

Contra Costa Youth Orchestra—Kids Helping Kids Concert

By Andrea A. Firth



Greg Mazmanian with the Contra Costa Youth Orchestra

Photo Andy Scheck

The Contra Costa Youth Orchestra (CCYO) will hold its third annual benefit performance for the Comfort for Kids Hospice of the East Bay on Wednesday May 28th at the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. “The wonderful folks running this organization are so amazing, and the cause so incredibly worthwhile (provides support and medical

services to families with terminally ill children) that we would like to fill Leshner Center with an audience that is touched, inspired, informed and entertained,” says CCYO Director Greg Mazmanian.

Approximately 30 Lamorinda students are part of the 50-member Contra Costa Youth Orchestra. Julliard-trained Mazmanian has directed CCYO since

its inception 11 years ago. “CCYO is an added enhancement to the already active music departments in our communities,” notes Mazmanian. “The “full” orchestra aspect, though, exposes a segment of repertoire that orchestra members would normally not be exposed to on a regular basis with band or a string-only ensemble.”

Membership in the orchestra

is by audition and open to local students in grades 7 to 12. In addition to weekly practices, each year the group presents two concerts in local venues, the Leshner Center Benefit Concert, and one special performance—last year aboard a cruise ship to Mexico and this year at Disneyland.

“I like to see kids do the most with the talent they have,” explains Mazmanian. “Energy, enthusiasm, and exciting experiences should be part of their musical memories,” he adds. “We always perform music from every genre—the classics, musicals, the movies... We look forward to performing a thrilling Suite from *Star Wars* by John Williams later this month in addition to the famous *William Tell Overture*.”

For tickets for CCYO’s Kids Helping Kids Concert call (925) 943-7469.