

# NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA OF CANADA

## Assessment for the Department of Canadian Heritage

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### Introduction:

The aim of this report is to present the assessment of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada (NYOC) with the focus on orchestral performance, chamber music performance, broader training activities, health and wellness, and the national and international experience and impact of this training program.

### Qualitative research Method:

Interviews with the Executive Director, Chair of Board of Directors, conductor, faculty, donor event, and student musicians, attendance at chamber music rehearsals, coachings, and performances, and attendance at an orchestral rehearsal, recording session, and performance.

**Contact form:** face-to-face and e-mail.

### Research of Other High Level Orchestral and Classical Music Training Programs:

Aspen Music Festival and School <https://www.aspenmusicfestival.com/students-welcome/about-the-school/>

Australian Youth Orchestra <http://www.ayo.com.au/>

Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity <https://www.banffcentre.ca/>

Boston University Tanglewood Institute <http://www.bu.edu/cfa/tanglewood/>

European Union Youth Orchestra <http://www.euyo.eu/> and Assessment of European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO) by Panteia, SMIT, iMinds, <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/library/assessment-euyo-eenca-20171014.pdf>

National Youth Orchestra of Canada materials: website <https://nyoc.org/>, annual reports, house program, recordings.

National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Young-Musicians/NYO-USA>

Youth Orchestra LA: Theory of Action and Proposed Evaluation Plan [http://legacy.laphil.com/sites/default/files/media/pdfs/shared/education/yola/yola\\_expo\\_theory\\_of\\_action.pdf](http://legacy.laphil.com/sites/default/files/media/pdfs/shared/education/yola/yola_expo_theory_of_action.pdf)

## OVERVIEW

The National Youth Orchestra of Canada (NYOC) is vitally important. NYOC has a focused and relevant mandate and vision for the rigorous and inspired training of Canada's top emerging classical musicians for active and accomplished artistic careers. It has demonstrated superior artistic achievements, had the vision to take on large initiatives, and has demonstrated a multi-faceted vision and track record in developing excellent, successful, and healthy artists for this country. Canada's NYO has a robust international reputation, and continues to be invited to prestigious concert halls and festivals across our country and around the world.

Artistic excellence and student health and wellness are central to NYOC's approach to all artistic matters, and NYOC is recognized as a world class youth orchestra. The NYOC has a significant impact on the student participants' advanced music competency. The curriculum is performance-based, repertoire-driven, standards-based, and ensembles focused, while developing the individual artist through private lessons and ensemble coaching. Students are expected to demonstrate professional behaviour, and come into rehearsals with prior preparation as is the case in a professional orchestra or chamber music group.

NYOC alumni hold leading positions in major Canadian and international orchestras; close to 40% of Canadian orchestral musicians are graduates of NYOC. Canada's professional orchestras would be at a lower artistic level without this concentrated training. This is where exceptional young musicians learn valuable and practical skills while transforming into professional artists. NYOC graduates have been awarded positions in prestigious orchestras around the world including the Berlin Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, The Metropolitan Opera orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, London Symphony , Orchestra symphonique de Montréal, and the Toronto Symphony.

Students are provided with the skills necessary to give enhanced employment potential as full-time classical musicians. The students that are accepted to NYOC already have advanced skills in technical proficiency, rhythmic precision, tone/timbre qualities, and intonation. At NYOC, they develop their musicianship and artistry, a deeper knowledge of a variety of musical forms and repertoire, exposure to new Canadian works, knowledge of structures and styles through intense repertoire training, interpretive skills, professional stage presence, the ability to communicate with the audience, and intense listening and ensemble skills. Students gain confidence to develop their own artistic personalities.

NYOC enjoys a great reputation as a top orchestral training program in Canada, providing a comprehensive and in-depth training program for the country's best young classical musicians. This tuition-free summer training institute includes a two-week chamber music program, a three-week orchestral training program that includes workshops and lectures spanning topics

such as business skills and repertoire, seminars from career development to injury prevention and musicians' health, and three weeks of national/international experience through touring. Students have the opportunity to performing with nationally and internationally renowned conductors and faculty.

Each year, Canada's top young musicians compete for a desirable place in the award-winning 92-piece orchestra. The NYOC provides an excellent orchestral training program for exceptional young musicians who are actively recruited from across Canada. The NYOC makes provisions for online auditions to ensure that musicians from geographically isolated parts of Canada have access to this program. Once accepted into the program, the students work with nationally and internationally renowned faculty to achieve a standard of excellence in orchestral performance. The students are provided with a national and international performance experience in a variety of concert hall and festival settings.

A position with NYO Canada is offered to qualified students *tuition free* (representing up to a \$25k grant per student) and each student receives a minimum \$1,200 scholarship upon successful completion of the program. NYOC also offers additional scholarships and awards totally close to \$200,000 each year, including the \$25,000 and \$15,000 awards which are provided by the Canada Council for the Arts as is the Michael Measures Prize. All other awards, scholarships and prizes are funded by the private sector through individuals, foundations and/or corporations.

The NYOC is one of the few Canadian training institutions that provides annual national and international exposure and experience through touring. The NYOC is positive cultural ambassador of Canada that showcases exceptional young musicians. Students are given significant performing opportunities nationally and internationally as halls and festivals such as the Berlin Konzerthaus and the Edinburgh International Festival. They are given networking opportunities and make new professional contacts that can lead to further training opportunities (e.g. the brilliant new NYOC/OSM internship program involving a full scholarship for a McGill graduate diploma). They are provided with career preparation (e.g. mock auditions, dealing with stress and performance anxiety, health and wellness training, anti-harassment training), and opportunities that lead to professional opportunities as orchestral musicians, chamber music musicians, soloists, and careers in the cultural industries.

In addition to Canadian and international touring, NYOC has collaborated with India Youth Orchestra, and is working on potential future collaborations with the European Union Youth Orchestra and the Australian Youth Orchestra. These collaborations, combined international touring experiences, will provide the students with transnational experience.

The music performed by the NYOC over the past five years represents a diverse immersion of new 21<sup>st</sup>-century Canadian works (mostly and admirably NYOC commissions), a vast variety of chamber music repertoire of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and an annual exposure to late romantic

and 20<sup>th</sup> century music. With more time in the summer session, the students could benefit from a deep repertoire experience with orchestral works dated from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as exposure to informed performance practices with the orchestral music of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schubert would be beneficial for the students in addition to the late romantic, 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary orchestral repertoire with which they receive excellent exposure and training.

The NYOC has now opened its vision to cross cultural, multidisciplinary works, and the 2017 *Unsilent Project* with Indigenous creator Michael Greyeyes and Signal Theatre was a significant and impactful deep dive for the students and audiences into other cultural paradigms.

