Annenberg Learner Course Guide

An 8-part multimedia course for music educators

Produced by THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS LLC
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Overview

*El Sistema* is a transformational music education program, begun in 1975 in Venezuela, that has helped hundreds of thousands of children in poverty envision a brighter future for themselves. Music educators in the United States, inspired by their Venezuelan colleagues, have begun to establish programs with a similar mission — to use music as a means to help young people realize their full potential as citizens.

*The Power of Music: P-5 Teaching Inspired by El Sistema* is a multimedia professional development course for music educators. Eight half-hour videos explore a variety of *Sistema*-inspired programs and practices used by music educators in diverse communities across the U.S. The videos are supported by a wealth of online resources, including an archive of strategies and tools aligned with the national music standards.

The eight course units of *The Power of Music* include both philosophical insight and concrete resources educators can use right away. The entire course is designed to help teachers understand the *El Sistema* philosophy, infuse its underlying principles into their practice, and implement *Sistema*-inspired strategies with their students.

Music teachers will discover brand new approaches as well as creative variations on familiar ideas. *The Power of Music* will be valuable for everyone who teaches music to students from pre-K to grade 5.
Using the guide / Group facilitation tips

Using the guide

This guide provides a suggested approach for educators to use the wide variety of resources for this course available online:

- streaming videos of the eight half-hour videos (also available on DVD)
- related video clips of instructional activities
- video commentary by teaching artists/experts
- downloadable PDFs of print resources
- links to other web resources
- an interactive tool — Music Mentor — for students

The approach outlined in this guide is suitable for individual teachers as well as groups. The guide takes you through eight ninety-minute sessions, each of which includes thirty minutes of discussion or individual inquiry, thirty minutes of watching a video, and thirty more minutes of discussion/inquiry. Between sessions, participants should explore related resources on the website and either prepare to discuss assigned questions or post comments online through Teacher-Talk.

Group facilitation tips

For each session, a facilitator should be responsible for leading group discussion and activities. The facilitator may be a professional development specialist or any participating educator; duties may be shared by several participants.

The video programs may be accessed online (video on demand) at www.learner.org or on DVD (available through learner.org). In advance of the session, the facilitator(s) should photocopy this guide for all participants or direct them to www.learner.org, where they can print the guide themselves. The facilitator(s) also may want to preview the video programs and guide materials in advance of the group session.
Units

Unit 1: Introduction to El Sistema

NYC seminario, New York, NY
presented by Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute
in partnership with Orchestra of St. Luke’s

Union City Music Project, Union City, NJ
Melina García, founder and director
Samuel Marchán, artistic director

Unit 2: Violin Basics

Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM), Glacier Valley Elementary School,
Juneau, AK
Lorrie Heagy, program director

Unit 3: Growing a Program

Corona Youth Music Project, Queens, NY
Alvaro Rodas, founder and director
Jennifer Johnson and Eun Lee, teaching artists

Unit 4: Nurturing the Ensemble

Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) at Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA),
Los Angeles, CA
Emily Kubitskey and Nikki Shorts, teaching artists

Unit 5: Building Community

Los Angeles Philharmonic Educational Initiatives and Youth Orchestra Los Angeles
(YOLA) at Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), Los Angeles, CA
Nikki Shorts and Emily Kubitskey, teaching artists
Unit 6: Chorus and Other Ensembles

AMPlify/Atlanta Music Project, Atlanta, GA
Aisha Bowden, co-founder and director
James Dekle, teaching artist

Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM), Glacier Valley Elementary School, Juneau, AK
Lorrie Heagy, program director

Unit 7: Getting Rhythm

Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM), Glacier Valley Elementary School, Juneau, AK
Lorrie Heagy, program director

Unit 8: Composing Music

New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers, P.S. 11, Brooklyn, NY
Jon Deak, composer/founder
Angélica Negrón, composer/teaching artist
Unit 1: Introduction to El Sistema

Provide course overview. (30 minutes)

In a workshop setting, begin by introducing yourselves, describing your current jobs, and explaining why this course is of interest to you. Then watch the Overview video (on the Power of Music homepage, or on DVD) and the Program Preview video (on the About page, or a continuation of the Overview video on DVD). Take notes on material you find most interesting and relevant to your practice, and write down questions you hope to have answered through the course. Then discuss at least one item of interest and one question you have, or post your thoughts and questions on Teacher-Talk.

Watch the video for Unit 1: Introduction to El Sistema. (30 minutes)

NYC seminario, New York, NY
presented by Carnegie Hall’s Weill Music Institute
in partnership with Orchestra of St. Luke’s

Union City Music Project, Union City, NJ
Melina García, founder and director
Samuel Marchán, artistic director

Unit 1 provides an introduction to El Sistema, its history, and its core principles. Founded in 1975 by Dr. José Antonio Abreu in Venezuela, El Sistema has been described as a movement of music education for social change. Ideas of community and citizenship are central to El Sistema-inspired teaching and learning, which has been taking hold in programs across the United States.

In New York City, a seminario — a common event in Venezuela — brings together children of diverse ages and musical levels to rehearse and perform with members of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela.

In a low-income New Jersey community where opportunities for instrumental music education are scarce, the Union City Music Project has been built on the philosophical and pedagogical foundations of El Sistema. From day one, preschoolers develop pre-orchestra skills as part of an ensemble — a musical community. Parents are intimately involved in the process of building paper violins with their children.

**EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**

- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- Parents are involved throughout the program.
- No student is too young to be a vital contributing member of a musical ensemble.
- Musicians have a responsibility to share their skills or knowledge with others who are still learning.
TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Bringing together musicians with different skill levels from multiple sites for a seminario, an intensive session of rehearsal, performance, and community-building
- Helping preschoolers learn how to hold a violin by practicing with a book
- Using movement when introducing notes on a scale
- Creating paper violins to use before real instruments

NATIONAL STANDARDS
The musical activities in this unit address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

Performing/presenting/producing

- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Responding

- Perceive and analyze artistic work

Connecting

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art

Discuss the video, or post responses to the questions below on Teacher-Talk. (30 minutes)

1. What about El Sistema is resonant with your own teaching practice?
2. What about El Sistema challenges some of your own ideas about music education?
3. What strikes you about the circles of communities that are involved — students, families, teachers, schools, administrators, regional gatherings?
4. Could you imagine similar structures in your teaching environment? Or adaptations of some of these community structures? How so?
5. As a music educator, how do you view performance? What are the goals of performing? What does El Sistema have to offer in terms of a different perspective on the purpose of performance?
6. How do the principles of Sistema-inspired teaching intersect with the National Core Arts Standards in the U.S.?
For homework, explore the online resources for Unit 1 listed below — additional video clips, PDFs, and links. Prepare to discuss the following questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. The Unit 1 video and additional resources introduce the grounding ideas that underlie El Sistema. What aspects of El Sistema do you think are unique to Venezuela?

