

## **Day 1 – Ottawa-Frankfurt-Goteborg**

Hey everyone!

We made it! It was a long day/night of travelling but we have arrived safe and sound. As chaperones we could not ask for a better group of teenagers to be travelling with. They are a family - they help each other if they need it and always have a great way of making us laugh!

Ottawa: Let the adventure begin! We met everyone at the OrKidstra studio in the Bronson Centre at noon. We ran a passport check, last minute checklist and then we were joined by a CBC camera who was able to capture the excitement on tape. We quickly loaded up the many vehicles that were convoying to the airport and set out down Bronson Avenue. Checking in was quite the adventure with 13 people, it took a while but we successfully said goodbye to our luggage and we headed straight to security. Going through security was a breeze, the students were respectful and it made the process painless. We then had a little bit of time to get something to eat before boarding the plane. Boarding was smooth and we were able to get all the violas and violins on the plane with ease. Next thing we know it is 5:00pm and we are in the air on our way to Frankfurt!

Frankfurt: We were sure to inform the kids that the Frankfurt airport is significantly larger than the Ottawa Airport - thank goodness we did. We swear that one tunnel we traveled through at the Frankfurt airport was larger than the entire Ottawa Airport!! Passport check was a unorganized chaotic mess. We were expecting ropes and organize lines but it was actually just a free-for-all. This was by far the most stressful part of our travel. After finally getting through the line we booked it to our connecting gate where they had just started boarding. We were sent through and loaded on to a bus that then transported us to another part of the airport where the airplane was waiting for us. We boarded quickly and next thing we know...we are in the air again!

Goteborg: Our first glimpses of this beautiful city were breathtaking. Lush greenery, small contained cities with water. Lots of water. The flight from Frankfurt to Goteborg was only an hour and a half and we were able to get off the plane and through to luggage claim in about 10 minutes. The atmosphere at the Goteborg airport was completely different to that of the Frankfurt airport. This airport was bright, open and FULL of colour. 15 minutes later we had our bags and headed out the arrival gate to meet the wonderful bus driver, Andrew. I (Ms. Tegan) had been told that we would be met by a driver who would provide us with a mini-bus to get us from the airport to the hostel that we would be calling home. We headed out to the bus parking lot and you will NEVER guess what we got....our very own Double-Decker bus! What an AMAZING way to see the outskirts of Goteborg! Lots of fun riding as 13 people in the top of an empty Double Decker bus!

Hostel: Beautiful, clean, great location, small, intimate rooms - safe to say that we will be very well acquainted with each other after 10 days! After dropping off the bags we set out to see the city while we waited for the rest of our rooms to become available. After walking and exploring we sat down for some lunch. What would we get? None other than Swedish meatballs in....SWEDEN!

After a long afternoon we headed back to the hostel to have some much needed downtime before reconvening for a family style dinner at the hostel followed by a wonderful game night filled with lots of laughing. Perfect way to end a long, tiring but incredible day.

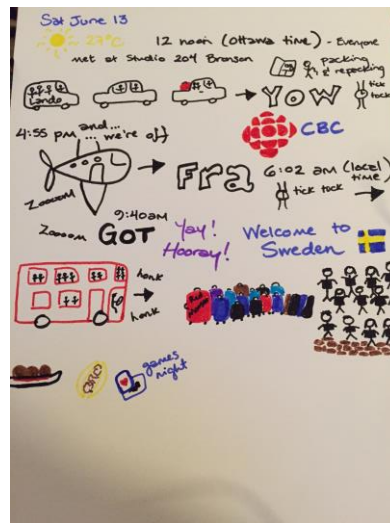
It's hard to believe that in the past 24 hours we have been in 3 countries, 2 continents, on 2 planes with 9 teenagers. Today we were reminded how truly lucky we are to be given this opportunity to be here and how lucky we are to have each other. We cannot WAIT to see what these next 10 days has in store for us! Be sure to check in daily!

Up next? Nick shares his views on his first flight ever! Check out Ms. Erin's awesome visual representation of our day!

