

Yosa[®] Quarter

SPRING 2020

NOTE

Yosa[®] Plays On



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MORE INSIDE

From the Podium

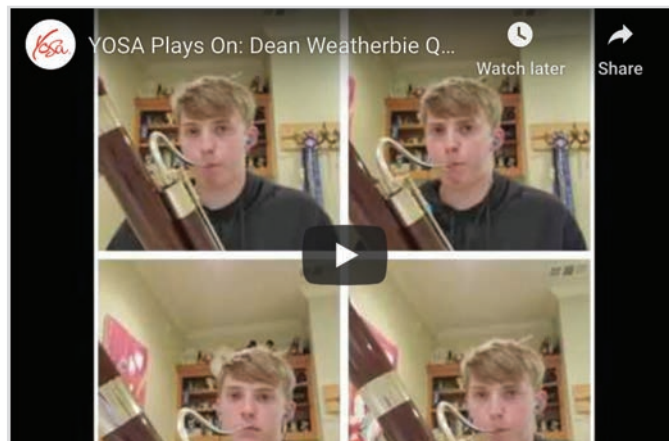
I have been a youth orchestra music director for 25 years, but I have never seen anything like this. With the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic making it impossible for orchestras to rehearse or perform together, how does a youth orchestra keep student musicians engaged and learning, until it is safe for us to make music together in person?

Over the last month or so at YOSA, our answer has been to create online content and host events to help our musicians stay focused on playing and listening to great music, as well as keeping them connected to each other. We call this campaign **YOSA Plays On**.

Our conducting faculty, along with some of our multitalented staff members, have produced a variety of instructional videos, including topics like how to get more out of listening to music or an introduction to baroque performance practice. Faculty members are also making coaching videos on the 2020/21 season audition excerpts, to help musicians prepare for YOSA auditions later in the summer.

On Sunday afternoons, when YOSA orchestras normally rehearse, we present a series of online Q&A sessions, during which I interview a different YOSA conductor each week. Musicians can submit questions in advance, or they can type questions, comments, and emojis into live chat during the event. Afterward, we post video of each session for those who weren't able to tune in live.

Our social media channels regularly feature performance videos by YOSA musicians and alumni. This period of social distancing has fostered lots of creativity with video and audio editing, allowing solo musicians to play trios or quartets with themselves or to synch up videos of musicians playing in different locations. All of us, students and faculty alike, are learning how to make music in new ways.



YOSA Symphonic Winds bassoonist Dean Weatherbie.

We look forward with tremendous anticipation to the day when we can all rehearse and perform together again. In the meantime, though, you can see an overview of *YOSA Plays On* videos at www.yosa.org/playson. In the coming weeks, as these efforts continue, please follow YOSA on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram to stay in touch with everything we're doing. And stay tuned for that wonderful day when we are able to announce your next chance to join us live in the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts!

Troy Peters, YOSA Music Director



Instagram Q&A Session available for viewing on YouTube.

Concert Recap



Winter Showcase (January 26)

The new year kicked off with YOSA Winter Showcase. The free concert at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts featured YOSA Symphony and YOSA Symphonic Winds. Guest soloist Rachel Ferris, principal harpist of the San Antonio Symphony, performed with the ensembles in Debussy's *Sacred and Profane Dance* and Saint-Saëns' *Morceau de Concert*. A full recording of the concert can be viewed at music.yosa.org/wintershowcase.

Zachry Series 2: At the Movies with the San Antonio Chamber Choir (February 9)

In collaboration with the San Antonio Chamber Choir, YOSA presented an afternoon of movie music on Oscar Sunday. Hundreds of high school choir students filled the boxes of the Tobin Center, as the concert opened with a grand presentation of "O Fortuna" from Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Music from *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Schindler's List* were all on the program. The YOSA Philharmonic and the San Antonio Chamber Choir gave a phenomenal performance to a full house. A full recording of the concert can be viewed at music.yosa.org/zachryseries2.

Viva Selena (March 9)

YOSA honored the life and legacy of the Queen of Tejano, Selena Quintanilla, in a night of music and celebration. The YOSA Philharmonic and award-winning local recording artist Isabel Marie Sanchez performed an outstanding show of Selena's greatest hits. Selena fans of all ages and backgrounds were singing and dancing in the aisles of the Tobin Center. Before and after the show, concertgoers had a blast snapping photos on the red carpet and meeting with Isabel Marie Sanchez after the concert.



Congratulations All-State Musicians!

Congratulations to these 17 YOSA musicians who were selected for 2020 TMEA All-State ensembles, through one of the most competitive all-state audition processes in the country.

