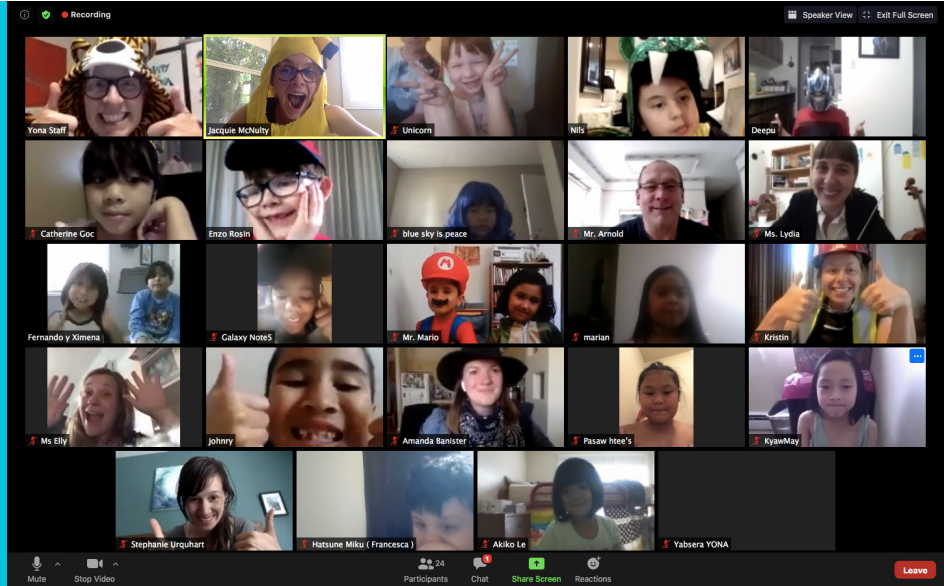


## Looking Back and Looking Forward

by Amanda Banister



The month of June is always a whirlwind of excitement at YONA and is all about celebrating a year of hard work. We perform at the Winspear alongside the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, host Community Concerts that show off new learning, enjoy a year end barbeque, share a slideshow of photos from the year, say our summertime farewell to the students, and gear up for YONA Explorers camp. Needless to say, YONA-Sistema likes to finish off each year with a bang.

With the program now running online, the team was tasked with finding a way to creatively wrap up the year in the digital space. Not surprisingly, our teaching artists leapt into action to create a satisfying closure to this unique year.

All students met in small groups to celebrate their year and reflect on their learning. Classes hosted zoom recitals, celebrations of learning, favourite memory sharing, costume parties, and so much more. Families (both locally and globally), friends, and ESO ambassadors tuned in to cheer our students on and wish them well.

At every online gathering, a beautiful video montage was shared that featured all 115 YONA students showing something that made them feel proud. Edited and produced by our Expressive Arts teacher, Nathaniel Wong, this video was a highlight of our year-end celebrations and truly captures year seven of this amazing program. A program that can rise above whatever hurdles we face, including a global pandemic.

### YONA-Sistema likes to finish off each year with a bang!

While we don't know what year eight of the program will exactly look like, we know that our students and staff will rise to whatever challenges come our way. Until then, enjoy your summer, keep smiling, and wash your hands! 🎵



# Canada Day with Aniela & Nathan

by D.T. Baker

Performance opportunities are a core element of YONA-Sistema. And while it is a collective program, which seeks to instill the values and benefits of orchestral collaboration, the performances of smaller groups from within the whole have value all their own. For Aniela, and her father Brad, providing the young violinist with a chance to perform on her own was all about confidence.

**“I think the more small group experience the kids get, the more confident they’re going to be.”**

**- Brad, Aniela’s father**

“I think the more small group experience the kids get, the more confident they’re going to be,” Brad says. “When they’re standing up in front of a big crowd at the Winspear, they’re covered by all the other musicians, so if they can get out and do more duets – the key is, if they’re going to get out and do things like that, they have to practice.”

And so it was that Aniela, who enters junior high this fall and has been a part of YONA for almost five years, accompanied by Teaching Artist Mr. Nathan, found themselves in front of a community crowd on Canada Day at the Edmonton Intercultural Centre. The fact that Brad is the Operations Manager there made it a natural.

“I thought it would be a good idea to gather a few musicians together and I thought, well, my daughter’s a musician – let’s see if we can get her to team up with Mr. Nathan and do a duet,” Brad explains. “My daughter has only performed with the group before, so I thought here’s her mentor, and she’s never played in public with him. So I asked her, ‘Would you do it?’, and she said, ‘Well, how many people?’ She was a little shy about it, but she did good.”

Good? They even did an encore, playing both a Minuet and a Gavotte for the appreciative crowd. “It was OK – I got lost in the middle of it, though,” Aniela says. “I was sort of scared and nervous, because I was more used to playing for people that I don’t know. So, like, if you can see your friend’s mom from where I was playing at my dad’s work, it would be pressure because I could see her watching.”

**(continues on next page)**



# Borden Park



## The weather couldn't have been better

as junior high YONA students and YONA staff took an afternoon to reconnect – responsibly – at Borden Park on Tuesday, July 28.

