamburrino said encourages students to look back at their notes on a regular basis rather than eventually ignoring them. All Kimball students are part of an AVID approach known as WICOR, which stands for writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading.

"It's a two-faceted system," Tamburrino said. "There's the AVID elective. Those kids get a high dose of higher-level thinking and college and career readiness skills." Kimball's AVID elective is taken by almost a third of the school's student population, about 200 students. Students come from all backgrounds, he said.

“And then there’s the AVID system, in which we’ve moved these strategies school-wide,” he said. “Our system is so embedded that if the district stopped funding AVID, we would still be doing it.”

Tamburrino said Kimball hosted educators and administrators of more than a dozen schools from across the state last school year. Some officials visited because they were starting their own AVID programs, others came to compare and contrast approaches, he said.

“Good things are happening along the AVID system, and we are proud to have a demonstration school in the district,” Ron Raglin, District U46’s assistant superintendent for educational support programs and alignment, said in a written statement. “As AVID continues to expand in the Midwest, U46 is becoming the go-to place for AVID support through events such as the AVID Midwest Showcase and the AVID Summer Path Training.”

The re-validation process for Kimball took between nine to twelve months, Tamburrino said.

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Negron almost ‘spoiled’ by run

Larkin grad: Loyola’s Final Four appearance something to build on

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

A year ago, Christian Negron was finishing up his senior year at Larkin High School, a basketball standout who spent his final season on the bench with a torn ACL.

This year Negron was under the bright lights of San Antonio’s Alamodome, as his team, the Loyola Ramblers, surprised the sports world by advancing to the Final Four in the NCAA tournament.

“We had open practice (earlier in the week) leading up to Saturday (March 31),” Negron said. “The lower-half section (of the Alamodome) was all open. We couldn’t hear ourselves on court because of all the people in the stands.”

The roar of the crowd at the March 31 game — all 68,000-plus people — was even more deafening, he added.

Loyola’s season ended with a loss against Michigan, leaving the Ramblers one game short of playing for the national title. The loss stings, Negron said, because the team believed a national championship was possible.

For the Loyola freshman, the Final Four appearance is something to build upon, Negron said. Like his other Loyola teammates, he hopes to experience a Final Four run once again.

“It’s hard to put into words,” the Elgin resident said. “I’m still trying to reflect on it. I almost feel spoiled getting to experience it.”

Negron only played two minutes during the NCAA tournament, as he was a backup behind a few other players, including former Jacobs High School player Cameron

Krutwig. Negron said he had no problem being on the bench, as he understood his role and appreciated the opportunity to be playing behind some “really great players.”

“I have really big shoes to fill next year,” Negron said of replacing departing players like Donte Ingram, Ben Richardson, Clayton Custer and others.

Negron said he is still recovering from his injuries, setbacks that kept him off the Larkin court his senior year and limited him this season. He averaged 16.2 points, 11.8 rebounds, 4.2 assists, 3.0 blocks and 2.2 steals per game as a junior in 2015-16.

The couple of appearances Negron did have in the NCAA tournament were during the highest and lowest points of Loyola’s Cinderella run. He was on the court for the last minute of Saturday’s loss to Michigan at the Alamodome, with the game’s outcome all but assured.

Only a week earlier, Loyola coach Porter Moser put Negron in for the final minute of the Elite Eight matchup against Kansas State in Atlanta. In that game, the outcome was also assured, in Loyola’s favor.

“That was when the moment started to sink in for me,” Negron said.

Everything about Final Four week in San Antonio was exponentially greater, Negron said. The sports media were fixed on Loyola, including the team’s celebrity team chaplain, Sister Jean Dolores-Schmidt. Their faces and names were plastered throughout the Alamodome and San Antonio, he said.

The local support overwhelmed Negron, he added. Larkin High School and School District U46 expressed support via social media and on the school’s marquee, he said. Family, friends and others reached out to Negron, telling him the community was behind Loyola.

“Even coach agreed. He described (Final Four week) as not being normal,” Negron said. “We wanted to keep everything as normal, but it was hard to do with all the distractions. It didn’t hinder our performance, but it was something we had to keep in mind.”

As for next season, Negron said he and his teammates “want to get back to this place,” meaning a return to the Final Four.

If they do pull it off, perhaps Negron will see Loyola well-represented once again in future installments of the NCAA’s “One Shining Moment” highlights reel played immediately after the tournament wraps up.

“I had chills” watching this year’s installment, which included several highlights of Loyola’s incredible run, Negron said.

“Watching ‘One Shining Moment’ every year, it gives you goose bumps,” he said, noting he’s been watching the tournament since he was a child.

“Every year something amazing happens. It never ceases to surprise me. Seeing us there, it was all those emotions times 1,000.”

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Streamwood students create temporary genocide museum

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



Laura Dietrich, 16, checks out the "Who do you want to be?" display at Streamwood High School's library. Students in the school's Advanced Placement world history and global studies class and the Be the Change club created the museum for Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month. *Brian Hill | Staff Photographer*

When 16-year-old Anya Landrowski visited the [Holocaust museum](#) in Skokie last fall, it sparked a sense of empowerment she hadn't felt before.

"I was kind of blown away," said the Streamwood High School sophomore, a member of the school's new Be the Change club that helped create a temporary genocide museum in the school's library last week. "I had to make a difference in the world. My whole life, I've kind have been rolling with the tides. It made me want to be a leader."

Sixty-nine sophomores enrolled in the Advanced Placement world history and global studies class at the school helped create the museum for Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month. Hundreds of visitors, including families, community members and roughly 500 students, perused its exhibits during the two days the museum was open.

Students created 18 projects raising awareness of massacres resulting from national, ethnic, religious or racial animus. They set up display areas explaining and honoring the victims and "upstanders" of six genocides during the 20th and 21st centuries -- the Holocaust, Armenia, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur.

Sophomore Yesenia Gonzzalez, 15, said she was unaware of the massacres of 100,000 Bosnian Muslims and Croats from 1992 to 1995 and called it the "forgotten genocide."

She wanted to make other students aware of what she had learned through the project and let them know "you can prevent them from happening."

Among the displays was a gallery providing examples of people who intervened and stood up in defense of others being persecuted in various conflicts. Visitors also could gather at the "action lab" to sign pledges against genocide, donate to [Save the Children](#), and discuss current issues in schools, the community and nation.

"It was so eye-opening," said sophomore Edgar Crespo, 15, of researching and learning about various genocides he never knew occurred. "You learn so much about how to be an upstander. I wanted to be able to make an impact in the school, even if it was just one person."

Students hope the museum will cause a ripple effect of change and be reproduced each year in April.

"There's ways to make a difference beyond (stopping genocide)," said social studies teacher Jaimee Shearn, who created a six-minute video for the exhibit.

In years past, Shearn's students have done classroom projects on genocide on a much smaller scale. This year, the goal was to make the museum accessible to everyone and encourage students "to think of themselves as the change," she said.

Students researched their topics for nearly four weeks and tried to emulate the Skokie Holocaust museum by creating artifacts, educational display boards and websites.

"I think it's definitely something we can continue and maybe even scale up a bit," Shearn said. "Our goal is to hopefully turn this into an online collection."