



# PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

---

## Erie Philharmonic and Downtown YMCA Youth Center create composition school

---

Erie, PA | October 23, 2017

The Erie Philharmonic and the students of the Downtown YMCA have been working together for many months to create the first piece of music composed and arranged by the students of the David Matthews Composition School. Their original song, titled **Our Erie**, will be performed by the Erie Philharmonic on November 1 at the Warner Theatre during the orchestra's Youth Concerts on November 1 & 2.

"Students from Erie composing a piece of music for our orchestra is quite an accomplishment in and of itself. The orchestra musicians are excited to perform it, and Maestro Meyer is proud to showcase their work," Executive Director Steve Weiser says. "What makes it even more special is the audience will be 2,000 students from their school or neighboring schools. We hope to inspire the composition students to keep writing, but also the other students in the audience to create and compose music of their own."

Matthews died unexpectedly in February 2016. He was a supporter of many organizations in the Erie region, but he was most passionate about music and the students at the Downtown YMCA. The memorials left in his name were used to create a composition school in his honor at the Y in collaboration with his wife, Margaret.

For nearly one year, the students at the Downtown Y Teen Center have been working with teaching artists to interpret and compose an original musical score for the full orchestra of the Erie Philharmonic. In addition, multi-media students have been learning about documentary film and documenting the entire year long creative process. The project culminates with a full orchestra performance and film debut on November 1.

This program is the first of its kind here in Erie, and both the YMCA and the Erie Philharmonic hope for the program to continue in future years. Weiser concludes, "the parts are printed and placed in the musicians' folders. We cannot wait to hear live what these students have been working on. It's going to be a very special afternoon for all involved."

The program is funded by the David Matthews Memorial Fund at the YMCA of Greater Erie with additional support by Erie Arts & Culture.

##

The Youth Concert will begin at 1:00pm, and the world-premiere of **Our Erie** is estimated to begin around 1:30pm. For interviews with leadership from either organization or the students, please be in the Warner Theatre lobby after their piece is performed.

For media questions or to schedule an interview, please contact Lisa Herring.

Lisa Herring  
Director of Community Impact, Erie Philharmonic  
[lisa@eriephil.org](mailto:lisa@eriephil.org) | (cell) (724) 747-5652

Steve Weiser  
Executive Director, Erie Philharmonic  
[sweiser@eriephil.org](mailto:sweiser@eriephil.org) | (w) (814) 455-1375