In the interviews this summer, unwavering confidence was expressed by the students, faculty, Board chair, and conductor in the leadership and management of the organization by Executive Director Barbara Smith. She has led the charge to return the NYOC to an accessible, scholarship-based program for Canada's exceptional emerging classical artists, she is responsible for the acquisition of prestigious national and international touring engagements as well as new forays into international partnerships, post-program training initiatives for NYOC alumni such as the internship program with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. She initiated a significant boost in health and wellness support and training, and secured significant fundraising support to bring big dreams to fruition while maintaining a balanced budget.

This is an internationally recognized youth orchestra that punches well above its weight, and it is remarkable to look at the quality and scope of activity that this outstanding training program undertakes on such a small budget that is a fraction of similar programs internationally. The parable of the loaves and fishes comes to mind with NYOC, and this with a straight-lined Canadian Heritage contribution over the last decade that represents a 15% (\$117k) decrease in real dollars.

<b>DESCRIPTION OF VISIT</b>
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**Thursday, June 28 to Saturday, June 30, 2018 – Wilfred Laurier University, Kitchener-Waterloo ON**

I attended student chamber music rehearsals and recitals, and had conversations with Executive Director Barbara Smith, Chamber music coach and viola teacher David Harding, chamber music coach and cello teacher David Hetherington, chamber music coach and violin teacher Mark Fewer, and pianist and creative consultant Gregory Oh.

I spoke with student musicians such as violinist Roxanne Sicard, violist Ellis Yuen-Rapati, tuba player Malcolm Kellett-Cooke, horn player Rachel Côté, violinist Anaïs Saucier Lafond, and violinist Alison Kim among other students.

### **Sunday, July 29, 2018 – Koerner Hall, Toronto ON**

Afternoon - Recording Session

Further chats with Executive Director Barbara Smith

Interview with Conductor Jonathan Darlington

Donor Reception

Interview with Chair of Board James Hunter

Performance of John Estacio *Moontides* (DV 265 World Premiere), Gershwin *Catfish Row*, Alison Yun-Fei Jiang's River Memory (NYO Commission), R. Strauss - *Ein Heldenleben*, Matthew Emery - *Lead Us Home* (NYO Commission), Marie-Claire Saindon - *Terre-Neuve* (NYO Commission)

### **2018 NYOC MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW**

**Gender:** 44 men, 51 women

**Diversity - Languages spoken:** 14 (English, French, Korean, Farsi, German, Spanish, Tagalog, Catalan, Hindi, Mandarin, Japanese, Cantonese, Bulgarian, Vietnamese)

**Scholarship investment per student:** \$25,000 (\$6k summer training institute, room and board, \$18k touring and recording, \$1.2k student scholarship)

**New/Returning Members:** 41% returning, 59% new members

**Canadian representation:** British Columbia - 8, Alberta - 11, Saskatchewan- 4, Manitoba -3, Ontario - 31, Quebec - 31, New Brunswick -2, Nova Scotia - 3, Newfoundland -2

### **TIMETABLE AND CURRICULUM**

**1. The number of classes/practices per day and per week.**

The NYO has between 12 and 18 classes/practices/rehearsals per week depending on the week.

**2. The length of time students work with any one instructor/mentor.**

The students work with any one instructor for a minimum of one week and a maximum of 5 weeks. There is more than one instructor per instrument so the students have access to and study with several coaches over the duration of the training institute. For example, clarinet coaches included James Campbell, Jose Franch Ballister, and Kimball Sykes. Other instrument specialists are brought in for master classes from time to time.

**3. The number of performing opportunities and their benefit to students.**

Students participate in several chamber music concerts, home concerts, and 8 to 10 Canadian and international touring concerts. Performance opportunities are also secured with Ontario festivals such as Toronto Summer Music, Ottawa Chamberfest, and Stratford Summer Music. The variety of venues provides the students with the necessary flexibility to adapt to the acoustics, and the repetition of repertoire on concerts enables both excellence and depth to be achieved by the students. Some concerts are recorded for broadcast by CBC and/or webcast, and students must also adapt to having microphones and recording equipment on stage and deal with the pressure of “getting it right” with one take for live performance recording.

**4. The format of training and how each specifically benefits the students (e.g. workshops, seminars, guest teachers, mentorship, apprenticeship, internship).**

**Chamber Music** - One of the strengths of the training program is to empower these young musicians as chamber musicians with the chamber music module in their first two weeks. This empowerment as a solo and chamber musician is both a passion and skill that these musicians can take into their whole professional lives. Chamber music empowers the musician as an independent solo artist to work in collaboration with other musicians. At NYOC, there is intense coaching that covers artistic, technical, and ensemble work. Private lessons are provided during this period where the students can seek individual attention with this repertoire. The chamber music skills enable a musician to be completely aware of and responsible for one’s own part in collaboration with those of colleagues, and these skills are taken into the orchestral setting for the program.

**Private lessons** are available with professionals of the student’s own instrument, and students also have the opportunity to have private lessons with professional faculty who play different instruments than that of the student.

**Workshops** – Students participate in workshops on injury prevention, mental health including performance anxiety, and workshops on “Life after NYO” alternative careers in the arts. These workshops are provided by experts in their respective fields and include physicians, occupational therapists, psychotherapists, social workers, audiologists and arts managers. On the arts management front, students hear from marketing, public relations, broadcasters, and communication experts.

**Orchestral Session** - During the orchestral session, students begin with two sectional rehearsals a day, and have individual practice time and private lessons. Mixed sectionals follow and individual lessons and practice time continues into the second week of the orchestral training. By the end of the first week, full orchestral rehearsals are held twice a day. The schedule is fluid and flexible in order to best suit the needs of the students. If the coaches and/or conductor feel that students would benefit more from a sectional rather than a full orchestral rehearsal, the schedule is changed to meet this need.

Since injury prevention and mental health are an integral component of the NYOC curriculum, the schedule incorporates 1 to 1.5 days off a week. During the tour, NYOC tries to avoid performances on travel days.

**Master classes** - Several master classes are provided by instrument specialists and/or soloists (e.g. Cho Liang Lin, James Campbell) and the resident string quartet does quartet master classes for all of the student string quartets.

**Mock auditions** are also held during this period thereby benefiting students as they prepare to audition for professional orchestras and/or chamber ensembles.

**Faculty Performances** – The NYOC professional faculty and resident ensembles also perform for the students and in some instances, students are invited to perform with the members of the faculty in chamber ensembles. NYOC also provides solo opportunities for some students.

**Post- Summer Session Opportunities** - NYOC is sometimes asked to provide musicians for professional engagements and cooperative ventures. For example, NYOC students will perform with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the German Youth Orchestra on November 11<sup>th</sup> for a special Remembrance Day performance of Brittan's *War Requiem*. In 2019, 35 NYOC musicians will join the European Union Youth Orchestra for a tour of various cities in Ontario and Quebec.