2. Which ideas strike you as most relevant for music education in the U.S.?

Additional video clips:
- How to make a paper violin
- Rhythm games
- TED Talks — José Antonio Abreu: The El Sistema music revolution
- El Sistema: Progressing through the Orchestra Venezuelan Style
- Karen Zorn on El Sistema as a mix of pedagogies
- Leon Botstein on adapting El Sistema in the U.S.
- Erik Holmgren on working within existing infrastructure
- Leon Botstein on El Sistema and classical music

Resources:
- PDF: El Sistema principles, teaching strategies, and standards
- PDF: Eric Booth — El Sistema Fundamentals
- PDF: Leon Botstein — Transcript of a talk at El Sistema Discovery Day
- PDF: Venezuela, the miracle of music (courtesy of author Chefí Borzacchini and editor Fundación Bancaribe)
- PDF: Union City Music Project paper orchestra handbook
- PDF: REP+Resource collection of repertoire and resources on Sistema Global
- PDF: Additional media resources
- Link: Official website of El Sistema
- Link: Union City Music Project website
- Link: Take a Stand partnership website
- Link: National Core Arts Standards
Unit 2: Violin Basics

Review Unit 1. (30 minutes)

Your homework assignment was to explore the additional resources listed below for Unit 1: Introduction to El Sistema, and prepare to discuss the following questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. The Unit 1 video and additional resources introduce the grounding ideas that underlie El Sistema. What aspects of El Sistema do you think are unique to Venezuela?
2. Which ideas strike you as most relevant for music education in the U.S.?

Additional video clips:
- How to make a paper violin
- Rhythm games
- TED Talks — José Antonio Abreu: The El Sistema music revolution
- El Sistema: Progressing through the Orchestra Venezuelan Style
- Karen Zorn on El Sistema as a mix of pedagogies
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- PDF: Additional media resources
- Link: Official website of El Sistema
- Link: Union City Music Project website
- Link: Take a Stand partnership website
- Link: National Core Arts Standards

Watch the video for Unit 2: Violin Basics. (30 minutes)

Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM), Glacier Valley Elementary School, Juneau, AK
Lorrie Heagy, program director

In 2010 Lorrie Heagy established an El Sistema-inspired program at Glacier Valley Elementary School, in Juneau, Alaska — a Title I public school where over forty percent of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. In this video, Lorrie, who was chosen
as the Alaska State Teacher of the Year in 2011, demonstrates how she incorporates *El Sistema*-inspired principles into her teaching practice.

As is the case in many Venezuelan *núcleos* (local *El Sistema* programs), in Lorrie’s program children learn to play the violin when they are young — in kindergarten — using paper violins first. Collaboration with kindergarten teachers has been critical to the program’s success.

In all her lessons Lorrie tries to engage youngsters using strategies outlined in Eric Jensen’s book *Teaching with the Brain in Mind* — movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity. Another effective technique she models is motivating youngsters with levels of mastery, a concept they know from video games. Her teaching illustrates the power of ensemble learning and the belief that every child is a musician from the moment he or she chooses to be.

**EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- Performance should happen every day at every occasion, rather than only at special events.
- No student is too young to be a vital contributing member of a musical ensemble.
- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Musicians have a responsibility to share their skills or knowledge with others who are still learning.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**
- Empowering students to serve as leaders/mentors
- Singing melodies correctly before playing them on instruments
- Engaging students through movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity
- Adapting songs with movement to build strength and skills for playing violin
- Finding patterns in music
- Supporting memorization of music in scaffolded steps
- Motivating students using levels of mastery

**NATIONAL STANDARDS**
The musical activities in this unit address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

**Performing/presenting/producing**
- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation

**Responding**
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work
Discuss the video, or post responses to the questions below on Teacher-Talk. (30 minutes)

1. What seems most effective to you about Lorrie Heagy’s approach to teaching?
2. In what ways might you imagine a music teacher and a classroom teacher collaborating long term in your program?
3. What are the advantages to starting students on paper violins before they play real instruments?
4. Lorrie dubs students “teaching assistants” to encourage them to serve as peer mentors. She also regularly asks students to serve as leaders in the front of the class. What strategies do you use to build mentorship and leadership skills in young students?
5. Juneau Alaska Music Matters was established as an academic intervention. In what ways does learning music help to build multidisciplinary skills?
6. Based on the work of Eric Jensen, Lorrie says that in every lesson she tries to incorporate five strategies to engage students — movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern. Discuss how you might modify some of your lessons to incorporate these strategies.
7. One of Lorrie’s classroom management techniques is not to use chairs or music stands. What are the advantages of this approach?
8. Another classroom management strategy Lorrie uses is to have children sing as they enter and leave the classroom. Why do you think she does this?
9. What other songs and finger plays could be adapted to nurture early violin-playing skills?
10. In what ways can you imagine integrating some of the principles of Sistema teaching and learning into your own educational practice?

For homework, explore the online resources for Unit 2 listed below — additional video clips, PDFs, and link. Prepare to discuss the following questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. In the Unit 2 video and the additional resources you explored, what new approaches did you discover about engaging the youngest learners in ensemble music-making?
2. Which of Lorrie Heagy’s top ten teaching practices do you think are most vital? Which ones do you already incorporate into your teaching, and which ones would you like to add?

Additional video clips:
- JAMM school concert with paper violins
- Cancan
- Kindergartners demonstrate violin positions
- Bow-hold games
- Erik Holmgren on the paper violin orchestra in Venezuela
• Judith Hill Bose on the development of *Sistema*-inspired programs in schools
• Michael Blakeslee on the connection between *El Sistema* and the national music standards

**Resources:**
• PDF: Lorrie Heagy’s “Top 10 Effective Teaching Practices”
• PDF: “Parts of the Violin” lyrics
• PDF: "Five Little Monkeys" lyrics
• PDF: “The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night” lyrics
• PDF: “The Tree Song” music and lyrics by Lorraine Lee Hammond
• PDF: Lorrie Heagy on “The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night” and the power of story
• Link: Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) website
Unit 3: Growing a Program

Review Unit 2. (30 minutes)

Your homework assignment was to explore the additional resources listed below for Unit 2: Violin Basics, and prepare to discuss the following questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. In the Unit 2 video and additional resources you explored, what new approaches did you discover about engaging the youngest learners in ensemble music-making?

2. Which of Lorrie Heagy's top ten teaching practices do you think are most vital? Which ones do you already incorporate into your teaching, and which ones would you like to add?

Additional video clips:
- JAMM school concert with paper violins
- Cancan
- Kindergartners demonstrate violin positions
- Bow-hold games
- Erik Holmgren on the paper violin orchestra in Venezuela
- Judith Hill Bose on the development of Sistema-inspired programs in schools
- Michael Blakeslee on the connection between El Sistema and the national music standards

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- PDF: “The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night” lyrics
- PDF: “The Tree Song” music and lyrics by Lorraine Lee Hammond
- PDF: Lorrie Heagy on “The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night” and the power of story
- Link: Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) website

Watch the video for Unit 3: Growing a Program. (30 minutes)

Corona Youth Music Project, Queens, NY
Alvaro Rodas, founder and director
Jennifer Johnson and Eun Lee, teaching artists

The Corona Youth Music Project in Queens, New York City, is an example of how music education can be effective even with limited resources. Alvaro Rodas, the founder and director, started the program with no money, no kids, and no space. But he recognized a community that did not have access to quality music education or after-school programs and wanted to create an opportunity for the children living there.
With support from parents, volunteers, and the students themselves, the program nurtures young musicians and builds their confidence as performers. They give back to their community by performing with their teachers at a local senior citizen center.

Peer mentoring — initially a strategy for addressing a shortage of teaching staff — has become an essential and empowering aspect of the program. Musical language camp helps younger students develop and retain skills, and thrive as part of a musical community, over the summer.

**EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**

- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- Parents are involved throughout the program.
- Performance should happen every day at every occasion, rather than only at special events.
- Musicians have a responsibility to share their skills or knowledge with others who are still learning.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**

- Peer mentoring
- Promoting self-assessment and goal-setting with a CYMPhony Card

**NATIONAL STANDARDS**

The musical activities in this unit address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

**Performing/presenting/producing**
- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
  - Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
  - Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

**Responding**
- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

**Connecting**
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

Discuss the video, or post responses to the questions below on TeacherTalk. (30 minutes)

1. How are students working as mentors in your program? If they are not, in what ways might you institute peer mentoring at your site?

2. What ideas about peer mentoring do you take away from the Corona program? What might work with your students?
3. How could you adapt the idea of joint assessment between student and teacher?

4. How might you adapt the CYMphony Card strategy at your site?

5. How can assessment be a creative and motivational aspect of learning (instead of carrying the stigma of judgment handed down from on high)?

6. How would you describe the importance of performance in your learning community? Is it part of the community's identity? In what ways?

7. Might there be opportunities at your site for students of varying ages to perform together? Students and teachers together? How might you reinvent some of the performing structures at your site?

For homework, explore the online resources for Unit 3 listed below — additional video clips, PDFs, links, and Music Mentor interactive. Prepare to discuss the following questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. In the Unit 3 video and the additional resources you explored, what aspects of peer mentoring struck you as most possible for or relevant to your class or program? How about assessment that uses student input?

2. How might you use the interactive Music Mentor tool with your students?

Additional video clips:
- Peer mentoring in Juneau
- "Walking, Walking" activity
- Alvaro Rodas on fundraising
- Erik Holmgren on the Sistema Fellows Program

Resources:
- PDF: CYMPhony Card assessment tool
- PDF: Lorrie Heagy — “Peer Mentoring Begins at an Early Age”
- Link: Music Mentor interactive
- Link: Corona Youth Music Project website
Unit 4: Nurturing the Ensemble

Review Unit 3. (30 minutes)

Your homework assignment was to explore the additional resources listed below for Unit 3: Growing a Program, and prepare to discuss them, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. In the Unit 3 video and the additional resources you explored, what aspects of peer mentoring struck you as most possible for or relevant to your class or program? How about assessment that uses student input?

2. How might you use the interactive Music Mentor tool with your students?

Additional video clips:
- Peer mentoring in Juneau
- "Walking, Walking" activity
- Alvaro Rodas on fundraising
- Erik Holmgren on the Sistema Fellows Program

Resources:
- PDF: CYMPhony Card assessment tool
- PDF: Lorrie Heagy — “Peer Mentoring Begins at an Early Age”
- Link: Music Mentor interactive
- Link: Corona Youth Music Project website

Watch the video for Unit 4: Nurturing the Ensemble. (30 minutes)

Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) at Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), Los Angeles, CA
Emily Kubitskey and Nikki Shorts, teaching artists

Gustavo Dudamel is the world’s most prominent example of a musician nurtured through the Venezuelan Sistema. As the music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, he is the public face of all that is possible through El Sistema.

Los Angeles and its orchestra are home to one of the largest and most active Sistema-inspired programs in the U.S. — YOLA, or Youth Orchestra Los Angeles. YOLA at HOLA (Heart of Los Angeles) is located in the Rampart District, a heavily gang-infested neighborhood of L.A. This after-school program demonstrates what it means to place the orchestral ensemble at the center of musical learning and social development.

Working fifteen hours a week, students are challenged to build solid music fundamentals — such as aural skills — to achieve technical expertise. Rigor in the pursuit of artistic excellence is central to the program’s success.
**EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**
- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- Performance should happen every day at every occasion, rather than only at special events.
- No student is too young to be a vital contributing member of a musical ensemble.
- Students have a responsibility to share their skills or knowledge with others who are still learning.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**
- Organizing sectionals into teams according to learning needs
- Encouraging orchestra players to sing and *solfege* their parts (and the melody) as well as play them on their instruments
- Recording learning in ungraded personal notebooks
- Using and encouraging students to use positive reinforcement language
- Playing a game to promote memorization of musical facts
- Giving back to the community through performances large and small

**NATIONAL STANDARDS**
The musical activities and explorations in this unit address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

**Performing/presenting/producing**
- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation

**Responding**
- Perceive and analyze artistic work

**Discuss the video, or post responses to the questions below on Teacher-Talk. (30 minutes)**

1. What components of the YOLA program contribute to its success?
2. What strategies that Emily and Nikki use seem especially effective?
3. How do the musicianship skills taught at your site intersect with the repertoire that students are performing in ensembles? What are some ways that a closer connection could be made between these two aspects of musical learning?
4. What might be the advantages to changing the physical setup or structure in a sectional rehearsal? What does a circle make possible? What do rows make possible? Are there other arrangements that could be worthwhile?
5. How might you adapt the “Musical Jeopardy” game that Nikki Shorts uses in L.A. — or another similar game — so that enthusiasm for learning and effort is prized, and making a mistake is just part of the process?
6. Are there ways that you might integrate singing and ear training into your regular ensemble rehearsals?
7. How might you imagine an event for your community based around a single, common piece of repertoire?

For homework, explore the online resources for Unit 4 listed below — additional video clips, PDFs, and links. Prepare to discuss these questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. As you reviewed the additional resources focusing on Sistema principles and aspects of program structure, what struck you as most relevant to your current teaching site or school?

2. How is the YOLA at HOLA Winds Curriculum (Year 1) designed to develop community and musicianship simultaneously?

3. In the video featuring Gustavo Dudamel working with Boston-area students, what did you think was particularly effective in the way he provided guidance to the young musicians?

Additional video clips:
- Open rehearsal with Gustavo Dudamel
- Indoor marching band
- Erik Holmgren on the El Sistema emphasis on group achievement
- Judith Hill Bose on regular performance
- Michael Blakeslee on the ensemble as metaphor for community
- Christine Witkowski on matching students and instruments
- Dan Berkowitz on the Sistema fellowship program
- Gretchen Nielsen on YOLA’s partnership with HOLA

Resources:
- PDF: YOLA Heart of LA Youth Orchestra Wind Ensemble (Year 1), curriculum compiled by Emily Kubitskey and Blake Cooper, courtesy of Los Angeles Philharmonic
- Link: Los Angeles Philharmonic Community and Education website
- Link: Gustavo Dudamel official website
Unit 5: Building Community

Review Unit 4. (30 minutes)

Your homework assignment was to explore the additional resources listed below for Unit 4: Nurturing the Ensemble, and prepare to discuss the following questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. As you reviewed the additional resources focusing on Sistema principles and aspects of program structure, what struck you as most relevant to your current teaching site or school?
2. How is the YOLA at HOLA Winds Curriculum (Year 1) designed to develop community and musicianship simultaneously?
3. In the video featuring Gustavo Dudamel working with Boston-area students, what did you think was particularly effective in the way he provided guidance to the young musicians?

Additional video clips:
- Open rehearsal with Gustavo Dudamel
- Indoor marching band
- Erik Holmgren on the El Sistema emphasis on group achievement
- Judith Hill Bose on regular performance
- Michael Blakeslee on the ensemble as metaphor for community
- Christine Witkowski on matching students and instruments
- Dan Berkowitz on the Sistema fellowship program
- Gretchen Nielsen on YOLA’s partnership with HOLA

Resources:
- PDF: YOLA Heart of LA Youth Orchestra Wind Ensemble (Year 1), curriculum compiled by Emily Kubitskey and Blake Cooper, courtesy of Los Angeles Philharmonic
- Link: Los Angeles Philharmonic Community and Education website
- Link: Gustavo Dudamel official website

Watch the video for Unit 5: Building Community. (30 minutes)

Los Angeles Philharmonic Educational Initiatives and Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) at Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), Los Angeles, CA
Nikki Shorts and Emily Kubitskey, teaching artists

Many music educators are familiar with culturally sensitive practices and techniques used to nurture diverse learners from diverse cultures — practices that support authentic multicultural learning in the classroom.

