

# CHILDREN'S YAMAHA MUSIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

## **Yamaha Group Lessons and Private Lessons:**

Ms Elizabeth, Ms Ella, Ms Inese, Ms Kristal, Ms Mary Ellen

## **Private Lessons:**

Ms Donna, Ms Krista, Mrs Mitchell

## **Substitute Teachers:**

Mrs Barb Anderson, Ms Courtnie, Mrs Luana Mitchell

## **Administration:**

Ms Deanna, Ms Vanessa

---

## **Yamaha Group Lessons and Private Lessons:**

---

### **Ms Elizabeth (Edina)**

YMES Group Lessons, Private Piano Lessons

Elizabeth was raised in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota. Her parents and siblings are all musical, and she was surrounded with music from a young age. Throughout her childhood, she played piano, as well as flute in her school symphonic band. She participated in numerous competitions throughout her schooling, competing in voice, piano and flute. In high school, she was given the distinction of best instrumentalist and vocalist of her graduating class.

Elizabeth attended and graduated from North Central University in Minneapolis with emphasis in both piano and voice. She and her husband Tom have three children, whom are all actively involved in musical instruction at Children's Yamaha. Their family enjoys camping, snowboarding, and spending time outdoors together. In adulthood, Elizabeth has become passionate about the classical method of education, and is a director of a local classical school, where she seeks to develop a deep appreciation of the arts in the individuals and students of her community. Ms Elizabeth has been a certified Yamaha teacher at CYMS since 2001.

---

### **Ms Ella (Edina & Roseville)**

YMES Group Lessons, Private Piano Lessons, Private Voice Lessons

Ms Ella began her formal piano lessons at the age of 9. A native of Russia, she had attended a 7-year music school for children specializing in piano. She had entered a 4-year music college at the age of 16 where she had majored in music theory and history. After graduating, she had attended Astrakhan State Conservatory until she had moved to United States. She had graduated from University of Minnesota, Twin Cities in 1993 with the degree in Music Education. She had received her music teaching certification in classroom and vocal music in 1994. She became a certified Yamaha Music School teacher in 2011.

Ms Ella had had experiences teaching both public school and private students. Currently she is the music teacher at Nasha Shkola, Charter school of Russian Language and Culture. She had taught general and vocal music for Minneapolis Public Schools for 14 years. While teaching for Minneapolis, she had especially enjoyed working with students on the annual musicals and participating in "Creating Original Opera" program sponsored by the Metropolitan Opera. She has been the faculty member of "Music for Everyone" program since 1992. She enjoys preparing her piano students for the recitals and

participation in the Upper Midwest Music Festival. She resides in Plymouth with her husband, son, and a cat.

---

**Ms Inese (Edina & Roseville)**

YMES Group Lessons, Private Piano Lessons

Ms Inese has taught music as a public school teacher, school choir conductor and piano instructor. She began teaching at Children's Yamaha Music School in 1997. Ms Inese is an MTNA Nationally Certified Teacher of Music in Piano.

Inese holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, and studied Music Pedagogy at Jazepa Vitola Music Conservatory in Riga, Latvia.

Inese is a board member of the Minnesota Music Teacher's Association. Her students successfully participate in the MMTA theory, piano exams, and contests. She is also a member of the Minneapolis Music Teacher's Forum and National Federation of Music Clubs.

---

**Ms Kristal (Edina & Roseville)**

YMES Education Specialist, YMES Group Lessons, Private Piano Lessons

Ms Kristal grew up in rural Minnesota. During her high school years she sang in choir, played flute and baritone horn in band, participated in several drama productions, and played piano for her church. Kristal graduated from Northwestern College in Roseville with a degree in Music Education, emphasis on voice and piano. While in college she sang in and accompanied the College Choir, was student director of the Male Chorus, and acted in several drama productions. She was a touring member of the Rhapsody in Praise singers through KTIS.

Kristal started teaching with Children's Yamaha Music School in 1989. She is now an Education Specialist with YMES. She helps to train new Yamaha teachers, evaluate current teachers, and pilot new curriculum. Kristal is a member of MMTA and has had several students play in the Honors Concert, and several attain high scores in the piano and theory exams. Her students also participate in the Upper Midwest Music Festival.

