

Quarter Notes



UJ and Ola are ready to perform with the rest of the viola team.

Springtime at YONA

It's hard to believe that we only have two months of YONA left before the summer break! Our students have been working hard over the last several months, and are getting excited to share what they've learned.

The last few months were filled with special events, concerts, and exciting professional development for our teaching staff. Our new students from Kipohatakaw YONA graduated to their real instruments in early April. Several members of our teaching staff visited the Sistema program in Los Angeles to gain new ideas, inspiration, and tips and tricks. We also hosted our annual Spring Concert, which was a huge success! The gym was packed with audience members eager to see our students sing and play their instruments.

The next few months are already filling up with more exciting things! We'll have some special visitors to YONA, and will participate in a South

African choral workshop. The cello and percussion students will be performing an outreach recital at a long-term care home near YONA, and the junior violins will be playing at an event put on by the Rotary Club of Edmonton South. All of our students are hard at working preparing for our Road to Joy fundraiser and our Year-End Concert in June.

In this Quarter Notes issue, you'll meet Mr. Dillon, our new Site Assistant. You'll also get to read about our Spring Concert and our Student Leadership Council. You'll get to hear directly from our students about what YONA means to them. Finally, you'll meet five students who have been rehearsing and performing as a string quintet.

Another issue of Quarter Notes will be sent out in July, but in the meantime you can check in online at www.yona-sistema.com.

Thanks for reading!

- The YONA Team

Vision

To kindle long-term positive change in Edmonton's underserved populations by engaging youth in music education.

Values

- Inclusivity
- Community
- Ensemble
- Peer mentorship
- Intensive instruction
- Holistic instruction
- Strength-based practice

"[YONA brought] more joy in our family, makes us more together especially listening [to] the instruments playing, we're having fun having music around us, playing, singing, and sometimes funny dancing. Lots of laughter- it's crazy!

- YONA Parent



Eliaz, a first-year clarinet student in YONA-Sistema.

Welcome Mr. Dillon to the YONA Staff!

We're excited to welcome Mr. Dillon to the YONA staff in the role of Site Assistant. Mr. Dillon joined the team at the beginning of April, and quickly become part of the YONA family. He brings so much experience, intuition, and organization to our team.

Mr. Dillon is originally from Red Deer, Alberta, and moved to Edmonton in 2016. He achieved his Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education degree through the University of Alberta, and found a passion for working with children and youth through his school practicums and volunteer experiences. Shortly after completing his degree, this passion to help and support others grew through opportunities such as coaching volleyball, as well as working with the Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area. In his free time, Mr. Dillon enjoys playing soccer, woodworking, camping, and playing the drums. He is very excited to be a part of the YONA family and to be working with an amazing group of kids!



YONA's Spring Concert

YONA held its Spring Concert at the end of March, and it was a huge success! The students were very excited to perform for a gym packed with family members and YONA fans. Our cello students were featured in a performance of Pachelbel's *Canon in D*, our junior bass students played *Ode to Joy*, and the viola students performed *French Folk Song*, complete with several different accompaniment styles. It was the first time our Junior Ensemble, made up of our first-year viola and bass students, performed. It was also the first time we've played pop music in our ensembles. The students and the audience had fun dancing along to some favourite tunes by Bruno Mars and Taylor Swift.

Enjoy these pictures from the concert!



YONA's Leadership Council

New to YONA this year is our Leadership Council, which comprises of six YONA students and is supported by Ms. Jacquie and Ms. Rebecca.

We started the Leadership Council at YONA for a number of reasons. Not only do we want YONA students to be a key voice in improving our program, but we also want to give senior students a space to develop the skills they need in order to make a positive impact on their communities. Additionally, we want to provide increased opportunities for students to act as role models for their peers. Part of the vision of YONA has always been to nourish community-building skills. We believe such skills are strengthened through the ensemble-based music education that we provide. However, with Leadership Council, we can take the lessons that these students have learned through their ensemble-based musical experiences and show them how to be the organizers and facilitators of more of these positive experiences for others.

The Leadership Council has been especially invested so far in improving the sense of belonging for all students at YONA, reducing social cliques, and spreading positive energy and a culture of kindness in our hallways through Random Acts of Kindness and other initiatives. We are also working on improving lines of communication between students, staff, and guardians, and are beginning to research strong leaders in our community in hopes of bringing more role models and inspiring figures into the daily lives of all students at YONA.

It is truly a privilege to be in a room full of such strong-minded, motivated young people, full of ideas on how to enrich their communities. Through this council, these students have been improving their understanding of what it takes to move from a simple idea into a meaningful change for their community.



Members of the Leadership Council.



YONA students enjoying community.

YONA Student's Corner

Not only do our students enjoy making music, but many of them also enjoy expressing themselves in other ways. Here are some of their thoughts about YONA.

"I like that I get to play and learn a new instrument. YONA makes me feel safe and it makes me feel special to be a part of the program."

– Larry, 1st year bass student

"I like that I get to play music and be with my friends. I like that I have polite friends in YONA. For me, YONA is like a family that's good at music, and we always have someone to sit by at snack."

– Adoneia, 4th year violin student

"I like that YONA is free to learn instruments, and we get to have a snack. And the teachers are nice." – David, 2nd year cello student



YONA students have fun together.

YONA Team

Alyssa Paterson
YONA Manager
Lucas Waldin
YONA Conductor
Jacquie McNulty
YONA Site Manager
Dillon Lehman
YONA Site Assistant
Lauren Dykstra
Lead Teaching Artist

Natalie Boisvert
Silvia Buttiglione
Sasha Campbell
Nathan Chan
Kevin Johnson
Rebecca Parsons
Elaine Stepa
Andreas Wegner
YONA Teaching Artists

Stephanie Urquhart
YONA Choir Accompanist

Photos by D. T. Baker &
Emily Parr

Special thanks to our
volunteers! If you'd like to join
our team, call Jeffory at
780-401-2517.

Upcoming Events

Year-End Concert
June 20 - 4:45 pm
RSVP to Miss Jacquie -
780-903-9744

Meet the YONA String Quintet- YONA Student Profiles

The YONA String Quintet consists of five members. In the violin section, there are two people: Jezelle, who has been in YONA for two years, and Charles, who has been with us for five. The two violas are Michael and Kaliyah, who have each been with us for three years. The last player in our group is our cellist Kristina, who has been with us for two years.

Why we wanted to be in the group was because we wanted to learn more advanced pieces. What we have learned was more techniques on how to keep a steady beat, play as one instrument, how to start and end a piece, and many more.

Our favourite memories were that we got to teach ourselves for a day. We got to learn how each person taught each other. We all had a different teaching style such as yelling, being too confusing for people to understand, etc. But the most important thing is that we had fun.

Playing chamber music is very unique. The older kids (us junior high's) can learn new skills and we could probably share it with other kids when we get older.

Hopefully next year we get to travel and let the YONA Chamber Group from St. Alphonsus be known around the world.

- Written by Charles, Jezelle, Michael, Kaliyah, and Kristina



Jezelle, Charles, Kaliyah, Michael, and Kristina.

Thank you to our supporters! You are truly instruments for change in our children's lives.

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please visit www.yona-sistema.com.