Using these ideas as a foundation, in Los Angeles an entire K-2 multicultural curriculum has been built around a single piece of orchestral repertoire — Sibelius’s Finlandia, a
symphonic tone poem. Through the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s educational initiatives, teaching artists Emily Kubitskey and Nikki Shorts use the curriculum to celebrate different cultures around the globe, as well as in Los Angeles.

The culmination is a powerful Neighborhood Project Day Concert, which brings together more than two thousand elementary-school singers and student musicians from Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA), who all have been studying Finlandia. This event takes community building to a new level of inclusivity. Students learn that through music, they can create a memorable experience they all share.

**EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**
- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- No student is too young to be a vital contributing member of a musical ensemble.
- Students have a responsibility to share their skills or knowledge with others who are still learning.
- Parents are involved throughout the program.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**
- Using a single piece of repertoire (in this case Finlandia) to drive an entire curriculum unit and to serve as a centerpiece for a large-scale performance
- Using boomwhackers to enable youngsters who can’t read music to play together in an ensemble
- Playing team-building games during “buddy time,” which brings together older and younger students
- Discussing how to be a helpful mentor
- Bringing together a large group of musicians with different skill levels to perform for the community.

**NATIONAL STANDARDS**
The musical activities and explorations in this unit address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

**Performing/presenting/producing**
- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

**Responding**
- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work

**Connecting**
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding
Discuss the video, or post responses to the questions below on Teacher-Talk. (30 minutes)

1. In Emily and Nikki’s teaching of the Finlandia curriculum, what strikes you as most effective?

2. What other piece of repertory could serve as a focal work the way Finlandia does? What repertoire could be connected to it in the same way the multicultural folk songs are connected to “A Song of Peace?”

3. What are the advantages of using boomwhackers? If you haven’t used them before, how might you use them effectively?

4. How might you imagine varying levels of music learners performing together at your site? How might singing and orchestra or other instrumental ensembles be combined?

5. How might you pair younger students with older students in your music-learning environment?

6. How might you guide older students to serve as buddies or mentors to younger students?

For homework, explore the online resources for Unit 5 listed below — additional video clips, PDF, and links. After reviewing the Finlandia curriculum, prepare to discuss these questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. What other pieces might you use within the framework of the Finlandia curriculum?

2. With whom could you partner in your community to create a shared musical experience?

Additional video clips:
- Native American song
- Partner songs with boomwhackers
- Gretchen Nielsen on the LA Phil music residencies
- Tony Brown on mentoring
- Nikki Shorts on behavior management

Resources:
- PDF: LA Phil YOLA Neighborhood Project Finlandia Curriculum for grades K-2
- Link: LA Phil Community and Education website
- Link: Noteflight online notation software
Unit 6: Chorus and Other Ensembles

Review Unit 5. (30 minutes)

Your homework assignment was to explore the additional resources listed below for Unit 5: Building Community, review the Finlandia curriculum, and then prepare to discuss the following questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. What other pieces might you use within the framework of the Finlandia curriculum?
2. With whom could you partner in your community to create a shared musical experience?

Additional video clips:
- Native American song
- Partner songs with boomwhackers
- Gretchen Nielsen on the LA Phil music residencies
- Tony Brown on mentoring
- Nikki Shorts on behavior management

Resources:
- PDF: LA Phil YOLA Neighborhood Project Finlandia Curriculum for grades K-2
- Link: LA Phil Community and Education website
- Link: Noteflight online notation software

Watch the video for Unit 6: Chorus and Other Ensembles. (30 minutes)

AMPlify/Atlanta Music Project, Atlanta, GA
Aisha Bowden, co-founder and director
James Dekle, teaching artist

Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM), Glacier Valley Elementary School, Juneau, AK
Lorrie Heagy, program director

El Sistema is an ensemble program, not just an orchestral program. Throughout Venezuela, different communities are making music in ways that draw on their assets and needs, creating ensembles from jazz bands to folk music groups. Some U.S. programs are also providing a variety of ensembles students can aspire to join.

This course unit explores two programs that embody El Sistema-inspired values through chorus and other ensembles. AMPlify is an El Sistema-inspired choral program in Atlanta. Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) at Glacier Valley Elementary School provides students with opportunities to make music in a variety of ensembles, including rock band, African drumming, and step dance. There is also an after-school program.
that celebrates native Alaskan tradition through Tlingit dance and drumming. Embodying music physically is an important part of the learning process in these ensembles.

**EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**
- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- No student is too young to be a vital contributing member of a musical ensemble.
- Students have a responsibility to share their skills or knowledge with others who are still learning.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**
- Using voice and body as first instruments
- Bringing together students of different ages and skills
- Separating melody from text in choral music learning stages
- Ear training through solfège, even with very young students
- Using songs or chants with positive messages important to social as well as musical learning
- Promoting embodied music making
- Making music that reflects cultural relevance to the school community

**NATIONAL STANDARDS**
The musical activities and explorations in this unit address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

**Performing/presenting/producing**
- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

**Responding**
- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

**Connecting**
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

**Discuss the video, or post responses to the questions below on Teacher-Talk. (30 minutes)**

1. Of the choral teaching strategies that Aisha and James use, which do you think are especially effective?
2. What are the advantages and challenges of using solfège with young students?
3. What experience have you had in creating arrangements appropriate for your students?

4. What opportunities are there at your site for ensembles that embrace folk music or non-classical traditions relevant to your community?

5. What opportunities are there at your site for older and younger students to play together in an ensemble? What would students gain from this experience?

6. What are the repertoire pieces you use that would lend themselves to a more physical or embodied mode of music making?

7. As music educators, how can we make our musical skill-building relate directly to the repertoire that our students are performing, so the satisfaction of accomplishment and learning is connected? In what ways might you tweak or adapt your lessons to incorporate this idea?

For homework, explore the online resources for Unit 6 listed below — additional video clips, PDFs, links, and audio recording. Prepare to discuss these questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. What kinds of ensembles could help create and reflect community in your school? What would they look like, and what would they sound like?

2. How could you teach your students the song “Shine” using levels, as Lorrie Heagy demonstrated with her African drumming class?

Additional video clips:
- “Autumn Roundelay”
- World music drumming workshops
- Michael Blakeslee on exploring multiple genres of music
- Erik Holmgren on Venezuelan ensembles
- Aisha Bowden on performance

Resources:
- Audio recording: "Shine" (courtesy of songwriter/performer James Dekle)
- PDF: "Shine" lyrics
- PDF: "TueTue" sheet music
- PDF: Lorrie Heagy on "levels" and African drumming with kindergartners
- PDF: Ensemble 1 ("Funga Alafia") from Will Schmid's World Music Drumming curriculum
- PDF: "Syncopation Celebration" (for “Yes I Can” step dance) from Jim Solomon's The Body Rondo Book (courtesy of The Lorenz Corporation)
- Link: Atlanta Music Project website
- Link: Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) website
Unit 7: Getting Rhythm

Review Unit 6. (30 minutes)

Your homework assignment was to explore the additional resources listed below for Unit 6: Chorus and Other Ensembles, and prepare to discuss the following questions, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to them.

