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ORCHESTRAS

Celebrating 60 years



2025-26

WINTER CELEBRATION

Featuring the Anchorage Youth Symphony
with concerto competition winner Ezzy Allwright, cello

Bruce Wood, conductor with music by Mozart, Saint-Saëns, Copland and others

With guest performance by  alaskadancetheatre

Sunday, February 22, 2026 4:00 pm

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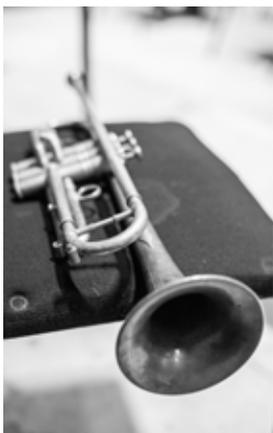
ALASKA YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

UPCOMING EVENTS

CLASSICS & COCKTAILS

AYO's annual fundraising event featuring delicious food, beautiful auction items, and a special concert by the Anchorage Youth Symphony!

Saturday, May 16, 2026 @ 6:00 pm
Alaska Center for the Performing Arts



60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & SPRING CONCERT

Join us for our exciting season finale, celebrating 60 years of AYO! Featuring the Anchorage Youth Symphony, with performances by AYO's Symphony School ensembles

Sunday, May 17, 2026 @ 4:00 pm
Atwood Concert Hall

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Lynsey Slavonic, 2nd violin
Miriam English Ward, viola
Francis Fay, cello
Avalon Lee, double bass
Laura Koenig, flute
Emily Weaver, oboe

Sandra Cox, clarinet
Kyle Noonan, bassoon
Lupe Marroquin, horn
Andrew Loeffler, trumpet
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Corliss Kimmel*, percussion
Joanna Mayer*, harp

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Brooke Wood, cello/bass
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A NOTE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

On behalf of the AYO Board of Directors, welcome to our Winter Celebration Concert! This will be an evening filled with amazing music, and we are thankful you could join us. Winters are always challenging in Alaska and we are appreciative of the dedication of our musicians (and their drivers!) to make this performance possible.

This year we celebrate 60 years of Alaska Youth Orchestras. Coming up on our spring calendar is the Classics & Cocktails fundraiser, on Saturday, May 16. It will be an evening of celebration with great food and a fun auction, including a special concert from the Anchorage Youth Symphony. Following that, on May 17, is our final concert of AYO's season. Alumni will also be part of the performance. These events celebrate AYO in the present as well as our history. We would love to see you there.



Finally, thank you to all the musicians on stage, as well as the families, school teachers, private teachers, staff, donors, and sponsors offstage whose dedication and support make AYO concerts possible. We hope you enjoy the music, and look forward to seeing you in the Spring!

Sincerely,

Anne Connors
Board President





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A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome to AYO's Winter Celebration Concert! Thank you for coming out to support our young musicians of the Anchorage Youth Symphony!

We are in for a treat this evening. AYS will perform a wide variety of music, from the opening of a classical symphony to an operatic prelude, with excursions amid the musical landscapes of France, Great Britain, and of course our very own United States of America.

We begin the concert by welcoming our dear friends from Alaska Dance Theatre, who join us for a renewed collaboration this year!

I am distinctly proud to recognize this evening's soloist and concerto competition winner, Ezzy Allwright. He will perform a pillar of the cello repertoire, by Camille Saint-Saëns. I am grateful for the musicianship Ezzy has shared with us this winter, and am also pleased to recognize our longstanding supporters of the AYO Concerto Competition: Soroptimist International of Anchorage / Barbara and Ed Dimock Art Scholarship.

I look forward to seeing you at our events this Spring. Symphony School rehearsals resume March 15, and we can't wait to see you all again for our annual Classics & Cocktails fundraiser on May 16, followed by our Spring Celebration Concert on May 17. We hope you can join us, in celebration of our young musicians, and AYO's 60th anniversary!