Matthew Averyt (cello)

Dezirae Bremseth (horn)

Connor Castillo (percussion)

Gemmalee DyerMok (violin)

Ian Fernandes (violin)

Jake Glaser (clarinet)

Zoe Gurwitz (oboe)

Cameron Halsell (viola)

Javier Hernandez (bass)

Breanna Humphrey (cello)

Seva Joshi (violin)

Lisa Kazami (violin)

Kadence Koehl (trumpet)

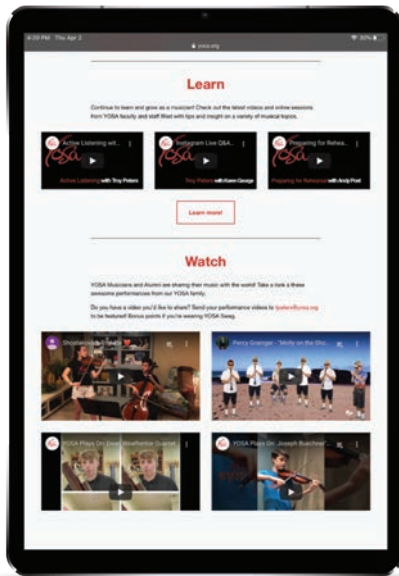
Hunter Messick (violin)

Caleb Miller (horn)

Ryan Post (cello)

Ray Zhang (viola)

YOSA Plays On



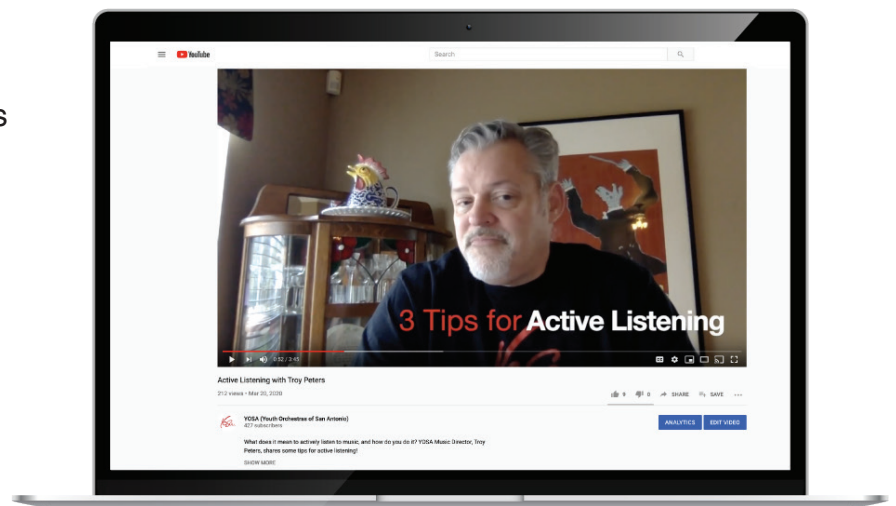
An abundance of rehearsals, concerts, and events were on the YOSA calendar for spring 2020. As YOSA took a bow for our Viva Selena concert in early March, musicians looked forward to spring break and the YOSA team was excited to prepare for the busiest time of the YOSA season. City Series 3: Festival Finale, Zachry Series 3: Scheherazade, YOSA Invitational, and YOSA's largest concert of the season, YOSApalooza, were all fast approaching.

In what felt like the blink of an eye, everything changed as the threat of COVID-19 began to increase and nationwide restrictions quickly shuttered the normal work of the arts and culture community. YOSA was forced to make the difficult decision to cancel the remainder of the 2019/20 YOSA Orchestra season. With group activities suspended and the ability to create a normal rehearsal environment gone, YOSA remained as determined as ever to reach young musicians in San Antonio. YOSA needed to play on in a new way.

In light of the circumstances, YOSA created an all-new webpage: *YOSA Plays On*. The webpage serves as a one-stop resource portal for young musicians to stay connected and continue to be involved with YOSA. Weekly, YOSA creates and curates musical and educational content, from educational videos to online Q&A sessions, student performances to light-hearted videos trending around the nation.

Since launching in late-March, the effectiveness of this digital shift has become apparent. YOSA's social media channels have seen steady growth and, more notably, have seen significant increases in post engagement with *YOSA Plays On* content. More people are liking, commenting on, and sharing these posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The *YOSA Plays On* weekly email to musicians and families is opened 20% more than past weekly rehearsal emails. Most impressively, YOSA's YouTube channel, the main hub for performance, educational, and instructional videos, has seen a 150% increase in weekly views over the past month. A steady stream of YOSA musician videos are filling the video content queue. Naturally, as more students are showcased online, more students are inspired to play on as well. Additionally, Audition Preparation videos created by YOSA conductors are filling playlists and accumulating views, with over 100 in its first weekend since publishing. In these new ways, YOSA's impact is reaching young musicians around the city and beyond. While it has been an adjustment, YOSA musicians, families, and supporters have found ways to play on.