Stay tuned!

xoxo

Ms. Tegan & Ms. Erin



## Day 2 – 39,000 ft.

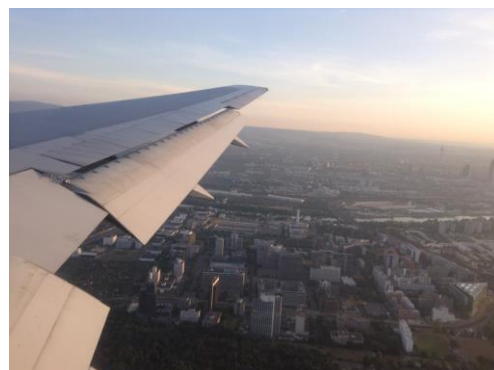
Today was my first time flying ever! It was so awesome, I loved the takeoff, the view and the beautiful cloud sailing. The two flights took about 10 hours. In general flying was a wonderful experience that I really wished I had done earlier in life, apart from increased air pressure in my ears!

Interesting things happen to friends who are pinned together for long periods of time in close quarters! The napping done by everyone within a super short time was very impressive. Ngoc Kim was falling asleep during take off which is very impressive considering how loud it is! Celeste, Derek and Declan all watched the Sponge Bob movie at the same time - Celeste was watching hers in German!

My first time flying was an amazing and ear pain filled experience.

Be sure to check back for more updates! I can't wait for the rest of the week.

- Nick



### Day 3 – Painted Hands, Drop Zone & Beaches

Being able to come to Sweden is a true honour. On Monday we went to the Academy of Music and Drama which is part of the Goteborg University. We were asked to help organize the opening ceremony for the Side by Side music camp. It was heart warming to see so many people from around the world use music, motions and sounds as a way to join hands together. Being able to see so many people from around the world that share the same goal is truly amazing. During the opening ceremony, we were divided into five different groups with five different hand colours. Then we all stand up into a circle and created music. However, it was not any kind music. It was silent and the only movements we did was with our hands. It was like one big harmony. It was incredible to see that you can still make music without signing or playing.

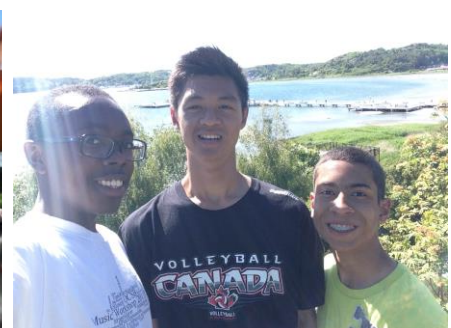
When we finished at the opening ceremony, we decided to go to the amusement park, where everyone enjoyed themselves except for Tegan (because she got a really bad migraine.) Before coming to Sweden, Tegan looked up things to do in Sweden. The first thing was " an amusement park", right away, we knew that was the thing we wanted to do when we arrived at Sweden. Since it will cost us around \$50 (which is about 400 Swedish Krona), we decide to come up with a way in order to pay for the amusement park, so we all saved up ourselves. Any how, it turned out to be a blast. One of the most memorable ride for me was the "free falling" or the "drop". When you're up 100-150 meters above ground, you will feel as it will be your last moment. The person who was working on the "drop" or "free falling" did a count down. He start from 10, 9, 8 , 7 and then he said just kidding.. It only lasted about 3 seconds but those three second can make you feel that you wish you were never born. Some how I've survived and conquered my fear of heights.

One of the things I really wanted to do while in Sweden was go to the beach. It was a struggle to get to the beach since you can't pay cash on a bus, so then we've decided to take a city bus which lead us to a corner store where we could buy bus tickets. Somehow we ended up going too far so we rode the city bus back into the city. For some reason we ended up going in circle. long story short, we arrived at the beach full of energy and excitement then we find out the there weren't very many people on the beach. (I later discovered that their summer vacation hasn't started yet.) Since it was fairly close to the ocean, it was very windy. Anyhow, we sucked up to the cold weather and find away to make the best out of situation!

The past 24 hours have been really great and I can't wait to start rehearsals tomorrow with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra!