Social distancing, masks, and a lot of hand sanitizer couldn't get in the way of being able to talk face to face, to reconnect with actual human beings – and try a bit of disc golf. Here are a few photos from an afternoon that proved that not time, nor distance, nor a pandemic will get in the way of summer, snacks, and friendship. 🎵



## (...Canada Day continued)

While YONA students have been able to have private, online mentoring from their Teaching Artists, face to face rehearsals have not been possible. So Mr. Nathan chose pieces that Aniela has performed before, and they rehearsed separately – Aniela assures us she practiced. “A lot,” she said, “a lot.”

“There was no way to play together on Zoom, and so what ended up happening is that I told Brad I would be there a little earlier, and we would have an in-person rehearsal right before we played,” Mr. Nathan says of the logistics of the thing. “Luckily for us, we did have a bunch of duets and pieces that we were ready to play before COVID happened, so we just picked one or two of them, and just played them.”

It's good for the community, it's great for the young musicians, and if it convinces Aniela to keep practicing – that's a lot of wins. “We intend to have a few more of them, maybe September,” says Brad.

Good thing Mr. Nathan is well stocked with duets. 🎵



# Welcome to the World:

## Benjamin and Avery

This June, YONA's family grew with two staff members becoming mothers for the first time.



### Benjamin Paul Carson McHan

Ms. Elly welcomed Benjamin Paul Carson McHan on July 8th, 2020 @ 9:55pm weighing 7lbs 4oz and 20.5" tall.

A special shout out to Benjamin for hanging in there until we finished off the YONA year and for allowing Elly to continue teaching viola until the end of the program!



### Avery Lianne Torgalson

Ms. Alyssa welcomed Avery Lianne Torgalson on June 17th, 2020 @ 3:01pm weighing 7lbs 1oz and 19.5" tall.

We are grateful that Alyssa and Avery have been popping in to staff gatherings to say hello over the summer. Both Benjamin and Avery are sporting their YONA onesie, hand embroidered by Ms. Lydia, our talented seamstress and cello teaching artist. Thank you Ms. Lydia! 🎵

# High School Survey

by D.T. Baker



Mai

Anyone who has been fortunate enough to have been part of the Youth Orchestra of Northern Alberta-Sistema (YONA-Sistema) program since the beginning will remember that amazing crop of first-year students, grades two and three, who made up the violins-only cohort that provided the seed from which the amazing YONA-Sistema tree has grown.

So to think that some of our musicians are embarking on high school this fall is nothing short of incredible. As they prepare to take on the new challenges that lie ahead, they'll also begin a new chapter in their lives as YONA musicians. So we asked three of them to answer a few questions about what their futures hold.

Taylor and Mai have been part of YONA-Sistema since the very beginning, at what was Mother Teresa School. Jezelle came later, and has just finished her third YONA year.



Taylor

**What is your favourite memory of your time with YONA so far?**

**Mai:**

Especially when we part ways going to different schools as we grow older, YONA was a way to reunite with old friends. I enjoy a lot of nostalgic memories. I especially love that memory of back in Grade 3 where we danced and laughed so much while rain was pouring down on us. We were so carefree and so ever since, it feels like I was included as a part of another close family.

**Taylor:**

A few years ago we had like, option-esque classes on Fridays, and I took a composition class. Which was tons of fun and very rewarding, and really got me into composition and writing music. One of my favourites.

**Jezelle:**

My favourite memory from YONA is when the seniors got to be in Chamber.



Jezelle

**Do you have any idea what you might want to do after high school?**

**Mai:**

I might choose a different career path apart from music, even though I do think music contributes and still will be a really big part of my life. I'm hoping to get involved in the medical field since I also find a great interest and passion for learning it as well. Who knows, I might end up like those people who sing or perform to their patients.

**Taylor:**

I think I might teach, like be a band teacher or something. I do plan on getting a music degree though. And I do want to tour at some point, with a band or something, even just around Alberta.

**Jezelle:**

I would like to do Graphic Design!

(continues on next page)



## (...High School Survey continued)

Do you plan on staying involved with music, and if so, how do you plan on doing so?

**Mai:**

In high school I already signed up for a band class and hopefully, I might as well audition for a Jazz orchestra as well. They said they're in need of a violinist so I'm considering whether to join.

**Taylor:**

Well, I don't think I ever want to stop doing music. It's kinda my favourite thing, so even if nothing goes as planned, I'll still keep playing instruments at least. Hopefully, I keep writing songs.

**Jezelle:**

I would like to volunteer at YONA sometime in the future!

What High School will you be attending next year?

**Mai:**

I'm attending Archbishop Macdonald High School

**Taylor:**

Victoria School Of the Arts

**Jezelle:**

I will be attending MAC! (Archbishop Macdonald High School)



### Memories from Their First YONA Year:



Mai



Taylor



Jezelle

# YONA online stats

On March 16, 2020 YONA went online.

- YONA completed a total of **12 weeks** of online programming
- **95% of students** were connected online
  - **150+ YONA group lessons**
  - **840+ YONA individual lessons**
  - **24 academic support sessions**
- **Weekly food and supply deliveries** were made to families in need



## Thank you to our supporters

The support of our incredible donors allows YONA to grow and thrive, and means more now than ever. Thank you!

Thank you to to all our partners and sponsors:

