

## May To Lead New Student Orchestra

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A split among Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra supporters has resulted in the creation of a second youth orchestra, which has hired former FSYO principal conductor Jonathan May as its leader.

May, who had been with FSYO for the past four years, will be artistic director of the Florida Young Artists Orchestra. Its formation was announced last week by a group of May supporters, some of them former FSYO board members.

May's contract with the FSYO ended Monday and he had not been told whether he would be rehired. He said the FSYO board had pushed him out of some of the [musical](#) decision making, excluding him from the audition process for FSYO members.

"What this is is a difference of philosophy," May said. "One is a strong musical director with a supporting board; the other is a weak musical director and a strong board calling the shots."

Letters went out Monday to about 350 young Central Florida [musicians](#) and their parents announcing formation of the new orchestra, its appointment of May and its plans to hold auditions this week. (Details of auditions are on F-4.)

James Graber, treasurer and acting administrator for the new group, said nearly 50 audition requests were received within 48 hours of the mailing - "enough to fill one orchestra."

Graber said that among others, the letters "directly solicited kids who had tried out and not been accepted" for the FSYO, which held auditions last month.

"We plan to be inclusive, we choose to have a very strong educational mission. We want to get as many students (as possible) interested in the [music](#) and give them a chance to learn and play it," Graber said.

Ron Manley, FSYO board president, said the FSYO can't accept every player who auditions.

But he added, "If I can't provide an opportunity for them in my orchestra because it's not big enough, I want the kids to have a good opportunity" elsewhere.

Manley acknowledged that his board last year had limited Mays' responsibilities and brought in a new conductor for the Philharmonia, the midlevel orchestra.

The board was so pleased with the results that Florida Southern [College](#) string director Arthur Pranno got from the Philharmonia, Manley said, that "it sent a clear message to the board that we needed new ideas, needed to continue to grow." Auditions and interviews for a new conductor are under way, he said.

The FSYO last season involved more than 200 student musicians in four divisions, ranging from a Primary Orchestra for the youngest players to a Symphonic Orchestra for high [school](#) and college players. The group has a 42-year history.

"We are the premier youth orchestra in Florida and Central Florida," said Manley. "We've been here all these years. I think people will want to emulate us, and that's the highest form of praise."

Frank C. Hunt, president of the steering committee for the new orchestra, said the FSYO board had intended not to hire May for last season until he and other pro-May parents got involved.

"They're [the FSYO board] not supporting Jonathan May, and we feel he's the best thing for the youth in the community," Hunt said. "He brought the FSYO from a two-orchestra organization to a four-orchestra organization and won several national awards in the process."

May also directs a youth orchestra in Daytona Beach, a community orchestra at Seminole [Community College](#), and teaches at both colleges and privately.

FSYO treasurer Garth Ashpaugh said he was "totally surprised" by the announcement of the new orchestra. "We've really tried hard to work with Jonathan," he said.

Ashpaugh said there are enough young musicians to fill two orchestras, but "whether there's funding and whether there's venues around for them to perform in, only time will tell."