



TAKE IT BEYOND THE CONCERT HALL

with From the Top Alum
Arianna Körting

FOUNDING THE ANIMATO PROJECT

Pianist Arianna Korting is passionate about showing younger kids how enjoyable and fun classical music can be. As a sophomore in high school, she founded the Animato Project – an interactive series of programs for 4th graders from the West Geauga school district. She specifically chose to work with 4th graders from this district given their annual field trip to see one of the Cleveland Orchestra concerts. Arianna saw this as a wonderful opportunity to further their exposure to the genre in a peer-to-peer setting and partnered with two schools: Lindsey Elementary in Chester, OH and Westwood Elementary in Russell, OH. Each 45-minute program combined performance with a variety of activities, ranging from students drawing in response to the music, to listing as many orchestral instruments and composers as possible. Arianna also worked with the administration at West Geauga High School (her high school) to guarantee the program’s continuation as she prepares to leave for college.

ANNA’S PROCESS

Arianna started the Animato Project her sophomore year after hearing that her younger sister (who was in the fourth grade) would be taking a class field trip to see the Cleveland Orchestra perform. Arianna immediately contacted the music teachers at both Lindsey and Westwood. After outlining some dates and initial ideas for the program, The Animato Project was launched in September 2010. The following April, Arianna approached her school’s principal to discuss the possibility of turning this into an ongoing program that could continue to be managed by students at West Geauga High School. He agreed, and also agreed to provide academic credit towards graduation for any of the students involved.

Arianna Körting is a 17-year-old pianist from Gates Mill, Ohio. She performed on *From the Top* on show [175](#) and again as a member of a quartet on show [241](#).



“[My goal was] to promote classical music to a young audience. Animato means animated, lively. This project is all about showing that classical music can be as cool as pop, country, or rap music!”

Q&A WITH ANNA

From the Top (FTT): What were some memorable moments from The Animato Project?

Arianna: It was great just watching the kids’ faces as I was playing etudes and scales on the piano - they loved it when I was able to show how fast one can play. When I asked them to name some classical composers, a few mentioned Michael Jackson! One girl came up to me after a visit and told me she would go home and play on the piano right away! Another girl really appreciated the project, and I later heard that she developed a great interest in this

genre of music. All I would like this project to do is touch the heart of at least one student, and show him or her a new perspective on music.

FTT: How did you develop the program?

Arianna: I came up with activities that would keep the kids' minds going and show them that listening to classical music is really cool! Having fourth graders actively listening is much more interesting than just passively listening. Most 9 and 10 year olds are very active, and I knew that if I just played music for them they would probably think it was pretty boring. This way they were able to be active and also use their imaginations.

FTT: Were there any unexpected moments or challenges?

Arianna: There were times when I was worried about losing the interest of the fourth graders. I constantly tried to find new ways to grab their attention. After I visited a school, I reflected back on the session and planned for an even more enjoyable approach for the next. Trying to get new students from my school to participate was also a bit of a challenge, but this project really only needs one or two students to carry on every year so I think it will keep going.

FTT: What did you learn from this experience?

Arianna: When I started this project I was only six years older than the fourth graders. For them to see someone close in age that can play an instrument well gives them the encouragement that they can do it too! It also shows them that classical music isn't some boring music just for adults. It is amazing what I was able to accomplish during these 45- minute periods because the fourth graders were hooked on the subject and looked up to me. I also believe that interactive programming is crucial in creating a fun and enjoyable learning environment for the kids.

FTT: What are your future hopes for the Animato Project?



Arianna: I hope that this project will continue in the hands of the underclassmen who have already taken part in it, and that they pass on the love for classical music to others in the years to follow. I am going to encourage the school's music department to put this into their curriculum.

FTT: What do you think it means to be an arts leader?

Arianna: Being an arts leader is showing and sharing my love for classical music to all in the community. This also means reaching out to those who may not have the opportunity to appreciate classical music and giving them a taste of how much fun it is to listen to; keeping classical music alive by introducing it to the next and newest generation of listeners.

“I learned that it is extremely effective to have kids teach other kids. I think they were able to really connect with me in a way that you can't connect with an adult teacher.”

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