

THE CONCORD ORCHESTRA
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Richard Pittman
Conductor and Music Director

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Paxton resident Mackenzie Melemed has been named second runner-up of the Concord Orchestra's 2010 Ehlers Young Artist Competition. He will give a pre-concert recital preceding the orchestra's spring concert on Friday, March 19.

"Mackenzie already has a distinguished list of performance credits in his young life and is a barn-burning young virtuoso," music director Richard Pittman said of his audition. He has performed at more than one hundred venues and has received numerous awards, including the Irving Berlin Award and the grand prize at the 2006 Bradshaw & Buono International Piano Competition.

He started playing the piano at age four, but his classical training began at the age of 10. In 2008, he appeared on NPR's "From the Top, Live at Carnegie Hall." "That was exciting, that was my big debut the day before my 13th birthday," he quipped.

Mackenzie performed for President George W. Bush in 2004 and was then asked to play at the White House. "I played a concert at Susan Wornick's house for a fundraiser for the Lupus foundation," he recalls. "Then one of the guests invited me to play at a fundraiser for George W. Bush." After that, he was asked to play at the annual Holiday Open House for the next five years.

A highlight of this past year for Mackenzie was playing for Seán Patrick Cardinal O'Malley. He also performed the Grieg Piano Concerto with the Boston Civic Symphony. During the summer, he attends "Piano Summer at New Paltz," a three-week festival with world-renowned pianists, including his current teacher, Alexander Korsantia.

In addition to Mackenzie's talents on the piano, he has appeared in some television commercials. The most memorable was one for insurance company AIG filmed at Babson College. "I had to climb up to a high diving board," said Mackenzie. "It was about risk."

Fifteen year old Mackenzie is a freshman at the Bancroft School in Worcester. As for career goals, Mackenzie says: "maybe a combination of science and music. Chemistry is really easy to me."

The Concord Orchestra Young Artist Competition is open to musicians of high school age or younger who reside in eastern Massachusetts. The winner is chosen by a panel of orchestra members and the music director. The winner also receives a cash prize from the Charles and Arlene Ehlers Memorial Scholarship Fund.

This year's competition winner is cellist Rainer Crosett, who will perform Barber's Cello Concerto with the Concord Orchestra. The orchestra also will perform Greatest Hits by Michael Gandolfi and Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 9 (the Great C Major) under guest conductor Eric Culver.

Concerts are Friday, March 19 and Saturday, March 20 at 8:00 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center at 51 Walden Street, Concord. Mackenzie will give his pre-concert recital at 7:15 on Friday evening. The first competition runner-up, violinist Jaclyn Freshman, will give a pre-concert recital on Saturday evening. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for senior citizens, and \$10 for students. For tickets and information, call 978-369-4967 or visit www.concordorchestra.com.

Short Calendar listing

Paxton resident Mackenzie Melemed has been named second runner-up of the Concord Orchestra's 2010 Ehlers Young Artist Competition. He will give a pre-concert recital preceding the orchestra's spring concert on Friday, March 19. On the concert program is Greatest Hits by Michael Gandolfi and Symphony No. 9 (the Great C Major) by Franz Schubert. Samuel Barber's Cello Concerto will be performed by Rainer Crosett, the winner of the Young Artist Concerto Competition. Pre-concert recitals are at 7:15 each evening. Concerts are Friday, March 19 and Saturday, March 20 at 8:00 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center at 51 Walden Street, Concord. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for senior citizens, and \$10 for students. For tickets and information, call 978-369-4967 or visit www.concordorchestra.com.