

Year 10 at YONA has been as busy and successful as ever. In this issue of Quarter Notes, you can read about the phenomenal Tutti Community Orchestra rehearsals, meet one of our fantastic volunteers, and watch our video re-cap of the instrument graduations earlier this year.

YONA also has lots of events happening in January and in the next few months! The YONA Opus fundraising concert was on January 17th, and the Winter Concert, a chance for YONA students to show off all their amazing skills to family and friends, is on February 7th. Details and plans for YONA's major year-end event, Road to Joy, are being decided with lots of excitement. Stay tuned for updates about all these events and more in future issues of Quarter Notes. 🎵

Year 10 is well underway!

by Alexandra Stout



Woodwind students at the St. Alphonsus instrument graduation

YONA Instrument Graduation 2022



As promised in our last issue of Quarter Notes, check out the video re-cap of the instrument graduations this year at two YONA sites: St. Teresa of Calcutta and St. Alphonsus.

Visit WinspearCentre.com/Graduation watch the highlight reel.

Being Part of a Big Sound:

Tutti Community Orchestra Rehearsal

by Jacquie McNulty



Students at a Tutti Community Orchestra Rehearsal

YONA Year 10 (YONA 2022-2023) is a very special year. It is significant for many reasons including the launch of our Tutti Community Orchestra Rehearsals – an initiative to bring students from YONA at St. Alphonsus School, YONA at St. Catherine School, and YONA at St. Teresa of Calcutta together to build community and an orchestra. “Tutti” means “everyone” in Italian and “Community Orchestra” is our intermediate level orchestra comprised of 63 students who have been in YONA for 1-3 years. This is a significant milestone for our program’s development as we now have enough students to fill two YONA orchestras (Community Orchestra and La Bruyère Orchestra). Further, the gathering of these students is an important tool for promoting community and fostering relationships across our many sites.

At our most recent Tutti Community Orchestra Rehearsal, on Wednesday, December 14th,

students from all three schools gathered at St. Teresa of Calcutta School. The day began with a snack of oranges, yogurt, cheese string, and granola bars while YONA staff and students from the La Bruyère Orchestra (acting as hosts, helpers, and leaders) assisted to set up the gym for rehearsal. Before the instruments were pulled from their cases, Mr. Nathaniel (our Viola and Expressive Arts Teaching Artist) led the students in some games to build community and have some fun!

Following some play time, Mr. Joshua (our Violin Teaching Artist at St. Alphonsus) reviewed expectations of how orchestra members act and behave in an orchestra setting. For example, you need to be in “play position” when the conductor raises their hands. Mr. Josh (our Cello Teaching Artist from St. Teresa) then led the orchestra in some warmup scales. The depth of the sound was remarkable, and the students felt exhilarated by

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being a part of such a big sound!

The day continued with Mr. Andreas (our Bass Teaching Artist at St. Alphonsus) and Mr. Nathan (our Violin Teaching Artist at St. Catherine School and Pedagogical Lead) leading the group to rehearse *Sweet Petite Winter Suite* by Brian Balmages; a festive and wintery piece that the students are busy preparing for the YONA Winter Concert in February. The collaborative nature of how these rehearsals are led, with many Teaching Artists

facilitating various aspects, models teamwork for the students; they see their teachers working together to create something beautiful. The students left the day feeling inspired to practice, excited about the new friendships they were forming, and looking forward to the next time they would all be together again.

It is an incredible experience to be a member of an ensemble. One learns to become an attentive listener, an effective team player, a leader, and develops a profound connection to something greater than each individual person playing: the music. Members of the YONA Community Orchestra, like with any ensemble, each have an important part to play, a responsibility to their ensemble, and are held accountable by their peers and the music. Because of the generous donations received through our Giving Tuesday Campaign in November 2022 in support of our transportation needs, we can make this incredibly meaningful opportunity happen for our students regularly. Thank you! 🎵

Volunteer Feature:

by Alexandra Stout

Get to know one of our amazing YONA volunteers, Norm Hill!

Q: How did you get involved with YONA?

I heard of the Sistema movement in Venezuela and Gustavo Dudamel from an old-fashioned recreation called listening to the radio. Through mutual friends, I made the acquaintance of Ms. Lauren, who spoke to me about YONA, and then encouraged and supported my decision to volunteer with YONA during a sabbatical leave from my regular job.

Q: What is your favourite story from your time with YONA?

I remember the gathering of the 12 students in Studio B on the 3rd floor of the Winspear near the end of the spring term and the ensemble work as they rehearsed "Classic video game themes." The students were congratulated on their playing,

listening, and watching by the Teaching Artists. Importantly, it was declared that they were now ensemble musicians, not just players of instruments!

Q: What do you value most about the YONA program?

What I value most is the ensemble aspect. Ensemble music-making is, to me, a team game. Not like competitive sports where there is an "I win-you lose" mentality, but a more collaborative effort. Our performance as an ensemble makes the best product. It is a "win-win" situation where together the whole is better than the sum of the parts. I also value the music making opportunities that are presented to me through YONA, and I have met students who, without the YONA program provided by ESO, may not have had such an opportunity. 🎵



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You can support the future of YONA-Sistema by donating money, time, or instruments. When you give, you put a musical instrument in the hands of a child. This can become so much more than a simple vessel for sound – it can become an instrument for growth, development, and change. Every gift, great or small, makes a difference in the life of a child and contributes to social change in our community.

Through YONA-Sistema, youth in Northern Alberta’s priority neighbourhoods will experience an extraordinary opportunity for social, emotional, academic, and musical development. They will develop lifelong values and skills that will promote the future success of these youth and of their communities.

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