1. What kinds of ensembles could help create and reflect community in your school? What would they look like, and what would they sound like?
2. How could you teach your students the song “Shine” using levels, as Lorrie Heagy demonstrated with her African drumming class?

Additional video clips:
- “Autumn Roundelay”
- World music drumming workshops
- Michael Blakeslee on exploring multiple genres of music
- Erik Holmgren on Venezuelan ensembles
- Aisha Bowden on performance

Resources:
- Audio recording: "Shine" (courtesy of songwriter/performer James Dekle)
- PDF: "Shine" lyrics
- PDF: "Tue Tue" sheet music
- PDF: Lorrie Heagy on "levels" and African drumming with kindergartners
- PDF: Ensemble for “Funga Alafia” from Will Schmid's World Music Drumming curriculum
- PDF: "Syncopation Celebration" (for “Yes I Can” step dance) from Jim Solomon's The Body Rondo Book (courtesy of The Lorenz Corporation)
- Link: Atlanta Music Project website
- Link: Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) website

Watch the video for Unit 7: Getting Rhythm. (30 minutes)

Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM), Glacier Valley Elementary School, Juneau, AK
Lorrie Heagy, program director

The spirit of El Sistema-inspired work is not limited to teaching groups that perform; El Sistema principles can also be infused into teaching in the general music classroom.

Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) provides the entire diverse population of students at Glacier Valley Elementary School with rich musical experiences. In this video, Lorrie Heagy draws on a variety of pedagogical strategies to teach third graders — who have just begun to play recorder — about rhythm and notation. To engage everyone, including
struggling learners, she uses five key elements that she tries to incorporate into every lesson: movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity.

Her story about the rhythm family includes all of those, and makes abstract musical symbols concrete and easy to remember. The class then applies what they learn by working as an ensemble on a group composition for recorder, using cups of different sizes to represent different note values, and Post-its of different colors to represent different pitches.

**EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**
- Engaging students through movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity
- Using story to make abstract symbols concrete and easy to remember
- Beginning to compose in a group, using cups to represent notes with different values, and colored Post-its to represent different pitches
- Incentivizing students using levels of mastery

**NATIONAL STANDARDS**
The musical activities and explorations in this unit address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

**Creating**
- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

**Responding**
- Perceive and analyze artistic work

**Connecting**
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

Discuss the video or post responses to the questions below on Teacher-Talk. (30 minutes)

1. What strikes you as most effective about Lorrie’s approach to teaching rhythm and notation?
2. What other strategies have you used to help struggling learners build their understanding of abstract musical concepts?
3. How might you use story to explain some other musical concepts?
4. In addition to the strategies Lorrie uses, how might you use the rhythm family story with your students?

5. What objects other than cups could you use as symbols that students could relate to notation?

6. How might you emphasize community and ensemble learning in other musical skill-building lessons you teach, particularly in areas where you might not have tried it before?

7. How might you infuse your teaching of a challenging topic or concept with the concepts of movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity?

8. Is music making accessible and equitable for all students at your site? What could help in making sure this is the case?

For homework, explore the online resources for Unit 7 listed below — additional video clips, PDF, and links. Prepare to discuss the following challenge, or post a comment on Teacher-Talk in response to it:

- Analyze one of your own lesson plans for the inclusion of the five concepts Eric Jensen says really help to engage students: movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity.

**Additional video clips:**
- Recorder lesson
- Erik Holmgren on engaging all students
- Michael Blakeslee on using manipulatives to teach children with different learning styles

**Resources:**
- PDF: Lorrie Heagy’s “Top 10 Effective Teaching Practices”
- Link: Noteflight and Soundation online notation software
- Link: Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) website
Unit 8: Composing Music

Review Unit 7. (30 minutes)

Your homework assignment was to explore the additional resources listed below for Unit 7: Chorus and Other Ensembles, and prepare to discuss this challenge, or to post a comment about it on Teacher-Talk.

- Analyze one of your own lesson plans for the inclusion of the five concepts Eric Jensen says really help to engage students: movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity.

Additional video clips:
- Recorder lesson
- Erik Holmgren on engaging all students
- Michael Blakeslee on using manipulatives to teach children with different learning styles

Resources:
- PDF: Lorrie Heagy’s “Top 10 Effective Teaching Practices”
- Link: Noteflight and Soundation online notation software
- Link: Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) website

Watch the video for Unit 8: Composing Music. (30 minutes)

New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers, P.S. 11, Brooklyn, NY
Jon Deak, composer/founder
Angélica Negrón, composer/teaching artist

According to a survey by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), music educators find the national standard about creating music to be the most challenging. The New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers program is based on the premise that creating music is an activity that should not be limited to a highly trained, elite group of adults. Founded by composer and bassist Jon Deak, the program assumes that all children — whether or not they can play an instrument — have the capacity to express musical ideas. The program is nurturing young composers in multiple states across the U.S. and several countries around the world, including Venezuela.

At P.S. 11 in Brooklyn, Jon and composer/teaching artist Angélica Negrón help fourth and fifth graders record their musical ideas using graphic notation. Students consult a list Angélica posts in the classroom to more fully develop those ideas, doing things like repeating a phrase, playing it backwards, and adding harmony. Two months later, Angélica has translated the scores into standard notation, and the students refine their ideas through collaboration with an ensemble of professional musicians. The payoff is an exciting concert for peers and family members.
**EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES**
- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- No student is too young to be a vital contributing member of a musical ensemble.
- Performance should happen every day at every occasion, rather than only at special events.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**
- Using voice and simple pitched instruments (keyboards, recorders, and resonator bells) to create melodies
- Using graphic notation — on its own or as a precursor to standard notation
- Serving as “scribes” for students’ musical ideas
- Suggesting possibilities for things to do with a musical idea
- Providing students with opportunities to collaborate with musicians when exploring musical possibilities

**NATIONAL STANDARDS**
The musical activities and explorations in this unit address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:

**Creating**
- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
- Refine and complete artistic work

**Performing/presenting/producing**
- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

**Connecting**
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art

**Discuss the video, or post responses to the questions below on Teacher-Talk. (30 minutes)**

1. Why do so many educators lack confidence about teaching composition?
2. What is effective about the process that Jon and Angélica use to encourage students to compose?
3. Why is it that in visual arts, for example, creating new work is at the center of learning from an early age, but in music education more often the learning of composed music is central? How might you begin to infuse creating music into your curriculum at multiple points?
4. How might experience with composing affect the future learning of students?
5. How might you use graphic notation in your music lessons? How could it be used to understand standard notation? How could a composition exercise be used as an introduction to a lesson about notation?

6. Are there older or more experienced musicians in your site or community who could be paired with younger composers in a collaborative creative process?

7. Revisit the items of interest and questions you had at the beginning of the course. Over the eight units, what have you learned about these?

For homework, explore the additional resources for Unit 8 listed below — additional video clips, PDFs, and links. After reviewing the Very Young Composers Handbook, post some ideas on Teacher-Talk about how you might help your students compose music.

