

Junior artists, senior talents

By KATE CASANO

Every week, an 11-year-old boy makes a 120-mile round trip to take violin lessons.

Every day, a 16-year-old ballerina spends several hours in the rigorous practice of her art.

After two years of lessons, a 13-year-old piano student shows unusual promise.

For such serious musicians, all soloists, the opportunity to perform is both a learning experience and a reward for their talent and hard work. This year the Junior Philharmonic Society of New Orleans will present these young performers, and many more, in a series of concerts designed to educate both the performers and the audience.

"PERFORMING FOR an audience is a valuable experience for me, since I would like some day to be a professional musician," says 17-year-old pianist Christopher Vath, who will appear in this year's recital series. "Of course it's important for a serious music student to have the recognition that comes with being chosen to play for the Junior Philharmonic. But the experience of playing before an audience is just as important."

At age 16, Alison Burrows has chosen to make ballet her career. In addition to hours of practice, she attends at least one dance class every day. For Alison, too, performance is an indispensable part of education.

THE JUNIOR Philharmonic Society was organized so that young artists like Chris and Alison could share their talents with an audience of their peers. Every spring, dozens of dancers, singers, and instrumentalists audition for the concerts, which are held at various times throughout the succeeding school year.

"The Junior Philharmonic is for the students, not for their teachers and parents," said Mrs. Ruth Wartelle, this year's president of the board of directors. "For that reason, we try to keep the auditions as noncompetitive as possible. There are no first or second place prizes. Every student who does well enough is a winner, whether there are three or 30 of them."

"YOU DON'T SEE the other auditioners, so you don't worry about how you compare with them," agreed Alison. "You just go and do your best; that's all you can do."

"One of the goals of the Junior Philharmonic has been to help raise the level of music teaching," said Mrs. Wartelle. "We require auditioners to play pieces from a wide range of styles and historical periods."

"In the early days of our organization, teachers used to concentrate almost exclusively on the Romantic composers — Chopin, Liszt, Paganini, and others. I don't know how much we had to do with it, but today's teachers and students have become knowledgeable about the entire range of musical composition — especially

the modern composers."

THIS YEAR THE first group of three concerts will feature performers under 18 years old. These will be held at 10:45 a.m. on Oct. 19, Dec. 7, and Feb. 15, at Dixon Hall on the Tulane campus.

In addition to the 11-year-old violinist and 13-year-old pianist mentioned above, this recital will feature a guest appearance by a group of tumblers from Sacred Heart Academy in New Orleans.

Performers of college age will appear at 8 p.m. on May 2, 1975. At this concert, scholarships and awards will be presented to students who have performed throughout the year.

"Besides being given by young people, the concerts are also given for young people." Mrs. Wartelle stressed the fact that the audience is an important part of the recitals. "We try to make the concerts accessible to as many young people as possible."

Tickets for the entire series of four concerts cost \$2, and can be bought at the door.

The Junior Philharmonic Society is a non-profit organization that is connected with the New Orleans Symphony. Financed by membership fees and donations, the group has been aiding young musicians since the 1930's. Junior Philharmonic alumni who have since become internationally famous include Norman Treigle, Charles Anthony, and Joann Yockey.