

# ‘Music in your head’

## Chiles junior enjoys energy of Tallahassee Youth Orchestra concert

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Council on Culture & Arts

Seventeen-year-old violinist and pianist Jovey Osagie loves Franz Liszt. The Hungarian composer tops out at number one on his list of musical inspirations. Osagie aspires to not only perform, but also compose, in the same manner as a man who would be nearly 150 years his senior today.

“I love him so much because he’s so real,” says Osagie. “When you listen to his music it makes you think about life in a different way.”

Osagie is a junior at Lawton Chiles High School. He participates in his school’s orchestra as well as locally with the Bach Parley String Academy and the Tallahassee Youth Orchestras. With the TYO, Osagie will be performing for their concert with guest artist Howard Levy on Feb. 24.

Classical music is as tangible as a vivid tapestry for Osagie — its notes captivate his imagination. After trying out the bass and organ, Osagie picked up the violin in fifth grade and has

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### If you go

**What:** Tallahassee Youth Orchestra with Guest Artist Howard Levy

**When:** 3-4:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 24

**Where:** Ruby Diamond Concert Hall, 222 S Copeland St

**Cost:** \$10 adults, \$5 children, free for FSU students and children under 2 years old

**Contact:** For more information, visit <http://www.tallahassee youthorchestras.com/>.



With the TYO, Jovey Osagie will be performing for their concert with guest artist Howard Levy on Feb. 24. COURTESY OF JOVEY OSAGIE



**Jovey Osagie is a junior at Lawton Chiles High School who is in the orchestra as well as the Bach Parley String Academy and the Tallahassee Youth Orchestras. He'll perform on Feb. 24. COURTESY OF JOVEY OSAGIE.**

## Orchestra

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pursued the instrument in tandem with the piano ever since. Though he's only been playing for six years, Osagie knew immediately that music would be his path.

"Every year there's something new to learn," says Osagie, who enjoys the community that surrounds playing piano and violin in Tallahassee.

He's grateful for mentors Dr. Valerie Arsenaault of the Tallahassee Bach Parley and Chris Miller at the TYO and Chiles High School. Osagie says that they teach more than "tonality, phrasing and dynamics" by encouraging him to become a better overall musician. His biggest challenge is overcoming the feeling of playing catch-up to peers who have been playing the instruments longer.

Osagie constantly pushes himself to learn quickly with sights set on his dream colleges on the horizon. He practices for a few hours each day, but more than focusing on just the notes on the page, Osagie enjoys diving into the history behind the music he plays.

"If the information is out there I will find it," laughs Osagie. "Learning more about these composers and people who wrote these pieces of music inspires me to want to do more."

In addition to Liszt, Osagie admires the compositions of Maurice Ravel. He appreciates Ravel's beautiful melodies and harmonies and finds similar joy in Liszt's overtures as well.

When listening to Liszt's "Years of Pilgrimage," Osagie embarks on a journey all his own. He feels the uprising, tragedy and heroism implicit in each note. For Ravel, it's more like swimming through a carefully composed emotion heightened with anticipation. Osagie likens the experience to wandering through a subliminal field.

"Liszt is known to be a grandfather to all kinds of classical music," explains Osagie. "His music has so much energy and story behind it. When played well, it can inspire people."

Osagie tries to honor these composers within his performances. He refrains from embellishing, but instead tries to attune himself to exactly what a composer wanted from a piece. As a burgeoning composer himself, he understands how personal music can be to an individual's experience and wants to maintain that integrity in his own playing.

He looks to the past for inspiration. Seated at a piano, he will allow these great composers to guide his own original creations. Sometimes he uses day-

to-day activities or personal stories to translate into a piece. A finished composition takes Osagie months to complete, and he currently is building a growing list of works-in-progress.

"As a composer you get used to the idea of having the music in your head," describes Osagie. "It's like singing a song out loud but at the same time you're recalling all the different voices and instruments that are going on."

Osagie sees violin and piano training as comparable to an athlete preparing for any sport. He grows his muscle memory and becomes involved in every aspect of the music. Recently, he was selected to perform in the Florida Music Educators Association All-State Orchestras, a statewide competition that surrounded him with like-minded students.

The experience motivated him to want to play better as he fed off the energy of a hundred other high school students with similar musical dreams. He's especially grateful for the opportunity to play with the TYO, and the impact it's had on his life.

"We're a tight-knit community and it's a feeling of camaraderie among everyone in the orchestra," says Osagie. "Everyone is trying to get to the same goal of playing better music and becoming better musicians. It's like a family. If you need anything people are quick to help you."

For the TYO performance with guest artist Howard Levy, a multi-instrumentalist and founding member of Bela Fleck and the Flecktones, Osagie is interested to see how the renowned harmonica player pairs with the orchestra. He also hopes that the audience will be moved by the music and find an urge similar to his own — to go out and seek more information.

Ten years down the line, Osagie says he wants to have achieved more than he ever thought possible. Whether that leads to a doctorate degree in music or becoming a music educator is something he is leaving up to the passage of time. Though he found music later than some of his peers, Osagie reminds any young person interested in playing any instrument that "starting anywhere is a very good place to start."

"When you're performing it is all about sharing the gift of music," says Osagie. "There's a real connection you have with people when you listen to music. It connects us in ways that we can't express. When you enter music like I have, you realize that you aren't alone."

*Amanda Sieradzki is the feature writer for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture ([www.tallahasseearts.org](http://www.tallahasseearts.org)).*