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ORCHESTRAS

*Celebrating 60 years*



# 60<sup>TH</sup> SEASON SPRING CELEBRATION

**Anchorage Youth Symphony, joined by AYO Alumni  
with performances by AYO's Symphony School ensembles**

*Featuring Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, with music by Bizet and others  
Linn Weeda and Bruce Wood, conductors*

**Sunday, May 17, 2026 4:00 pm**  
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# ALASKA YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

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Linn Weeda\* ~ AYS Guest Conductor  
Bruce Wood, Ph.D. ~ Symphony School Conductor  
Zach Akins\* ~ Operations Manager  
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ALASKA YOUTH  
ORCHESTRAS

## 2026-27 AUDITIONS:

### ANCHORAGE YOUTH SYMPHONY

Fully-symphonic performance ensemble, open to intermediate and advanced musicians (age 14 and up, or Grade 9 through college).

Weekly rehearsals Monday evenings at The Nave.

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### SYMPHONY SCHOOL

Teaching ensembles for advanced-beginner and intermediate level youth musicians (grades 4 through 12). Musicians prepare, step by step, for participation in the Anchorage Youth Symphony and other community and school music programs. Fall and Spring sessions available, Sunday evenings at UAA.

**Screening submissions open August 1, 2026**

Visit [www.AlaskaYouthOrchestras.org](http://www.AlaskaYouthOrchestras.org)  
for more information and to apply!



# ALASKA YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

## COACHES

### ANCHORAGE YOUTH SYMPHONY

Nina Bingham\*, 1<sup>st</sup> violin  
Lynsey Slavonic, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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  
Michael Ottaviano, low brass  
Corliss Kimmel\*, percussion  
Joanna Mayer\*, harp

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# A NOTE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Alaska Youth Orchestras at 60 years!  
What an incredible milestone. I am honored to share today's concert with you, as we celebrate our youth musicians and recognize the importance of music in our community.

The Anchorage Youth Symphony and Symphony School have both had a great season under the guidance of our conductors, Linn Weeda and Bruce Wood. The music has been challenging, and AYS is especially proud to bring you Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony tonight. We are grateful to our community of musicians, coaches, conductors, staff, volunteers, and parents for your role in these performances.



Thank you to the alumni who are joining us to perform today. We love having you back to share the stage and appreciate you taking the time to play with the Anchorage Youth Symphony and AYO once again.

We also say goodbye to our graduating seniors today as they enter the next stage of their lives. We wish them well and hope they take their love of music and AYO wherever they may venture.

AYO would like to express our deep appreciation for the Music and Fine Arts teachers in the Anchorage School District. Elementary music teachers introduce all students to music and are the starting point for many musicians. Middle and high school music teachers start with squeaks, wonky rhythms, and out-of-tune notes and, through many hours of instruction, create something from nothing. Without these teachers' passion and instruction, AYO wouldn't be here. Thank you, teachers, for your dedication to your profession.

And finally, thank you to our donors, supporters, and patrons for supporting the arts and our youth. Your support, in all forms, helps us achieve our goal of bringing music to our community. We couldn't do this without you.

Let's celebrate!

Anne Connors  
Board President





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# A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome to AYO's Spring Celebration Concert, and the final performance of our 2025-26 Season and AYO's 60th year!

The program you will hear today is not just the result of our rehearsals this spring. Every single one of our musicians builds on the work done in their schools, in their lessons, in their individual practice. Countless hours of dedication, nurturing not only the work of an entire season at AYO, but multiple years of growth and improvement with our ensembles. I am

proud to be sharing the accomplishments of our youth musicians today, and to celebrate the tremendous effort it takes on all sides to make symphonic orchestral experiences like these possible.

I am especially grateful to our AYO team—Linn Weeda, Bruce Wood, Zach Akins, and our professional musician coaches. Thank you for the dedication, care, and expertise you share with our young musicians. I couldn't be more thrilled to celebrate this milestone with you.

This summer, we welcome a new person to AYO: our incoming music director, David Platt! I look forward to our next chapter at AYO with Maestro Platt's artistic leadership, and to our continued work in support of youth musicianship in our community.

