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String Harvest 2011 showcases area's best young string players

For the Press

Area listeners who appreciate fine string music will soon have the chance to sample a beautiful music harvest, while at the same time extending a helping hand to those in need.

The occasion will be "String Harvest 2011," a benefit concert Friday and that will bring together some of the top young string musicians in the region. The event will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. at Central Baptist Church, 300 N. Roan St., and donations for admission will benefit Second Harvest Food Bank in full. The suggested donation is \$5 per person or \$15 per household.

This is the first string concert to bring together advanced young soloists from around the Tri-Cities to one concert venue. The concert is being organized by the Academy of Strings, a Johnson City-based organization dedicated to the personal development of students through quality music education and performance.

But the performance will include other top musicians from throughout the region, playing selections that range from classical virtuosic solos to fiddle music to string quartet and small group ensemble compositions. A toe-tapping bowdown that will feature 50-plus violin students should be an audience treat.

Tim Barrett, who leads the Academy of Strings with Kim

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— Tim Barrett, who leads Academy of Strings

Barrett, said String Harvest 2011 resonates with the group because one of its central tenets is giving back to the community through performances for a variety of community and civic organizations.

"String Harvest 2011 could be an eye-opening event for those unfamiliar with the caliber of young musicians in our region," he said. "Because we have been so blessed by the community, we wanted to offer this performance as a demonstration of gratitude, and as a way to support Second Harvest."

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occasionally, or perhaps for the first time ever."

Some of the musicians who will perform include:

■ Benjamin and Bethany Dawson of Abingdon, Va. Benjamin, who has received multiple awards as a violinist and young composer, is a violin performance major at East Tennessee State University and a student of Jane MacMorran. He currently performs with the Johnson City Symphony and will play the Lalo Symphonie Espagnole, mvt. I. His sister, Bethany, also the recipient of numerous musical honors, is a student of Kathleen Bowman and is principal cellist in the Symphony of the Mountains Youth Orchestra. She will interpret Gabriel Faure's Elegie (Op. 24).

■ Violinist Claire Morison of Bristol. Morison, a sophomore at Virginia High School, will perform a Celtic fiddle set, an apt vehicle for her since she is also a student of ETSU's MacMorran, who is internationally renowned

for her Celtic fiddling. Morison has been a first-place winner in the Bristol Music Club auditions for both violin and voice. She recently finished up a run playing violin for Barter Theatre's production of "Civil War Voices."

■ Violist Emily Lamb of Elizabethton. Lamb, who is a high school junior, is principal violist with the Symphony of the Mountains Youth Orchestra and also plays with the Johnson City Symphony. She studies viola with Dr. Louis Brown, Chair of the Music Department at Milligan College. Lamb will participate in a string quartet.

■ Cameron Lugo of Jonesborough. Lugo, an 8th grade student of Tim Barrett (Academy of Strings), plays with the Symphony of the Mountains Youth Orchestra and recently became well-known to listeners in Knoxville, as he was a featured soloist during a Knoxville Symphony Youth Orchestra concert by virtue of winning the KYSO Concerto Competition.

He will play the third movement of the Mendelssohn violin concerto, as well as one of his original string quartet compositions that won the competition for both Tennessee and the Southeast region in the National Federation of Music Clubs. The composition is now being judged at the national level.

■ Other participating violinists will include students from the Academy of Strings as well as

The Ambassador Strings, which includes the Academy's most advanced musicians. The musicians will be accompanied by col-

laborative pianist Robert Jeter, who is an adjunct instructor in the Department of Music at ETSU.