Additional video clips:
- Jon Deak bass demo
- Composing with GarageBand
- Michael Blakeslee on the need to put more emphasis on creating music
- Angélica Negrón on an easy way to teach composition
- Jon Deak on the growth of Very Young Composers
- Students share their feelings after the concert

Resources:
- PDF: Scores to compositions by students at P.S. 11 written in standard and non-standard notation
- PDF: New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers handbook
- PDF: Things a composer can do with a melody
- PDF: Angélica Negrón — Caracas Children and Their Resonant Voices: Thoughts on Composing with El Sistema
- Link: New York Philharmonic Composition Workshop
- Link: New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers website
- Link: Noteflight and Soundation online composition software
Appendix

El Sistema principles, teaching strategies, and national standards explored throughout The Power of Music

EL SISTEMA PRINCIPLES

- Programs both serve and respond to the needs of a community, as well as build on the assets of a community.
- Ensemble music-making is at the heart of all learning — both musical and social.
- Parents are involved throughout the program.
- No student is too young to be a vital contributing member of a musical ensemble.
- Musicians have a responsibility to share their skills or knowledge with others who are still learning.
- Performance should happen every day at every occasion, rather than only at special events.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

UNIT 1

- Bringing together musicians with different skill levels from multiple sites for a seminario, an intensive session of rehearsal, performance, and community-building.
- Helping preschoolers learn how to hold a violin by practicing with a book
- Using movement when introducing notes on a scale
- Creating paper violins to use before real instruments

UNIT 2

- Empowering students to serve as leaders/mentors
- Singing melodies correctly before playing them on instruments
- Engaging students through movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity
- Adapting songs with movement to build strength and skills for playing violin
- Finding patterns in music
- Supporting memorization of music in scaffolded steps
- Motivating students using levels of mastery

UNIT 3

- Peer mentoring
- Promoting self-assessment and goal-setting with a CYMPhony Card

UNIT 4

- Organizing sectionals into teams according to learning needs
- Encouraging orchestra players to sing and solfège their parts (and the melody) as well as play them on their instruments
- Recording learning in ungraded personal notebooks
• Using and encouraging students to use positive reinforcement language
• Playing a game to promote memorization of musical facts
• Giving back to the community through performances large and small

UNIT 5
• Using a single piece of repertoire (in this case Finlandia) to drive an entire curriculum unit and to serve as a centerpiece for a large-scale performance
• Using boomwhackers to enable youngsters who can’t read music to play together in an ensemble
• Playing team-building games during “buddy time,” which brings together older and younger students
• Discussing how to be a helpful mentor
• Bringing together a large group of musicians with different skill levels to perform for the community.

UNIT 6
• Using voice and body as first instruments
• Bringing together students of different ages and skills
• Separating melody from text in choral music-learning stages
• Ear training through solfège, even with very young students
• Using songs or chants with positive messages important to social as well as musical learning
• Promoting musical expression through physical movement
• Making music that reflects cultural relevance to the school community

UNIT 7
• Engaging students through movement, emotion, relevance, novelty, and pattern or familiarity
• Using story to make abstract symbols concrete and easy to remember
• Beginning to compose in a group, using cups to represent notes with different values, and colored Post-its to represent different pitches
• Motivating students using levels of mastery

UNIT 8
• Using voice and simple pitched instruments (keyboards, recorders, and resonator bells) to create melodies
• Using graphic notation — on its own or as a precursor to standard notation
• Serving as “scribes” for students’ musical ideas
• Suggesting possibilities for things to do with a musical idea
• Providing students with opportunities to collaborate with musicians when exploring musical possibilities

NATIONAL STANDARDS

The musical activities featured throughout The Power of Music address the following Anchor Standards of the National Core Arts Standards:
Creating
- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
- Refine and complete artistic work

Performing/presenting/producing
- Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Responding
- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

Connecting
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding
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Bios of teaching artists/experts

Dan Berkowitz (4, 5) is manager of Youth Orchestra Los Angeles, Los Angeles Philharmonic. Named one of Forbes's “30 Under 30” for education in 2014, Dan is a musician and educator with degrees in economics and trombone performance from Northwestern University. He began his career with Morningstar Inc., moving to London to start up their European fund research endeavor. In 2009, he was chosen as an inaugural Sistema fellow at New England Conservatory. After graduation, he moved to Los Angeles to build one of the nation’s most robust El Sistema programs, Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA). With the support of the LA Phil, Gustavo Dudamel, and community partners, Dan has grown YOLA to over 600 students — each receiving twelve to fifteen hours of free programming each week. Internationally, Dan designs symposiums that explore the intersection of music and social innovation for the LA Phil and its institutional partners. He also advises organizations worldwide through various stages of development, and has had residencies with El Sistema Japan and Sistema Taiwan.

Michael Blakeslee (1, 3, 5, 8) is deputy executive director and chief operating officer of the National Association for Music Education. He received BAs in music and psychology and an MA in music composition from the University of Virginia. He has taught at institutions in the United States and abroad, notably at Northern Virginia Community College, Virginia Commonwealth University, the Universidad de Los Andes, and the Universidad Nacional Pedagogica de Colombia. At NAfME Blakeslee has served as editor of the award-winning Music Educators Journal and Teaching Music magazine. He has directed the development of music education initiatives and innovative online tools for music education. In 1994, he was editor of the National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts. In 2010, he managed the process that resulted in the 21st Century Arts Skills Map, published by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. At NAfME he has also overseen significant cooperative ventures resulting in the development of teachers’ materials and other support for teachers and the public, and the institution of initiatives encouraging decision-makers to engage more effectively in supporting music education. In 2006, Blakeslee was designated a Lowell Mason Fellow, a distinction awarded to outstanding individuals in music education.

Judith Hill Bose (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8) is the director of teacher education and educational initiatives for the Longy School of Music of Bard College. She holds a PhD in urban education from the City University of New York Graduate Center and an MM in vocal performance from the New England Conservatory of Music. At Longy she directs the teaching artist program in Cambridge and is the central architect of the curriculum for the Master of Arts in Teaching at the Los Angeles campus. She is an active collaborator in the Take a Stand partnership and serves as the Longy principal in the Sistema Evaluation Project with WolfBrown.

Leon Botstein (1) has been president of Bard College since 1975, and is a leading advocate of progressive education. He is music director and principal conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra, and leads an active schedule as a guest conductor all over the world. Mr. Botstein is also co-artistic director of the Summerscape and Bard Music Festivals in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, and conductor laureate of the
Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. He is the editor of *The Musical Quarterly* and the author of numerous books and articles. For his contributions to music, Mr. Botstein has received the award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and Harvard University’s Centennial Award, as well as the Cross of Honor, First Class from the government of Austria. In 2009 he received Carnegie Foundation’s Academic Leadership Award, and he is also the 2012 recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award for the Elevation of Music in Society.

**Aisha Bowden** (6) is the co-founder and director of AMPlify, the choral program of the Atlanta Music Project and the first Sistema-inspired choral program in Georgia. In 2012 Aisha completed the *Sistema* Fellows Program, a prestigious post-graduate fellowship of New England Conservatory that trains gifted musicians and educators to lead *El Sistema*-inspired programs in the United States. Prior to the fellowship, Aisha was an award-winning public school music educator for eleven years. As chair of the music department at Thomson Elementary School in Washington, DC, Ms. Bowden provided general and vocal music instruction to the full student body, directed the Thomson Choir, and managed several partnerships with leading arts organizations, including the Washington National Opera and The Choral Arts Society of Washington, DC. Under her direction, the Thomson Choir performed for the King and Queen of Norway, Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, and the Bicentennial Celebration of Abraham Lincoln at which President Obama was the keynote speaker; it also appeared on CNN, C-SPAN, and *Good Morning America*. Ms. Bowden has been recognized for excellence in arts education by the Arts for Every Student Program, Who’s Who in American Educators, and the Mayor’s Arts Awards in Washington, DC.

