

**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Marketing Director

## Midwest Young Artists



878 Lyster Road  
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Great People do Great Things: Chicago Music Legend Shmuel Ashkenasi Gives Back to the Musical Leaders of Tomorrow.

How does someone become “great”? Perhaps by being three times nominated for a Grammy Award? Perhaps by being winner of the top prize at both the Tchaikovsky Competition and the Queen Elisabeth Music Competition in Belgium? Surely by being a soloist with every major US and European Orchestra including Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Berlin and Vienna.? Possibly by having made numerous recordings of Paganini and Mozart Concertos? Certainly by being, first violin of the Vermeer String Quartet from 1969 to 2007 that toured practically every major city in North and South America, Europe, the Far East and Australia?

Yes, this is the monumental career of Shmuel Ashkanasi, Illinois’ own musician extraordinaire. However, for Shmuel, it’s not enough to have been one of the leading chamber musicians of this time. Like other of his “superstar” colleagues including YoYo Ma and Itzhak Perlman, he feels the need to take another step in his life and inspire the next generation of musicians by teaching and mentoring, traveling to Philadelphia teaching at the Curtis Institute of Music and, until recently, teaching at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

Now he will take his artistry and experience to an even younger audience coaching a series of Chamber Music Master Classes at Midwest Young Artists (MYA) in December, January, February, April and May (see below for specific dates and times). There is no admission charge to observe any of MYA’s Master Classes and there are many classes scheduled during the year, including Classes for woodwind, brass, percussion and piano.

After his Master Class in April of this past academic year he commented that he wished he could have more time to work with the students, to see what kind of progress might be made with a longer period of coaching time. His interest was in having the students genuinely understand the work and discover what they need to do to “get inside” the music. It was obvious he loved sharing his life’s work with youth. That is what really defines Shmuel Ashkenasi’s “greatness” – his desire to make others love and understand music and then striving for excellence.

MYA is delighted to have Mr. Ashkenasi involved in the Chamber Music Program. We see it as appropriate that a chamber music legend, such as he is, should partner with the most successful and conceivably the largest chamber music program in the US. Over the past sixteen years MYA has won more medals at the National Fischoff Chamber Music Competition than any other participating program. In addition, MYA is host of the exciting and new Discover Chamber Music Competition held annually in early February. MYA has over 65 chamber groups including all combinations of instruments – strings, winds, brass and percussion. Annually, during the first three weeks in July, MYA operates the Chicago Chamber Music Camp, attracting students from all over the US, Europe,, China, South America and South Africa. Additionally, MYA hosts a Young Musician Chamber Music Workshop for younger students the last week in June.

For more information about MYA and/or the Shmuel Ashkenasi Master Classes, please go to [www.mya.org](http://www.mya.org). MYA’s podcasting website is [www.wmya.fm](http://www.wmya.fm) and a free listing of private teachers can be found at [www.privatemusicteaching.org](http://www.privatemusicteaching.org). (more)

Shmuel Ashkenasi Master Class Dates, times, locations

- December 10 3:30-5:30 – MYA Center 878 Lyster Road Highwood, IL 60040
- January 15 11:30-1:30 - Bennett Gordon Hall at Ravinia

- February 11 3:30-5:30 - Bennett Gordon Hall at Ravinia
- April 22 11:30-1:30– MYA Center 878 Lyster Road Highwood, IL 60040
- May 6 11:30-1:30 - Bennett Gordon Hall at Ravinia

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Information about Midwest Young Artists:

Midwest Young Artists is the premier youth music education and performance ensemble conservatory in the Midwest and features some of the best young musicians in the country. The program offers exceptional training in jazz, choral, chamber and orchestral instruction. Midwest Young Artists was founded in 1993 with a single orchestra, and now reaches over 900 students from 75 communities in the metropolitan Chicago area, with students ranging in age from 12 months through 12th grade. MYA has eight youth orchestras, more than 60 chamber music ensembles, four choral groups, an all-inclusive jazz program, classes in music theory and composition and an early childhood education program. Students have the opportunity to travel abroad and to perform in major venues throughout Chicago and around the world. Leading the nation in chamber music instruction, MYA graduates are accepted at the most selective conservatories, universities and colleges in the country.

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