- Gareth

PS. Shout-out to my #1 fan Ms. Carrie! ;)



#### Day 4 – Boat tours, Da Mateo & Massage Chairs

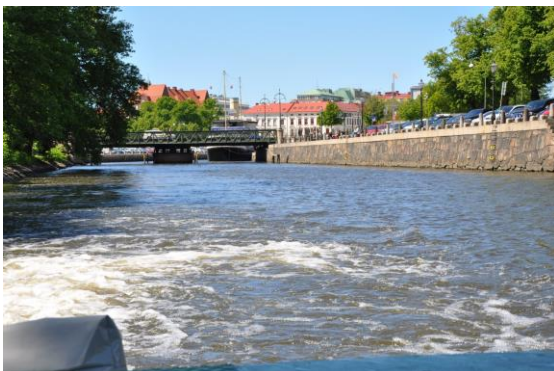
Today we spent a lot of time exploring Göteborg. We started the morning by taking a look at what was going on at the junior music camp. There we saw many younger children playing the instruments we play and were fondly reminded of when we had first started playing our instruments. As we were leaving the music academy the young musicians were taking their break when three Swedish flautists approached Celeste, Declan and me and asked where we were from. When we responded that we were from Canada they admitted that they had been spending a lot of time looking for some people from Canada.

After exploring the music academy we saw more of Göteborg by going on a boat tour on the canal running through the city which brought us out into the port. Along the way we learned many things about the geography, history, and landmarks of Göteborg.

After that, we enjoyed lunch in a courtyard café called "Da Mateo" which was recently named the best café in Sweden. Since it was a nice day some of the students visited a nearby beach after lunch. They decided to take public transit but soon discovered that it was much more complicated than in Ottawa. Lost at a tram station, and unwilling to sacrifice their important practice time myself and some other students turned back. Halfway to the concert hall where some of our instruments were being kept; the tram changed its route and we found ourselves in a part of the city where we had not yet been. We decided that we would wait walk back to the concert hall instead. While we were walking back, the four of us took a look at some of the buildings and shops that were around. We eventually got back to the concert hall after about half an hour. Declan, Celeste and I used one of the practice rooms at the concert hall to go over our music before our first real rehearsal tomorrow. Each practice room had a massage chair!

We practiced for an hour and a half, and then we went out for dinner. We are so thankful that the European Union funded our music exchange to Sweden and are very happy that they also accommodated for us to arrive a few days early because we not only are improving musically but we are also learning about the beautiful culture of Sweden and meeting many fellow musicians from across Europe!

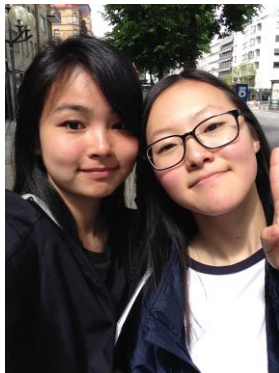
- Derek



## Day 5 – Rain, rain and more rain!

Woah! I can't believe it's Wednesday already! I'm so glad that the first couple of days we took advantage of the beautiful sunny weather in Sweden to visit the amusement park, go on a boat tour and familiarize ourselves with downtown. I got to ride the roller coaster for the first time and had some really awesome Swedish meatballs. Today it rained really heavily and we all got drenched like a soaked sponge. We went to the music academy to see what we could help with, and then stopped for some hot chocolate before listening to the Side by Side Beginner Youth Orchestra. In the evening we had our first sectional and it was really fun :)

Right away I made myself a friend. Her name is Park and she came all the way from South Korea. Although her English was limited and my Korean was ...just bad, we got along really well.



Here is me and Kafele pretending we like each other. :P



Here is me and another friend I made in Sweden. This plushie is from the amusement park the other day. Declan won it with his mad minion skillz and kindly gave it to me!



