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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA):
Creating Access to Excellent Music Education for
Underrepresented Students of Color

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts

by

Tanitra Carrie Flenaugh

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Youth Orchestras Los Angeles:
Creating Access to High Quality Music Education for
Underrepresented Students of Color

by

Tanitra Carrie Flenaugh

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Gary Gray, Chair

Access to excellent and culturally relevant music education for Black and Latino youth in urban schools has been declining in recent years. Recently, however, some private, non-governmental organizations, have successfully overcome the barriers to create high quality music programs for students of color. This study will examine the practices employed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic's *El Sistema*-based Youth Orchestras Los Angeles (YOLA) to serve this population, using critical ethnography like interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. This study will show how YOLA's practices in pedagogy, the *El Sistema*-based philosophy informing it, and community engagement contributed to the program's success and their areas of opportunity.

The dissertation of Tanitra Carrie Flenaugh is approved.

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**YOUTH ORCHESTRA LOS ANGELES (YOLA): CREATING ACCESS TO
EXCELLENT MUSIC EDUCATION FOR UNDERREPRESENTED
STUDENTS OF COLOR**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Providing Black and Latino students in urban communities with meaningful access to music education is challenging, yet promising, in the diverse communities of Southern California. Numerous reports document the educational inequities children in urban schools experience, particularly in the arts (J. S. Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). An examination of the programs that do successfully serve these populations could provide insights on improving arts education for underserved youth. This research is a case study that examines the practices of one organization, the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Youth Orchestras Los Angeles (YOLA), which is actively working to counter this issue. YOLA services nearly 600 students of color in the Los Angeles community. It is my hope that other programs servicing this population may learn how to improve their offerings through this investigation of how a non-profit organization, like YOLA, provides quality music education.

YOLA is a part of the rapidly expanding *El Sistema* network, which is engaged in providing high quality music education for youth all over the world. The program began in Venezuela, South America, and this study examines its expansion into North America. The Los Angeles Philharmonic's Music Director, Gustavo Dudamel, developed as a musician through the *El Sistema* program, and is encouraging Los Angeles to develop similar programs based on this model. YOLA, whose goal is to have a youth orchestra in every Los Angeles neighborhood, adheres to the *El Sistema* model of music education, which originated as a government-supported social program in Venezuela. With the vision of fostering social reform, the goal of *El Sistema* is to put an instrument in the hands of every child and provide high quality music instruction starting at age two.

Since 1975, *El Sistema* has grown into an international model for music education. At the inaugural YOLA at Hearts of Los Angeles (HOLA) performance, Deborah Borda, the L.A. Philharmonic Executive Director, shared the story of how *El Sistema* began. She talked about how there were only two orchestras in Venezuela, and they were mostly comprised of foreigners. After graduating from a conservatory, a young bassoonist burned his instrument in front of the school in outrage, because he knew that there were no jobs for him. Dr. José Antonio Abreu, the founder and developer of *El Sistema*, partnered with the local government to change that. With every instrument Abreu hands out he says, “With this instrument, you will change the world.” Each year, *El Sistema* teaches music to 350,000 students and currently has 215 orchestras or *nucleolus* in Venezuela. Today *El Sistema* inspired programs operate in 25 countries around the world and dozens of cities in the United States.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic’s version of *El Sistema*, called YOLA, currently operates two groups—the YOLA EXPO Center Youth Orchestra with the Harmony Project and the YOLA at Hearts of Los Angeles Orchestra. The Harmony Project is located in South Los Angeles--the Exposition Park area--and the Hearts of Los Angeles (HOLA) is in the Rampart District near downtown. The Los Angeles Expo Center, their main site, is where YOLA started their first program. The Harmony Project is an award winning, research-based after-school program in Los Angeles. It promotes positive youth development in underserved communities through instrumental music programs. A Public health specialist, Dr. Margaret Martin, founded the Harmony Project in 2001 with only 36 children and a check for \$9,000 from the Rotary Club of Hollywood. By 2010, the organization received the highest honors for an arts program targeting high-need youth—the President’s Coming Up Taller Award. They have since expanded to multiple locations throughout the Los Angeles County.

YOLA's most recent venture with HOLA, gave the philharmonic an opportunity to collaborate with an organization that has been well established in the Rampart community for over 20 years. HOLA serves at-risk youth from ages 6-19 by offering free programming in academics, athletics, and arts. This partnership afforded YOLA more legitimacy than if they were starting up in the community with no other neighborhood connections.

Participant observation and open-ended interviews with parents, administrators, teachers, and students over a six-month period informed this study, which is structured in the following way. The study begins with the problem statement and the significance of the research. The following section provides a review of current relevant literature on the topic. Next, an explanation of the research methods and form of analysis is provided. The remainder of the study, chapters 4 – 6, focuses on detailed analysis of the case study. I conclude with core lessons learned from the study and recommendations for future opportunities.

Significance

In combination with my final doctoral recital, this thesis represents capstone outcomes from my doctoral studies by examining how a single, non-governmental organization is trying to meet the music education needs of Black and Latino students outside of the school day. My own doctoral recital program included trios (clarinet, violin, piano) by highly esteemed Western classical composers like Bela Bartok and Olivier Messiaen, but I performed the second half of my program with a jazz rhythm section featuring several songs by Brazilian, bossa nova composer Antonio Carlos Jobim. Perhaps if more students had access to a high quality, well-rounded music education, we might see more programs like this, with a culturally relevant repertoire that may appeal to more diverse audiences.

This dissertation touches on the importance of both music and music education for intellectual development, a holistic education, the maintenance and development of society, and the pursuit of knowledge of self and one's own heritage. I will also demonstrate how YOLA operates to fulfill a need in the community. In order to best understand why some programs have been successful in providing Black and Latino students with quality music education, it is important to examine their practices closely. This study hopes to learn from their processes and suggest areas of opportunity to grow a new generation of well-rounded performers.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Significance of a Music Education

There is a plethora of advantages to having access to an excellent music education. These advantages include intellectual growth, impactful learning, a holistic education, becoming a contributing member to the maintenance and development of society, and the realization and knowledge of self. Scholars like James Catterall (1999), Lynn Waldorf (1999) and Ron Butzlaff (2000), have researched and written about the favorable outcomes associated with students who are involved in school arts programs versus those who do not participate in such courses. According to these scholars, students who are highly involved in the arts exhibit greater academic achievement, are more likely to stay in school, and demonstrate better attitudes about school and community. Studies also demonstrate benefits like improvement in reading (J. Catterall & Waldorf, 1999), (J. Catterall et al., 1999), cognitive skills (Deasy, 2002a; Gazzaniga, 2008; Heath, Soep, Roach, & (Organization), 1998), standardized test scores (J. Catterall & Waldorf, 1999; Deasy, 2002a), and spatial reasoning (Deasy, 2002b; Hetland, 2000; Rauscher et al., 1997). Arts puts skills acquired in the core subjects into practice, which is evidenced in the abovementioned studies.

Many notable organizations believe in the importance of the arts as part of a comprehensive education. According to both the Paideia Proposal—the educational reform plan developed by Mortimer Adler that is rooted in Ancient Greece principals, and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), a well-rounded education includes: (1) language, literature and the fine arts; (2) mathematics and natural science; (3) history, geography and social studies; (4) physical education; and (5) general introduction to the world of work (Longley, 1999, p. 8). In addition,

they believe that twenty-first century interdisciplinary themes like global awareness, must also be woven into the core subjects. Music and arts training may assist students in remaining competitive as they approach college and working age (Adler & Doren, 1990; Kozol, 1991). According to P21, in order for students to be prepared for the future, their education must center on the four C's: creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Studying the arts nurtures the executive attention portion of cognitive development, which relates a child's ability to control everyday thoughts, feelings, and behavior (Posner & Patoine, 2009). This aspect of cognitive development directly influences several important applied abilities, which are skills that can transfer to any field or task. For example, a student's control over their thoughts relates to the applied skills of critical thinking and problem solving, and their creative and innovative capacities. Individuals who study music are more adaptive in today's society.

Music Education's Impact on the Individual

Better control over feelings and behavior may translate into more professionalism in the work place. Reports (Bronson & Merryman, 2010; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006) produced by task forces that asked employers what skills are valued in the modern workforce, found that applied skills like critical thinking and problem solving; professionalism and work ethic; oral communications, collaboration and innovation are more relevant to the workplace than the basic academic skills emphasized in school. What is important to these employers are the skills students learn inside and outside of school that help them apply their knowledge to the workplace. With corporations continually outsourcing middle-class wage jobs to countries that can offer equally or more skilled work for a fraction of the cost of an American worker, it is imperative that the modern worker be a leader who is constantly innovating and renewing herself

(Education & Workforce, 2008).

Music may assist people in connecting to and understanding various causes and issues outside of themselves. Music can be a powerful tool for social change (W. Roy, 2010; Werner, 2006) for people who are striving to improve their conditions and that of their fellow human beings. Throughout history, people have used music as a part of social commentary, as a reflection of the times, and simply as a means to connect to others and understand themselves (Garofalo, 1992; W. G. Roy, 2010; White & Walker, 2008). Pursuing knowledge of self is a natural human pursuit and many people all over the world find music as the avenue through which to achieve this. According to Elliott,

Developing the knowledge required to meet significant challenges in a particular context or domain of effort leads to self-growth, self-knowledge, and enjoyment. These consequences contribute, in turn, to the development of self-esteem and happiness. One of the main reasons that flow is beneficial is that one's overall quality of life depends on it. As Aristotle recognized twenty-three hundred years ago, human beings seek self-esteem and happiness more than anything else." (p. 119)

The opportunity to learn music provides a pathway through which people can learn about themselves and their capabilities. Along this pathway are opportunities to build self-esteem and to pursue happiness. This may be one of the reasons why there are many more amateur musicians than professional ones. According to Elliott, "Many human pursuits are taken up precisely because they engage our powers of understanding" (1995, p. 113). The pursuit of knowledge of self is a constant journey that is necessary for our development as human beings. (Elliott, 1995) Learning music facilitates better self understanding because we are actively satisfying the need to overcome a challenge, like learning a new song, genre, or realizing a different interpretation of a more familiar piece.

The pursuit of happiness and knowledge of self is especially important for teenagers. According to Dorothy Miell, et al. in *Musical Communication*, "By claiming membership of

various sub-cultures, music can be seen to act as a resource used by the young people in their ongoing construction and presentation of self” (2005, p. 324). Music is a central means through which teens connect with their peers and form a sense of community with others. With arts and music programs being cut from schools, students have fewer opportunities to pursue their happiness, explore knowledge of self, and develop a sense of belonging through performing in an ensemble.

Framing Inequality

The ongoing decline of school-based arts education programs in California has resulted in a generation of young people who have not had the same learning opportunities as their parents or grandparents. Concurrent with the reduction of arts education programs is the disturbingly high rate at which students drop out of high school. The President’s Committee on the Art and Humanities (PCAH) report states the following:

Persistently high dropout rates (reaching 50% or more in some areas) are evidence that many schools are no longer able to engage and motivate their students. Students who do graduate from high school are increasingly the products of narrowed curricula, lacking the creative and critical thinking skills needed for success in post-secondary education and the workforce. In such a climate, the outcomes associated with arts education — which include increased academic achievement, school engagement, and creative thinking — have become increasingly important. (2011, v – vi)

At a time when urgency is growing to ameliorate citizens’ success in a global economy, it is essential to provide students with the creative abilities that are acquired through participation in music and art programs. It seems fair to say that instead of minimizing curricular offerings, school districts should be making sure that students are reaping the acknowledged benefits of arts education, especially when a narrowly focused academic curriculum is not engaging enough to keep students enrolled in school. This lack of engagement may be especially true for students of

color attending inner-city schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in 2009 the dropout rate for American high school students was 8.1 percent. However, the dropout rate for African-Americans was 9.3 percent while the rate for Latinos was 17.6 percent (<http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=16>, accessed 10/31/11). NCES data suggests that students of color are particularly vulnerable to dropping out of school in the current education system.

The latter is true in part to the fact that Black and Latino students disproportionately attend high-poverty and low achieving schools. Because current academic policies require students to demonstrate progress in math and reading, these institutions are under extreme pressure to improve test scores in these disciplines. As a result, time allotted for arts and music education is frequently reduced and instructional programs for these creative disciplines are frequently eliminated. Many principals of high-minority schools reported a large decrease in instructional time for arts classes and expect an even larger reduction of instructional time in the immediate future (von Zastrow, Janc, & Education, 2004). The absence of adequate arts education in low performing schools deprive students of the learning experiences which may enhance creativity, critical thinking, and cultural understanding: all of which contribute to learning outcomes and are necessary for individuals to effectively function in society. As a result, Black and Latino students in urban settings are especially in need of assistance to receive quality music education. (<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/analysis/2010-section3a3.asp> accessed October 28, 2011).

With low-income students of color receiving less in-school jazz and classical music instruction, music education scholars like Kratus (2007) have come to wonder if this may directly affect the consumption of jazz and classical music on a larger scale. According to demographic and ticket sale reports by the League of American Orchestras' Audience

Demographic Review (1999), live classical music concert attendees were mostly elderly and white.

Dwindling audiences impact the vitality and demand of live symphonic music performance. Within the first four months of 2011, three major orchestra's economic woes were in the headlines. The Philadelphia Orchestra filed for bankruptcy due to plummeting ticket sales and dwindling donations (Wakin 2011). The Syracuse Symphony Orchestra refused \$1.3 million in pay and benefit cuts for the 2011/2012 season (Johnson 2011), while the Detroit Symphony finally ended a six-month strike on April 10, 2011 while agreeing to a 25% pay cut (Wakin 2011). According to Jorgensen (2003), "Live music is threatened where musicians cannot make a livelihood or the public does not attend and support live performances." When the public is not willing to pay for live jazz or classical music, it becomes more difficult for these musicians to sustain a living wage. The decline in jazz and classical music attendance may very well be a symptom of the dwindling access to classical and jazz music education. (Miell, MacDonald, & Hargreaves, 2005) According to David Elliott in *Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education*, "To love, appreciate, and enjoy musical performances, one needs to know MUSIC as a performing art. To become an enthusiastic and knowledgeable listener requires knowing MUSIC as the interpretive and social art it is."(1995: 102) In other words, if the amount of Americans receiving orchestral music education is declining, then the pool of people who may be interested in attending live classical performances may also decline as a result. With Black and Latino students being the least likely to receive access to music education, some argue that it will become increasingly difficult for live classical and jazz music to thrive if it does not start appealing to a more diverse audience (Kratus 2007, Music For All Foundation 2004).

Symphonies can start expanding their appeal by simply including more composers of color in their usual repertoire.

Understanding the Relationship Between Culture, Race, Privilege, and Equity

Neoliberal educational policies, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), have had a detrimental effect on arts and music education in schools. With teachers under added pressure to perform in reading and math, some schools narrowly focus on scoring high in those two subjects and subsequently leave other subjects by the wayside (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Guisbond & Neill, 2004; von Zastrow et al., 2004). Underrepresented students of color (Guisbond & Neill, 2004; von Zastrow et al., 2004), and low-income students (Crocco & Costigan, 2007) are the most negatively impacted subgroups in education, and they have seen the largest decline in access to music education (PCAH, 2011).

Teachers found themselves dissatisfied with their work conditions due to the threatening conditions created by NCLB (Guisbond & Neill, 2004), which may have led to higher attrition rates among new teachers, especially in schools serving low-income populations (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Meanwhile, the real issues with education inequity—family poverty and inadequate school funding—continue to be harmful to underrepresented students of color (Guisbond & Neill, 2004).

Given the challenges associated with neoliberal education, like the narrowed curriculum, disheartened teachers, elevated student failure rates, and increased discrimination against impoverished students of color (Cawelti, 2006; Hursh, 2005a, 2005b, 2007a, 2007b; Hursh & Martina, 2003), it seems reasonable that access to music and arts instruction should include an equitable and culturally responsive approach to countering these issues.

My research is placed at the intersection of three major theories: (1) critical race theory in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995); (2) Pierre Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital (P. Bourdieu, 1986; Pierre Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1990) and; (3) Paulo Freire's theory of culture, power, and oppression through education (Freire, 2000).

Critical race theory (CRT) responds to the larger question of why students of color, especially Black and Latino students, seem to get the "short end of the stick" in both the diversity and equity of education. Historically Black and Latino Americans have not received the entire range of educational resources necessary to support their pursuit for academic excellence (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Massey and Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1980). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, access to jobs directly correlates to the quality of education (accessed 1/12/11). With the earning gap between Blacks and whites widening (Kochhar, Fry, & Taylor, 2011), it stands to reason that oppressed populations will persistently have higher poverty rates if they are not adequately prepared for decent wage-earning jobs through a quality, well-rounded education.

According to the critical race theory (CRT), racism is regularized in American life, legally, culturally, and psychologically. CRT originated in the legal field to develop a language that takes on a race-based, systematic critique of legal reasoning and institutions. Today, CRT has proponents in various fields, especially in education (Delgado, 2001, p. xix). Gloria Ladson-Billings, a professor in the department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and William F. Tate IV, Department Chair of Education at Washington University in St. Louis, are two CRT leaders in the field of education. They believe that in the United States, race is still a considerable factor in determining equity and that our society is based on property rights and not necessarily human rights (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995).

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), the dominant society views the possession of whiteness as the ultimate property. The cultural practices of whites are the only ones highly valued. This reality was constructed by the dominant culture to maintain their privilege through rationalizing oppression. CRT also asserts that the school system simply equates to better property values, which equal better schools, since the quality and quantity of curriculum often varies directly with the property values surrounding the schools. More affluent schools often have a richer curriculum variety, which includes a diverse selection of honors, AP and arts courses (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). As a result, the curriculum is a direct reflection of the richness of the intellectual property, geography, and race.

According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital is “convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications” (1986). If someone possesses valuable cultural capital, then she may have more access to jobs, quality education, and better opportunities. The hierarchy of cultural capital is also institutionalized in education. When students perform according to the dominant culture’s expectations, they are rewarded so that behavior is reinforced. Bourdieu’s work has been codified and used by Lamont and Lareau (1988) to create a clear concise definition of cultural capital as well. They defined cultural capital as “institutionalized, widely shared, high status cultural signals (i.e., attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion, the former referring to exclusion from jobs and resources, and the latter, to exclusion from high status groups” (1977). The dominant culture will set forth expectations and rules about widely accepted norms and standards for social and cultural interactions. Dominant classes rules by quieting, minimizing, or disempowering the voices of those they oppress (1988, p. 156).

In analyzing my research data, I observed how Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital played out in YOLA's interaction with students and parents. The faculty and administrators, who are members of the dominant culture, worked to inspire the students to feel ownership over their role in the orchestra, Walt Disney Concert Hall, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. As YOLA taught the parents and students about European composers' music, like Mahler's, they aimed to assimilate the families into their own culture. YOLA teachers and staff rewarded student participation in their cultural norms through praise and by implementing more activities to encourage this association. They wanted the students to look beyond race and cultural differences and embrace each other through music as a unifying entity. More specifically, they wanted classical music to be the non-biased force that brings them together as one united orchestra or community. Yet each individual culture represented by the students, has its own hierarchy of cultural capital as well. There are particular cultural norms and practices within each of these communities that supplies validation and acceptance. Music education programs for youth could benefit greatly from incorporating the student's own cultural capital into the program (Flenaugh, 2011).

Bourdieu's work ties-in closely with how YOLA teachers and administrators view their own culture. The program has placed a high value on Western classical music. This is evidenced by the amount of class time spent rehearsing and learning that particular music, as well as the music that is performed in their concerts. Some may argue that these repertoire choices are logical since the L.A. Philharmonic, a symphony in the Western classical tradition, sponsors YOLA. There are, however, many symphonic composers of African and Latino decent, who could be incorporated into the repertoire. According to Bourdieu, by embracing the cultural practices of the dominant culture, these unrepresented, impoverished students may have a chance

at climbing the social and economic ladder. Although the L.A. Philharmonic's Artistic Director is Venezuelan, his adoption of European culture has assisted in his ascension up the social and (Western) musical ladder. Laudably, though he may be best known for conducting Western classical music, Dudamel regularly incorporates diverse composers into his programming.

Since its inception, *El Sistema* has used classical music to change their social status, and to elevate themselves in a similar way. According to Bourdieu's theory on cultural capital, *El Sistema's* adoption of Western classical music may have been their ticket to this widely accepted elite status.

However, at the same time, *El Sistema* orchestras in Venezuela perform culturally relevant music alongside symphonic composers in the Western tradition. In 2008 CNN interviewed one of the directors at a Venezuelan *El Sistema* site, or *nucelo*. He said that the reason that they play classical music is because they want the kids to escape from their impoverished, desolated reality. He stated that, "To play the same music that their dad gets drunk to every night is not enough to have an impact, it has to be something different." Although they are learning "something different," they are also infusing their culture into the way that music is performed. In addition, they are performing pieces by composers of Latino descent.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Freire states that "Radicalization, nourished by a critical spirit, is always creative... radicalization criticizes and thereby liberates" (p. 37). By trying a new approach to music education, one that is culturally relevant and takes a critical look at the type of repertoire that is chosen and the ways that it is taught, then perhaps these students can find their own liberation. At the same time, learning an instrument in a western classical setting may also prepare students for playing music fluently in multiple spaces. Venezuela and the United States are dissimilar structurally, economically, culturally, and beyond. Our history of

oppression is very different from that of Latin America. A North American model of an *El Sistema*-based music education program should account for those differences.

There are a few options programs may consider when aiming to create a culturally relevant music program. In the fall of 2011, I started the Empowerment Youth Orchestra in partnership with the Learning Enrichment After-School Program (LEAP) with the Inglewood Unified School District in California. The orchestra program meets at two schools, Beluah Payne Elementary and Bennett-Kew Elementary during the site's after-school program and totals 60 students. Payne Elementary School has a primarily Latino population, while Bennett-Kew Elementary School is nearly split evenly between Latino and Black students. Since repertoire options are limited for beginning students, I use several sources for music in . The string students worked fairly consistently out of *Essential Elements for Strings*. The band students used a combination of exercises I customized from the *Rubank Method for clarinet* and Klosé's *Celebrated Method for the Clarinet* to build technique, various familiar tunes like "Hot Cross Buns," and "Merrily We Roll Along," and we occasionally played through the *Yamaha Advantage*. During the first year, the orchestra was asked to perform regularly at different events around the City of Inglewood.

One day when I was asking the students if they wanted to play old or new music for the next performance, one Latino student suggested we play the "Mexican Hat Dance," and then I agreed. This interaction meant that I was validating his contribution to the class and acknowledging a part of his culture. During the course of the year I transcribed Michael Jackson songs for them to perform as well. For the final combined concert in the Spring of 2012, they performed the melody of "Spring" by Antonio Vivaldi, the theme from Brahms' "Symphony No. 1" and "Summertime" by George Gershwin.

The diversity of teachers is another component that keeps my music program culturally relevant. The students have a minimum of three teachers at each site, not including volunteers, so they experience varying perspectives and teaching styles. The teachers for the Empowerment Youth Orchestra are culturally, geographically, and musically diverse. Hailing from all different parts of the country, Alaska, Washington state, New York, Louisiana, and California, each have had different musical foci throughout their careers, two teachers were pursuing doctorates in music performance, one teacher has a PhD in Musicology and a Master's degree in performance, another teacher had a master's degree in music education, while one teacher had extensive experience in jazz education and performance. I am constantly looking for ways to fuse my traditional classical music education with new ways of looking at repertoire and student cultural contribution. Over the years, *El Sistema* has found a nice balance between Western and Southern symphonic literature.

El Sistema: Where South Meets West

In order to understand the goals of YOLA, it is important to establish some background about *El Sistema*, since they are attempting to export their Southern model to Western society. *El Sistema* has grown to teach music to over 300,000 of Venezuela's most impoverished children, "demonstrating the power of ensemble music to dramatically change the life trajectory of hundreds of thousands of a nation's youth while transforming the communities around them" (ElSistemaUSA.org, accessed 12/6/10). Today, *El Sistema*-based programs exist in dozens of cities around the United States--and the world--and are growing on a daily basis (Allan, 2010; Booth, 2009; Tunstall, 2012). Some people view *El Sistema* as the key to saving classical music and are committed to adopting their program for the United States (Booth, 2009; Copeland, n.d.;

Tunstall, 2012). The fundamental focus of *El Sistema* is to bring social change through music (Allan, 2010; Booth, 2009; Tunstall, 2012). Likewise, other *El Sistema*-based programs focus on bringing high quality music education to underrepresented or impoverished students who would not typically have access to such programs (Silk, Griffin, & Chow, 2008; Tunstall, 2012). In later chapters, I will go into further details as to how exactly YOLA is influenced by the practices of *El Sistema*.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGIES

This is a case study analyzing how YOLA—a community based non-governmental organization founded by the L.A. Philharmonic—has increased access to classical music education for impoverished Black and Latino youth in Los Angeles through their community education programs. My research question asks in the context of YOLA: What practices did administrators, teachers, and parents employ to provide access to classical music education for Black and Latino youth? I intend to pay particular attention to the following three areas: music pedagogy, mission and focus, and community partnering. Below, I outline several matters observed that supported my determination of accessibility for the target populations.

1. **Pedagogy:** How do teachers interact with students as it relates to their teaching approach and methods? What type and level of music did the students perform and why? What expectations (standards, commitment level, and behavioral expectations) do the teachers have of the students? What type of support do the teachers supply to motivate, nurture, and provide guidance inside and outside of the musical space? Do they create an emotionally and physically safe space? How so?
2. **Mission and focus:** Here I examine their stated goals and objectives. Are their goals clearly articulated? How do they follow them on a day-to-day basis? How does *El Sistema* influence their goals and objectives? My analysis was aided by the assessment tool “Guide to Assessing Your Community Arts School” by the National Association of Schools of Music website, found at nasm.arts-accredit.org.
3. **Coalition building:** Here I looked at the level of involvement the music program had in the community, the parents, and the social services that they provided. According to

Stephen B. Fawcett, et al. (1995), “Community partnerships serve as *catalysts*: Members take action to effect changes in programs, policies, and practices throughout the community. These changes reshape community agencies, institutions, and citizen organizations, and may enable them to better address the issues of concern” (p. 678). I wanted to know how deeply this program intermingled with the community, how much community members communicated with YOLA.

In what ways was a South American model for music education relevant to the United States in general, and to the City of Los Angeles specifically, and what aspects needed to be modified and in which ways?

Methods

Like many non-profit music organizations, YOLA operates outside of regular school hours. Since its inception in 2007, the YOLA EXPO Center Orchestra has taught hundreds of students. The students enrolled are 2–17 years old, and attend classes for up to nine hours a week. YOLA at the Expo Center draws students from more than 60 schools within a five-mile radius. They budgeted the program for 100 students, but only recruited 60 at the beginning of the program.

YOLA at the Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA) began in 2010 (www.laphil.com/yola, accessed 12/1/10). During year one at YOLA at HOLA, first graders started on strings and fourth graders started on wind instruments. In order to gradually increase enrollment, they will keep accepting first and fourth graders until all grade levels are included in the orchestra. The students have music instruction five days a week. Monday through Thursday, the students receive two hours of music instruction—musicianship, singing, sectionals, semi-private lessons, solfège, or

orchestra—and one hour of tutoring in academic subjects between the hours of three and six in the evening (www.laphil.com/yola, accessed 12/1/10). All of the students were required to learn solfège and to sing in the choir. During this choir and ear training class, the students would learn basic musicianship. The class usually begins with a warm up in both the body (i.e., shoulder rolls, stretching) and breathing. For example, David, the solfège and choir conductor, would ask the students to inhale then exhale on a hiss. Then the students may proceed through solfège imitations by echoing his solfège syllables while he pointed to the letters above the board. They would then smoothly transition into ear training, followed by vocal warm-ups. Once weekly, the students have either a composition or critical listening class. Friday participation is optional but the students are required to come for three hours on Saturdays. Attendance is important for consistency and continuity. YOLA maintains a firm rule that after three unexcused absences, the children are un-enrolled from the program. After only two months on their instruments, the YOLA at HOLA Orchestra had their first full orchestra concert on December 16, 2010. The rigor of this program models many *El Sistema* types of programs and was examined as part of my research question. YOLA has an extensive network of supporters and advocates, due largely to their connection with the L.A. Philharmonic. YOLA was quite open to sharing information about their program, and they encourage people and organizations to visit and offer their impressions. Daniel Berkowitz, the director of YOLA programs, in our March 2011 interview, said that since the launch of the site in September 2010, at least 50 different organizations had visited from places like Japan, Korea, Venezuela, and San Diego.

Using qualitative research methods such as critical ethnography, I examined YOLA's practices over a period of six months. I performed case studies to understanding the dynamics present within specific settings. In keeping with recommendations from researches like Kathleen M. Eisenhardt (1989), I combined data collection methods like student, parent and administrator interviews and observations to witness how YOLA worked to address the issue of access to classical music for Black and Latino youth.

I employed three ethnographic techniques: (1) interviews with program administrators, teachers, and other community members, (2) focus groups with parents, and (3) observations of the classrooms, rehearsals, other learning environments (i.e., graduation ceremonies, new instrument ceremonies). The goal of using these methods was to examine the practices employed by YOLA through the following perspectives: administrator, student, teacher, parent, and community member.

I used unstructured, open-ended interviews with the administrators of these music programs in order to determine their position and opinion on access to music education, and to gain permission to observe various aspects of the organization. Most of my interviews took place in person, although I asked some follow-up questions via email. I used unstructured interviews in order to understand the complex behaviors of, and interactions between, program administrators, teachers, and other community members without imposing any categorization that may have limited the field of inquiry. I also interviewed the teachers who worked with the children to learn their perspectives on the techniques they used, and what worked for their space. The interviews were approximately 45 minutes to one hour in length.

By conducting a focus group with the parents, I learned what they observed about the program and their children's involvement. Since I am not bilingual, and many of the parents

preferred to communicate in Spanish, I brought a professional translator. In order to keep these interviews anonymous, I did not collect any names or contact information.

Since the main study participants were Black and Latino music students in urban communities, I focused on that population during my observations, although there was also a significant percentage of Korean students at the HOLA site. The demographics at this particular site matched that of the neighborhood: 72% were Latino, 20% were Asian, 5% were African-American and 2% were Filipino. This large program has many levels and dimensions, so I focused my observations on one site--YOLA at HOLA. I observed the daily musical instruction of both the wind ensemble and string classes. I also witnessed the ceremony where students received their violins, and a special Valentine's Day performance given for their in-school teachers. Observation of the performances, recitals, and ceremonies are also part of the structure of the organization and may be indicative of the practices that work best for the population. During the instructional periods, I was particularly aware of the teacher-student interaction and the teacher's instructional methods.

During the course of this study, the L.A. Philharmonic and the teachers and staff of YOLA were cooperative and open to providing assistance and information in any way possible. I gained access to the program through an introduction to Leni Boorstin, the L.A. Philharmonic Director of Community Affairs. During our initial interview, she shared the structure of the program and the supervising administrators. At the first event, she invited me to at the HOLA site, where she briefly introduced me to several YOLA teachers and the site coordinator. At that point, I received their email addresses and requested permission to start visiting the site.

I had a distinct interest in this study because of my background and experiences in classical music. I am an African-American female clarinetist who grew up in a small, artistic

town in Alaska. My music education was traditional in many ways in that I learned the standard repertoire during private lessons, school band, youth orchestras, and summer camps. Upon my arrival at college as an undergraduate, my music studies were no different from my earlier education in terms of repertoire. As a graduate student, however, I started exploring more diverse composers like Paquito D’Rivera and arrangements done by the Grammy award winning woodwind quintet, Imani Winds. I wanted my final Doctorate of Musical Arts degree recital to include diverse composers. As a result, I performed compositions by Brazilian composer Antônio Carlos Jobim with trumpet and rhythm section as well as highly esteemed classical music like Olivier Messiaen’s *Quartet for the End of Time*.

I started exploring student’s interest in school bands with my private students in the Los Angeles area, and noticed that some students were losing interest in these programs because they thought they were boring. I began to explore why their interest may be waning and noticed that the music selections, oftentimes, were not a reflection of the student’s diverse backgrounds. Music selection is important for a number of reasons both culturally and psychologically. Students need to see that their cultural contributions are important and validated, and that there is highly respected repertoire that reflects their ethnic background. In addition, the teaching methods, particularly in band and orchestra programs, have not changed much since they were first established two centuries ago. According to Jorgensen,

In the face of these major shifts and movements, Western classical music and the ‘high’ arts remain normative. Performing ensembles and music classes that foster music listening and audience development are a mainstay of school music programs. Teaching methods remain generally didactic, emphasize prescribed subject matter and procedures, and utilize assessment approaches to validate this instruction. In other fundamental respects and like other school subjects, music instruction remains very traditional, and its rationale has changed little since the early part of the nineteenth century, when publicly supported schools were established. (2003, p. 3)

Although societal norms and expectations shift from generation to generation, music education has largely remained constant. The issue of engaging students of color and their interest levels in music education led me to look deeper into the issue of access, and to develop the research focus of this study. I was curious to see how students of color were receiving access to music education in Los Angeles, what repertoire they were performing and whether this affected their interest levels.

This study had several limitations, the main one being time. The data collection took place over only six months. I did not interview the students directly, although I took note of the posters and other artwork they created, and witnessed candid comments they made about YOLA, Dudamel, The L.A. Philharmonic, and their teachers.

Definitions

Community coalition: The Webster dictionary defines coalition as “a temporary alliance of distinct parties, persons, or states for joint action.” According to James R. Whitley (2003), “A coalition is an alliance of individuals and/or organizations working together to achieve a common purpose. When this type of alliance forms to address the needs and concerns of a particular community, it is often referred to as a community coalition” (p. 5). Feigherty and Rogers (1990) define a coalition as “an organization of individuals representing diverse organizations, factions or constituencies who agree to work together in order to achieve a common goal.” The community coalition in my research refers to how large organizations like YOLA, HOLA and the L.A. Philharmonic work with various members of the community like parents, business owners, smaller organizations and political figures to create a support system for their programs. In order for change to come about in a community, the community needs to

be involved (Feighery, M.S. & Rogers, Ph.D., 1990; Fawcett, et al., 1995; McCarthy & Jinnett, 2009).

Empowerment: The most commonly cited definition of empowerment comes from The Cornell Empowerment Group (1989) and states that "Empowerment is an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources." Wallerstein (1992) states that, "Empowerment is a social action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities toward the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life, and social justice." This paper talks about empowerment as it is focused around the community members receiving tools to improve their conditions.

Abreu Fellow: After being given the TED Award, *El Sistema* founder, Dr. Antonio Abreu, asked to start a program in the United States that would train teachers and musicians to start *El Sistema*-based programs all over the country. The New England Conservatory decided to host the program and began training "outstanding young postgraduate musicians and music educators, passionate for their art and for social change, who seek to guide the development of *El Sistema* programs in the U.S. and beyond. Upon completion of the program, graduates are required to work on behalf of an *El Sistema*-inspired program in the U.S. for a period of at least one year with the expectation that Fellow alumni will be actively involved in the *El Sistema* movement for years to come." <http://elsistemausa.org/the-abreu-fellows-program/the-program/> accessed 5/1/11

CHAPTER 4: MUSIC PEDAGOGY

The teacher's pedagogical approach in a music program is important, as it is reflective of the quality and expectations of the program. When teachers pay close attention to detail and delve into musicianship and musicality within the first few months of instruction, they are making it clear that these are central components to their pedagogical approach, and are vital to the goals of the program. Teaching the students how to listen critically to music and be attentive to detail bolsters their development as musicians, and builds a strong foundation for their musicianship as they continue to grow and develop. The pedagogical approaches of the YOLA teachers help us to identify their goals and their expectations of student learning. Below I examine several aspects of music pedagogy used by the teachers including music selection, attention to musicianship, use of singing, and technique development. I also examined how their use of leading questions, the teaching philosophy, intercultural sharing, the assessment process, and classroom management contributed to student learning outcomes.

Music Selection

When the music chosen for performance and instruction is reflective of the student's culture, they may experience benefits like increased enjoyment in music learning, increased subject matter connectivity, and cultural validation from their teachers and society. In addition, when students play music from differing cultures, they have the opportunity to learn about their peers and the various cultures with which they co-exist. This exposure can lead to deeper connections with people to whom they may not have previously related. Learning music from

different regions of the world may enhance a musician's adaptability to various musical elements since music from diverse regions can be distinctive according to variants in rhythm, meter, tempo, chord structure, and melody.

In reviewing the recital programs of the YOLA at HOLA performance groups, I noticed that the selections were mostly Western classical orchestral works, although there were a few songs from either the Latino, Korean, or African cultures. For example, the December 16, 2010, concert at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, featured mostly European composers like Mozart, Holst, and Beethoven. However, the string ensemble performed "Hakkyo Jongq" by Korean composer Mary Kimm Joh. The November 5, 2011 concert had several diverse selections like the Nigerian song "Funga Alafia," a traditional song in Spanish called "Mi Cuerpo," the traditional Korean song "Toraji," an arrangement of a Chilean composer's piece "Concierto al Aire," and the African American spiritual "Wade in the Water." Their concert on December 12, 2011, which took place at the Lafayette Park Recreation Center, only had a couple of diverse composers, the traditional spiritual "African Noel" sung by the choir and "Concierto al Aire" again by Fabian Andrades played by the string ensemble. The remaining fourteen selections were either traditional, like "French Folk Song" or "Deck the Hall" or songs by famous Western classical composers like Strauss, Dvorak, Beethoven, Britten, Brahms, Rossini, and Sibelius. Since YOLA is an orchestral program, it would appear that they prioritize introducing the students to the important Western classical symphonic composers: however, there is a plethora of many accomplished Latino, African-American and Korean symphonic composers whose music could be incorporated into the repertoire. Incorporating melodies from symphonies by more Latino, African-American and Korean composers would also show the students that significant symphonic works can come from anyone with any cultural background and that the contributions

from these composers are equally important to the program. Most of the ethnically diverse songs performed were either traditional or famous tunes from the American, Latin American, African American, and Korean cultures. Playing a few popular music melodies, such as a Disney song or a current pop tune in addition to these traditional melodies would be enjoyable and be easy for both students and parents to relate to, cross-culturally.

Developing Young Musicians

The habits that are instilled early in any child may stay with them for a lifetime, or at least until they learn a different way. If students are developing sound musical habits early in their studies then they have a chance to develop and prosper as musicians. Some of the practices that the YOLA teachers are fostering includes ensemble development, musicality, music theory, and ear training. Including diverse repertoire in their standard practices would enhance the well roundedness of the program.

Listening to surrounding melodies and harmonies is essential to basic musicianship. It can be challenging for young musicians to listen outside of themselves and to hear what fellow musicians are playing across the room. This is a skill that conductors often have to reiterate even in many college groups. This cross-sectional listening was a skill that YOLA teachers were developing with the students through direct challenges. During rehearsal on February 14, 2011, woodwind and wind ensemble specialist, Emily Kubitskey, was focusing on balance with the students by asking them to pay attention to which sections had the more or less important tune at the time. Kubitskey kept working to adjust each section by telling them to play softer when appropriate or louder if needed. If she wanted them to refine their sound, she pointed that out as well. As she continued to emphasize listening across the ensemble, she challenged the trumpet

section to play softer where their part was not prevalent. She asked a student to demonstrate his soft playing and told the rest of the section that she was going to let them have “personal accountability,” by allowing them to drop out if they could not play softer, which would leave only one student to play the section. They objected by screaming out, “nooooo!” As Emily walked away she replied, “nooo, you guys aren’t playing soft enough.” By the end of rehearsal the balance amongst sections had improved. Since all of the students wanted to be able to play with the section, they needed to figure out how to play softer to obtain the appropriate balance. Emily was able to keep the students attentive and interested in the rehearsal by having the trumpet student demonstrate the obtainable goal of playing softly, then directly challenging the other students to do the same. Rigorous instruction served as a motivational role in the students’ interest level. Striking that balance may encourage students to continue coming to class with an eagerness to learn.

In order to continuously improve in music, student and teacher must engage in constant problem isolation. During the rehearsal later on that day, Blake, the brass specialist, was focused on improving the tone and dynamics of the song to make it more musical. After playing for a few minutes, he remarked, “I didn’t love the tone. Can we make it sweeter? Remember how we moved to the music before?” The next time they played, one of the trumpet students began swaying back and forth. After practicing on their own for a few minutes, Blake reengaged the group. “Now let’s play with dynamics,” he said. He sang the phrase while demonstrating how it should sound with dynamics. After they played the phrase again, he told them to play the pianos softer in order to enhance the dynamic contrast. The dynamics improved the second time. By pinpointing the precise problem, whether it was creating a beautiful tone or starting the pianos softer, Blake was able to achieve the desired results by isolating the problem and focusing the

attention there. The practice of problem isolation motivates continuous improvement, which may create a sense of accomplishment. As a result, the students may be more likely to enjoy their time in orchestra when they hear daily improvement.

Ear training and music theory are integral to developing a well-rounded musician. The choir and ear training classes reinforced the songs that the students were singing and playing in orchestra. For example, during their choir and musicianship class, the students clapped and said the rhythm of the tune, “Simple Gifts,” a song they were to perform with the combined orchestra and choir. When David asked the students to solfège the whole song they seemed much quieter than when they were mimicking his pitch or singing intervals. The students did not realize that they were solfègeing “Simple Gifts,” until he informed them near the end of class. “Ohhh!” said the children in shocked discovery. David responded, “Yeah! Why do you think we’re doing this? If you can sing it, you can play it.” By getting more comfortable with singing and solfège, the young musicians are building their sight-reading skills so that they can learn music with greater efficiency. The key, however, is to make sure that the students are making the connection between sight-singing and sight-reading with their instruments. Preparing them to be great sight-readers through these musicianship classes supports the students in their journey to becoming accomplished musicians.

The YOLA teachers worked diligently to develop young musicians while keeping them engaged and excited about learning. By activating motivation through direct challenges, engaging in constant problem isolation, and asking leading questions, the teachers were able to keep the students committed to achieving their performance goals. Student engagement and commitment are two elements that contribute to the program’s ability to retain, expand and develop the program.

Inquiry-Based Learning

Asking questions can be used to create a pathway to student engagement in class, to test their knowledge, and to track their progress. At YOLA, most of the inquiry-based learning took place while the teachers were asking leading questions. Even though the teachers had predetermined answers to these questions, they were presented as avenues for the students to reflect on or analyze the music and the situation by answering, “What happened here?” Taking a less didactic approach to instruction, as they do at YOLA, and allowing the students to engage in dialog with the teachers, may give students the opportunity to retain more information by discovering the answers through a trial and error process. Critically focusing on musical elements like starting together, phrasing, and dynamics at such an early point in their musical education creates a strong foundation for musicianship in the future. Below are examples of two leading questions that the teachers asked during rehearsal.

Leading Question #1: “What did I do to help you start on time?”

As noted earlier, playing together while following the conductor is a skill that is integral to orchestral playing. YOLA teachers spent a great deal of rehearsal time maturing this skill as demonstrated during rehearsal on February 14, 2011. The focus of this segment of class was starting the piece together with the conductor. Kubitskey stood in front of the wind ensemble and brought her hands up as a signal for the students to get ready to play. She stopped and started the piece several times in an effort to get the orchestra to start the song as one unit. She was giving visual cues to direct them to enter together, and was hoping that the students would notice. The first time she brought up her hands, she did not make this gesture but the subsequent times she

did. Then she asked the students, “What did I do to help you start on time?” After several raised hands and attempts, a student give the answer Emily sought, which was that she took a “visual breath” right before their entrance.

Leading Question #2 “What did he do to bring that out?”

Another example of inquiry-based learning took place on the same day in February and focused more on phrasing and dynamics. When Emily started the students again, she wanted to emphasize the importance of not breathing over the bar line in order to extend the phrase. She asks Daniel Berkowitz, a YOLA administrator and trombonist who periodically sits in during the rehearsals to support the trombone section, to demonstrate how to continue the musical line by not breathing over the bar line. After he played the phrase, she asked the students what he did to bring out carrying the musical line over the bar. Once again, after several students raised their hands, a student correctly answered that Berkowitz made a crescendo—just before he got to the bar line. Now Kubitskey was ready to start the piece again so that the students could implement this new detail.

Kubitskey’s question about dynamics allowed the students to test their critical listening skills and musical vocabulary while reinforcing the concept of playing musically by extending the melodic line. By simply identifying how Berkowitz was able to play more musically, the students were learning one detailed, specific technic they could use to play more expressively through dynamics and proper phrasing, two things that are often require much development even on the college level. By answering the question with a musical term, the student also verified for Emily that they were building her musical vocabulary.

By asking leading questions that required students to achieve a deeper level of musical understanding and developing greater attention to detail, YOLA teachers were able to test student's knowledge, reiterate key concepts, and challenge students to make connections to observations they are making during the rehearsal time. This interaction also challenged and encouraged students to engage with the music and in the class. The frequency of this and other questions about ensemble will also ensure that the students retain these lessons in the future.

Teaching Philosophy

The teaching philosophy that was established by YOLA teachers also played a large role in both the quality and the level of student and parent retention and involvement. Their shared philosophy aimed to create an environment that encouraged creativity by fostering a safe and caring environment. During an interview with Emily, she shared with me several stories regarding the students revealing heart-wrenching stories about their personal lives. YOLA teachers and administrators wanted to make sure the space was safe for the students to be vulnerable so that they could learn, experience, and create music without hindrance. They encouraged students by highlighting their success, emphasizing intercultural sharing, engaging in low-pressure assessment, and managing the classroom through clear expectations of respect for both the teachers and fellow classmates. Since the teachers collaborated in creating and practicing this philosophy together, the students had consistent expectations with each teacher.

YOLA teachers determined that it was important to create a supportive classroom culture while providing the structure where creativity could thrive. One way of fostering their creativity was through composition exercises. During one class I observed, the students were composing a two-bar melody as a group. Blake, the YOLA at HOLA brass specialist, chose the key signature,

(4/4), and told them to pick two rhythms. He restricted the choices to quarter notes and half notes. Then he asked them to choose three notes, either F#, G#, or D. After they chose the notes and rhythms for the composition, Blake played it on the piano. The students wanted to conduct him while he played. One student yelled out, “Lame!” several times while another student defended the composition. In addition, various students’ personal two-bar compositions were displayed on the door of both the first and fourth grade classrooms. They named the compositions and described the feeling it was supposed to portray on the posters. Although composition is part of the music education standards, it is often neglected in music education. Allowing the students to explore and hone these skills provides an opportunity for them to gain and maintain confidence in their creative abilities.

Creating an environment that highlighted the students’ successes was also central. On observation day, February 27, 2011, the students were going through their regular solo time. That day a clarinetist played the *Beauty and the Beast* theme song. After she finished playing, Christine announced to the class that nobody gave the student the music to this song. She started on clarinet a month later than everybody else but quickly caught up. Christine told the students that they can do the same thing, she encouraged them by saying, “You all should go out and learn how to play a song you really want to learn.” The students also highlighted the success of their fellow classmates in their own way. For example, on March 17, 2011, a student taught himself how to play “Simple Gifts” by ear on the recorder. This was a song that the students were learning on their band instruments since they finished playing the recorder several months earlier. As he was playing the song before the start of class, all of the students stopped what they were doing and gathered around to listen. Drawing attention to success may encourage the

students to achieve more or give them the courage to try something new. This may also contribute to their confidence levels, which may inspire them to continue in music.

The students sharing the space at the HOLA site represented several very different cultures. Even though they may have lived in the same zip code, does not mean that they lived in the same buildings, attended the same schools or patronized the same businesses. As a result, even though many of the students were “neighbors,” there may not have been many more common spaces for intercultural sharing outside of the HOLA site. In order to build strong relationships with both the participants and their families, YOLA teachers decided that they wanted to bring the students’ personal lives into the classroom. They accomplished this by constantly incorporating storytelling, through student sharing of their traditional songs, and by attempting to connect classroom learning to the community. Christine felt that teachers incorporated the students’ personal lives by asking them to bring in music that was important to their community and sharing what it meant to them. She said that the students would learn the music by ear and play it for the class. For example, she shared how a Korean boy played a traditional Korean hymn for the class. The Latino students, especially, asked many questions about the song. Another example was when the Latino students taught the class their version of a song traditionally sung for birthdays. She said that the Korean children were eager to learn it because they were able to sing a song in a language they had never spoken before. Christine feels that these experiences tie them together. It was important to the teachers that they create a space that was positive and where the kids felt they belonged.

Student assessment is a meaningful way to track the progress of individuals and the group as a whole. The YOLA teachers wanted the assessment process to be low-pressure so they never referred to them as “tests.” They accomplished this by asking the children to play solos of

specific pieces they were learning or by asking them to play as a section. In addition, each teacher regularly communicates the goals, learning objectives, and accomplishments during each rehearsal. For example, at the beginning of a rehearsal, the teacher may list the songs he or she wants to complete by the end of the rehearsal. If they are only working on learning one song he may indicate the point in the music he desires to reach by the end of rehearsal. At the end of class, the teachers will check back in with the goals articulated at the start of class and have the students express their performance level and ask them if they covered all of the sections that they discussed. Certainly one of the main goals of assessment is to gauge student progress so that the teacher can continue to teach them effectively.

Clear expectations and consistency were central to YOLA's classroom management policies. In the preliminary pre-planning session, the teachers established common practices among the classrooms. The first was addressing students as "artists," the second was the three rest positions (relaxed, rest, ready), the third incorporated routines like transitions and classroom norms, and the fourth included respecting the instrument and maintaining posture, personal space and proper positions. All teachers consistently implemented these common practices. Another element addressed performance as habit, so the students performed both informally and formally on a regular basis. YOLA teachers believe that HOLA's core values of respect, responsibility, positive communication and support best summarize their classroom expectations. The teachers would regularly reference HOLA's values that were listed on a poster board at the front of the room. If the students needed repeated reminding to be respectful, they had to pack up their instruments up for the day. Consistency and clear expectations contributes to a child's fundamental feeling of security.

Retention and longevity are crucial aspects of growth, development, and maintenance of a music education program. A music selection to which both student and parent can relate may contribute to their willingness to continue in the program. Although the music selection at YOLA was mostly orchestral-based, and they only incorporated a few traditional songs from the student's cultures, the parents started listening to more classical music themselves. With YOLA emphasizing the abovementioned elements, in addition to music theory and ear training through constant problem isolation and direct challenges, the students are able to feel a sense of accomplishment while learning important rehearsal techniques. Inquire-based learning keeps students engaged in dialog and aids in the recall of old information while making new discoveries. Connecting these leading questions to musical detail makes them even more meaningful. A teaching philosophy that facilitates a welcome feeling in both the students and their families also contributes to positive student learning outcomes. YOLA's goal was that this environment would foster students' gratification in exploring their creativity and supporting each other. As a result, teachers and fellow students would highlight student successes. YOLA teachers also incorporated storytelling so that everyone would feel more comfortable sharing their personal stories. Student assessment was often informal, regular, and low-pressure in order to minimize anxiety about any aspect of music making. Clear and consistent expectations were laid out for the students so that mitigated any uncertainty about respectful versus inappropriate behavior. All of these pedagogical techniques may have contributed to both parent and student satisfaction, which may play a part in student retention and therefore the overall longevity of the program.

CHAPTER 5: YOLA'S CONNECTION TO *EL SISTEMA*'S CORE VALUES

YOLA, being based on *El Sistema*'s model for music education, has adopted many principles of *El Sistema*'s core values and several of its fundamental elements. This chapter focuses on the following elements: (1) Mission of social change, (2) Access and excellence, (3) The use of ensemble, and (4) The CATS Model: Citizen / Artists / Teacher / Scholar. In the pages that follow, I will outline examples of how YOLA has made these principles the main frame of their program and how it connects to the L.A. Philharmonic's vision for music education.

From my observations, YOLA and the L.A. Philharmonic education department have a clearly articulated mission. According to their website www.laphil.com/education, the education department's mission is the following:

The Los Angeles Philharmonic believes in the profound and transforming experience of living music. We are committed to creating innovative music education programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. Our programs provide access to the world's finest musicians and creative programming. The Philharmonic is dedicated to providing leadership in music education and to building upon the renewed commitment in Los Angeles public schools to restore arts education for all students.

