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PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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**CELEBRATING YOUNG STRING MUSICIANS OF SOUTH WEST SEATTLE
AT *SUPER STRING SATURDAY*, JANUARY 28, 2012**

**Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestras partners with Seattle Public Schools to enhance
instrumental music education**

Seattle WA - On **Saturday January 28 from 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.** young violin, viola, cello and bass players from South West Seattle schools will fill the Chief Sealth High School auditorium with the sound of their hard work and dedication. The **second annual South West Seattle Super String Saturday** showcases elementary and middle school string players who have been working with professional string musicians hired by the Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestras in their instrumental music classes. These musician “coaches” lead small group and individualized instruction to deepen the quality of the students’ musical skills. Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestras (YSO) provides the coaches free to the following schools: **Concord, Roxhill, Sanislo, Arbor Heights, Gatewood, and Highland Park elementary schools and Denny International Middle School.**

YSO has supported public school music education through its *YSO in the Schools* program for over 20 years. YSO has been able to deepen its partnership with public schools by focusing on schools in South West Seattle where students have historically had lower participation rates in instrumental music due to economic barriers. Through the generous support of a Wallace Foundation Excellence Award, YSO provides music coaches to collaboratively teach with Seattle Public School instrumental music instructors during the school day. In the elementary schools, YSO coaches also provide a free before school lesson each week as well as coaching through the West Seattle Community Orchestra, essentially tripling the lesson time available to students and supplying private lessons that most of these students would not be able to afford.

The music heard at South West Seattle Super String Saturday is evidence that this partnership has increased quality of and access to music education. **Denny International Middle School Orchestra Director Heather Shaffer** testifies to the value of the program: “I can’t say enough about this program or the coaches! It enables students to receive the results of private and semi-private lessons, regardless of family finances or work schedules. It helps kids past the significant initial hurdles of learning a stringed instrument and then provides them with the tools to play the music that’s inside them. For these students, it opens the door that was closed to a lifetime and even a livelihood of music.”

South West Seattle Super String Saturday is also an opportunity for these young musicians to engage in peer-to-peer learning as they play alongside the top-level Youth Symphony Orchestra, SYSO's flagship orchestra and one of the premier youth orchestras in the United States. Imagine a fourth grader who has only begun to study the violin, taking part in a full symphony orchestra for the first time. Immersed in that wonderful, massive sound, the beginning student could be sitting next to an accomplished high school musician on their way to a professional career. The excitement generated by these side-by-side concerts is palpable, causing the younger students to aspire to the level of performance and dedication demonstrated by their older peers.

“The benefits of nurturing young musicians have been demonstrated by numerous studies and research. These evaluations reveal that students gain in both musicianship and in life skills such as focus, self-discipline, collaboration, and self-confidence – skills needed to prepare for college and a career in any field. We are delighted to be playing a part in the growth of these young people as well as in the creation of a strong instrumental music program in South West Seattle,” says **SYSO Music Director Stephen Rogers Radcliffe**.

As the musicians play on the stage in the Chief Sealth auditorium they will also discover that they are part of the historic redevelopment of a robust orchestra program at, what in a few years, will be their high school. String orchestra enrollment at Denny International Middle School has more than doubled since the program began. By putting time and resources into the early years of music education in order to create skilled high school orchestra musicians, SYSO is also supporting Seattle Public Schools' goal of ensuring every school has quality programs under its New Student Assignment Plan.

All are welcome to join this free community event -- whether participants have a student musician, a younger child, or are interested in learning more about playing an instrument. In addition to side-by-side concerts, activities will include parent information sessions, scholarship information, chamber ensembles, instrument master classes, resources and refreshments. For more information about South West Seattle Super String Saturday or the *SYSO in the Schools* program, please contact Kathleen Allen at 206.362.2300.

Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestras (SYSO) has a tradition of life-changing excellence and innovation. Founded in 1942, SYSO is the largest youth orchestra organization in the nation, providing direct instruction to over 1,500 students annually through four full orchestras, two summer programs (Marrowstone Music Festival and Marrowstone-in-the-City), and partnerships with local public schools. SYSO's flagship orchestra,

the Seattle Youth Symphony, is one of the premiere youth orchestras in the U.S. Made up of the finest young classical musicians in the region, the Seattle Youth Symphony regularly delivers professional-caliber performances filled with the unrivaled energy and passion of youthful artistry. Internationally recognized guest conductors and soloists frequently perform with the orchestra, and members receive regular coaching lessons with distinguished artists from the Seattle Symphony and other regional orchestras and ensembles.

The Wallace Foundation is an independent, national foundation dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people. Its three current objectives are: strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement; improving out-of-school learning opportunities; and building appreciation and demand for the arts. The Foundation maintains a Knowledge Center of free publications on what it has learned at www.wallacefoundation.org.

Who: Young string musicians of Concord, Roxhill, Sanislo, Arbor Heights, Gatewood, and Highland Park elementary schools and Denny International Middle School and SYSO's Youth Symphony Orchestra.

What: Performances by the Seattle Youth Symphony, SYSO Scholarship Chamber Ensembles, and string instrumental music students from South West Seattle

When: Saturday, January 28 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Where: Chief Sealth International High School Auditorium 2600 Thistle Street, Seattle WA.

Price: Free

Ticket Purchasing: No tickets necessary, free community event

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For more information please call Kathleen Allen at (206) 362-2300.