Today was really fun albeit being soaked all day. I can't wait for tomorrow! :)

- Ngoc Kim



## Day 6 – Our first rehearsal

It was an early morning and we all ate breakfast together. We were all either excited or nervous for the long day to come. We quickly walked to rehearsal. We started the day with sectionals - winds and strings were separated. In the wind sectionals we worked with Etienne, a Swiss violinist. He was very attentive to the details and he really wanted us to move with the music. I felt that we worked hard and improved as a team.

We were in sectionals all day until dinner. After dinner we had our first full rehearsal. My first impression of the full rehearsal was the big full sound that the orchestra created. I think that the conductor we had for the first full rehearsal was very impressed with how quickly we adapted to his suggestions and direction. We are playing a lot of really great music. Ms. Tegan asked us all which was our favourite piece and I honestly can't pick one - I love them all!

Overall the first day of rehearsals was really fun and I am really looking forward to the concert!

- Peter



## Day 7 – Midsommarstang

Today was [Midsummer](#) which is a really big celebration in Sweden. However, before participating in the festivities we had a sectional a tutti rehearsal.

In the tutti rehearsal we were conducted by our conductor for the concert, Joshua Dos Santos. This was a good rehearsal because we finally got to start working on specific things for the concert. Because of Midsummer we were let out of rehearsal at 3:00 and were invited to a Midsummer barbecue with the other side by side people. At the barbecue we enjoyed hamburgers, hotdogs, strawberries and cream (the strawberries were amazing), and a "jam" with many of the musicians who had brought their instruments along. It was neat to experience a traditional Swedish celebration; from the flowers in people's hair to the strawberries, the Midsummer celebrations truly made the cold Swedish weather feel like summer.

- Celeste





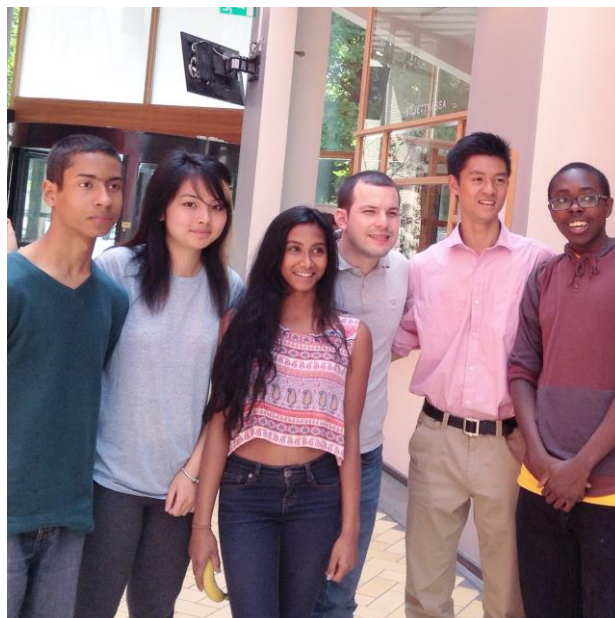
## Day 8 – A Musician's Conquest

It was day 3 of rehearsals and it started out like every other. Wake at around 8:15, get showered, brush teeth, get dressed and eat breakfast until everyone was ready to leave. Looking around you could tell that we weren't yet tired of the rehearsals, but they definitely did take a toll on us. Wrists hurting, fingers cramping, embasures tensing, lungs exhausted (even for string players) but it was a beautiful kind of pain.

Fast-forwarding into rehearsal, you have your new conductor, Joshua Dos Santos, for the second time. He is Dudamel's right hand man. You and the group had received the heart-breaking news that Gustavo Dudamel had to cancel due to back-pain but was thrilled that his fellow El Sistema conductor, Joshua would be able to step in. When playing under his conducting, one can tell that he has a lot of experience and that even when he is joking around, there is a lot of seriousness behind it. His sense of music was clearly highly developed and even when everything sounded perfect, he always knew just what it needed to sound better. Time went by and you take your 15 min break. But when you come back, Ron Alvarez was there. Let me tell you a little bit about Ron. One, he is one of my favourite conductors out of all that I met, because not only does he have the "musical sense" that Joshua Dos Santos has, but he also conducts with a lot of energy. It must be a Venezuelan thing. He puts his entire body into his conducting and you can tell he really enjoys what he does. Two, like his conducting he plays the violin with just as much passion and energy. It was inspiration to watch him play. And three, his accent was pretty cool, I think that's reason enough. So that's when I realized he was sitting down next to where I sit, and that was when I had one of those "oh crap" moments as well as excitement. Excited to be playing beside him but "oh crap" because I didn't actually know all my parts that well yet (shhh, don't tell anyone). But it all worked out in the end. It was pretty cool.