The L.A. Philharmonic's commitment to bringing innovative music education programs to people of diverse backgrounds led them to bringing an *El Sistema*-inspired program to some of the neediest communities in Los Angeles. The students of YOLA have access to the L.A. Philharmonic musicians in the form of performances, lessons and demonstrations. The Philharmonic's leadership in music education is demonstrated through the stakeholder meetings they have on a regular basis, which encourage and provide resources to other communities around Southern California to start *El Sistema* inspired programs. YOLA's focus is also in

congruence with the L.A. Philharmonic's education mission, which has established that they should provide orchestral music education. As a result, the students are learning classical music by composers like Mahler, Brahms, and Ravel. These composers and their symphonies are standards in the orchestral repertoire performed by Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Empowering Students Through Music Education

A founding mission of *El Sistema* in Venezuela was to affect social change and empowerment through music education. *Tocar y luchar* ("to play and to struggle") is a phrase that *El Sistema* often articulates to express its mission. Their goal is to use music as a tool to enable each child to feel like a valuable resource within his or her community, both inside and outside of the various rehearsal spaces or "*nucleos*." For YOLA, social change is an integral part of their focus too. Through empowering the students to express themselves, encouraging them to have ownership of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and by educating and empowering the parents, YOLA is hoping to create social change in this community.

The YOLA administrators want the students to feel like their opinions are of significance in their communities and that they can influence their community by voicing their opinions. I witnessed an example of this practice on May 16, 2011. Christine shared with me that recently there was a surge of gang violence in the area, so she decided to have the students make posters for display in the windows facing the street that expressed how they liked making music in their community. With their instrument sections, students made posters that represented what they wanted to share with the community. The posters said things like, "We Love Music," "We Love Our Orchestra," "We Like YOLA at HOLA," "HOLA Teachers Rock," "We Are the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles," "We Love YOLA and Los Angeles Philharmonic," and "YOLA

Oboes [heart] Gustavo.” The students seemed excited to make their posters and share their love of music with the community. The hope was that neighbors would see something positive coming from the children there and think twice about contributing to the violence. Perhaps the gestures of the students would motivate the parents to stand against violence in their community so as the students grow older, they may choose to build up instead of tear down their neighborhood.

At YOLA, they also want the students to feel like the Los Angeles Philharmonic is their orchestra. During my interview with Heart’s of Los Angeles’s parent liaison on May 16, 2011, she shared a story with me that may reflect the sense of ownership the students had with Dudamel and the L.A. Philharmonic. After Dudamel’s first visit, the students had another opportunity to see him conduct in the Walt Disney Concert Hall. She noticed that they were excited and it appeared that they felt like Dudamel was their friend and that they could be just like him. She quoted the children saying, “Ah, it’s Gustavo! *Esta aqui!*” She started to tear up as she was telling me the story because she was moved by how it seemed like the children now believed that greatness was attainable for them too. That one day, they could play on that stage just like Dudamel.

YOLA is also engaged in empowering the students’ parents through musicianship classes and other courses in life skills. They regularly ask the parents to complete surveys about their thoughts on YOLA and improvements they would like to see. Berkowitz, the director of YOLA programs, recognized that many of the YOLA staff and faculty are strangers to the community. He believes that, “When you give something that they [community members] need, they’ll rise to the occasion.” Berkowitz also subscribes to the belief that, “With this instrument they will change the world,” a statement often expressed by *El Sistema* founder, Abreu, each time he

hands a student their first instrument. At the same time, Berkowitz recognizes that “We’re not the saviors sent down from heaven, each community has its resources. We are just building off its strength.” He wants the parents to know that “your kids are talented and we’re going to help them get to the next level.” He felt that the parents viewing student performances facilitate a tremendous “buy-in.” The parents have seen them perform every other month. The parents feel that their kids are more focused in school, and they noticed that their grades are improving. He expressed that he understands that the teachers and administrators are outsiders and that they are not from the communities that they are serving. His hope, however, was that the members of the community would one day be the teachers and administrators running these programs, although no formal training is currently in place. Maintaining their focus on social change through student and parent empowerment is crucial to the longevity of the program because if the community supports the work, they are more likely to support and mobilize behind it. In order for the community to be liberated from the oppression of their current circumstances, they need to be the ones at the helm, guiding where they need to go. YOLA’s presence and initial investments may function as the catalyst, but it will take the community’s support to maintain momentum.

Access, Playing Together, and the CATS Model

El Sistema-inspired programs target two important issues for impoverished students of color in music education: access and excellence. The previous chapter detailed how their pedagogical practices contribute to the student’s elevated performance. A fundamental principle of *El Sistema* is that the quality of music instruction is elevated; in addition, it is accessible for as many children as possible. They do not believe in making a choice between high quality program for a few students or a mediocre program with widespread access. Both access and excellence

must be in place and extensive. For YOLA, the location of the program is important for the accomplishment of this goal. Both the Hearts of Los Angeles and EXPO sites are located in densely populated neighborhoods, and thus most of the students are within walking distance of the program. YOLA does not turn students down based on talent, and thanks to YOLA's extensive list of donors and grantors, the classes are offered at no cost to parents. The objective of these policies is to ensure that low-income and minority families have access to YOLA's services.

El Sistema programs believe that the orchestra is a model of society, in which, rather than fostering competition between individuals, people should be encouraged to work together. I witnessed many section-building exercises during my observations like a game I observed on February 27, 2011. During this hour, the teacher seemed to focus on mimicking, improvising and rapport building within the sections. The teacher asked all of the students to sit in a circle while she brought out the boomwackers (pitched tubes). After working with the students to establish the rules of appropriate boomwacker use, they began the game. First, she started with body percussion only. She asked them to mimic her by repeating, "Mmm, mmm," while hitting legs twice, then "Pa!" with a clap. Then they went around the circle taking turns leading the class in the rhythms they created. She then told them to pair up so that they could make up additional rhythms and share it with their partners. Then she was ready to hand out the boomwackers. She wanted the students to come up with their own rhythm, first in teams, then with their entire instrument section. Since this was during the brass sectional hour, she divided them into two groups: trumpets and low brass. They were to come up with a name for both their duet and for their group. After working for five minutes on their group piece, they performed it for the class. By encouraging the students to work together as a group, both in music and in games, they build

on the principal that the orchestra is a model of society. The students have created posters in their sections, composed together in their sections, and even became friends with fellow section members, even though they did not attend the same schools and were not of the same cultural background.

The Citizen / Artist / Teacher / Scholar (CATS model) is an important aspect to the teacher's philosophy. The teachers believe that they too should serve multiple roles as musicians. According to an email from Berkowitz on April 27, 2011,

The acronym "CATS" stands for "Citizen-Artist-Teacher-Scholar," coined by the 2009-2010 Abreu Fellows with [New England Conservatory] faculty member, Larry Scripp, to describe musicians aspiring to lead children by teaching, performing, educating, and modeling good citizenship. HOLA teaching artists discussed this model for a 21st-century musician and employ these attributes on a daily basis.

They wanted the students to see them interacting in these various roles. For example, the students will see the teachers as musicians during the regularly scheduled faculty recitals and performances. The teachers also share stories with the students about the performances and orchestral auditions that they take. In addition, YOLA administrators will play in sections with the students. Through YOLA's use of several of *El Sistema's* core values, YOLA is able to facilitate a process where families and students can begin feeling empowered, families from different cultures can feel comfortable working with each other, and students can see that as a musician, their possibilities are endless. They are doing this all while establishing a program with increasingly wide access and noticeably high quality.

CHAPTER 6: CREATING ACCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The final component, and one of the most important aspects necessary for effectively providing a high quality music program to impoverished students of color, is community coalition building. The old adage “it takes a village to raise a child” came to mind when I looked at YOLA’s approach to creating access and opportunities for the students and for the community. YOLA involves the parents, classroom teachers, and volunteers from the community in order to accomplish their objectives. They are able to hone their resources through connecting with strategic partners and with official and unofficial stakeholders. By regularly partnering and collaborating with community members, business and organizations, and utilizing previously established support systems like public school teachers and partnering organization’s resources, YOLA is able to involve the greater Los Angeles community in the sustainability and growth of YOLA at HOLA.

YOLA’s Engagement with the Surrounding Community

Achieving a balance of give and take with the surrounding community is significant to YOLA’s survival and growth in this neighborhood. Gaining the parents’ confidence in the program was a challenge at first, until the parents heard their children perform and witnessed Dudamel’s appearance at their first violin ceremony. The families’ belief in the program continued to grow as they participated in the classes offered by YOLA, and as they attended the potlucks and performances. The designated parent liaison also facilitates relationship building

between the parents and the administrators as they work to bridge the cultural gaps. YOLA also campaigned to include and thank classroom teachers for their hard work with the students to enhance the child's holistic support system. They also regularly schedule joint concerts with children from the surrounding public schools. YOLA has a steady stream of volunteers, some come on their own accord, while others are guided there through training programs like the Abreu Scholars Fellowship. The network of support that YOLA has built is instrumental in ensuring the longevity of support for the orchestra in the immediate community.

Family involvement is an integral part of both *El Sistema* and YOLA. Christine described families as the “blood of the program.” One technique they employed to get parents involved right from the beginning was the use of the “paper orchestra.” Twenty years ago, *El Sistema* took this approach to starting young violinists in order to engage parents, foster focus and discipline from the students, and give the families a way to explore music in this way for the first time. At the HOLA site, the parents helped the students build and create their paper violins. This type of family involvement early on was especially important for this site, since Christine felt that the parents did not trust her or the teachers for the first four weeks. YOLA, like *El Sistema*, aims to focus holistically on nurturing the child. Without parental support, YOLA would not be able to keep students enrolled. YOLA also supports the parents on an ongoing basis in various ways.