---

**Ms Mary Ellen (Edina)**

YMES Group Lessons, Private Piano Lessons

Ms Mary Ellen began teaching at Children's Yamaha Music School in 1997 (and has participated in 4 YMES Summer Music Camps in Appleton). She began studying piano when she was 6 years old. She has studied voice, composition and recorder as well. She is a graduate of Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA with a Bachelor of Music degree in music education. She attended the Children's Theatre School in Minneapolis as a student and music intern and studied acting, dance, mime and improvisation. She's been in many choirs thru the years and loves choral singing! She performed as a mime named Zucchini for 5 years. She is involved as an accompanist, singer and music mentor at her church. She also loves writing songs and teaching composition. Children make her smile! She is married to Forrest and they have 3 daughters: Angela (husband: Jason), Julia (husband: Ben) and Christina and two grandsons, Logan and Jett.

Mary Ellen published a music book called *Do Re Mi, Line Space Key, Sing With Me*. Learn more at her website: [www.maryellenskeesick.com](http://www.maryellenskeesick.com).

---

**Private Lessons:**

---

**Mrs Luana Mitchell (Edina)**

Private Piano Lessons, Private Voice Lessons, Substitute for YMES Group & Private Lessons

Luana Blake Mitchell first received piano lessons at the age of 6 from her mother. Upon moving to Illinois, she auditioned and became a student of Ruth Sadlo, a prodigy of Paderewski. Luana began teaching piano at the age of 14 upon encouragement from her teacher. Performing in northern Illinois as a member of "The Talented Teens" organization, she also had a radio show her senior year of high school.

Mrs. Mitchell is a graduate of Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois where she was a scholarship student and recipient of the Sigma Alpha Iota Opera Scholarship. She received a full scholarship at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana for her Masters in Vocal Pedagogy. Before moving to MN, she was a Yamaha Music School instructor in Illinois in addition to teaching voice at the Clinton Fine Arts Center.

Upon moving to MN, she began teaching Yamaha Music School in the Minnetonka area. She was applied Voice Instructor at North Hennepin Community College for 17 years and maintained a large private studio. In 1999, she decided to "open a new window" and began teaching young children again, loving every second.

Recently, she was Director of Music at Arlington Hills UMC in Maplewood, in addition to teaching at the Roseville CYMS for many years. She sang with Voices of Vienna and is a Performing Artist member of Thursday Musical where she has served as VP of the Student Section, served on many Boards/committees for MMTA (Including a Piano Syllabus Judge up through Level 7), was a former State President for NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) and is a member of Minneapolis Music Teachers Forum. She has had numerous winners of state competitions and loves going to student CD openings and seeing them perform on various venues across the state.

Mrs. Mitchell taught both group and private lessons for many years at CYMS. She is currently teaching private lessons for CYMS and is a frequent substitute teacher for group classes.

---

**Ms Donna (Roseville)**

Private Piano Lessons

Originally from Illinois, Donna has been teaching music since 1999 in Texas, in Northern Ireland, and now in Minnesota. She received her BA in music from St Olaf College and her Master's in Education from Queen's University of Belfast in Northern Ireland, where she studied as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar.

Her musical journey began with Yamaha group lessons at age 4. Her experiences in music education include teaching pre-K through 5th grade classroom music in public and private school settings, conducting children's choirs in school and church, instructing private and group piano classes for students of all ages (4 to adult), and teaching Yamaha group keyboard classes in Northern Ireland. Over the years she has been successful in facilitating the musical development of hundreds of students.

Donna enjoys playing the piano with her church worship team and performing for weddings and special events. She is a member of MMTA and is on the board of SPPTA (St Paul Piano Teachers' Association). Her students perform successfully in MMTA piano exams and in SPPTA monthly recitals. Some have been selected to perform in the annual

Honors recital and have been winners in the MMTA piano contest. Donna enjoys helping each of her students discover that they can make beautiful music and have lots of fun in the process! Ms Donna joined CYMS in 2012.

---

### **Ms Krista (Roseville)**

Private Piano Lessons, Private Percussion Lessons

Krista teaches beginning to advanced percussion, up through intermediate piano, and beginning winds. Krista attended Wartburg College in Waverly, IA, and graduated in May of 1994 with a B.M.E., instrumental emphasis, and a B.M. in percussion performance. She was named outstanding senior in the Bachelor of Music Degree program.

Krista taught grades 5-12 band for two years, along with private piano lessons, before joining Children's Yamaha Music School in 1997. Since then she has only taught private percussion and piano, but took on the roll of band director at Twin Cities German Immersion School in the fall of 2012.

