



BRAZOS VALLEY  
*Symphony Society*

## PRESS RELEASE

**Contact:** Nika Hancock  
**Phone:** 979-696-6100  
**E-mail:** [office@bvso.org](mailto:office@bvso.org)  
**Website:** [www.bvso.org](http://www.bvso.org)

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### GREAT FUN AT THE BRAZOS VALLEY SYMPHONY'S CHILDREN'S CONCERTS

*College Station, TX—January 15, 2011—*

On Monday, January 10, 2011, Music Director and Conductor Marcelo Bussiki and the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra musicians presented the annual Children's Concerts to 4059 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their teacher escorts. Attendance at the concerts included children from both Bryan and College Station ISD's as well as from surrounding districts, such as Richards, Gause, Brenham, and Huntsville. The symphony has an important educational component as part of its mission, the Children's Concerts are just one way the organization seeks to fulfill this goal.

"This is about offering an opportunity for education. I believe that music and music education in general, is as important an experience as reading to a child or having them paint, or take part in a play. One aims to unlock creative doors, to bring those kids to a world that is unknown and fascinating," said Bussiki.

A highlight of the Children's Concerts is the portion of the program where a "guest conductor" is randomly selected from the audience. One lucky student from each concert was able to stand on stage and conduct the orchestra as they played Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker March. This year, those students were 4<sup>th</sup> grader Mary House from St. Michael's Episcopal School in Bryan and Esperanza Campa, a 4<sup>th</sup> grader from Samuel W. Houston Elementary in Huntsville ISD.

"For Student Conductor Winner Mary House and her friends, being able to conduct the symphony was a 'once in a lifetime' experience," said Christine Larsen, Key Organizer of the concerts this year. "The parents at Mary's school are already discussing how they can introduce opportunities to listen to more classical music on a seasonal basis," added Larsen.

Another special feature of the Children's Concerts includes the winner of the Brazos Valley Youth Concerto Competition. The concerto competition is also a component of the symphony's important mission in educational outreach. 2010 Winner Thomas Yum performed Accolay's *Concerto in A Minor* with the orchestra. The Music Director explains why the Youth Concerto Winner is an important part of the concert. "I program the winner at this concert for two reasons. First is to give to the young artist the opportunity to perform with an orchestra which, due to the reduced number of orchestras, is one of the greatest challenges for a young musician trying to build a repertoire and a career. A symphony concert will also prompt the young artist to operate in a much more complex musical environment, one that will give greater experience and musical maturity. And finally, to the audience, as an incentive to the youngsters that such an accomplishment is within reach," said Bussiki.

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The symphony also performed Kleinsinger's *Tubby the Tuba* with the help of principal tuba, Larry Campbell and Greg Wise as the Narrator. The music is accompanied by a storyline presented through the eyes of Tubby, a cute little cartoon tuba character who found a melody to play. This story has been translated into 30 languages and played by every major orchestra in the world. Tubby and his friends have evolved into a series of works for children, combining music and story to the delight of all. Students enjoyed hearing the characterization of violins "laughing" at Tubby in this performance.

The *Catcerto* selection starred Nora the Cat playing as a "guest soloist". Nora is a music teacher's cat who has learned to charmingly paw at the piano keys and an orchestral piece was composed to accompany her work. This piece has been performed by many orchestras around the nation while Nora and her piano styling are also popular YouTube videos. Nora is shown on a large video screen above the orchestra for the performance. This was the hit of the concert, according to the feedback Larsen received from educators.

Each year, the Children's Concerts introduce 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to symphonic music. This year, the positive responses abound from teachers and principals and the word is spreading to other schools.

"A new school has already said they will be attending the concert next year!" announced Larsen.

Coordinated by FASO (Friends Association of the Symphony Orchestra), this project provides follow up activities for the students, including drawing and essay contests. FASO plans to announce the winners of the art and essay contests in February 2011. Winners will receive tickets for their family to attend a symphony concert in late February.

This program is generously funded in part by generous contributions from Blue Bell Creameries and Target. This annual educational outreach would not be possible without the support and assistance of our own Symphony Belles, and many dedicated FASO volunteers. The Brazos Valley Symphony Society is most thankful and appreciative for these gifts. All photography by Bob Morris.

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*About the Brazos Valley Symphony: The Brazos Valley Symphony is a non-profit performing arts organization with the mission to maintain a symphony of high artistic standards, and to promote the musical arts for cultural and education purposes in the Brazos Valley. For more information about the Symphony's 2010--2011 Season, please visit the Brazos Valley Symphony Web site at [www.bvso.org](http://www.bvso.org).*

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