



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## **Carnegie Hall Beckons Malibu High School Orchestra for Special New York Performance**

***Santa Monica, Calif.*** – Malibu High School Orchestra players spend years perfecting their craft – working tirelessly to bring the stirring harmonies of Holst and Vivaldi to life. Now, those efforts have earned the group an opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall through the prestigious Manhattan Concert Productions’ Symphonic Series Residency and Performance Program.

“Our brilliant music students have earned the musical adventure of a lifetime with their unwavering dedication to their expertise,” said Sandra Lyon, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified Superintendent. “We are extraordinarily proud of them and their instructors for earning this residency and for representing Santa Monica-Malibu Unified in such a unique capacity.”

The residency – to be scheduled late in the 2015-16 school year – will bring MHS orchestra members to New York to attend a series of workshops, confer with professional musicians and perform on Carnegie Hall’s world-famous Isaac Stern Auditorium/Ron O. Perelman Stage.

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified sets a high priority on arts education, supplementing its many programs and resources with community support from groups such as the Arts Angels, a booster club that provided the recording equipment the orchestra used to send its MP3 audition to event organizers. The group learned of its acceptance in a quick two weeks, and now will embark on a fund-raising campus to pay for the journey.

The invitation to play rewards years of extra-curricular hard work and dedication for the Malibu High students, many of whom have played together since fourth grade.

“We start them together a little earlier than other districts,” said Maia Zander, who is in her sixth year as Malibu High School music instructor and orchestra leader. “This school and these kids are special, driven, determined, a lot of fun to work with and they play well together. They lift each other up.”

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The orchestra's success can be attributed to an overall sense of purpose – no one student stands out over the rest. Moreover, all of the 30 members are honor students who must devote significant time to their studies, making every minute of practice count.

Two such students are juniors Molly and Emma Gallagher, who both started playing music in the fourth grade – Molly on the viola and Emma on the violin. The twin sisters, now sectional leaders for their respective instruments, credit their success to the Malibu High music program and Zander, who has been guiding them since the sixth grade.

“Success in music requires practice every single day,” said Molly. “Dr. Zander makes it fun and inspires us to play better.”

The Malibu High orchestra plays several high-profile events during the school year, including the Samohi Invitational Band and Orchestra Festival on March 25. But Zander was looking for an event that could prove transformational for the entire group. She found that opportunity through Manhattan Concert Productions, which oversees several collaborative musical residency programs.

In earning the trip to perform in New York, the Malibu High Orchestra follows in the footsteps of the MHS Choral group, which performed at Carnegie Hall in March 2014 as part of the National Youth Choir.

For Molly and Emma Gallagher, performing at Carnegie Hall is a musician's dream come true as well as a chance to see the Empire State Building, catch a Broadway show and, perhaps, indulge their sweet tooth with a slice of New York cheesecake.

**Photo Captions:**

MHS Orchestra1: Malibu High School Orchestra players, pictured here, have earned the group an opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall through the prestigious Manhattan Concert Productions' Symphonic Series Residency and Performance Program to be scheduled during the 2015-16 school year. *Photo credit: Devon Meyers*

MHS Orchestra2: Malibu High School Orchestra players, pictured here, have earned the group an opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall through the prestigious Manhattan Concert Productions' Symphonic Series Residency and Performance Program to be scheduled during the 2015-16 school year. *Photo credit: Devon Meyers*

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*As a community of learners, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District works together in a nurturing environment to help students be visionary, versatile thinkers; resourceful, life-long learners; effective, multilingual communicators and global citizens.*