Thank you to everyone who helps make AYO possible—our families, educators, donors, and supporters far and wide. Special thanks to all who came to support *Classics & Cocktails* yesterday, and to our partners who show up throughout the year for AYO. Your support means the world to us!

I look forward to seeing you in our 2026-27 Season! To all our musicians, families, and friends, thank you for making AYO such a special part of our community. Have a great summer!

Pierre Derycz  
Executive Director



# WELCOME MAESTRO DAVID PLATT

This spring, we announced the appointment of David Platt as AYO's next Music Director!

Mr. Platt's appointment follows an intensive search process, which included over 50 applicants from across the United States and abroad. Mr. Platt will join the AYO team in June, as we finish planning our upcoming 2026-27 Season.



Mr. Platt brings a multifaceted background to AYO. An experienced violinist and music educator, Mr. Platt holds advanced degrees from Butler University and the Cleveland Institute of Music, and will soon earn a Doctorate in Orchestral Conducting from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. He recently concluded a three-year Conducting Fellowship with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and has served as cover conductor with the Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Firelands (Ohio), Austin, and Charleston Symphony Orchestras. Mr. Platt has also held positions with the Sangamon Valley Youth Symphony and Baldwin Wallace Youth Orchestras, and served as a visiting clinician with the Charleston Symphony Youth Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, and the Akron Youth Symphony.

Mr. Platt has appeared internationally in performances spanning symphonic, operatic, ballet, and contemporary music genres. Recent highlights include working with the Myrtus Festival Orquesta (Spain), Orchestra Simfonică a Filarmonicii Pitești (Romania), and the Allegra Festival Orchestra (Bulgaria). He has been privileged to study under master conductors and pedagogues Nicolás Pasquet, Johannes Schlaefli, David Efron, Thomas Wilkins, Arthur Fagen, and Carl Topilow, among others.

Mr. Platt will conduct his debut concert with AYO in the fall of 2026, leading the Anchorage Youth Symphony in Atwood Concert Hall. As Music Director, he will also oversee the continued development of AYO's Symphony School ensembles, and provide artistic and pedagogical leadership for all AYO programs.

We look forward to working with Maestro Platt, and welcoming him to Anchorage and Alaska!

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# PROGRAM

## SYMPHONY SCHOOL ~ PRELUDE

CONDUCTOR: *BRUCE WOOD*

### **Polka from *The Bartered Bride***

Bedřich Smetana ~ arr. *Carrie Lane Gruselle*

### **Theme from *Jurassic Park***

John Williams ~ arr. *Robert Longfield*

### **Strings of Fire**

Chris M. Bernotas

### **Pine Mountain**

Katie O'Hara LaBrie



## SYMPHONY SCHOOL ~ OVERTURE

CONDUCTOR: *BRUCE WOOD*

### **Rosamunde Overture**

Franz Schubert ~ arr. *Richard Meyer*

### **Cumberland Cross**

Carl Stommen

### **Genesis**

Rossano Galante

- INTERMISSION -

# ANCHORAGE YOUTH SYMPHONY

CONDUCTOR: *LINN WEEDA*

## **Selections from Suite No. 1 from *Carmen***

Georges Bizet

Prelude – Aragonaise – Intermezzo – Les Toréadors

*Featuring Alumni of the Anchorage Youth Symphony*

~ *SENIOR RECOGNITION* ~

## **Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67**

Ludwig van Beethoven

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Scherzo: Allegro
- IV. Allegro – Presto

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### *NOTE FROM LINN WEEDA* *AYO MUSIC DIRECTOR EMERITUS*

Welcome to the Anchorage Youth Symphony's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

Tonight's concert has a deeply personal meaning for me, not only as tonight's conductor but as the Youth Symphony's Music Director Emeritus, as an Alumnus, and its biggest fan! My association with AYS spans intermittently from 1970 until now. Performing Bizet's *Carmen* Suite with alumni joining the orchestra emphasizes the connection through the years.

Tonight's concert features Beethoven's iconic Fifth Symphony. We programmed this work for the orchestra the year of the pandemic but were unable to perform it then. Tonight is a joyous reaffirmation of our return from those trying times.