After dinner was the second part of the rehearsal where 7 female conductors came to practice conducting on us. They had been taking part in a course and even though they still have some work to do, it was quiet interesting to be conducted under seven different styles and struggle to try and adapt to each one. Overall the day was really fun and when it was all over, we just went back to the hostel and played games until going to bed early. Tomorrow is the big day and I cannot wait!

- Kafele





## Day 9 – A bittersweet end to an amazing week

Sunday marked the last day of our trip and was a fantastic day throughout. We woke up early as usual so we could catch the bus to the final few rehearsals leading up to the long awaited concert.

When we got to the venue, a large stage in sort of a shipyards area with large speakers and microphones on every stand, Peter remarked to me that it felt more like a rock concert than anything he had done before, to which I agreed. It was quite chilly and a lot of people had opted to wear clothes on top of their Side by Side shirts. The Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra was there and we all got to meet the musicians we would be playing with. Axel (the other tubist doing Side by Side) and I were very excited to meet the GSO's tubist. He was very nice, and when the seating was arranged I wasn't surprised to find he was seated beside the GSO bass trombonist, exactly like when the Ottawa Youth Orchestra collaborated with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra. I wasn't surprised because bass trombonists and tubists in the wild share a special bond of brotherhood that no other species of instruments can emulate.

Playing with the mic'd stands was fun and interesting. We had three tubas all mic'd meaning the basses would have a hard time keeping up. The mics were nice because they routed audio to speakers for the audience but also at the back of the stage behind us. This helped us hear what was going on a little better- usually in the very back of the orchestra it's easy to be late.

The rehearsal was quick and to the point, only a review of what we had worked on in the other rehearsals. It felt so weird to be performing music we had only started rehearsing days before at such a great level and it felt like we had been rehearsing much longer. After the rehearsal, everyone had lunch. It was starting to warm up a little, but we weren't going to have any sun on the stage so it would still be cold.

When everyone was ready and the concert was about to begin, we all lined up off stage. We performed the Brahms's Hungarian Dance and Shostakovich's Festive Overture on our own, a decision that had not been in the original plans. They went very well though and everyone seemed to be full of energy. Afterwards, the GSO joined us for the rest of the program and performed a Sibelius Symphony by themselves which sounded amazing. Playing on the stage was nice because the noise took a lot of the nerves off and it didn't feel much different from rehearsals. The only main difference would probably be how music was flying off everyone's stands and it's possible most of the festive overture was performed from memory...

After the amazing concert, I got to take a photo with Axel. He was a lot of fun to play with and it was sad to say goodbye. Luckily, our bus left without us so we got on the train bus and got to stick with Axel for a bit longer!

After getting back to the hostel, we went to a hotel restaurant for dinner and took lots of photos afterwards. It was the perfect end to an amazing trip. Once we went back to the hostel again, some of us stayed up all night until 4 and some of us went to bed. It was a lot of fun staying up that extended our time in Sweden just a little while longer.

What an amazing trip that was. Getting to go to Sweden with some of my best friends and then playing with their national orchestra, getting to meet so many fantastic people. It was truly an unforgettable experience. I would like to thank Ms. Tina, Ms. Tegan, Ms. Erin, and Mr. Gary for making the trip amazing and especially to Ms. Tina for working so hard to make this trip possible. Hopefully some day I will be able to return to another Side by Side camp!

Axel and I after the concert:



- Declan



## Day 10 – Goodbye Sweden

Wow! What an amazing experience this has been. I feel so lucky to have been able to chaperone these 9 amazing kids and experience Göteborg and Side by Side first hand. The end of day 9 and the start of day 10 all blurred together because the kids (& Ms. Tegan) stayed up all night playing Dutch Blitz (our new favorite game) since we had to leave the hostel at 4:30 am to go catch our plane.