A big thank you to the AYO team, and to our supporters, teachers, and educators across the community who make our work possible. Thank you for helping our young musicians thrive!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Pierre Derycz". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Pierre Derycz
Executive Director



Anchorage Youth Symphony

2026-27 Auditions: Online submissions due June 1

Eligibility: Age 14 or Grade 9 – college at the start of Fall 2025

Skill Level: Intermediate – Advanced

Requirements: Two scales, two excerpts, a solo piece, and a brief bio

Symphony School

Spring 2026 Session: Rehearsals begin March 15

Eligibility: Grades 4 through 12

Skill Level: Advanced beginner – Intermediate

Rehearsals: Sundays at UAA (4:30-5:45 or 6-7:15pm based on placement)

Concert: Sunday, May 17, 2026 (Atwood Concert Hall)

Screening includes: Solo piece (90 seconds) and 2 scales (your choice)

Visit www.AlaskaYouthOrchestras.org
for more information and to apply!

PROGRAM

ANCHORAGE YOUTH SYMPHONY

CONDUCTOR: *BRUCE WOOD*

Symphony No. 31 in D major Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
I. Allegro assai

Featuring: Alaska Dance Theatre

Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor Camille Saint-Saëns
Allegro non troppo, allegretto con moto, and finale

Soloist: Ezzy Allwright, cello

Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4 Edward Elgar

“Hoe-Down” from *Rodeo* Aaron Copland

Prelude to *Die Meistersinger* Richard Wagner



ANCHORAGE YOUTH SYMPHONY

VIOLIN 1

Alaina Hansen
Concertmaster
Sarah Kim
Sahid Talome Dewees
Jocelyn Kerley
Caele Rohwer
Natalie Taylor
Ellowyn Lang
Soren Rhodes
Ryan Chew
Leo Shephard
Udith Senevirathne
William Siebert
Reine Soule
Nina Bingham*

VIOLIN 2

Amber Snelling
Principal
Sebastian Terry
Hannah Kim
Nicholas Goetz
Nolan Phelps
Maui Delos Reyes
Fiona Salao
Brandon Kim
Alejandra Choi
Isaiah Kim
Skye Moberly
Catalina Whited
Landyhn Patel
Nora King
Lydney Slavonic*

VIOLA

Eirene Hansen
Principal
Matthew Jackson
Abigail Page
Nina Geist
Thaddeus Greenwood
Samuel Holman
Lincoln Altman
Lucinda Grant
Kaitlyn Joseph
Makayla Cobb
Emma Dougherty
Ava Christianson
Eden Rhoades
Claire Cartee
Auda Bernier
Miriam English Ward*

CELLO

Ezzy Allwright
Principal
Minghan Dai
Leah Kim
Lindsey Lucas
Luciana Liu
Ethan Johnson
Kendrew Liu
Adrian Cryan
Logan Fairbanks
Riley Snider
Zoey Dougherty
Caedmon Johnson

BASS

Hunter Bernas
Principal
Rienzi Witmer
Erika Dobler
Paetyn Orebaugh
Talon Motyka
Samuel Temiz

FLUTE

Lena So
Principal
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Marley McDonagh
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Ksenia Bryant

CLARINET

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Principal
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HORN

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Eve Setian
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Principal
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THE NAVE

BIOGRAPHY

EZZY ALLWRIGHT, CELLO

Ezzy Allwright started the cello just after his fourth birthday. Four months later, he was on the stage of the Wendy Williamson Auditorium at the Anchorage Folk Festival performing his first gig with his family, the AllGood Family Band—and he loved it. In the thirteen years since, Ezzy has studied with Lisa McLaughlin, Mary Alice Donaldson, Dr. Bruce Wood, and has also worked with Mary Schallert, George Jackson, and Adam Stewart. He has attended the Interlochen Cello Intensive, Anchorage Chamber Music Festival, and Mike Block String Camp.



Ezzy has played four years with both the Anchorage Youth Symphony and West High School Symphonic Orchestra, where he is currently principal cellist. He has won command performances at both the Aurora Music Festival, Alaska All-State Solo and Ensemble Festival, and was first chair at the All-Northwest Orchestra Festival in spring 2025.

Beyond the concert hall, Ezzy has performed at the Anchorage Folk Festival every year since 2013, played with West High Dance, and gigged around Alaska with groups ranging from bluegrass to psychedelic rock. Ezzy's passions also include snowboarding, rock climbing, and experiencing new adventures. He has received admission to Berklee College of Music and Western Washington University this fall, and is looking forward to hearing back from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Whitman College soon. Ezzy is excited to share the Saint-Saëns with you and hopes you enjoy the concert!