This work has another special meaning to me. My mother took me to my first orchestral concert in the sixties which I remember vividly. The Anchorage Symphony performed this work that night, and the sound of the orchestra fascinated me. The conductor was AYS's founder and first music director Frank Pinkerton. I have since performed this work many times as a player and conductor: the impact of this nascent moment in my young life has infused each of my performances.

# SYMPHONY SCHOOL

## PRELUDE ENSEMBLE:

### VIOLIN 1

Marian Beals  
*Concertmaster*  
Wuuri Shim  
Bea Besh Barber  
Margo Dufort  
Willow Mahaffey  
Lucia Gartland

### VIOLIN 2

Sophia Waters  
*Principal*  
Anna Jackson  
Eliana Bailly  
Rory Essary  
Aiyla Parrish  
Layla Ubedei  
Dwight Parker  
Ella Collins

### VIOLIN 3

Naomi GreenRose  
*Principal*  
Annabelle Nicolai  
Ellie Trevithick  
Elijah Lumba

### CELLO

Carter Holbrook  
*Principal*  
Cameron Young  
Lillian Vogt

## OVERTURE ENSEMBLE:

### VIOLIN 1

Ileah Hansen  
*Concertmaster*  
Lillian Beals  
Micah Holsopple  
Ruth Leman  
Suin Kim  
Jessica Westley  
Amy Stockly  
Luna Elrod  
Ethan Swartz

### VIOLA /

VIOLIN 3  
Annie Hamel  
*Principal*  
Pearl Bassham  
Annika Hosselkus  
Olivia Jones

### FLUTE

Joshua Warren  
*Principal*  
Eloise Cloutier  
Anne-Elise  
Levanon-Brown

### HORN

Lawrence Pennino  
*Principal*  
Isaac Leman

### VIOLIN 2

Irene Kwon  
*Principal*  
Hanna Lundebye  
Jacqueline Parker  
Ella Guzik  
Arthur Cha  
Lydia Johnston  
Marian Kwon  
Wuuri Shim  
Virginia Ayer  
Mirai Moore  
Zachary Howe  
Marcelo Whited  
Kylie Walton  
Ayah Alsaltani  
Meriam Alsaltani  
Olivia Jones

### CELLO

Caden Grunst  
*Principal*  
Lilly Jeppesen  
Hendrik Hansen  
Kaitlyn Dunfee  
Hanna Elrod  
Siri Erickson  
Cameron Young  
Bruce Lin

### BASS

Lyra Brosius  
*Principal*  
Mackenzey Shicks

### OBOE

Benedict Gartland  
*Principal*  
Maria Witmer  
Kai Tokita  
Lorelle Myers

### TRUMPET

Samuel Erickson  
*Principal*

### CLARINET

Dawson Brunquist  
*Principal*  
Lyla Bailly  
Ian Chun  
David Parrish  
Noah Schmid

### BARITONE

McKenzie Cope  
*Principal*

### PERCUSSION

John Bazin  
*Principal*  
Mirai Moore

### AYS MENTORS

Alaina Hansen, violin  
Skye Moberly, violin  
Eirene Hansen, viola  
Hunter Bernas, bass  
Zoe McDonagh, horn  
Anya McLaughlin, percussion



# ANCHORAGE YOUTH SYMPHONY

## VIOLIN 1

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

## VIOLIN 2

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

## VIOLA

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

## CELLO

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

## BASS

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

## FLUTE

Lena So  
*Principal*  
Amelia Swartz  
Marley McDonagh  
Helen Wood

## OBOE

Kai Peppinger  
*Principal*  
Adria Myers  
Ksenia Bryant

## CLARINET

Ruby Beardsley  
*Principal*  
Chanelle Matlock  
*Assistant Principal*  
Zachary Day  
Emryn Schock

## BASSOON

Kaitlyn Paculba  
*Principal*  
Amaya Hammatt  
Andrew Zartmann\*

## HORN

Jojo Leonard  
*Principal*  
Eve Setian  
Zoe McDonagh  
Illia Shymko  
Lupe Marroquin\*

