



A “Magical Musical Moment”

Kipohtakaw YONA students will be presented with real instruments for the first time

For immediate release

Edmonton, AB (April 9, 2018) – An extraordinary graduation ceremony will take place at Alexander First Nation Kipohtakaw Education Centre on Tuesday April 10, 2018. **50 students, from Grades 2 and 3 will graduate to the next phase of the Kipohtakaw YONA curriculum and formally be presented with their real instruments.** The program is a partnership between Alexander First Nation and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra.

Students created and individualized their own paper violins that have since been used to learn the basics of playing, caring for, and respecting the instrument. Students will perform a demonstration of songs and proudly display their acquired musicianship with their paper instruments for their families and special guests attending the ceremony. **They will then play their first notes on their real instruments!**

“The students have been working hard and are extremely excited about the upcoming graduation. They can barely contain their excitement. They are also looking forward to sharing the day with family and friends,” said Jody Kootenay, superintendent of Alexander First Nation.

One of Edmonton’s youngest and fastest growing demographics are Aboriginal families and in January, of this year, YONA expanded to a three-year pilot at Alexander First Nation. 50 students in Grades 2 and 3 receive eighty minutes of general music and violin instruction from instructors.

“The students and their teachers have been working diligently with the YONA teaching artists since January and are making great progress”, says Alison Kenny-Gardhouse, VP of Music and Engagement at the Winspear. “We are inspired by their energy and focus and can’t wait to witness their continued development throughout the program.”

We invite media to attend with interview opportunities:

Violin Graduation

Date: April 10, 2018

Time: 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm followed by reception.

Location: Kipohtakaw Education Centre
10301 100 Ave, Morinville, AB T8R 1P9

For more information on the YONA-Sistema program: www.yona-sistema.com

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About YONA-Sistema (Youth Orchestra of Northern Alberta – Sistema):

YONA-Sistema is a program which aims to kindle long-term positive change in Edmonton’s under-served populations by engaging youth in music education. Launched in September of 2013 - Every day after school, eighty five students from Delton Public School, and St. Teresa of Calcutta and St. Alphonsus Catholic Schools spend three hours in a safe and nurturing environment, studying music in an ensemble-based and community-focused setting. This program is presented by the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and Winspear in partnership with the Edmonton Catholic School District and the Edmonton Public School Board.

About the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra | Winspear

In its sixty-fifth year, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra has taken its place as one of Canada’s foremost orchestral ensembles. Its current roster includes fifty six musicians from Canada and around the world performing a wide-ranging repertoire from the great classical masterworks to pops and family concerts. The orchestra is the resident artistic ensemble, the “home team,” of the Winspear, among the best acoustic concert halls in North America.