**Tony Brown** (4) has been the executive director of Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA) since 2007. He is a graduate of Loyola Marymount University and received a master’s degree from the University of Tennessee in sports management/marketing. After working at HOLA in the 1990s, Tony worked for several years as a teacher and served as an athletic director and coach for private schools, while owning and managing several successful camp programs. Tony is a Stanford University Graduate School of Business, Center for Social Innovation fellow and serves on the University of Tennessee’s College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences Dean’s Board of Advisors. Tony has been acknowledged by LMU with the Distinguished Alumni Award, by Bank of America with the “Local Hero” award, and by KTLA as a “Hometown Hero.” Most recently, he received the Leadership Excellence Award from the Los Angeles Business Journal.

**Katy Clark** (1) has served as president & executive director of Orchestra of St. Luke’s and The DiMenna Center for Classical Music since 2010. Prior to her career in arts management, from 1994 to 1999 Katy was a violinist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London. In addition to the BBC, Katy performed with a number of ensembles, including the Scottish and English Chamber Orchestras, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Opera Company of Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia. From 2001 to 2004, Katy led the Philadelphia chapter of the American Composers Forum. Katy is an alumna of the League of American Orchestra’s Orchestral Management Fellowship Program, during which she worked at the Aspen Music Festival and School, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. A graduate of Cambridge University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree in history, she also holds a master’s degree in violin performance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a certificate in arts.

**Jon Deak** (8) is the young composer advocate of the New York Philharmonic, where for many years he was associate principal bassist. As a composer, he has written over three hundred works, and has had his music played by orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony, the National Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic. His concerto for string quartet and orchestra, *The Headless Horseman*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1992. His music may also be heard on several TV series and many recordings. In 1995 Jon founded Very Young Composers, an award-winning program now international in scope, for public-school children ages nine to thirteen. Student compositions developed through the program have been performed by the New York Philharmonic, the Colorado Symphony, and ensembles across the country and on four continents.

**James Dekle** (6) is a teaching artist with AMPlify, the choral program of Atlanta Music Project. He graduated magna cum laude with his bachelor of science degree in music education from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee and received a master’s degree in music education from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC. While in college, he joined the world-renowned FAMU Marching 100 and the FAMU Concert Choir. His involvement with the Concert Choir led him on several national and international music tours including the Bahamas and Ethiopia, where choir members performed with Lauryn Hill, The Marley Brothers and the I3’s featuring Rita Marley. In addition, James provided background vocals for R&B and gospel singer Kelly Price in 2005 and toured Spain as a soloist/musician for The Florida Singers in 2006. In 2007, James began teaching at Albemarle Road Middle School, where he developed the choral program. He completed his master’s degree in music education in the spring of 2011 and was invited to be a member of Pi Kappa Lambda, a national music honor society. Currently, James is working with the Atlanta Music Project at Coan Park Recreation Center and promoting his debut CD release entitled *Purpose*.

**Gustavo Dudamel** (4) is concurrently serving as the music director of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela and of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He also guest conducts with some of the world’s greatest musical institutions each season. Gustavo grew up in Venezuela, where he studied music through *El Sistema*. Since it has been so important in his own life, Gustavo wants all young people to have the opportunity to study music. Under his leadership, the LA Phil has extended its reach through Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA), bringing music to children in underserved communities. Along with his mentor, Dr. José Antonio Abreu, he was granted the 2008 “Q” Prize from Harvard University for extraordinary service to children. When he was asked what it takes to be a good conductor, Gustavo said, “You need to feel that you are only a bridge between the composer and the orchestra, and you have to have humility.”

**Melina García** (1) is the founder and executive director of the Union City Music Project. She is a native Venezuelan and current resident of Union City, NJ. An active member of her community, she saw a need to create a program that would enrich the lives of Union City’s children and their families. Melina has over 15 years of experience in public and media relations, international politics and development, fundraising, and project management. She has also held positions at the William J. Clinton Foundation, the Venezuelan Mission to the United Nations, and The Wayuu Taya Foundation, as well as...
affiliations with several national and local non-profit organizations including Arts Plan NJ, Art for Change, and Por un Mejor Hoy. Melina holds BAs in media studies and studio art from Hunter College, and has taken courses in cultural planning and creative place-making at Rutgers University.

**Lorrie Heagy** (2, 6, 7) is a music teacher and program director of Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM), an *El Sistema*-inspired program that provides violin instruction for more than four hundred students in Juneau. In 2009, Lorrie was selected to be a *Sistema* fellow at the New England Conservatory. She has seventeen years’ experience in the classroom and has provided training for other *El Sistema* initiatives in early-childhood practices, brain-based learning, and student engagement. She is honored to have represented Alaska’s teachers as the 2011 Alaska Teacher of the Year. Lorrie holds three master’s degrees in education: elementary, music, and library education. Lorrie is pursuing a PhD in education with a specialization in instruction, learning, and innovation.

**Erik Holmgren** (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) had the privilege of directing the *Sistema* Fellows Program at New England Conservatory and working with courageous, ambitious colleagues to develop musical opportunities for culturally underserved students around the world. Following his work with the *Sistema* Fellows Program, Erik accepted a position as a program officer with the Massachusetts Cultural Council, where he is overseeing the development of the first government support system for *El Sistema*-inspired work in the country. Erik holds five degrees in music and education, including an EdD from Teachers College, Columbia University, and is the founder of *Musical Perspectives*, the first online academic journal focusing on research in music performance.

**Jennifer Johnson** (3), a native of Wyoming, traveled to New York City to pursue her development as a musician. There she had the opportunity to study under Joey Corpus, Charles Neidich, and Burton Kaplan and participate in master classes with Miriam Fried and Stephanie Chase. However, it was when she volunteered with the Corona Youth Music Project during its inaugural year in 2010 that she found her true passion: using music education as a vehicle for social change. When Jennifer graduated summa cum laude from the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College with a degree in violin performance in 2012, she decided to continue her work with CYMP, where she ultimately became the head violin teaching artist. Her interest in mastering the art of teaching as well as providing access for all children to create high quality music has been highlighted by her participation in the 2013 Institute of Musicianship and Public Service at Community Music Works in Rhode Island, her appointment as an ambassador for the 2012 Take a Stand Symposium in Los Angeles, and her selection as one of thirty New York City teachers to attend a year-long music educator’s workshop at Carnegie Hall.

**Emily Kubitskey** (4, 5) is the woodwind specialist and wind ensemble director for the LA Phil’s Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) program. She works at the HOLA (Heart of Los Angeles) site in the Rampart District, where, as a member of the inaugural staff, she helped build the wind program and curriculum to eighty students from ages eight to fifteen. At HOLA, she is also the chamber ensemble director, where she has created and organized YOLA at HOLA’s top-performing ensembles, repertoire, and performance schedule. Simultaneously, Emily is a curriculum writer and teaching artist for the LA Phil’s in-school residency program. In this position, she has created, presented, and
taught curricula that are implemented in over fifteen LAUSD schools to hundreds of teachers and over three thousand students. Emily is also a mentor teacher for Longy and Bard’s Master of Arts in Teaching program where she assesses, guides, and works with students who have a focus on teaching in an *El Sistema* setting.