Krista currently plays drum set with "Southern Resident Killer Whales." She also plays regularly at her church, and freelances at various locations. Krista is a member of the Percussive Arts Society, and also judges for the Upper Midwest Music Festival every April.

---

### **Substitute Teachers:**

---

#### **Mrs Barb Anderson**

Substitute YMES Group Lessons, Substitute Private Lessons

Barb has a degree in vocal education K-12 from Gustavus Adolphus College. She taught at Children's Yamaha Music School for 18 years, and is now a frequent substitute teacher. She received a degree from Augsburg College in 1997 as a music therapist.

Teaching experiences include her time at Yamaha and her ongoing substituting for classes, as well as teaching music in the public and Catholic school systems. She has been a life long church musician, starting as an organist at age 16 and working as a children's choir director, preschool music teacher and director of many musical productions throughout the years. She is also a member of a hand bell choir. Her music therapy work has mostly involved hospice patients but she has also dealt with clients with dementia and autism and physical disabilities.

Mrs Anderson has been a member of the VocalEssence chorus, directed by Philip Brunelle, since 2003.

Mrs. Anderson taught lessons for many years at CYMS is now a frequent substitute teacher.

---

#### **Ms Courtnie**

Substitute YMES Group Lessons, Substitute Private Lessons

Courtnie has been immersed in music since she was three years old, starting with her church and expanding through her completion of the Yamaha Music School program at the age of 17. She continued her education in high school through playing flute in marching band and wind ensemble, as well as jazz piano under the direction of Jeff Gottwig.

While at Augsburg College, Courtnie had the opportunity to travel with the Augsburg College Choir throughout the Midwest as well as a two week tour to China. She actively

enjoys combining traveling while learning about the native music environment. One such trip was to Paris, France in 2009 where she studied art and music, specifically about the Impressionistic Era of piano music. This was the synthesis of her senior project, where she tied artists to French Impressionist musicians of the day, including her favorite composer, Claude Debussy. Her college degree was completed in 2011 where she received her B.S. degree in Music Therapy; as well as numerous lessons in guitar, piano, percussion and voice.

Courtne is still actively involved at her church where she has served as an accompanist with the tour musical group, Spirit Bound, a member of the Senior Choir and is now an active lead for the youth ministry group Recharge. She enjoys spending time with her equally musical husband, Mike and touring around the Twin Cities with his various bands.

Ms Courtne taught private lessons for several years prior to teachings lessons at CYMS for 6 years. She is currently a substitute teacher for CYMS.

---

### **Administration:**

---

#### **Ms Deanna**

Director, Children's Yamaha Music School

Born in Red Oak, Iowa, Deanna started piano at age 5. It was during these young years, that her compassion for music began. She graduated from North Park University in Chicago, IL, with a degree in Music Education and minors in Art History, English and Piano Performance. After college, she taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade in Bloomington Public Schools for 4 years and then taught preschool in Golden Valley for 4 years. In 1974, she enrolled her daughter in the Yamaha Music School in Edina, which she had heard about from a friend. She was so impressed with the program, that she became a Yamaha teacher herself within in a few months. After a year of teaching Yamaha, she became the Director of the school in 1975. She continued teaching for 15 years and then decided to focus solely on the management and expanding the school. She has been a guest speaker at the University of Minnesota, MMTA, MMTF & SPPTA. Under her direction, CYMS has won several awards from the Yamaha Music Education System. Deanna has also visited the YMES headquarters in Japan twice. She has now been the Director of CYMS for over 40 years, and her love for music, children and the Yamaha method teaching of music, remains as strong as ever.

---

#### **Ms Vanessa**

General Manager, Children's Yamaha Music School

Vanessa grew up in Minneapolis, MN as a Children's Yamaha Music School student. A highlight as a CYMS student was when she entered a composition in the MMTA competition (a trio for flute, clarinet & piano) & won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the state contest, (she played the piano part, a CYMS teacher played the flute part, and her Minnehaha Academy band director played the clarinet). During high school, she was active in band, choir, orchestra and jazz band. Vanessa graduated from North Park University in Chicago, IL with a Bachelor's degree in Business Communications with an emphasis in Business Administration, and minors in Marketing and Swedish. She also sang & toured extensively with the NPU Concert Choir. She and her husband, Peter, have 3 children whom have all participated in the Yamaha program.