**New Professional Collaboration** - The NYOC has a new partnership with l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal to provide up to 10 students an internship/apprenticeship with the OSM for an 8 week period. Students will audition for these spots and be mentored by an OSM musician during this period and will rehearse and perform as a member of the OSM for one half season. They will also be given lessons by an OSM musician. NYOC students will also be offered a full scholarship to McGill's Graduate Diploma in Performance. As part of this project, several international coaches will join the NYOC faculty for master classes, lessons and ensemble coaching thereby benefitting all NYOC students and not just the 10 interns.

5. **How the timetable and curriculum compares to that of other programs in the discipline in Canada.**

NYO Canada has a comprehensive curriculum. It complements other top university or conservatory programs such as McGill University's Schulich School of Music and the Royal Conservatory of Music's Glenn Gould School that happen during the school year. The NYOC summer program enables top musicians from across the country to perform together in a performance-focused program that offers a varied national and international experience.

The program offers a 2:1 student/teacher ratio or a curriculum that provides training in chamber music, orchestral training (including concerti), injury prevention, mental health skills, and mock auditions.

## **6. How the timetable and curriculum rate by international standards.**

**Note:** There are a variety of structures of orchestral training programs around the world which makes them not completely parallel with the NYOC program.

**NYOC Schedule:** 7-8 weeks a year including chamber music institute, rehearsals, master classes, private lessons, Canadian and international touring, and workshops on mental health including performance anxiety, audition preparation, faculty concerts, composers in residence, quartet in residence, and marketing and communications workshops.

### **European Union Youth Orchestra**

The EUYO has involved the world's greatest conductors and involves international touring. It has bases in the UK, Austria, and Italy. It recently survived a financial crisis, but has bounced back with an international agenda. The NYOC and the EUYO are working on a collaboration for a 2019 Canadian tour.

**Scheduling:** The EUYO Ferrara Residency and tour is 4 weeks, and the Grafenegg and Bolzano residencies and tours results in a 6 week term.

### **Australian Youth Orchestra**

The Australian Youth Orchestra is also a leading training organization for young pre-professional musicians and has a more diversified program than NYOC. It has a \$5M budget (double NYOC), and receives \$3.8M in grant support. AYO presents tailored training and performance programs each year for aspiring musicians, composers, recording engineers, orchestra managers and music journalists. 65% of Australia professional orchestras are AYO alumni. AYO also runs the AYO Chamber Players, AYO Orchestral Development, and Orchestral Management, Words About Music, Sound Production, and Composition programs. In addition to AYO, they also have the AYO Young Symphonists and the AYO National Music Camp for younger players.

**Scheduling:** 5-week July Residency/International Tour (\$5k tuition per student), and a 3-week February Victorian Opera residency.

## **National Youth Orchestra-USA**

Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute (WMI) brings top young players from across the country to form the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America (NYO-USA). The target for this program is teenagers, whereas the NYOC focuses on pre-professionals in their 20s. As with NYOC, this American program is free for all participants through a competitive audition process.

**Scheduling:** The residency period is 3 weeks versus 5 weeks at NYOC prior to touring. NYO-USA does have significant international touring, and the students work with the best conductors of the world such as Michael Tilson Thomas.

## **Tanglewood Institute**

The Tanglewood Institute is run by the Boston University College of Fine Arts and affiliated with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Tanglewood Music Center focuses on younger musicians aged 14-19. It is a 6-week program and students work with top conductors and have master classes with internationally acclaimed musicians. Although the students are exposed to top musicians, their education is modular with musicians who are performing with the Festival itself. They do not tour. The training program is not the sole focus of Tanglewood.

**Scheduling:** 2-6 Weeks.

## **Aspen Music Festival and School**

This combination festival/school means that the students are not the sole focus of the organization and the conductors change throughout the session. Although the students are exposed to top musicians, their education is modular with musicians who are performing with the Festival itself. The ensembles do not tour. Aspen School encompasses more than 650 students (rather than honing in on the development of 100 top players), five orchestras, opera, an offering of chamber music studies, master classes, lectures, and more. Along with private instruction, many students rehearse and perform major orchestral repertoire side-by-side with their teachers and/or with principal players from major orchestras. Orchestras perform weekly or accompany one of two professional operatic productions. Soloists and conductors vary by week and are among the world's most revered classical musicians. Students in all programs can attend more than 400 performances, master classes, lectures, and panels. Aspen is open to musicians of any age and at any stage of their career. However, the average age of an Aspen student is 22.

**Aspen Music Scheduling:**

Full Session: June 19 – August 18  
Half Session I: June 19 – July 21  
Half Session II: July 22 – August 18

## NYOC CLASSES

### **1. Class size and length**

The student body is typically between 93 and 100 musicians. Class sizes depend on the activity. Workshops are often broken into 2 or more groups, chamber coachings are as small as two musicians and as large as 10 or 12 or, in the case of a string orchestra reading for example, could be as high as 50. Private lessons are one-on-one. NYOC provides one-on-one sessions with a social worker, occupational therapist and psychotherapist in addition to group sessions.

### **2. Amount of material covered in an average class/rehearsal**

This varies depending on the class. It can be anywhere from a one hour workshop to a 2.5 hour rehearsal. Private lessons are one hour in length and master classes typically take place over a 2-3 hours period and involve several students in ½ hour segments.

### **3. Specific strengths of/or concerns or reservations regarding the technical training offered.**

The strengths are the quality of the participants and faculty, the international scope and experience, the chamber music and orchestral training, the full scholarship nature of the program, and the health and wellness focus. It does an incredible amount of activity with very limited funding.

With increased funding, the potential and vision is there for brilliant cross-disciplinary new creations with other Canadian training institutions and Canada's top creators in other artistic fields, international collaborations, diverse cultural partnerships, explorations into new performance practices for new generation audience development, the expansion of training to include a feeder program, a 360° exposure to the arts eco-system and diverse cultural career opportunities through intensive labs and workshops, an empowering education about arts entrepreneurship and an exposure into socially engaged art and a deep understanding of the power and societal responsibility of being an artist, and the expansion of the internship and mentorship initiatives for recent NYOC participants. This increased investment could change the course of orchestras in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and present an outstanding creative opportunity between Canada's gifted students of varied art forms to learn from each other.

### **4. Class dynamic and atmosphere (teach/student and student/student relationships, and learning environment).**

The learning environment is collaborative, collegial, nurturing, supportive and professional. Students that were interviewed talked about how supported they were by faculty and staff.

**5. If relevant, to what level is the training received by students at the pre-professional level impacted by the use of new technologies.**

NYOC uses digital media to provide on-line master classes and audition workshops to students and use digital technology in our audition process thereby making our auditions more accessible to students in remote regions.