AYO's Concerto Competition is generously sponsored by:

***Soroptimist International of Anchorage /
Barbara and Ed Dimock Art Scholarship***

A NOTE FROM ALASKA DANCE THEATRE

Dear AYO Friends, Family, and Fans,

Alaska Dance Theatre is thrilled to share the stage with the tremendously talented musicians of the Anchorage Youth Symphony! We are especially grateful to Pierre Derycz and Dr. Bruce Wood for once again saying yes to this collaboration and embracing it. It has been a pleasure to work with AYO.

Alaska Dance Theatre believes that the arts are for everyone. That music, dance, and theatre exist to make the world a better place. Thank you for supporting these young artists as they learn and grow and do this important work.

With Gratitude,
Cari Zawodny, Executive Director
Farah Zoetmulder, Artistic Director
Alaska Dance Theatre



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CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTE

Parisian Spring, performed to Mozart's Symphony No. 31 (1st mvmt.)
Choreographed by Cady Lynn O'Brien

Travel with us to Paris in the spring where dancers frolic through an awakening garden's budding flowers. Inspired by Mozart's Symphony No. 31, this dance uses baroque ballet techniques to invoke the lighthearted joy and transformation of spring.



Cady Lynn O'Brien began her dance training in Sitka, Alaska at Sitka Studio of Dance. As an adult, she moved to London, England to study at the dance conservatory, Trinity Laban. Her performance credits include *Carmen*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Magic Flute*, and *Maria De Buenos Aires* with the Anchorage Opera and *Caravan*, *Rite of Spring*, and *The Nutcracker* with Pulse Dance Company. She holds a degree in Dance Studies and a Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Symphony No. 31 in D major, “Paris”

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was one of the most influential composers of the Classical Era. Born in Salzburg, Austria, Mozart displayed extraordinary musical talent from a young age and toured throughout Europe as a child prodigy alongside his sister under the guidance of their father, Leopold Mozart. Over the course of his short life, he composed more than 600 works, including symphonies, operas, chamber music, and concertos.

Mozart composed his Symphony No. 31 in 1778 during a stay in Paris, where he hoped to build his reputation and secure a stable position. Written for the prestigious Concert Spirituel orchestra, the symphony reflects the grandeur and brilliance favored by Parisian audiences.

The first movement, *Allegro assai*, opens with a striking and energetic flourish designed to immediately capture the audience’s attention. Strong unison passages and bright D major harmonies create a sense of grandeur, while sudden dynamic contrasts add excitement and intensity. One particularly notable feature is Mozart’s use of the crescendo, a gradual increase in volume that builds anticipation and reflects popular Parisian taste at the time.

- MATTHEW JACKSON, AYS VIOLIST



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Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33

Camille Saint-Saëns

Camille Saint-Saëns' (1835–1921) Cello Concerto No. 1 is an exemplary work of Romanticism, renowned for its innovative structure, intense emotion, and melodic charm. First performed in 1873, this composition condenses the impact of a classical three-movement concerto into a seamless, well-integrated progression, highlighting the cello's extensive range from powerful, emotional eruptions to soft, lyrical reflection.



- SEBASTIAN TERRY, *AYS*
VIOLINIST

Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4

Edward Elgar

Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934) was a British composer who acted as a bridge between the 19th and 20th century of classical music. Born into a modest family of musicians, Elgar built a name for himself as a reputable violinist and music teacher. Often self-taught, Elgar studied many scores and books found in his father's music store, even becoming rather proficient in both the bassoon and trombone. Although he struggled in gaining traction as a composer, many of his works are now widely performed, and his music is remembered for its unique style that blends emotion and lyricism, tied to European Romanticism with poetic structure and an expressive sense of drama.



The Pomp and Circumstance Marches are a series of five marches Elgar composed from 1901 to around the end of his life in 1930, with the title of the marches being inspired by a line from a scene in William Shakespeare's play "*Othello*" that speaks of the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!" The first march is the most iconic and well-known march out of the five, with the celebratory middle section being used at the coronation of Edward VII in 1902 and in present day graduation ceremonies across the United States. The fourth march, the one that will be played tonight, captures the same sense of grandeur exhibited in the first march, opening with a loud and energetic fanfare that turns into a noble and broad melody midway through before returning to and concluding with the same lively theme found at the beginning, all coming together in glorious celebration and style evocative of the imperial Britain of Elgar's time.

