

Report**Martin Luther King Jr. Day Community
Open House at Severance Hall (January 20)**

by Daniel Hautzinger



In celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 20, The Cleveland Orchestra honored Dr. King's calls for universal brotherhood by hosting its annual Community Open House featuring various Cleveland performing arts groups.

Severance Hall provided warmth throughout the snowy day, with various performances and activities scheduled. The Bogomolny-Kozerefski Grand Foyer was transformed into a dance floor with flashing lights and an emcee for a fun diversion between performances. Downstairs, in the Smith Lobby, guests were invited

to view a display about the life of Dr. King.

Performances began at 12:15 with the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus. Directed by Lisa Wong, the enthusiastic high school-age singers demonstrated the balance and musical maturity well beyond their years.

After the Chorus's short set, the Julia de Burgos Dance Troupe, hailing from the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center, took the stage. Small groups demonstrated different forms of Latin dance before a longer set of pieces explored the history of Puerto Rican dances. Young children showed off indigenous dance in simple costumes, and an explanatory voiceover moved through the centuries to end with urban dance.

Next up was the Kyodai Brass Quintet, the only non-youth group to perform. The CIM-trained musicians played a genre-hopping program of American music including selections from *West Side Story* and an arrangement of Billy Strayhorn's jazz standard "Take the A-train."

A highlight of the afternoon was performances by the devoted students of El Sistema @ Rainey and El Sistema University Circle, who showed off the hard work they had put in, five days a week after school, in learning to play stringed instruments. Both programs, launched by Isabel Trautwein, endeavor to make classical music training accessible to more people by offering lessons at a low cost. The University Circle group were joined

by students from The Music Settlement, conducted by artistic director David Malek. The University Circle group were making their debut performance, having been founded only last fall. The children's progress on their instruments in only a few months impressed and inspired. The Rainey students, some of whom have been in the program for all three years of its existence, sounded equally confident under their director Brittany Kubiak. At one point, all the players came together for a performance of Pachelbel's *Canon*.



For the last event of the day, the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra performed five pieces under the baton of Brett Mitchell. They brilliantly feted Dr. King with two separate *Festive Overtures*, by Shostakovich and African-American composer William Grant Still. "Engelkonzert," the first movement of Paul Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* Symphony, which COYO will perform in its entirety on March 9, glowed and surged. Bassoonist Stuart Englehart was stunning in the opening movement of Vivaldi's tricky e minor concerto. The performance and open house ended in suitably glorious fashion with the triumphant "Great Gate of Kiev," from Ravel's orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

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