

MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YO-YO MA MAKES RARE VISIT TO CALGARY ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

CALGARY PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA BRINGS WORLD RENOWNED CELLIST TO PHILKIDS PROGRAMME

Calgary, Alta., December 7, 2017 – Today students at Keeler Elementary School in North East Calgary were treated to a rare opportunity to receive a music lesson from world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Students who participated in the unique event this afternoon are part of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra's (CPO) PhilKids Programme, an initiative that focuses on bringing music lessons to underserved kids in the community. Yo-Yo Ma is in Calgary to perform two sold-out concerts with the CPO and took time out of his busy schedule to make this special visit.

"If you want to change the world – invest in the children. I can't think of many better ways to make a difference than the amazing PhilKids programme," said Paul Dornian, President & CEO of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. "Seeing Yo-Yo Ma interacting and making music with these elementary school children put a lump in my throat. Mr. Ma is a master communicator whether he is playing his cello, talking to the children, or listening to their wisdom. It made me want to be eight years old again."

Mr. Ma listened to a cello performance by a number of children before performing to the group and said of his experience, "It's always wonderful to walk into a room where you see children are engaged and curious. I can see the long-term effects of what the teachers, staff, and musicians have created. They have created a space for these students where their imagination and curiosity for the world is supported and encouraged."

There were approximately 55 students, from grades one to five, who took part in the programme.

"The opportunity for us to host Yo-Yo Ma at Keeler Elementary School has been so phenomenal for our students," said Denise Nimmo, Principal of Keeler Elementary School. They have been so excited for his visit to hear a world famous musician play for them and then to also have the experience of actually playing the cello for him to hear. To have this opportunity today is just out of this world and something that our students will carry in their hearts forever I am certain."

"Such excitement and joy to have a visit to PhilKids by one of the world's greatest cellists! It was truly unforgettable for all of us," said Judith Kilbourne, Founding Donor of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra's PhilKids After-School Programme.

Yo-Yo Ma performs a sold-out concert tonight with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, which will be broadcast live from the Jack Singer Concert Hall to audiences around the world free of charge.

Live-stream link: <http://calgaryphil.com/plan-your-experience/live-stream/>

ABOUT THE CALGARY PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra is a cornerstone of Calgary's multi-faceted arts community and since 1955, has grown to be one of North America's finest and most versatile live music ensembles. A repertoire that is extensive and broad in scope consistently attracts acclaimed guest artists and conductors. The CPO offers an average of 80 concerts per Season designed to fit all musical tastes.

ABOUT PHILKIDS

PhilKids is an after-school music programme that creates a learning environment designed to fuel and support the empowerment of children in underserved Calgary communities through the exploration of music. The weekly programme at Keeler Elementary School facilitates over 50 students (between grades one to five) to work closely with musicians from the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. Using a multi-faceted approach, we introduce musicality to children to develop and improve the following attributes: musicianship, rhythm, creativity, self-expression, performance and co-operative learning and goal achievement. There are many tangible and measurable benefits to this program beyond learning music. Personal growth in the children shines as we create positive learning environments that nurture: team work, self-awareness, community engagement, discipline, leadership, focus and trust.

BACKGROUNDERS ATTACHED

-30-

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

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BACKGROUNDER

YO-YO MA

The many-faceted career of cellist Yo-Yo Ma is testament to his continual search for new ways to communicate with audiences and to his personal desire for artistic growth and renewal. Ma maintains a balance between his engagements as soloist with orchestras worldwide and his recital and chamber music activities. His discography includes over 100 albums, including 18 Grammy award winners. Ma serves as the Artistic Director of Silkroad, an organization he founded to promote cross-cultural performance and collaborations. He has received numerous awards, among them the Avery Fisher Prize (1978), the National Medal of Arts (2001), and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2010). In 2011, Ma was recognized as a Kennedy Center Honoree. Most recently, Ma has joined the Aspen Institute Board of Trustees. He has performed for eight American presidents, most recently at the invitation of President Obama on the occasion of the 56th inaugural Ceremony.

MEDIA KIT

Official images and B-roll footage is available via **dropbox link**:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6xg9uwcbu1etw4p/AAxmpBypezwTqJHDxSoyQSDa?dl=0>

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