

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 23, 2025

**Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra  
to Host Violins of Hope-Wisconsin Residency**

Weaving a tapestry throughout our community, the Violins of Hope-Wisconsin residency will tell stories of instruments from the Holocaust, and the musicians who played them, through educational and cultural programs and exhibits -- fostering hope, resilience, and unity.

**Milwaukee, WI** – To compose an era of harmony in our community, the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO) will showcase musical instruments from the Holocaust in performances, exhibitions, and educational programs through the Violins of Hope-Wisconsin residency from September 1, 2025, through January 31, 2026.

MYSO is bringing together organizations around the state to tell the stories of these instruments through the power of art -- promoting respect and understanding to build a more accepting, resilient, and unified community.

The centerpiece of the residency, the Violins of Hope, is a collection of stringed instruments that Jewish musicians and others targeted by the Nazis owned and played before and during the Holocaust. The instruments deliver a powerful message, as the Violins of Hope website says:

“Remember me, remember us. Life is good, celebrate it for those who perished, for those who survived. For all people.”

“Music and the arts speak the language of the soul, unifying us all,” said Linda Edelstein, MYSO Chief Executive Officer.

“By amplifying the important messages of the Violins of Hope, ensuring that their stories educate about the Holocaust, and connecting their lessons to today, we will bring hope to thousands of young musicians, students, and community members to make a positive impact on our society.”

Painstakingly restored by violin-makers Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein and collected in Israel, the Violins of Hope instruments are symbols of resilience and the enduring power of the human spirit.

Many of the instruments were donated by or purchased from Holocaust survivors and family members. Several carry the Star of David as a decoration and an identity tag.

At a time of rising antisemitism and other forms of hate in Wisconsin, the lessons that the violins and their stories teach are profoundly relevant for today.

To honor the voices of the past, enlighten the present, and inspire hope for the future, MYSO is working with a broad spectrum of community, arts and cultural groups, as well as schools, universities, and faith-based organizations, across the state to bring the residency here.

The 12 cultural, faith-based, and educational partners committed to date are Carthage College, Congregation Shalom, Harry & Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center, Jewish Museum Milwaukee, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County Historical Society, Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center, Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

The 13 performing arts partners committed to date are Cream City Suzuki Strings, Danceworks, Festival City Symphony, First Stage, Florentine Opera, Frankly Music, Milwaukee Ballet, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Next Act Theatre, Renaissance Theatreworks, RUACH, and Skylight Music Theatre.

To learn more about the residency, or to get involved, please visit [www.violinsofhopewisconsin.org](http://www.violinsofhopewisconsin.org).

### **About MYSO**

Since 1956, the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO) has been nurturing, challenging, and inspiring young minds through music, profoundly changing lives and the community for the better.

MYSO has grown from one orchestra and 30 students to become the largest after-school youth orchestra program in the country. MYSO yearly serves 1,000 musicians, ages 8 to 18, from more than 200 schools, 90 ZIP codes and as many as 14 counties in southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. The organization reaches an audience of 6,000 students through free concerts and 25,000 people through public performances.

A founding member of the United Performing Arts Fund, MYSO offers more than 40 ensemble and supplemental training programs, providing high-quality experiences for students of varying skills and experience.

For more information about MYSO, please visit [www.myso.org](http://www.myso.org).

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