## TRUMPET

Malachi Temiz  
*Principal*  
Will Bryan  
Connor Booth  
Liam Kraft

## TROMBONE

Kristina Kagerer  
*Principal*  
Luke Thomas  
Mike Ottaviano\*

## PERCUSSION

Anya McLaughlin  
*Principal*  
Ashton Bednar  
Corliss Kimmel\*

## HARP

Mary Grace Cope  
*Principal*  
Rena Tokita

*\*Mentor, Volunteer,  
or Coach*



**THE NAVE**

# ANCHORAGE YOUTH SYMPHONY

## ALUMNI

### VIOLIN

Nina Bingham	1976-1980
Bailey Hamilton	2023-2025
Amanda Kerr	2002-2004
Daniel Perry	1979-1983
Benjamin Strauss	2022-2025
Juliet Tardy	1982-1985
Danika Watson	2006-2010
Angel Yang	2023-2024

### VIOLA

Betsy Beardsley	1990-1994
Kristi Cada Brown	1983-1986
Michael Giles	1984-1987
Mary Primis Pennino	1988-1991

### CELLO

Bentley Altman	2020-2024
Grant Chythlook	2021-2025
Jamie Byers Harleston	2009-2013
Elizabeth Knapp	2002-2006
Brett Lindsay	2008-2012
Erin Witmer	1988-1991

### BASS

Zach Akins	2008-2010
Katie Eakes	1997-2000
Heidi Herbert-Lovern	2004-2008

### FLUTE

Corinne McVee	1975-1977
Cecelia Pullen	2001-2002

### HORN

Evan Hagen	2012-2016
Marcus Oder	1980-1983
Lolly Rader	1978-1980
John Wellmann	2021-2023

### TRUMPET

Jackson Altman	2019-2022
Grant Bryan	1997-1999

### TROMBONE

Victoria Bower	2008-2010
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### TUBA

Constance Golding	2003-2006
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### PERCUSSION

Jacque Braden	2007-2009
Jack Greenwell	2023-2024

### HARP

Joanna Mergler Mayer	1978-1984
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# PROGRAM NOTES

## Suite No. 1 from *Carmen*

*Georges Bizet*



Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875) was a French composer who lived and composed during the Romantic period. Suites No. 1 and No. 2 present selections from his opera *Carmen*, widely considered one of the most famous operas ever written. The four-act opera details the story of Don José and the struggles he goes through in order to win the heart of the gypsy Carmen. The “Toréadors” song, included in today’s performance of the Suite No. 1, is one of the most recognizable tunes in all of opera.

It took Bizet around a year to fully complete *Carmen*, with the initial draft containing over 1,200 pages of music! Commissioned by the Opéra-Comique in Paris, work on the project was suspended for a time, possibly as the story behind the opera was deemed too violent. After multiple revisions and alterations made at the request of the orchestra and singers who found some of it too difficult to perform, the opera was premiered in 1875 and met with a generally negative reception from audiences and critics. Tragically, Bizet passed away at the age of 36, just 3 months after the opera’s release. He died never being aware of how popular and well received his opera would become in the present day.

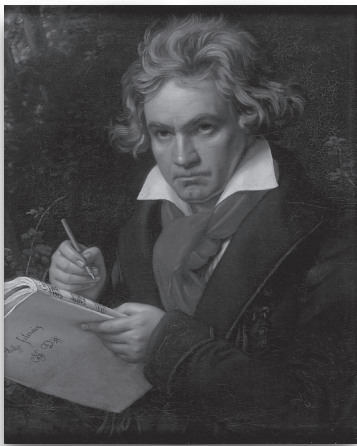
- UDITH SENEVIRATHNE, *AYS* VIOLINIST



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# Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

Ludwig van Beethoven



The famous four-note opening line of Beethoven's fifth symphony has become one of the most recognizable in western music. It almost instantly conjures up images of anger and passion, grand struggle on a vast scale, and destiny itself. "Fate knocks at the door," was how Beethoven's biographer, Anton Schindler, characterized it. In fact, the symphony is widely known not just as the fifth symphony, but the *fate* symphony.

That same opening motif occurs throughout all four movements, creating a sense of tension and conflict that defines the core of the work: fate, always impatient, always on your heels; fate, knocking on the door. In many ways, it was Beethoven's own fate—the struggle and despair he felt against his encroaching deafness. In a letter from 1806, he declares that "I will seize fate by the throat; it shall certainly not bend and crush me completely."

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) completed this symphony in 1808, premiering it that April in Vienna. Evidently, the opening was not very good; the conditions of the concert led to a poor performance and an exhausted audience. However, it didn't take long for recognition to build. About a year later, acclaimed critic E. T. A. Hoffman gave a raving review, stating, "No doubt the whole rushes like an ingenious rhapsody past many a man, but the soul of each thoughtful listener is assuredly stirred, deeply and intimately, by a feeling that is none other than that unutterable portentous longing, and until the final chord—indeed, even in the moments that follow it—he will be powerless to step out of that wondrous spirit realm where grief and joy embrace him in the form of sound..."

The overall structure of the symphony is one of a great conflict between two keys: C minor and C major, representing the forces of destiny against human free will. The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, is almost aggressive in its impatience. The fate motif runs constantly throughout, rushing it towards its final capitulation. The second movement, *Andante con moto* in A-flat major, immediately switches things up with a gracefully serene theme and variations. Still, the fate motif echoes in the background. The initial theme of the third movement, *Allegro*, continues this with its short-short-short-long rhythmic structure back in C minor. Halfway through, it modulates to C major, reprising the conflict before shifting back to minor for an extended bridge section. This building tension explodes outward with the triumphant arrival of the fourth and final movement, *Allegro–Presto*, now firmly in C major. Several new instruments are added here: the contrabassoon, the piccolo, and the trombone. For the latter two, this symphony marks the first time they were used in a work by a major composer. Their addition lends range and power to the orchestra, creating a sense of grandeur underscored at the last by a tempo change and six victorious chords in a row, firmly and resoundingly announcing the triumph against fate and the end of this great drama.

- MARLEY McDONAGH AYS FLUTIST



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# BIOGRAPHY

## LINN WEEDA

Conductor, performer, arranger and composer Linn Weeda was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska. He has studied for his music degrees at UAF and Boston University with further studies in trumpet, solfège and conducting with several celebrated and revered masters.

Performances of his compositions include the recent premieres of his *Passacaglia for the Children of War* by the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra string section, and a set of songs premiered by UAA professor Dr. Mari Hahn.



As trumpet soloist he has appeared throughout the state, nationally as well as internationally, with many works composed for him. He has conducted in venues as varied as the Sydney Opera House, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, and in a plane hangar in Talkeetna, Alaska.

Linn Weeda is the Assistant Conductor and Principal Trumpet of the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra and can be heard frequently with groups throughout the city.

Recently retired from the UAA music faculty after 41 years, he retired in 2021 from the Anchorage Youth Symphony after 31 years as its music director at which time he was appointed Music Director Emeritus.

Linn Weeda is a Yamaha Artist, performing on Yamaha instruments.

# 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.

# SENIOR PROFILES



## *ESZY ALLWRIGHT, CELLO*

Ezzy has performed in AYS for 4 years. He was first chair at All-Northwest, and is proud of having performed the Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto No. 1 with AYS as this year's Concerto Competition winner. Ezzy was recently accepted to both Whitman College and the Berkeley College of Music. He played the part of Aladdin in 5th grade, and has performed at the Anchorage Folk Festival with his family

every year since the age of four! He also enjoyed playing a command performance of the Handel-Halvorsen Passacaglia with violinist Ben Strauss at All-State Solo and Ensemble. Ezzy shares that it has been a unique experience to play with a different conductor almost every year in AYS, and that he has really enjoyed the community. It is so much more than just an orchestra!



## *RUBY BEARDSLEY, CLARINET*

Ruby has performed in AYS for 3 years. She is proud to have stayed committed to music for this long, and can't wait to see where it takes her next in this lifetime. Ruby is also proud to have grown as a person through music, and to have been in All-State band and Solo and Ensemble for all of high school. AYO has taught her that music has the power to bring people from all walks of life together, as musicians all share one thing in common: the desire to create music.



## *ASHTON BEDNAR, PERCUSSION*

Ashton has performed in AYS for 4 years. He is proud to have been Alaska Policy Debate champion in 2025, and broke in 8 of 9 British Parliamentary Debate Tournaments, including one international with the UAA debate team. Ashton was also chosen to represent the UAA debate team in an exhibition debate as a primary speaker. Ashton has played in two different types of ensembles, moving to jazz at UAA. His biggest takeaway from AYO is being

able to listen to the entire orchestra and isolate individual parts, widening his understanding of music and music composition.

# SENIOR PROFILES



## HUNTER BERNAS, BASS

Hunter has performed in AYS for 2 years. His proudest accomplishment is making the All-Northwest Orchestra and the All-State Jazz Band. His favorite memory from AYO is playing the Prelude to Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* at the Winter Concert this season.



## CONNOR BOOTH, TRUMPET

Connor has performed in AYS for 1 year. Some of his proudest accomplishments include playing at Carnegie Hall, performing in All-State for 3 years in a row, and playing in the Chugiak/Eagle River Drama musical pit for 3 years with *Beauty and the Beast*, *Mary Poppins*, and *The Music Man*. His greatest takeaway from AYO is being able to spend time with other amazing musicians, playing amazing classical music with people who enjoy music as much as he does.



## MARY GRACE COPE, HARP, CELLO & BASS

Mary Grace has performed in AYS for 4 years (first on bass, then cello, while playing and completing her tenure on the harp!) One of her proudest moments includes playing Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* at both the Midwestern Music Camp last summer and with the Anchorage Civic Orchestra. Her greatest takeaway from AYO is getting to play with people who have the same passion for music that she does!



## SAHID IMOX TALOME DEWEES, VIOLIN

Sahid has performed in AYS for 3 years. His proudest accomplishments include playing Mahler's sixth symphony at Boston University Tanglewood Institute, winning the middle school state badminton championship, and winning the Juneau Symphony Orchestra concerto competition. His favorite memory in AYO was sight-reading Beethoven's fifth symphony.

# SENIOR PROFILES

## *ERIKA DOBLER, BASS*



Erika has performed in AYS for 4 years. Besides participating in both the Steller and West High Orchestras, she is also proud to have participated in All-State and the Aurora Music Festival. Erika is on the Alaska Middle College Honor Roll and will be attending the University of New Mexico in the fall. Her favorite moments in AYO include playing Beethoven's fifth symphony, and the community and friends.

## *ZOEY DOUGHERTY, CELLO*



Zoey has performed in AYS for 4 years. She is proud to have played the cello for ten years, and can't wait to see what she will be able to do in another ten! Zoey's fondest memories of AYO will be the passion for music that filled every rehearsal and performance from all of her peers.

## *AMAYA HAMMATT, BASSOON*



Amaya has performed in AYS for 3 years. She is proud to have played with the South Anchorage symphonic band for 4 years, was captain of her cross-country ski team, had art featured in the Anchorage Museum for 3 years, volunteered as a teen climate communicator with the Museum, won regions for declamation in French poetry, participated in the civic leadership program, and won second for her National History Day project.

Amaya shares that she has improved immensely as a musician, building relationships with people in the music community, and has developed her passion for the bassoon. She greatly appreciates the opportunity AYO provides to its musicians and how it has helped her grow as an individual.

# SENIOR PROFILES



## *EDEN JOHNSON, CELLO*

Eden has performed in AYS for 2 years. She is proud to be graduating high school with 171 college credits towards her Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering, with minors in Math, Physics, Music, and Neuroscience. Eden has already been employed in both professional engineering and hospital environments, and this summer will be a part of research at the University of Rochester Medical Center, where

she's excited to work with faculty at the nearby Eastman School of Music. Her favorite memories from AYO include helping out the younger cellists in the orchestra.

## *KRISTINA KAGERER, TROMBONE & VIOLIN*



Kristina has performed in AYS for 2 years. She is proud to have been awarded first chair tuba at All-State twice in her four years attending, and a command performance at Solo and Ensemble in 2025 with the brass quintet she formed. Kristina played trombone in the All-Northwest band, the newly-formed All-State Jazz band, and on the South HS World Strides Band trip to Anaheim was awarded the Maestro Award for her jazz trombone solo of "The Way We Were". Following one year with Symphony

School, Kristina played in AYS as Principal 2<sup>nd</sup> Violin in the 2024-25 Season, and Principal Trombone in the 2025-26 Season. This fall, she begins a music education and trombone performance major at Central Washington University. Her biggest takeaway from AYO is how much it has helped her grow, both as a musician and as a person. "Although playing both violin and trombone showed me different sides of music, it also taught me that every role matters, even if you're not always in the spotlight. Performing in AYO has also showed me I can handle more than I think, and it gave me a place where I felt like I belonged alongside other musicians who really care about making music in our community."



## *JOCELYN KERLEY, VIOLIN*

Jocelyn has performed in AYS for 2 years. Her proudest accomplishments are being able to play in the Anchorage Youth Symphony, and also participating in All-State. Her favorite memory in AYO was performing Dvořák's Cello Concerto last year with Concerto Competition winner Isaac Ward. Jocelyn liked how fun the violin part was, even though it wasn't the main melody.

# SENIOR PROFILES



## LEAH KIM, CELLO

Leah has performed in AYS for 2 years. She is proud to be attending the University of Michigan and to have been deeply involved in the music community for the past several years. One of her favorite commitments has been the pit orchestra at Chugiak and Eagle River's spring school musicals. Leah's favorite memories from AYO have just been playing music—especially Fauré's *Pavane*, Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter Overture*, and Beethoven's fifth symphony this spring. Leah shares that performing a piece is a whole different experience from just listening to it, which is why she loves being a part of ensembles like AYS.



## SARAH KIM, VIOLIN

Sarah has performed in AYS for 5 years. She is most proud of her time as director of Music for Hearts, a nonprofit organization she founded in 2023. Since its inception, they have performed at over 10 locations with more than 50 high school volunteer musicians across Anchorage, uplifting the elderly and patients through the power of music. Another highlight for Sarah was the opportunity to perform with the Piano Guys at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts, as well as participating in the Hip-Hop Orchestra Experience alongside composer JooWan Kim and rappers Unity Lewis and Brother Buffalo. Next year, Sarah looks forward to continuing her musical and service-oriented work in Philadelphia while attending the University of Pennsylvania. Her favorite AYO memory is the pre-concert buzz backstage, where musicians gather in their concert black and run through passages from their music one last time before going on stage.



## CHANELLE MATLOCK, CLARINET

Chanelle has performed in AYS for 1 year. She is proud to have participated for 4 years in All-State, as well as her Symphonic Band and Solo and Ensemble. Chanelle has also been playing club volleyball for 5 years. Her fondest memory of AYO is eating pizza with everyone and listening to Beethoven's fifth symphony!

# SENIOR PROFILES

## MARLEY McDONAGH, FLUTE



Marley has performed in AYS for 2 years. Marley is proud to have recently won the Aurora music festival solo and ensemble command performance, and played first chair in the honor band there for the last three years. Marley has also made All-State band for the last two years, and All-State solo and ensemble for the last three. Marley was admitted to Oberlin College, and completed a semester-long, self-directed independent study course at Steller secondary,

consisting of a survey of historical female composers in classical music, for which Marley completed research, a writeup and also performed their music. Marley's favorite memory from AYO is playing Holst's *Jupiter* last season. Marley especially loved the feeling of sitting in the middle of the orchestra, surrounded by the beautiful harmonies in the main theme. It was like being in an ocean of sound.



## PAETYN OREBAUGH, BASS

Paetyn has performed in AYS for 1 year. Their proudest accomplishments include being admitted to All-Northwest. Paetyn's fondest recollections from AYO include the enjoyment from getting to play fun music with their friends.

## KAYLA "KAI" PEPPINGER, OBOE



Kai has performed in AYS for 4 years. She is proud to have played in AYS, performed in other venues, and also had the opportunity to step in as a student director with the Dimond Symphonic Band, all thanks to Mr. Webb. In the rest of life, Kai was awarded a Gold Key for her art portfolio, acted in *Bye Bye Birdie* and other plays at school, and found a group of friends who are amazing and supportive through every step of the way. Kai shares: "All of this wouldn't be complete with a thank you to my family and especially my mom for always being right behind me to support and push

me through these accomplishments and loving me to be my best self. Thank you mom!" Kai's greatest take-away from AYO is to keep pushing forward while still being yourself. "I made the most memories from being myself while also progressing forward within my musicianship and skill while being in AYO! Take charge!"