**Eun Lee** (3) is a teaching artist with the Corona Youth Music Project. An educator and musician based in Queens, New York, she was born in South Korea and raised in New Jersey. Eun attended Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in music education. After spending two years in South Korea teaching English and studying Korean traditional music, Eun returned to the U.S. in 2011 and has worked as a music educator in public school and private settings. Eun specializes in teaching woodwinds as well as early childhood music, and has a strong interest in arts advocacy and outreach. Since 2012, Eun has worked as a teaching artist at the Corona Youth Music Project, an *El Sistema*-inspired music program serving families in Corona, Queens, since 2010. In addition to teaching, Eun is a practicing classical musician and performs in chamber ensembles throughout the five boroughs.

**Samuel Marchán** (1) is the artistic director of the Union City Music Project. Originally from Mérida, Venezuela, Samuel has over twenty-five years of experience as a violist and extensive educational experience in the New York public schools and in Venezuela, teaching privately and in small groups. Samuel was part of *El Sistema* in Venezuela and is co-founder of the first *nucleo* in his home state. A recipient of the 2005 King-Chavez-Parks Visiting Professorship Award from the University of Michigan, Samuel holds a bachelor’s degree in viola performance from the Juilliard School and a master’s degree in music performance from New York University.

**Angélica Negrón** (8) is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, and teaching artist with the New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers and The Little Orchestra Society’s Musical Connections Program. She also co-founded the Spanish immersion music program for young children, ¡Acopladitos! Interested in creating intricate, yet simple, narratives that evoke intangible moments in time, she writes music for accordions, toys, and electronics, as well as chamber ensembles and orchestras. Her music has been described as “wistfully idiosyncratic and contemplative” (WQXR/Q2) and “mesmerizing and affecting” (*Feast of Music*) while *The New York Times* noted her “capacity to surprise” and her “quirky approach to scoring.” She was selected by Q2 and NPR listeners as part of “The Mix: 100 Composers Under 40” and by Flavorwire as one of the “10 Young Female Composers You Should Know.” Angélica received an early education in piano and violin at the Conservatory of Music of Puerto Rico, where she later studied composition. She holds a master’s degree in music composition from New York University and is currently pursuing a doctorate in music composition at The Graduate Center, City University of New York. Her music is published by Good Child Music.

**Gretchen Nielsen** (4, 5) is director of educational initiatives, Los Angeles Philharmonic. Since 2007 Gretchen has designed, implemented, and supervised an integrated set of LA Phil education programs that reach more than 150,000 schoolchildren, teachers, families, young musicians, and concert-goers annually. In 2007, Gretchen launched Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA), Gustavo Dudamel’s signature program based on *El Sistema*. Since that time she has worked to expand YOLA locally, and broaden its reach nationally by helping to form the Take a Stand partnership with LA Phil, Longy School of Music, and Bard College. Internationally, Gretchen is connecting the social...
and artistic imperatives of the Los Angeles Philharmonic by leading LA Phil education projects with the Barbican Centre in London and *El Sistema* in Venezuela. Gretchen is a former management fellow of the Opera America Fellowship Program, a current member of 24th Street Theatre’s Board of Directors, and a proud mentor of YOLA students.

**Alvaro Rodas** (3) is the founder and director of the Corona Youth Music Project. He was in the leadership team that hosted the first replication of *El Sistema* in his native country, Guatemala, in 1997, and worked as a teacher and mentor of young musicians in Guatemala until 2004. There, he also taught percussion at the National Conservatory and was the principal percussionist at the National Symphony. His interest in leadership and administration related to *El Sistema* earned him a Fulbright scholarship to complete an MA in arts administration at Columbia University in 2006. In 2009 he was selected as part of the inaugural class of Sistema fellows at the New England Conservatory. A direct result of this fellowship was the creation of the CYMP in 2010. That year, Alvaro was a consultant for the government of El Salvador to develop the plan for *El Sistema* in that country.

**Nikki Shorts** (4, 5) is a string specialist and children's orchestra conductor with Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) at Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA). Nikki is a freelance performer and teacher throughout Southern California who believes in making music available to all people, especially within underserved communities. She is a member of the Kroma Quartet and has performed with The Southeast Symphony, Camerata of Los Angeles, Marina del Rey Symphony, Culver City Symphony, Santa Monica Symphony, Downey Symphony, and MESTO (Multi Ethnic Star Orchestra), which is known for its performance of orchestral transcriptions of traditional Middle Eastern music. As a recording artist, she has worked with pop artists Tyrone Wells, Rihanna, and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. As a teacher, she works as a curriculum writer and teaching artist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s School Partners Programs and the LA Phil’s YOLA program. At YOLA at HOLA in the Rampart District of Los Angeles, Nikki is the lead strings teacher and conductor of the HOLA Children’s Orchestra. She is also a mentor teacher for the Longy/Bard Master of Arts in Teaching program. Nikki received her master's in viola performance from Northwestern University in 2007, and her BM in viola performance from California State University Long Beach in 2004.

**Ollantay Velásquez** (1) is a violinist with the Simón Bolívar Orchestra of Venezuela. Ollantay was born in Puerto la Cruz, Venezuela, in 1981 and started his musical training at the age of eight in the city of Carúpano. He enjoyed success at a young age, winning the “Concurso de Ninos y Jóvenes Instrumentistas” in Argentina at the age of eleven. A key member of the Simón Bolívar Orchestra, Ollantay was selected as concertmaster of the Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil Iberoamericana and toured extensively in this role. He was also a member of the Millennium Quartet. As a soloist he has performed many of the major concerti including the Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, and *The Four Seasons* by Vivaldi.

**Christine Witkowski** (4, 5) is the Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) at Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA) program director and music director at HOLA. Christine is dedicated to providing *El Sistema*-inspired music programming to children and families in the Rampart District of L.A. The *El Sistema* journey began for Christine in 2009, when she was chosen as one of ten fellows to participate in the inaugural Sistema Fellows Program at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. As a fellow, Christine
studied the *El Sistema* movement in the United States and Venezuela. She is now a member of the ever-expanding network of *El Sistema* leaders in the U.S., mentoring other programs and teachers while continuing to adapt and implement best practices from the movement to the particular needs and strengths of the HOLA community. Christine is a horn player and holds a bachelor of music degree from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, and a master of music degree from McGill University in Montreal, QC. Christine also holds a certification in community counseling from the Southern California Counseling Center.

**Karen Zorn** (1, 6) has been president of Longy School of Music of Bard College since 2007 and a vice president of Bard College since 2012. Since her arrival at Longy, she has balanced the budget, boosted enrollment, executed a merger with Bard College, and established partnerships with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Fundamusal Bolívar (*El Sistema* in Venezuela) to launch innovative programs of study and community engagement. These include the recently launched Take a Stand program and new Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Music program based in Los Angeles, as well as initiatives that embed Longy Conservatory students as teaching assistants in public schools, community centers, prisons, shelters, and other external venues where the traditions of music education can contribute to public life. Zorn is herself a classically trained musician, having been educated as a pianist in the United States and Germany. Prior to her tenure at Longy, Zorn served as associate provost at Berklee College of Music and acting director and director of instruction at MacPhail Center for the Arts in Minneapolis. She has taught as a member of the faculties of Berklee, MacPhail, and the University of Missouri, Kansas City.