- *UDITH SENEVIRATHNE, AYS VIOLINIST*

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“Hoe-Down” from *Rodeo*

Aaron Copland



Aaron Copland (1900–1990), known as the “Dean of American Composers,” forged a distinctively American style of classical music to evoke the pioneer spirit and vast American landscape. His works are mainly characterized by folk melodies, syncopated rhythms, as well as an “open-space” sound.

“Hoe-Down” is the energetic final movement of Copland’s 1942 ballet *Rodeo*. The ballet tells the story of a

Cowgirl trying to fit in at a ranch and win the attention of the Head Wrangler. The “Hoe-Down” scene and accompanying music showcases her dancing during a lively ranch celebration, where she ultimately finds love with a different cowboy who admires her.

Within the broad melody, you may recognize famous American folk tunes like “Bonaparte’s Retreat” and “McLeod’s Reel.” Today, the piece is considered a quintessential work of Copland, representing the “American sound.” It blends American folk tunes with modern orchestral instrumentation that authentically brings out a virtuosic work of energy.

- SARAH KIM, AYS VIOLINIST



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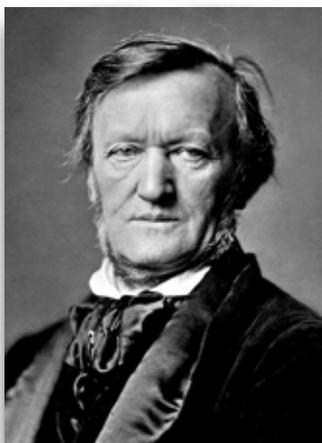
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Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

Richard Wagner



Richard Wagner (1813–1883) was a German composer and librettist during the Romantic period. Wagner showed interest in the theatre from an early age, having a close relative who was involved in theatre. He began learning piano and composition, which he excelled at rapidly. After writing his first opera, *Die Feen* (*The Fairies*) at the age of 20, he went on to write thirteen operas in his life, including *Tristan and Isolde*, *The Flying Dutchman*, and the four-opera cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

Wagner's music exemplifies many aspects of the Western romantic classical tradition, and also contained revolutionary themes. His works were not always supported; Wagner was often in debt, and he was once exiled from his homeland for taking part in revolutionary protests.

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (*The Master-Singers of Nuremberg*) (1861-1867) is Wagner's only comedic opera and was loved by audiences from its first performance. It premiered in 1868 and received more admiration at its opening than any of his other operas. Surprisingly, the composer included elements in the show which he had previously denounced, such as ballet, rhymed verse, and arias. The performance was described as colorful, lively, and striking, with its exciting themes, enticing musical variance, and spirited nature. The three-act opera has often been beheld as an artistic symbol of German nationalism, in part due to one of the opera's characters expressing their opinion that German art must be preserved and protected from alien powers.

- NATALIE TAYLOR, AYS VIOLINIST

BIOGRAPHY

BRUCE WOOD

Dr. Bruce Wood served as Music Director of Alaska Youth Orchestras from 2021 to 2024, and currently conducts AYO's Symphony School ensembles.

Dr. Wood was the founding Music Director of the Youth Orchestras of Lubbock, Texas while also serving on the faculty of Texas Tech University. From 2014 to 2021 Dr. Wood was the Director of Fine Arts for the Anchorage School District.



Dr. Wood received a bachelor's degree in music education from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa and his master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Wood has taught in public school settings for eleven years and at the university level for over twenty-five years. He has been published by the American String Teacher Journal, Strings Magazine, and GIA publications.

A cellist and singer, Dr. Wood has been a member of the Alaska Chamber Singers. He has also conducted a number of the performances of the Anchorage Community Chorus Messiah. Dr. Wood's wife, Brooke, works for the Anchorage Museum.

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2025-26 SEASON

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Hendrik Hansen – *OVERTURE, CELLO*
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Lawrence Pennino – *OVERTURE, HORN*
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Isabella Schirard – *OVERTURE, VIOLIN 1*
Udith Senevirathne – *AYS, VIOLIN 1*

William Siebert – *AYS, VIOLIN 1*
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in memory of Margaret David
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2025–2026 SEASON

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OUR HISTORY

The Anchorage Youth Symphony was formed in 1965 by Frank Pinkerton and has continued under the leadership of prominent local musicians and educators including Dewey Ehling, Kurt Pasch, Jeanne (Ray) Bruhn, Charles Gorsuch, Marlow Thomas, and, most recently, Linn Weeda and Dr. Bruce Wood.