<b>AUDITION/ENTRY PROCESS</b>
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**1. Breadth and scope of audition/entry process**

Auditions are open to any Canadian Student between the ages of 16 and 28. Applications open in late September/early October. Students are provided a list of excerpts and solo requirements and have until the end of January to submit a recorded audition. Instructions are provided to students via our website in both official languages [https://nyoc.org/uploads/Image/2019\\_Audition\\_Repertoire/NYO\\_Canada\\_2019\\_Auditions\\_En.pdf](https://nyoc.org/uploads/Image/2019_Audition_Repertoire/NYO_Canada_2019_Auditions_En.pdf) Members of the professional faculty work collaboratively to select the students for their section and this process is done “blind” in the first and, in some cases, second round.

**2. Accessibility of process.**

Since moving to on-line/YouTube auditions, the program has become much more accessible to students who for a variety of reasons cannot attend a live audition (i.e. for reasons of geography, illness, accessibility issues, and/or school/exam schedules).

**3. Rigour of process.**

The criterion for admission is based on talent. Students must win the audition. The faculty members select orchestral excerpts and solo works <https://nyoc.org/2019-audition-repertoire> The program is highly competitive with only one in 5 or 6 students being selected each year. Each student is assigned a number so that the faculty members who select the students do not know the identity of the students when listening to the auditions. On occasion, (mostly in the case of strings), faculty members may choose to see a video recording of the student in the second or third round in order to assess student’s set up or positioning while playing. Many of the faculty work as a team to select students which has the added benefit of removing the perception of bias or a conflict of interest situation where a member of the faculty favours his/her own students.

## TEACHERS

### 1. Number of teachers on staff (full-time and part-time)

The faculty consists of up to 50 professional chamber and orchestral musicians and/or music educators in addition to mental health professionals, physical injury and prevention specialists (audiologist, physicians, occupational therapist etc).

### 2. Quality of teaching staff

#### a. Qualifications of level of experience.

- i. The faculty are top chamber or orchestral musicians. The number of teachers that the NYOC engages makes for a rich environment of teach resources for the students. Students are given excellent access to these professionals.

#### b. Sensitivity to students' needs/abilities

The addition of the mental health professional assistance has been greatly welcomed by the students, as have been seminars on injury prevention, sexual harassment. The students described the NYOC staff as sensitive to their needs and timely in their response.

### 3. How the teachers compare with others in the discipline in Canada.

The NYOC engages a high level of faculty, and provides the opportunity for students to learn from a variety of renowned teachers including those who are principal and/or associate principals of major symphony orchestras.

### 4. How the teachers rate internationally.

The faculty teach and perform nationally and internationally, and are leaders in their fields.

## STUDENTS

### 1. Counselling/career preparation approach.

The students are provided with audition preparation training, workshops on dealing with performance anxiety, mental health professionals to provide individual attention, and exposure to professionals in fields such as arts marketing, broadcasting, and public relations.

## FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT

### 1. **Number, size, and quality of studios and classrooms.**

NYOC has access to the entire music department at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo Ontario which gives adequate space for classes, sectionals, rehearsals, performances and practice rooms for students. This is not a world class facility by any means, but a financially and operationally accessible option, and WLU is supportive of the NYOC annual residency. It is important to note that the students have the experience of excellent performance halls on tour.

### 2. **Change rooms, showers, washrooms**

Students have their own bedroom with a shared bathroom between 2 rooms.

### 3. **Is appropriate equipment available?**

Yes. NYOC owns several instruments (2 harps, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, English horn, alto flute, 10 cello chairs, and a number of percussion instruments). If NYO does not own a required instrument or piece of equipment, it rents equipment as necessary. It also has or rents equipment as needed for injury prevention (e.g. seat wedges, foot rests).

### 4. **How the facilities compare to others in Canada?**

There are better facilities and far better concert halls in Canada than at WLU, but there is a logistical and affordability reason for staying at Laurier. The university is supportive of the NYO, and gives NYO the run of the entire building over an extended period of time for this comprehensive operation. The orchestra does get to perform in excellent concert halls while on tour.

### 5. **How the facilities rate internationally?**

There are summer training programs associated with major international festivals and cultural capitals and world-class concert halls, but the NYOC priority is an intense training experience that can be offered at the Wilfred Laurier Faculty of Music. NYOC invests in national and international tours that provide the students the experience to perform in include top venues.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

As in any training program, there are clearly great young artists and those who are good. Saying that, the level of all players was high. It was clear that these musicians were getting so much out of the chamber music sessions that were building the artistic depth of them as artists. The musical level was high.

I attended a number of rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and concerts that were associated with the chamberfest portion of the 2018 NYO session.

The rehearsal process was rigorous and positive. In one situation, coach David Harding was really pushing the ensemble musically, and it was interesting to watch the transformation from rehearsal to concert. He worked on the musical line, rhythm and tempo, and keeping the driving force of the music throughout the movement. He provided technical advice regarding fingering, bowing and arm position to assist with especially difficult passage. All of his coaching was delivered in an energetic and positive way, and the students were clearly engaged. The performance of the Beethoven quartet that night was absolutely thrilling and was brought to a whole new level through such attentive and dynamic coaching.

Coaches at the dress rehearsals for chamber music concerts were positive and specific about musical strengths, built up the confidence of the students right before the performance, and were helpful in addressing technical and ensemble issues. Students are treated as professionals.

The concert hall was good for chamber music; a good acoustic brings out the best in musicians. At the chamber concerts, different students were assigned to welcome the audience in French and English. The musicians who were performing were in professional attire, and had a good confidence on stage. Students, as is the case with professional classical musicians, could do with some coaching in staging and stage presence that is often provided in other art forms. I had mentioned Opera Atelier Co-Artistic Director Marshall Pynkoski as a potential future coach to the Executive Director, as he has had much experience in the staging of performances of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra as he has with dancers and opera singers.

A student stated about his chamber music experience at NYOC, "It's about the music. We get out of just talking about technique and into making music together. To put yourself out there as an individual artist is amazing."

## TOURING

NYOC casts its vision in bold strokes, accomplishes much artistically on the world stage, and undertakes considerable artistic activity while keeping its finances in order. NYOC has a strong Board of Directors and staff team, and it cherishes a loyal family of supporters that makes its tuition-free program and national/international touring possible.

NYOC has enjoyed a rich history of Canadian touring which has enhanced the orchestra's artistic development and national and international profile. The organization has built a strong platform for major national and international tour development through its own determination and resourcefulness, as well as a growing tour network. Touring is not for the faint of heart, and the dedication and determination of its Executive Director has not only meant that the NYOC has remained on the world stage, but that it has expanded its international partnerships and secured prestigious engagements such as the successful residency at the Edinburgh Festival this past summer.

*The Scotland Herald* stated, “For their fixture in the Edinburgh International Festival 2018 Year of Young People championships, Canada brought a huge squad to play Scotland, and fielded the most versatile and promising youngsters the event has seen yet.”

