

Young musicians get a shot at composing

A workshop Saturday will start teens on their way to having their works played by a real orchestra.

By **CHRISTINE SHOW**

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Colin Aebli can't remember a time when music wasn't a part of his life.

He was 5 years old when he first placed his fingers on piano keys. Now 15, Colin plays percussion in his band class at The Master's Academy Upper School in Oviedo. His fascination with the movement of music pushed him to explore orchestra composition.

"All my life I've been tapping on

things," said Colin of Orlando. "I thought, why not put it to good use?"

So Colin will join teens from across the Southeast in a daylong workshop Saturday designed to teach young people how to compose music. Professional composers will teach participants 13 to 18 years old how to create a musical score and use technology. The workshop will be at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre in downtown Orlando. After the confer-

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Colin Aebli, 15, of Orlando plays the marimba at The Master's Academy Upper School in Oviedo. He will participate in the workshop Saturday.

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Youngsters to get a shot at composing

MUSIC FROM H1

ence, students will put their skills to the test: They will create a five-minute orchestra or ensemble composition. Six compositions will be chosen and performed by the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra at a public concert Sept. 28.

The top three full-orchestra composers will win \$1,000, and three ensemble winners will get \$500 each.

The workshop's activities include a tour of the University of Central Florida's digital-media lab and a viewing of an Orlando Philharmonic dress rehearsal. Students also receive composition lessons from international award-winning composer Stella Sung; Dan Crozier, an assistant professor at Rollins College; and Keith Lay, director of music history at Full Sail School of Entertainment Media in Winter Park.

"I want to learn everything about it," Colin said.

Winter Park philanthropist Steve Goldman, a major sponsor of the event, said the challenge, now in its fourth year, provides an outlet for young musicians to expand their musical talents. Goldman is co-sponsoring the event with the Orlando Philharmonic and the University of Central Florida's Center for Research and Education in Arts, Technology and Entertainment. Sung serves as director of the UCF program.

"Not a lot of kids do [composing] because there's not a lot of opportunity to get played," said Goldman, who is a board member of various Orlando organizations including the Philharmonic, Orlando Science Center and the UCF Foundation and is a trustee of United Arts of Central Florida.

Once a young composer, Goldman said he understands the need for a place where young musicians can experience composition writing.

"I remember I used to scour these publications for some chance to win a contest and have an orchestra play my piece," Goldman said.

"But there was nothing for kids. Kids don't have a chance, but that's the most important time to get involved."

That chance inspired 16-year-old Gregory Monroe of Kissimmee to sign up for the challenge workshop. A student at Valencia Community College who graduated from Osceola County School of the Arts last year, Monroe marveled at the idea that his future composition could be performed by the Orlando Philharmonic.

"It would just be breathtaking to know that you could do that much," Monroe said.

A piano player and percussionist at the Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra, Monroe said neither he nor the world can live without music.

"I always, always, always play music," he said. "I love that you can create your own stuff. Once you start to play, you're free to do whatever you want."

The freedom to create an original piece encouraged Craig Brotherton, 14, of Mount Dora to participate in the workshop. At age 11, Craig discovered his passion for music through the sounds of Richard Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung*. Now a

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Sound of music

Watch Colin Aebli playing marimba at his band class at OrlandoSentinel.com/composers

flute and piano player, Craig said he wants to find out how a whole arrangement of instruments can blend together into one masterpiece.

"It's going to open me up to new ideas," he said. "I get to hear other people's pieces."

As for Colin, he wonders whether the workshop is the start to a future of composition writing where his works may one day match up to influential musicians, including his favorite, Johann Sebastian Bach.

"I'm not sure if I want to compose music or be a performer, but I think both would be good for me. I'd like to see where life goes for me," he said.

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