The importance for YOSA to play on is far greater than simply using content to fill the empty space of the canceled season. YOSA Executive Director Brandon Henson explains, "During this global crisis, I think about how everyday life has been interrupted for all of us, but especially young people. Many



The image shows a smartphone screen with the YouTube app open. The video player at the top shows a black frame. Below the player, the video title "YOSA" is displayed in large white letters. Underneath the title, the channel name "YOSA" is shown in a smaller font, followed by "2.6K" subscribers. The video description is written in white text: "What an awesome feature on @TUMUHQ! Had a blast when YOSA is playing on and continuing to keep me here through music. @GOSATWUHQ! Youth Orchestra of San Jose. A Lifetime Continues To Live. (Song)". Below the description, there are icons for liking, commenting, and sharing. At the bottom of the screen, there is a navigation bar with icons for home, search, and other app functions. The phone's status bar at the very top shows the time as 3:52 and the battery level at 100%.

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Musician Spotlight: Giving Back _____

YOSA Musicians are giving back to the community in a variety of ways! We're spotlighting Sam Igbo, Aria Nguyen, and Jessie Gaeda for all of their fantastic volunteer work.



Sam Igbo
Violin, YOSA Symphony
The Children's Shelter of San Antonio Volunteer

Tell us about your volunteer experience.

I enjoy volunteering at The Children's Shelter of San Antonio and perform various tasks, such as running the front desk, organizing items donated, or playing the violin!

Why did you become interested in volunteering, and why is this volunteer work important to you?

I became involved in the organization after I saw the effects of poverty in the greater Atlanta area where I once lived. I believe it is vital to invest in youth, because many people's futures and dreams depend on it!

Why should your friends and peers also volunteer with you or elsewhere?

By contributing to the lives of other kids, we are creating more impact on others—kind of a “pay it forward” notion.

Aria Nguyen
Violin, YOSA Philharmonic
Center for Refugee Services Volunteer

Tell us about your volunteer experience.

The refugee center accommodates refugees of all ages; they have classes for adults and children, as well as a nursery for babies. Classes are separated by age and level of fluency. Although tasks depend on what you sign up for, I volunteered as a teacher assistant for elementary-aged students around one or two times a week. We helped students with worksheets and reading books, as well as explaining unfamiliar terms and phrases. In addition, we assisted in handing out clothing items to families in need. My favorite part of the shift was during the kids' break time, in which we went outside and engaged in fun group activities with them. I was able to develop a more personal connection with the kids during this time, and it was very exciting when I would come back the following week and they would remember my name.

Why did you become interested in volunteering, and why is this volunteer work important to you?

I thought it would be a cool experience to help others learn English, since I myself was an immigrant and faced similar struggles of learning English at a young age in an unfamiliar environment.

Why should your friends and peers also volunteer at the refugee center or elsewhere?

I think others should definitely dedicate some time to volunteering, because the feeling of helping others is truly priceless and reminds you how important it is to give back to your community. It not only helps the people you volunteer for, but also helps give you opportunities to learn from others and benefit from your community. In addition, volunteering is great way to make new friends!



Jessie Gaeda
Viola, YOSA Symphony
Camp CAMP Volunteer

Tell us about Camp CAMP and your volunteer experience.

Camp CAMP is specifically designed for people who have special needs. It includes all regular camp activities like horseback riding, canoeing, etc. but makes it accessible to people who otherwise would not have been able to do those activities. I personally try to go to camp every spring break and at least three sessions over the summer. Volunteers at CAMP definitely have more responsibilities than the average camp counselor! It is our job to provide all help needed to our camper, which usually includes helping them with hygiene and transfers in and out of wheelchairs (which we are taught how to do of course!).

Why did you become interested in volunteering, and why is this work important to you?

My brother has special needs, and when we were younger my brother and I would go to CAMP (they have a program there for siblings of those who have special needs too!). Volunteering at CAMP is important to me because I get to see how happy the campers are! Outside of CAMP, people with special needs are often associated with the disability they have, not with their actual personality, but at CAMP we get to see who they are and what they are interested in.

Why should your friends and peers also volunteer at the camp or elsewhere?

I would love for my friends and peers to volunteer at CAMP! Or just volunteer in general! It feels really good to break out of your normal routine and help make someone's day a little better.

Donors and Friends

YOSA appreciates the generosity of the many individuals, corporations, and foundations that believe in the transformative power of music. **Thank you to the donors below whose gift was received between December 1, 2019 and April 1, 2020. You have changed kids' lives through music!**

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YOSA changes kids' lives through music.

YOSA
AUDITIONS

2020/21
SEASON

**VIDEO AUDITIONS
ONLINE SUBMISSIONS
DUE JULY 15, 2020**

Have a great time playing exciting music with young musicians from all over San Antonio!

YOSA Orchestra auditions are free and open to young musicians ages 8-20. Visit yosa.org/auditions for audition materials, requirements, and registration.