*The Scotsman* stated, “Having won the title of Best Youth Orchestra in the World in 1996\*, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada has clearly set the bare high since then to retain its position within the top international echelons of young people’s music-making. In Tuesday’s Usher Hall programme, which showed off their capabilities ... NYOC were invariable confident and assured. The string sound glistens and shimmers while the brass are rich yet mellow.”

\*In 1996, the delegates to the World Youth Orchestra Conference in Tokyo, who represented 39 countries, voted to award the NYO Canada the title “Best Youth Orchestra in the World”. The NYO Canada returned to Japan and toured China in 2002.

### **Touring Summary**

NYO Canada’s concert tours have included every major Canadian city as well as occasional trips to the United States, Europe, and Asia.

**Tour 2019:** Toronto’s Koerner Hall, La Maison Symphonique in Montréal, and Granada’s Unesco World Heritage Site La Alhambra, plus concerts in Madrid and other cities in Spain.

**Migrations tour 2018:** Canada (Parry Sound Festival of the Sound, St. Catharine’s Music Niagara, Toronto Summer Music Festival, Montreal La Maison symphonique Place des Arts, Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival), Germany (Berlin Konzerthaus Young Euro Classic, Kassel Stadthalle Kulture Sommer Nordhessen), Scotland (Edinburgh International Festival).

**Edges of Canada Tour 2017:** Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Charlottetown, Halifax, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Whitehorse, Nanaimo, Vancouver

**Lisboa tour 2016:** Lisbon Portugal (7 performances), Elora, Toronto, Montreal

**Tour 2015:** Joint concert by NYO Canada, the Youth Orchestra of the Americas, and l’Orchestre de la Francophonie at William Allman Memorial Arena in Stratford. NYO continued tour to Toronto’s Koerner Hall, Montreal’s Maison Symphonique, Ottawa’s National Arts Centre and National Gallery, Vancouver’s The Chan Centre, Calgary’s Jack Singer Concert Hall, and Edmonton’s Francis Winspear Centre for Music.

**Tour 2014:** 32 NYOC musicians, three faculty members, and Maestro Alain Trudel travelled to Bangalore, India for two weeks of mentoring and training with 36 Indian orchestral musicians from the Bangalore School of Music. At the end of the two weeks, the two groups of musicians performed a gala concert as the Canada-India Youth Orchestra. National tour to Waterloo, Cambridge, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver.

## RECORDING

NYOC's recording objectives include those to create a stream of recordings of artistically significant repertoire that develops the orchestra and its distinctive artistic footprint and that enables ongoing artistic improvement through the meticulous recording process.

The meticulous recording process inspires artistic excellence, creates ongoing artistic growth and stimulation that comes with the incredible discipline and rigor of the perfection-seeking recording process.

The NYOC's commitment to annual recording work has contributed to its high artistic level and recognition. The NYOC could make more of its digital national and international footprint by setting up a digital concert hall on its site. Currently there are just a few tracks, but the NYOC recording activity is such that they could provide greater national and international access to a wider selection of its recorded music. Creating access to online recordings would support profile-building, audience development, and tour development.

**2018** - *Ein Heldenleben* by Richard Strauss, *Moontides* by John Estacio; *River Memory* by Alison Yun-Fei Jiang\*, *Lead Us Home* by Matthew Emery\* and *Terre-Neuve* by Marie-Claire Saindon\*  
\* NYO Commission

**2017** - *Four Seasons of the Canadian Flag* by John Burge (NYO Canada Commissioned Composer), Ravel's *La valse* and *Death and Transfiguration* by Strauss.

**2016** - *Lisboa* - Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 5* and two new works from emerging Canadian composers; Christopher Goddard (RBC Emerging Composer) and Chris Meyer (NYO Canada Emerging Composer). Both emerging composers were mentored by NYO Senior Faculty through the SOCAN emerging composer program.

**2015** - Holst's *The Planets*, Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*, and two new pieces from Canadian composers; Emilie LeBel's (RBC Emerging Composer) *monograph of bird's eye views* and Alfredo Santa Ana's (NYO Canada Emerging Composer) *Ocaso*.

**2014** - *Daphnis and Chloe* by Ravel

## NEW CANADIAN WORKS/NYO COMMISSIONS

NYO currently commissions two works a year, and does composer readings.

**2018** - *Moontides* by John Estacio, *River Memory* by Alison Yu –Fei Jiang, *Lead us Home* by Matthew Emery, *Terre-Neuve* by Marie-Claire Saindon

**2017 - *The Unsilent Project*** was a collaboration between Signal, NYO Canada and the family of late spoken word artist Zaccheus Jackson. Bringing together the worlds of spoken word and classical music, this project sought to give voice to those who have been silenced or ignored. Spoken word artists come together with a 90-member orchestra in a retrospective of Jackson's inspiring body of work to activate youth and lay down a blueprint for 21st century collaborations between Indigenous artists and organizations committed to change. In select cities, NYO's orchestra joined hands with some of Canada's most high-profile Indigenous artists in a trans-disciplinary performance including spoken word, film, and multimedia.

Through a year-long series of transcultural exchanges and collaborative workshops led by Signal Theatre, a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists joined NYO Canada to create a new staged performance weaving together spoken word and orchestra. Conceived by Signal Theatre's Artistic Director Michael Greyeyes and NYO Canada's Gregory Oh, the project draws inspiration from the work of the late Piikani Blackfoot poet Zaccheus Jackson.

*The Unsilent Project* weaves together Zaccheus' poetry with original orchestral works by composers Ian Cusson and Juliet Palmer; new poetry by spoken word artists Brendan McLeod, Zoey "Pricelys" Roy and Lindsay "Eekwol" Knight; costumes by designer Isidra Cruz; and stage direction by Falen Johnson. Moving between poetry and music, *The Unsilent Project* contrasts wordlessness and dialogue, with a hundred young musicians elevating and amplifying Indigenous voices and stories. *The Unsilent Project* closes with Strauss' *Death and Transfiguration*.

New works commissioned by NYO Canada for *The Unsilent Project*:

Composer Ian Cusson's *A Child's Bright Eyes*, an orchestral work inspired by Zaccheus Jackson's poem of the same name, connects a child's awakening to Zaccheus' own transformation from wordless to wordsmith, from unheard to outspoken.

Spoken word artist Zoey "Pricelys" Roy's poem *Unsilent* announces an Indigenous awakening: "they tried to bury us, they didn't know that we were seeds."

Lindsay "Eekwol" Knight's *Grounded* invites us to "rethink what life looks like nation to nation — action and movement is what will really bring change."

