

## Behind the scenes

By Kevin McInerney

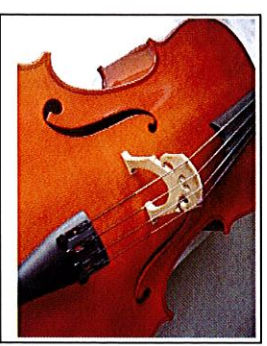


### Access Art offers low-cost arts opportunities for youth

FRIDAY, Nov 6 — High school and middle school students in the greater Lansing area with interest in writing, music and the arts are in for a treat courtesy of the Lansing Symphony Orchestra. Over the last several months, the orchestra's staff has worked closely with various local arts institutions to develop Access Art, a youth engagement program which will provide students aged 12 to 19 with discounted event tickets and insider access to Lansing's diverse art scene.

The program is a partnership between the symphony, Williamston Theatre, Lansing Art Gallery and Happendance.

Membership to Access Art is free and includes \$5 tickets to participating events, free master classes and behind-the-scenes visits with artists and industry professionals. Interested members can also join the Access Art Press Corps, where they will learn to write previews, reviews and perform media-style interviews with artists and performers.



"The Press Corp is my favorite part of the program," said Crysta Manthei, education and community engagement program coordinator for the Lansing Symphony. "It really gets the kids involved with the scene and serves as mutually beneficial to artists because they can meet a new generation of art lovers."

Members can use their benefits as early as this weekend to get discounted tickets to Saturday's Lansing Symphony concert.

Planning for Access Art began in early 2015 when members of the Lansing Symphony staff attended a national orchestra conference. It was at the conference that Manthei first saw similar programs that were in place around the United States. She contacted staff at the Lansing Art Gallery, Williamston Theatre and Happendance with the bare bones idea for Access Art and launched the program last month.

“For a while a lot of our staff and several orchestra members discussed the need for some sort of program for teens,” Manthei said. “I think introducing kids to the art community is extremely important.”