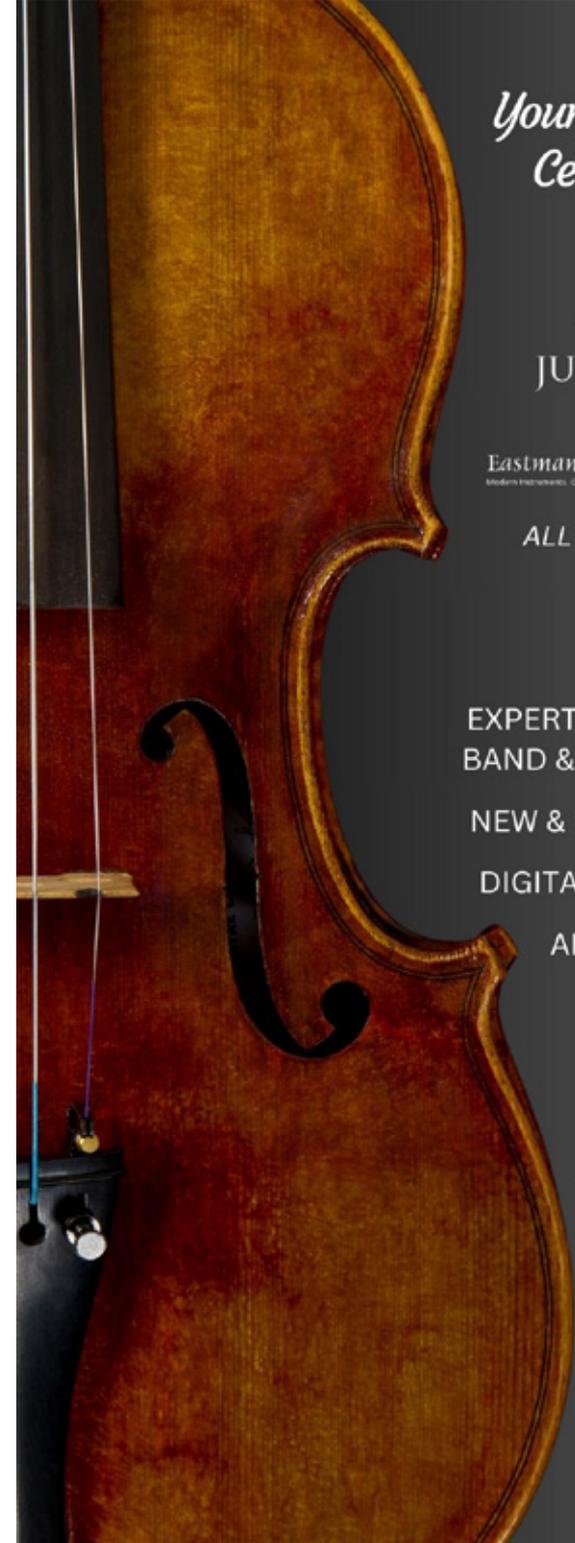
In 1981 the Anchorage Youth Symphony Association began operating separately from the Anchorage School District and was granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. Shortly thereafter the organization adopted the name Alaska Youth Orchestras. Since then, the organization has remained an active member of the Anchorage arts community and has been a resident company of the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts since 2011.

Linn Weeda served as Music Director for 31 years, expanding the program to include coaching by local professional musicians, many who were in the youth symphony as young players. He retired in May 2021, succeeded in the role of Music Director by Bruce Wood, Ph.D.

In 2023, Pierre Derycz joined the AYO team as Executive Director, bringing a deep passion for music education and youth development. Under his leadership, AYO continues to participate in advocacy and community building efforts across the Anchorage Arts community.

AYO's education and performance programs now serve over 160 youth musicians each year in three ensembles. The Anchorage Youth Symphony provides a professional performance experience for high school and college age musicians. Symphony School provides progressive teaching ensembles for musicians grades 4-12.

AYO is currently conducting a search for its next Music Director. We are delighted this season to continue to work with Dr. Bruce Wood and Music Director Emeritus Linn Weeda, as we celebrate AYO's 60th anniversary and continue building a community where music education and performance are valued and shared.



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