Composer Juliet Palmer's *Invicta* amplifies Zaccheus Jackson's voice in a new work for two spoken word performers and orchestra. Slowing down the mile-a-minute pace of spoken word performance, we dig deeper into Jackson's poem to grapple with the difficult truths of colonization in Canada. Finding music in the inflections and rhythms of the voice, *Invicta* finds a balance and a meeting point between cultures and histories.

In his new poem *Don't Run*, spoken word artist Brendan McLeod asks us to face Canada's history, let it "thunder through our minds and make a mess" and looks forward to the day when "the sound of so many nations forced into one / stops being a howling / and becomes a new song."

<http://nyoc.org/theunsilentproject>

<http://www.signaltheatre.ca/performance/#in-development-the-unsilent-project>

**2016** - Chris Goddard - *Spacious Euphony*, Chris Meyer - *Hope*

**2015** - *Ocaso* by Alfredo Santa Ana, *Monograph of a Bird's eye views* by Emilie Cecilia LeBel

**2014** - *The Afar* by Jordan Pal

## IMPACT

**1. How important is the program to the Canadian artistic community in its discipline?**

This is a primary pre-professional training program that attracts the top emerging Canadian musicians, who go on to take major positions in orchestras across North America.

**2. Do its graduates go on to significant professional careers?**

More than 40 per cent of the professional musicians working in Canadian orchestras are NYO alumni.

**3. Are the graduates recognized for their excellence in Canada and internationally?**

NYOC alumni secure leading positions in major Canadian and international orchestras. Canada's professional orchestras would be at a lower artistic level without this concentrated training. This is where exceptional young musicians learn valuable and practical skills while transforming into professional artists. NYO graduates have been awarded positions in prestigious orchestras around the world including the Berlin Philharmonic, The New York Philharmonic, The Metropolitan Opera orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, London Symphony, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and the Toronto Symphony.

This year, the Canada Council for the Arts Michael Measures prize was awarded to the following NYOC musicians: Martin Mangrum, French horn and Jonathan Mak, piano and viola.

All 2018 members will receive a \$1,200 Achievement Award in Fall 2018 upon successful completion of the NYO Canada program.

The NYO Canada Award of Excellence awards ten orchestra members an Award of Excellence valued at \$5,000. These awards are intended for the most advanced students who will most likely hold section leadership positions.

**4. Does the program reflect and encourage the expression of the diversity of Canadian society?**

The 2017 *The Unsilent Project* focused on the Indigenous residential experience in Canada, and the NYO has commissioned new works by Canadian creators every season. As stated above, there is cultural and language diversity in the student body.

**5. Is it unique in the country? In what ways?**

There is no other pre-professional intensive summer program in Canada of this calibre that offers chamber music, orchestral experience, and national and international touring.

<b>INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY</b>
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**a) How well run is it, and does the administration appear to support adequately the artistic direction?**

**Financial Management**

The National Youth Orchestra runs on a limited \$2M-\$5M budget (depending on touring, special projects) that is the equivalent to a budget for a small to mid-size B-level orchestra in Canada. Yet, it runs a first-class training program attracting Canada's top musicians with world-class performance results as an ensemble. It now offers full \$25,000 scholarships for all of its 100 participants so that there is no economic barrier to participation, it undertakes ambitious national and international tours every year, which with a group of 100 musicians, is no easy task and requires tremendous vision, revenue generation acuity, and will power to bring to fruition. The NYO also undertakes annual recording projects to ensure a meticulous experience for these young musicians who are encouraged embark on the journey of attaining excellence.

This comprehensive level of national and international activity on a balanced budget, can only point to outstanding management of a small staff team and engaged Board of Directors who keep climbing new summits on behalf of Canada's top musical talent. This is a group that punches far beyond its weight on the national and international stage, as it does with a full-scholarship artistic training program that attracts the top talent in the country, and trains them for positions in Canadian orchestra.

**Canadian Heritage Operating Funding**

<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
\$800,000	\$800,000	\$800,000

**Note:** DCH funding has been at \$800,000 for 10 years which represents a \$116,754 decrease in real dollars (15% decrease) in DCH funding over this period (using the Bank of Canada rates) despite the ongoing merit of this national training institution.

### **Working Capital**

The NYOC management maintains a positive working capital position for the organization which has ensured positive cash flow and unencumbered financial management to meet financial obligations.

<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
\$1,229,925	\$545,882	\$298,605

### **Fundraising**

The management has embarked on a strong fundraising campaign to ensure full scholarship opportunities for the summer session as well as national and international tours.

<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
\$3,051,651	\$1,090,053	\$622,884

### **Net Assets**

The management has produced ongoing balanced budgets, and earned designated funds to assist with ongoing and special opportunities for the organization.

<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
\$1,289,760	\$566,256	\$312,579

#### **b) How the management compares to other training in the discipline in Canada?**

This is a management that does not think on a parochial level. It immediately has parachuted young Canadian musicians into a national and international mindset, and has actively sought collaborations with organizations in Indigenous Canada, India, China, Europe, and beyond. This is an extremely important point, as the level of difficulty of running a nationally and internationally bound organization takes a large, determined mindset and sophisticated expertise to bring this vision to fruition.

#### **c) How the management rates by international standards?**

The National Youth Orchestra of Canada is well respected worldwide, and was elected the top youth orchestra in the world in Japan in 1996. This is reflected even in 2018, where the orchestra was invited to the Edinburgh International Festival who described NYO as, "Energy, conviction, breathtaking freshness: the National Youth Orchestra of Canada brings together the finest musicians aged 16 to 28 from across the vast country to form one of the world's most accomplished youth ensembles. Throughout its half-century history, NYO Canada has

toured the US, China, Europe and Japan to huge acclaim, its performances lauded for their commitment, focus and sheer exuberance.”

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

The student interviews were very creative conversations around the future of orchestras, and the students were full of ideas. Here are their perspectives.

### **Positive Culture:**

The students felt that a positive culture was being fostered by the organization. One student said, “NYO is so great, and it is the reason why I choose to come back.” Another student stated, “This is where you learn to give your all each time.” Another said, “NYO has changed my life. This is an experience that you DON’T get in school. You are surrounded by such committed musicians in an immersive, intensive experience.” Being in a bilingual environment was seen as a great strength. They talked about how sometimes instrument groups could get cliquey and judgmental of each other, but also talked about a family atmosphere within the NYO. “I can be myself. Every player is improving, and it is not an ugly competitive environment. We take risks, unlike at school. Our coaches encourage artistic risk taking.”

### **Mental Health Initiative:**

The introduction of the mental health initiative was seen by students as really important and a program that could grow further. In classical music, mental health is not really talked about, where as in sports, athletes are very open about it. In music, mental health issues are not shame free, and this new program helps bring it out of the closet. They appreciated the mental health toolkit, coaching on performance anxiety, dealing with a “uni-faceted” existence that could prevent young classical musicians from drawing from real world experience, especially those musicians who started playing at a very young age. They saw this program as reframing the “tormented artist” to the “healthy artist” as the ideal. Another student stated, “NYO wants you to be healthy, a better musicians, and to succeed.”

