

OCYSO

ORANGE COUNTY YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 2017

OCYSO PRESENTS DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR AWARD TO JIM KOLLIAS

ORANGE, California - The Friends of the Orange County Youth Symphony Orchestra (OCYSO) are pleased to present the 2017 Distinguished Educator of the Year Award to Jim Kollias, Instrumental Music Director and Visual and Performing Arts Chair at Irvine's Beckman High School. The Award was formally presented to Kollias at OCYSO's season finale performance on May 14, 2017 at the Musco Center for the Arts.

"Jim built one of the most robust and competitive programs in all of Southern California from scratch," said OCYSO Music Director and Conductor Daniel Alfred Wachs. "It has been amazing to observe the Beckman High School string program grow not only in size, but in outstanding quality. I've had the distinct pleasure and privilege of working with his program on several occasions, most recently in a joint and [lauded concert](#) with OCYSO. Jim is not only an excellent musician and conductor, but a valued friend. We are honored to name him Distinguished Educator of the Year."

"I am extremely honored to receive the OCYSO's Distinguished Educator Award," remarked Maestro Kollias. "It was an honor, privilege and pleasure to have the opportunity to perform in concert with the OCYSO and conduct them as well. The afternoon really showcased the best of music at the high school level in Orange County."

Commenting on the Beckman High School Orchestra, California State Superintendent Jack O'Connell said that "this is the reason we need to keep the arts in our public school system. This is a tremendous group - what a talent! This is an extremely distinguished group - what an orchestra!" Founded in 2004, the orchestra has earned Superior and Unanimous Superior Ratings at every district and regional music festival it has ever performed in. In April 2015 the Chamber Orchestra made its fifth appearance at Carnegie Hall and earned its fourth Gold Award for their performance at the New York International Band & Orchestra Festival.

Jim Kollias holds degrees in music and music education from UCLA and the University of Illinois. His guest conducting assignments have included honor orchestras in Southern California. He has served on the board of directors for the Southern California School Band & Orchestra Association. In 2008, OC Family Magazine featured Kollias as one of Orange County's "Ten Heroes Among Us." He was a quarterfinalist for the 2017 Grammy Music Educator Award and twice a finalist for the Orange County Arts Educator of the Year Award.

ABOUT OCYSO

The Orange County Youth Symphony Orchestra (OCYSO) is the official youth orchestra of Orange County, California. Since 1970, the Orchestra has maintained an enviable reputation for its artistic inspiration and performance training of young adult musicians.

For nine seasons, Music Director & Conductor [Daniel Alfred Wachs](#) has energetically led OCYSO through many prestigious performances, conferences, and competitions. Highlights of the upcoming 2017/18 season, the Orchestra's 48th, include the third annual family holiday concert featuring

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Humperdinck's semi-staged opera, *Hansel and Gretel*, with star soloists including mezzo-soprano Milena Kitic. Presented by the Philharmonic Society of Orange County, the Concerts for Fifth Graders continue at The Segerstrom Center for the Arts. Repertory to include Shostakovich's monumental Symphony No. 11 and Gershwin's masterpiece *An American in Paris*.

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The mission of the Orange County Youth Symphony Orchestra is to provide pre-professional training to Orange County's most talented young musicians through varied performance opportunities, and by establishing an environment that develops creative ability, self-expression and the desire for perfection.

For further details on the Orchestra, please [visit our website](#).

OCYSO partners with Chapman University, Philharmonic Society of Orange County, Musco Center for the Arts, Anaheim Ballet and the Orange County Department of Education.

General OCYSO Information:

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