

Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra: Violinist Marina Ziegler plays Sibelius

by Mike Telin



Performing a concerto with the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra is an honor and a moment to cherish. “I have fun playing Sibelius,” violinist Marina Ziegler said, “I’m just happy to play it with COYO because I get to do it with all of my friends. And it will be a nice way to end the year. My first piece with COYO was the Sibelius Second Symphony, so I feel like I’ve come full circle.”

On May 5 at 8:00 pm at Severance Music Center, the Copley High School senior will play the Sibelius concerto with COYO under the direction of Daniel Reith. The program also includes Schwerdtfeger’s *Herr K. entdeckt Amerika* and Rachmaninoff’s *Symphony No. 3*. Tickets are available [online](#).

Ziegler began her violin studies at the age of five at the Sato Center for Suzuki Studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Her teachers have included Stephen Sims, Isabel Trautwein, and Eugenia Poustyreva. She currently studies violin with David Bowlin at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

In addition to winning the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra concerto competition, Ziegler won the Suburban Symphony Concerto contest in 2020 and 2021 and has appeared as a soloist with that orchestra. She has attended the Credo Music Festival, the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Bowdoin International Music Festival, and Chamber Music Northwest's inaugural Young Artist Institute in Portland, Oregon. As a member of the National Youth Orchestra she has performed at Carnegie Hall as well as in major European concert halls.

I reached Marina Ziegler by phone and began our conversation by asking when she started learning the Sibelius.

Marina Ziegler: I first learned it when I was fifteen, in my freshman year of High School. Then I put it away, and last April I started learning it again.

Mike Telin: What are your thoughts about the piece?

MZ: I think the history of it is very interesting. Sibelius was a failed violinist. He didn't start learning the instrument until he was fourteen, so he was late to the scene. And I think that his ambition being crushed inspired him to write the concerto.

I think the story of the failed premiere and then the revision of the whole piece is really interesting. You can hear a lot of tension and agony throughout the concerto — there are so many different emotions, and it's interesting to explore the feelings that he must have gone through when writing it.

One thing that really stands out to me is that the first movement has a lot of decrescendos written on very high notes. A lot of violinists would want them to sound virtuosic, but for me those decrescendos symbolize a voice fading into the orchestra — his voice being lost.

MT: What about the third movement?

MZ: It's my favorite. It's very technical and at that point in the piece it's kind of a stamina test, because the first two movements are so exhausting — but it's really exciting. And it's exciting to play it with COYO because I feel the energy from my colleagues.

MT: What have you learned from your four years in COYO?

MZ: I think the mentors I've had there have inspired me to become a musician — they've given me an inside look at what it takes. Learning directly from Cleveland Orchestra

members has been amazing and getting a little bit of insight into their lives has also been interesting. And Daniel Reith is great, he's so positive at rehearsals. We're all very grateful for him.

MT: Switching topics, tell me about your experience in the National Youth Orchestra.

MZ: Oh my, that was life changing. To be able to perform in those concert halls in Europe was a dream come true. Like the Concertgebouw — the fact that I performed there before I was eighteen is amazing. We also got to play with Ukrainian refugees in Berlin and that was cool to share our love of music. Even though there was a language barrier it didn't matter.

MT: What are your plans after high school?

MZ: I'm still deciding between two colleges but I am planning to be a violin performance major

MT: What do you do when you're not playing the violin?

MZ: I like hiking and I take my dog and explore nature trails that are nearby. I also go on hiking trips with my family and it's nice to be able to unwind from music.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com May 1, 2023.

Click here for a printable copy of this article

[Return to the Front Page.](#)