### **Anti-Harassment Training:**

The students felt that the introduction of the anti-harassment workshop and discussion was timely with all the discussion of it in the media. It was helpful to have harassment defined – what it is and what is isn’t. The anonymous reporting without reprisal is really a good idea, and students are aware that complaints will be investigated. One student said that she was more aware of the standard of asking of consent, and another student said that she was happy that NYO addressed this issue that is a serious issue in the field of music.

**Touring:**

Touring was seen by students as an incredibly important part of NYO, and where the musical depth was developed and where the exposure to different parts of Canada and the world expanded world views. There was a magical feeling of unity with one's future colleagues. They felt that through touring, their perspective had grown to that of a nation-wide one, and now they felt they had a friend in every city. They also got exposure to the real-world gruelling nature of being on the road, built resilience, and how to develop healthy tour habits and self care.

**View of Faculty and Staff:**

The chamber music program was adored; there was respect for the calibre, efforts and goodwill of the faculty. They talked about the generosity of the faculty in giving private lessons, and that they had access to lessons with faculty who specialized in other instruments. They felt much supported by the staff, and talked about how responsive the whole staff team was, that they are "great problem solvers," and how "impeccably organized" the whole operation was.

**Cross-Cultural Work:**

*The Unsilent Project* (2017) was seen as a project that built empathy and got classical music students "out of their bubble" and made ties with social activism. Initially, musicians were unsure about the combination of music and poetry, but the more they got into the project, the more that they wanted to do a good job. The big learning moment was to see how moved the audience was and how touched they were by the message of the poetry. The mix of Indigenous and western artists was a very positive initiative, as was the exposure to the 'first voice' describing the residential school system of which the students had previously had little exposure. One young musician talked about the importance of being exposed to other world instruments and traditions, the importance of seeing music beyond a colonial tradition, and to participate in each other's cultures. However, these diverse collaborations need to be done for the right reasons. The project has to have artistic integrity and not be a mash up. They talked about the engrained tunnel vision of classical training, given most players start at a young age.

**Future of Orchestras:**

"Now is the time for us to nourish our artistic imagination as musicians," said one student musician. There was discussion about new performance practices, getting movement training and method acting classes to get classical musicians out of their comfort zone, being exposed to visual art and multi-media practices, working in new non-traditional venues, and not being the only centre of attention on stage. The chance to combine contemporary music with dance was an exciting possibility. One student talked about the importance of doing multi-disciplinary projects well, and "musicians are in a bubble – multi-disciplinary exposure helps us break that bubble."

**Audience Development:**

One young musician talked beautifully about her mission to share the emotional power, passion and depth she feels for music with the audience. If the audience could feel that intensity, it would change their lives. The feeling of being all together present in one work is so powerful, and the job of the musicians is to channel that feeling to the audience and to share the language of music. The question to be explored was how to bring the audience into the creative process and open their ears and hearts. This is much different than music education in the schools, which this musician felt hurt listeners. Music should be taught as part of teach history where there is context and something to excite the imagination with experiences that are so pure. The NYO performance of *Death and Transfiguration* was something so big and beautiful, and “I want the audience to feel these emotions.”

**Socially Engaged Art:**

Socially engaged art brought up many ideas. One musician had the idea of chamber concerts to the disenfranchised, and to create community partnerships programs with seniors and hospitals. She wanted socially engaged art to become the norm with chamber music, and it would also give students more opportunities to perform and to talk about their music in a variety of settings.

**Other Comments:**

There was one person who expressed the need for per diems on tour. Another expressed the need for more repertoire to be reviewed. One person thought there should be more violin faculty given the number of violinists. The ensemble in residence is a highly successful idea, and a student expressed how great it would be if string players got to learn more quartets.

**How does the organization demonstrate a commitment to the mental and physical safety of its students?**

This area includes a meaningful and dynamic area of growth. In 2018, the NYO introduced the 3-year pilot project, called J & W Murphy Initiatives for Mental Health, to support the mental health and wellness of NYOC musicians. This program was also inspired by a tragic incident in 2017 that involved a suicide of an NYOC alumnus in the fall after the program, and NYOC reacted immediately to boost mental health services to its members during the program that has been so enthusiastically embraced and used by the students. The NYOC also collaborates with the Musicians’ Clinic of Canada and The Al & Malka Green Artists Health Centre.

With the new mental health program, students have been encouraged to come forward, and have been assured that there is no shame and penalty to do so. All sessions with mental health professionals are completely confidential, and the NYO now has a doctor come on tour. This is a big step forward to de-stigmatize mental health issues in the arts, and having this introduced at the pre-professional period is essential and welcomed.

There are injury prevention workshops with occupational therapists.

Workshops are given on the NYOC sexual harassment policy that includes what does and does not count as harassment, the whistle blower hotline to a third party, the investigation stage, and the zero tolerance policy. This year, a student was sent home for breaking this policy and exhibiting aggressive behaviour, and students saw that NYOC was taking sexual harassment very seriously.

Classical musicians deal with significant performance anxiety. Barbara Smith looked at the Toronto Western Hospital artist health program and sports psychology as models, and then sought expertise in the classical music field. Former OSM flutist Caroline Christy runs performance anxiety workshops and provides tools for coping including journaling so that worrying can be compartmentalized and not be too pervasive, as well as introducing mindfulness practices such as meditation and yoga.

**In the case of organizations entrusted with the care of minors, how does the organization and staff engage in practices that promote an environment that nurtures trust, confidence, independence, and safety.**

As stated above, students are given an anti-harassment workshop, there is an independent contact that ensures reporting can happen without reprisal.

The average age of an NYOC member is 21 years old, so most students are not minors.

**FACULTY & CONDUCTOR PERSPECTIVES**

There was a great feeling amongst faculty members about the high level of the faculty. There were ideas expressed about bringing in the concertmasters of the top orchestras in the world. There was talk about getting the top conductors in the world as is the case with some other international training programs who work with conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, Bernard Haitink, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Daniel Barenboim. Conductors such as Yannick Seguin and Kent Nagano were suggested.

All talked about the value of the chamber music program at NYO as the young musicians develop their own artistic agency, to think for themselves, get a mental grounding, develop listening and ensemble skills, and to take care of every detail. If these skills are developed, their orchestral playing will be good. One instructor suggested bringing in the next generation of professional musicians such as the Ebène or Dover quartets.

One faculty member felt that the chamber music program was one of the most significant factors in developing better string players, and another said that the detailed work involved in making great chamber music has created a standard of excellence in the program.