The last week has gone by so fast. Personal highlights for me include: our first meal in Sweden - Swedish meatballs, of course! Volunteering for the opening ceremonies of Side by Side, painting hands blue. Riding Balder (the big wooden roller coaster) with Mr. Gary at the Liseberg amusement park, and ending the night with The Flume ride with Mr. Gary, Ms. Tina and Ngoc Kim - we got soaked and had an absolute blast. Definitely the best ride of the day. Dropping the kids off to their first rehearsals (sectionals) and feeling a sigh of relief because everything so far had gone just fine - must be what parents feel like when they drop their kids off at school after a rushed morning. Meeting new friends. Walking on a cobblestone path, approaching the HSM and hearing the first full rehearsal from outside. I got goosebumps! An incredible awe hit me - this is the best orchestra our kids have played with! They sounded amazing and it was only the first rehearsal! Teaching Artist Forum and our workshops with Eric Booth. Eric hit on every main point that has come up in my own research over the last 6 months and tied it all together beautifully. Watching one young student conductor lead the orchestra through the Tchaikovsky. She had such conviction, power and steady control of the ensemble. It was inspiring. Hearing the GSO perform Mahler 1 and witnessing the stand partners hug after all the applause and bows were over. Afternoon Fika. (A Swedish tradition meaning a meeting with friends over coffee and a sweet - usually a cinnamon bun.) The final concert and seeing all those children in turquoise tees on such a huge stage with the GSO.

It was amazing! I know I already said that, but it really was! I am so thankful for the experience. And the thing I am most thankful for was just being; spending time with these 9 remarkable young people and hanging out - much laughter and silliness ensued. :D The end of the trip was bittersweet, not because it was time to leave the remarkable country of Sweden but because many of these kids are going on to university now. It really is the end of an era. But, we have decided that just because they have graduated does not mean their program with OrKidstra should end - so this week we will inaugurate the "OldKidstra", for our graduates! I am certain that many new and exciting things are to come. The future of Sistema is bright, and it feels to me a bit like this quote from the Volvo Ocean Race, "Being at the bow is like standing on a moving platform with a fire hose in your face. Hold on tight and clip your harness on." - Sophie Cizek, Team SCA

I'm ready. I can't wait to see what the future will bring.

- Miss Erin



## Teaching Artist Forum – Ms. Tina

There have been so many opportunities at this incredible Side by Side Music Camp in Gothenburg Sweden – not only for the kids, but professional development for the teachers. Erin and I grabbed the chance to be inspired by Eric Booth in his Teaching Artistry workshop sessions [www.ericbooth.net](http://www.ericbooth.net).

In one session he gave an overview on Teaching Artistry and shared the fabulous phrase *pedagogy of joy* (how Japan describes Sistema) and an informal workshop on the meaning of creativity. Asking great questions like “How does the trajectory of a young person’s life become re-directed?” Through developing motivation, grit, purpose, autonomy, intrinsic satisfaction, mastery ... He quoted a book that I too have enjoyed, a surprisingly easy and energizing read, *Drive* by Daniel Pink. It’s great to see how our *Kid-Powered* levels and philosophy of ownership and community development are so in sync with this.

Other awesome Eric quotes that captured my imagination were: *Virtuosity of Communication* – meaningful performance with heart, intent and caring of the audience; and one that sums up the *OrKidstra* staff and teachers’ passion: *Unite your advocacy with your vocation*.

Defining creativity was an interesting challenge and it boiled down to creating something innovative that has value within its own context. Creativity can explode when people are in an environment where playfulness, trust and joy are part of the mix (are we coming back to the *pedagogy of joy*?) I also loved how he share Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's description of being *In the Flow* - when you find the balance between anxiety and boredom...how cool is that?

Thanks so much Eric – and we are looking forward to reading your (and Tricia Tunstall’s) new book. More on that when it is released!

- Ms. Tina