



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS *in the*
ARCHDIOCESE of NEW YORK

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Faith and Creativity Unite: Archdiocesan Students Showcase Compositions with the New York Philharmonic

MANHATTAN — On January 24, 2025, the gymnasium at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Manhattan was filled with the joyful sounds of creativity as students premiered their original musical compositions through the New York Philharmonic’s Very Young Composers (VYC) Program. This inspiring event, held in anticipation of Catholic Schools Week, celebrated the union of faith, education, and the arts—showcasing the transformative power of creativity through the lens of Catholic values.

The VYC Schools program works directly with students at individual school sites, and at Our Lady of Lourdes, selected students participated in 12 enriching sessions with VYC Teaching Artist Evelyn Petcher Brandes. Throughout these sessions, students learned about musical notes, instruments, and the sacred art of composition. One-on-one mentoring sessions offered personalized guidance, helping the students bring their musical visions to life. The culmination of this creative journey was a school assembly where a professional ensemble performed the students’ compositions, affirming the beauty and depth of their gifts.

The VYC Teaching Artist faculty fosters a nurturing environment for creativity, using inquiry-based learning and social-emotional learning (SEL) to encourage students to find and express their artistic voice. Through reflective questioning, creativity prompts, and collaborative activities, Teaching Artists guide students in exploring musical concepts and discovering how music can be a tool for personal expression and connection to the divine. This approach invites students to respond to the world around them with grace and creativity, cultivating their artistic and spiritual growth.

“Our students’ participation in this program is a shining example of how the arts can transform and inspire within the framework of Catholic education,” said Sr. Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of New York. “Their creativity, dedication, and joyful expression remind us of our calling to nurture the whole child—mind, body, and spirit—while pointing to the ultimate Creator who inspires all.”

Several compositions from Our Lady of Lourdes students will be showcased as part of the New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers Program at the Sidewalk Studio in David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center. These works will be performed prior to the Young People’s Concert on February 8, 2025, offering students an extraordinary opportunity to have their music performed at one of the world’s most prestigious stages—a powerful affirmation of their God-given talents.

This collaboration stands as a testament to the enriching opportunities Catholic schools like Our Lady of Lourdes offer, fostering academic, spiritual, and artistic growth in students while nurturing their God-given creativity and preparing them to serve the world with love and purpose.

For more information about the Very Young Composers Program, visit www.nyphil.org

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Photo Captions:

ADNY-VYC-1: Ms. Suzanne Kaszynski, Principal of Our Lady of Lourdes School in Manhattan, welcomes students and families to the Very Young Composers showcase in the school gym.

ADNY-VYC-2: Students of the New York Philharmonic’s Very Young Composers Program at Our Lady of Lourdes School Manhattan await their turn to present original compositions at the very young composer showcase.

ADNY-VYC-3: Teaching Artist Evelyn Petcher Brandes leads a string quartet in premiering student-composed pieces at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Manhattan.

ADNY-VYC-4: A student composer follows along with their musical score during the Very Young Composers showcase at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Manhattan.

ADNY-VYC-5: The New York Philharmonic’s Very Young Composers Program Class of 2025 at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Manhattan.