Discussions around multi-disciplinary initiatives drew different responses. Some felt that the orchestra's job was to focus on the cannon of symphonic repertoire with the time allowed, and others were interested in further artistic explorations.

There was discussion about a year-round program or year-round modules such as those with the Australian Youth Orchestra. The AYO, Tanglewood, Aberdeen Youth Orchestra Festival, and the Orchestral Academy of the Schleswig Holstein Musik Festival were examples that the faculty brought up as other strong training programs.

It would also be interesting to expose students to different orchestral models such as the St. Paul's Chamber Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. As well, they talked about the importance of introducing the students to a number of career choices.

One person talked about the need to cover classical and early romantic repertoire, as the orchestra had been focusing on the larger late romantic repertoire, and that there could be solutions to involve all the musicians and provide the experience of a wider range of repertoire (including Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn) rather than focusing on the large late romantic works at the expense of other repertoire.

There was great respect expressed for Executive Director Barbara Smith, and a feeling of support and good health of the institutional culture that was geared to support and develop outstanding musicians.

## LEADERSHIP

### **Barbara Smith, Executive Director**

I had a number of meetings with Barbara Smith. It is clear from the programming, the international tours secured, the logistical and production excellence, the quality of the faculty, the return to full scholarships for students so that every talented musician has access to this high level of training, that Barbara is a leader with integrity, vision, and tenacity.

She has inspired confidence as indicated in conversations with the Board Chair, Conductor, faculty and students. She has led the charge to return the NYOC to an accessible, scholarship-based program for Canada's exceptional emerging classical artists, the acquisition of prestigious national and international touring engagements, new forays into international partnerships, post-program training initiatives for NYOC alumni such as the internship program with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. She has inspired a major boost in health and wellness support and training, and secured significant fundraising support to bring an important vision to fruition in a wise financial context.

Barbara Smith and her small but mighty team have created a warm and supportive culture where the students and faculty are both nurtured and inspired.

## WHERE TO FROM HERE

### **NYO Grad Program:**

The concept of the NYOC grad program is already being developed. The new OSM program for NYO pre-professional musicians (where 10 students win a spot in the OSM for half a season and receive mentorship and have access to scholarships at McGill University's Schulich School of Music's graduate diploma program) is the next step to prepare top musicians for the field.

### **International Collaborations:**

Given NYOC's reputation internationally, there are several exciting new collaborations being discussed, including a joint tour with the European Union Youth Orchestra and that with the Australian Youth Orchestra. NYOC's Executive Director is playing an important role in the international forum of youth orchestras that allow for this international exchange and to draw from the strengths of each other's programs. There has already been activity between sessions such as the NYO cross-cultural exchange in India several years ago, and this post-session activity could include touring NYO chamber groups.

### **Deeper Exposure to the Arts Eco-System and Arts Leadership:**

There is discussion on a more thorough preparation of orchestral musicians in training on the eco-system of the arts that would provide exposure to strategic planning, marketing, the role of musicians in major gift fundraising, socially engaged art and the role and responsibility of the musician with stakeholders and with society as a whole. NYOC would like to set up internships for students during the year for those interested in securing this experience. This is an important point as some of the top leaders in the arts are those who invested their student years in striving for excellence, and have brought this to their role as leaders in the arts. The European Union Youth Orchestra, for example, has a Music Lab for Social Change.

### **Multi-tiered Program with Feeder Program:**

There is discussion about having a 2-week junior prep program (as is the case with a number of classical training programs in the USA and Australia) as a feeder system to the senior orchestra.

### **Multi-Disciplinary and Cross-Cultural Collaborations:**

With increased funding, the potential of multi-disciplinary collaborations with pre-professional artists in choir, opera, dance (e.g. National Ballet School), theatre (e.g. National Theatre School), and film (e.g. Vancouver Film School) are possibilities being considered. The greatest creativity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is happening between the disciplines, and Canadian Heritage may wish to consider some de-siloed support that would enable comprehensive multidisciplinary collaborations and the whole concept of incubation of new art and art forms to be fostered at the pre-professional level.

The NYO took a huge step in 2017 with the *Unsilent Project* that was in collaboration with Michael Greyeyes of Signal Theatre, and dealt with the Residential School system. NYO took a deep dive into the subject matter. All NYO students visited a residential school, participated in smudging ceremonies, and each student wrote a land acknowledgement. It was interesting to talk to the students who were involved in this project. There was some initial skepticism about the project and the combination of symphonic music and slam poetry. However, when the students saw the impact on audiences across Canada, they saw the power of socially engaged art. This project was a game changer for these young musicians.

Resident NYOC creative consultant Gregory Oh talked about the benefits of “artistic cross-training.” The work with Michael Greyeyes was enlightening, as Michael’s approach was on what each person around the table wanted to bring and get out of the experience. The exposure to other cultures and the exchange that happens could be a goal in itself. Gregory Oh wants to further inspire the quest for discovery for the “wow – this opened my eyes” moment beyond a musician’s classic “it’s in tune” moment. When asked about the future of orchestras, he stated, “R & D.”

To do a creative deep dive, the program would need to be longer to dedicate time in the creative incubator as an essential part of the artistic experience as a musician while ensuring the exposure to the chamber and orchestral music canon. The student musicians can play an active role in creation and to question conventions. This is what happened with the 2017 *Unsilent Project* where everyone was listening even if they were initially fearful of the experience.

## **CONCLUSION**

This is an outstanding artistic training institution with a national and international vision and impact. It is the major training ground for Canada’s emerging musicians, and the fact that almost 40% of Canada’s orchestral players are NYOC alumni speaks volumes.

The NYOC is growing its vision, and is deserving of increased support that would result in impactful initiatives benefiting the next generation of Canada's changing orchestral world. The potential and vision is there for brilliant cross-disciplinary new creations with other Canadian training institutions and Canada's top creators in other artistic fields, transglobal collaborations, diverse cultural partnerships, explorations into new performance practices for new generation audience development, the expansion of training to include a feeder program (as is the case with the Australian Youth Orchestra and other international programs), a 360° exposure to the arts eco-system and diverse cultural career opportunities through intensive labs and workshops, an empowering education about arts entrepreneurship and an exposure into socially engaged art and a deep understanding of the power and societal responsibility of being an artist, and the expansion of the internship and mentorship initiatives for recent NYOC participants.

This increased investment could change the course of orchestras in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and present an outstanding creative opportunity between Canada's gifted students of varied art forms to learn from each other.

This is not a plea for help to this extraordinary Canadian training institution. It is a call for investment into Canada's cultural future that is necessary to incubate the collaboration between cultures and art forms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in our nation and with our nation's top emerging artists. They are our future.

Canada's National Youth Orchestra delivers on what it sets out to do with vision, excellence, determination, and a global outlook. It is Canada's world renowned and future bound arts training institution of which we can all be mightily proud.

Respectfully submitted,

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