# SENIOR PROFILES



## *EDEN RHOADES, VIOLA*

Eden has performed in AYS for 3 years. She is proud to be first chair violist at South High school, and to have traveled to Washington, D.C. for National History Day where she represented her team that made nationals for their group documentary about the Japanese-American interment camps during World War II. Eden helped organize a charity clothing drive that reached over 120 families in Anchorage, made varsity on the girls wrestling team at South High School and made it to regionals. From her time at AYO, she will appreciate the effort that it takes behind the scenes to put everything together. Eden is grateful for all the work put in by teachers, administrators, and parents for her and her peers play music. She enjoyed having the opportunity to socialize and help clean up after rehearsals with other musicians in the orchestra.



## *CAELE ROHWER, VIOLIN*

Caele has performed in AYS for 1 year. He is proud to have caught up to his friends' musical skills, as well as landing a cool job and learning to make friends. Of his experience in AYO, Caele shares that the real reward are the friends he and his peers made along the way.



## *UDITH SENEVIRATHNE, VIOLIN*

Udith has performed in AYS for 2 years. He is proud to have been a section leader for the second violins in his orchestra class for 3 years, placed at the top rank of his class by the end of senior year, and won the Mari Churchill Service award/scholarship at his school, which got his name immortalized on a plaque at East high school. What Udith loved the most about AYO was being able to study and perform challenging pieces from different time periods with so many

talented musicians—musicians who, despite being his age or younger, possessed a level of skill and finesse with their instruments that he thought he'd never be able to achieve himself. Udith shares that learning about the story told behind each piece they performed and how it relates to the composer's life and upbringing never failed to amaze him!

# SENIOR PROFILES

## RILEY SNIDER, CELLO



Riley has performed in AYS for 2 years. She is proud to have participated in All-State Solo and Ensemble, been a Student Choreographer for 2 DanceWest productions, and performed a sold out show of *Hadestown* in the Atwood Concert Hall her junior year. Riley shares that it was a lot of fun watching her cello teacher, Dr. Wood in a different setting, conducting AYS this winter cycle! She will remember working with him more often through AYO.



## LENA SO, FLUTE

Lena has performed in AYS for 4 years. She is proud to be graduating from high school and going to college! Her favorite memories of AYO are break time conversations with her friends!



## LUKE THOMAS, TROMBONE

Luke has performed in AYS for 2 years. His proudest accomplishment was getting into the All-Northwest band on tuba. Luke shares that his favorite memory from AYO is being able to play an entirely different genre of music and discovering some great pieces.



## CATALINA WHITED, VIOLIN

Catalina has performed in AYS for 4 years. Her proudest accomplishments include building the confidence to perform on a big stage, and having the opportunity to play with AYO. Catalina completed high school in three years, and is proud to have received offers from different colleges so she can choose the path she wants for her future career. She will remember fondly playing with such a big orchestra and meeting nice talented people.

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Alaina Hansen – *AYS, VIOLIN 1*  
Eirene Hansen – *AYS, VIOLA*  
Ileah Hansen – *OVERTURE, VIOLIN 1*  
Hendrik Hansen – *OVERTURE, CELLO*  
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Kendrew Liu – *AYS, CELLO*  
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Lawrence Pennino – *OVERTURE, HORN*  
Sofia Amalia Pennino – *AYS, VIOLIN 2*  
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Udith Senevirathne – *AYS, VIOLIN 1*

William Siebert – *AYS, VIOLIN 1*  
Malachi Temiz – *AYS, TRUMPET*  
Samuel Temiz – *AYS, BASS*  
Kylie Walton – *OVERTURE, VIOLIN 2*  
Kylie Walton – *OVERTURE, VIOLIN 2*  
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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.

Following an intensive search process, conductor, violinist, and educator David Platt was appointed AYO's next Music Director, with a tenure beginning in the 2026-27 Season. We are delighted to welcome Maestro Platt as we continue to build a community where music education and performance are valued and shared.



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