YOLA offers many opportunities for parents to get involved through classes and surveys, they also create an atmosphere for informal involvement. For example, YOLA at the EXPO center has two weekly hour-long sessions for parents. The first session is called Parent Hour and the second is a musicianship class. The parent attendance averages about 30 people per week and includes classes on nutrition, experiencing music and art in the city, and enhancing their child's success. The YOLA at HOLA site runs a weekly musicianship class where parents can

learn the same music as their children and even perform alongside them, for example, around Christmas time. The aim of this class is to build self-esteem and community. They want to boost the parents' empowerment to help their children learn. Christine felt that although a mom may not be able to help her child with the reading homework, being able to assist her with music may aid in building her confidence. Both sites have several potlucks each year after the concerts, which can facilitate community building. The variety of options for parent involvement means that more people have the opportunity to engage in a way that is comfortable and convenient. As a result, the parents may feel closer to the program and may be more willing to commit to their child's enrollment and continued success in the orchestra.

YOLA at HOLA also has a parent liaison to guide staff members' interaction and connection with the parents. In my interview with the parent liaison, Veronica Matos, on May 16, 2011, she expressed that she helps the staff overcome not just the language barrier, but also the cultural barrier with the parents. She also facilitates the parents' navigation of the Americanized culture in which their children are living. She may go with the parents to a school conference, to court to act as a translator, or to other special school meetings. Matos felt that her role has grown into more of a parent advocate because of the assumptions some of administrators or teachers may have. For example, people may assume that the parents have a car, can speak some English, have a high school education or have access to the internet. She noticed that parents who initially came into HOLA through YOLA are more involved in the mainstream HOLA events and are vocal about their gratitude for YOLA. Since the YOLA teachers and administrators are not from the Rampart district nor do they share the same cultural background as many of the participants, the parent liaison's ability to help them navigate the cultural differences may be important for enhancing the parents' investment in the program.

The classroom teachers and surrounding public schools are important allies to the program. YOLA at HOLA campaigned to reach out to the orchestra student's in-school, general subject teachers. As Christine explained to me, having in-school teachers on their side and in the loop makes it easier to support the child in multiple ways, making it, "more difficult for them slip through the cracks." With good communication lines open with the teacher, ideally, Christine can find out if the student is having challenges at school or problems with a school subject, so that the HOLA tutors and YOLA teachers can continue to support the student as needed after school or refer them to an outside specialist. In some cases, in-school music teachers may feel threatened by an after school music program, or concerned that they will lose their jobs. In an effort to bolster the in-school music teachers' feelings of support, and to reward the school's efforts for maintaining an in-school music program, YOLA administrators went to schools that had at least one hour of music per week and asked those teachers to refer fifteen students to their program in exchange for a free L.A. Philharmonic residency. The residency would include visits and performances by L.A. Philharmonic musicians over the period of several months. YOLA also coordinated several performances with the local schools.

One community-building performance event took place on Valentine's Day. During my observation on February 14, 2011, the YOLA Wind Ensemble was preparing for their Valentine's Day performance. I looked around and noticed that the room was decorated for Valentine's Day with hearts and "I Love You" signs. This particular performance was significant for both YOLA administration, students, and in-school classroom teachers since it was part of the YOLA administration's campaign to reach out to the students' classroom teachers. The students appeared excited to watch their classroom teachers enter. The teachers looked happy to be there and appeared to be quite impressed with the student's progress. HOLA's academic

teachers also have individual connections to the schools so, on the Valentine's Day performance, the tutors connected with the students' in-school teachers to see what problems they may be able to address in the students' work. Building strong partnerships with the classroom teachers strengthen the support system for the students, especially since they spend most of their day in school.

Another important aspect of community involvement are the volunteers. On February 23, 2011, I met a trumpet volunteer at YOLA. She came over to me and introduced herself and informed me that she recently received her bachelor's degree from the UCLA ethnomusicology department the year prior. She comes once weekly to assist different trumpet players one-on-one or to work with the brass section in general. She told me that she has volunteered at this site for the past few months and that it was "a way to stay active in the community while looking for a job [job]." She did not indicate that she was recruited to volunteer, but said that she heard about the program and wanted to give back to the community. The community at large seems invested in the orchestra succeed and is eager to give their time in order to be a part of that success.

Periodically, YOLA also has access to volunteers who are specifically trained in *El Sistema*'s principals. Two administrators for YOLA are Abreu Fellows--young musicians and music educators who have gone through post-graduate training to become *El Sistema* administrators. Abreu fellows worked closely with the students during their residencies, as witnessed on March 3, 2011. While I was observing the string players, the fellows offered reinforcement for the teachers by tuning violins and assisting with the positioning, fingerings, and notes. The Abreu fellows were able to get hands-on experience working with the children while providing valuable support to the teachers.

Between parents, classroom teachers and volunteers, the students at YOLA are receiving a plethora of support from the immediate community. The parents' involvement helps them better understand what their child is learning. The potlucks give the parents the opportunity to give back to the program and the various classes support the parents in other important areas in life outside of music. YOLA's engagement with the public school teachers also ensures that someone is looking out for the best interests of the child from morning all the way to after school and beyond. The steady stream of volunteers provides vital support on a daily basis, which keeps rehearsals effective and progressive. YOLA's engagement with the immediate community ensures that the people closest to the program will continue to support it.

YOLA's Collaborations with the Extended Community

YOLA took several steps to promote and encourage community coalition building with the extended community. They keep the media abreast of major new developments in the program, and its affiliation with Dudamel and the L.A. Philharmonic, to ensure visibility. They also use political support from important figures in local, state and national offices. They welcome various community members throughout Southern California into their circle of stakeholders while forming informal partnerships. YOLA also strategically forms formal partnerships with organizations, which are mutually beneficial. This use of networking and resources allows YOLA to provide access to students in a way that is significant and influential.

I first experienced YOLA's involvement with the greater Los Angeles community when I attended YOLA at HOLA's first performance with the paper orchestra, just one month after they started music classes. This event, which took place on October 16, 2010, also served as an introduction to the new HOLA site for the L.A. Philharmonic board members, investors, and the

media. Mitch Moore—the founder of HOLA spoke briefly about how excited he was to have YOLA there. U.S. Senator, Barbara Boxer, gave a rousing speech about how she was the first person to write after-school programs into law. Council Member, Ed Reyes, spoke about the benefits this program will have for the community. Dudamel spoke about how he loves uplifting the community through music and building dreams through the arts. This initial introduction of the site to the public showcased the political support of the program. Subsequent performances were geared more towards thanking local community for their support of YOLA and for showcasing the student’s accomplishments.

Strategic partnerships, both formal and informal were a key component to YOLA’s practices. According to YOLA, partnership is, “a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of a specified goal” (“Composing Change: YOLA and the *El Sistema* Movement” accessed online May 4, 2011). More specifically, YOLA has defined two levels of partnerships: informal and formal. YOLA defines informal partnerships as “Organizations that are working together for a common cause but without a formal agreement.” Some of their stakeholders are affirmed within the community and operating successfully so YOLA decided to form an informal partnership with them. Examples of these informal partnerships include the Renaissance Arts Academy (a small music and performing arts charter school dedicated to cultivating “twenty-first century Renaissance citizens”) Education Through Music –Los Angeles (a program that promotes integrating music into the general curricula), and Verdugo Young Musicians Association (an *El Sistema*-based music education organization that has partnered with the Pasadena Unified School District after school program, LEARNs). YOLA’s strategic, formal partnerships with more established organizations like The Harmony Project and Hearts of Los Angeles have allowed

them to expand rapidly and efficiently. An important distinction of formal partnership is that they usually require a formal, written agreement between the two parties. According to “Composing Change: YOLA and the *El Sistema* Movement,” YOLA does the following before establishing a formal partnership,

(1) Align the missions – “the partnership should be mutually beneficial to fulfilling each organization’s mission.”

(2) Analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the potential partnership.

With the missions aligned, both organizations can move forward without compromising their goals but helping each other progress. By analyzing the SWOT of the partnership, they can plan accordingly for any issues that may arise.

Not only was it beneficial for YOLA to use HOLA’s reputation, but HOLA also had access to resources like physical space, access to funding, and infrastructure for tutors and volunteers. The space and location of the program have been crucial for YOLA. Christine credited the location as being a large contributor to their success.

At the second stakeholder meeting I attended on January 19, 2011, which took place at Renaissance Arts Academy in Eagle Rock, CA, I heard a L.A. Philharmonic education staff member say that the purpose of L.A. Philharmonic’s stakeholder network was to be a matchmaker for community members--they were happy to make introductions. What I gathered was that they were hoping that within and outside of these meetings, individuals would meet and mingle in such a way that was mutually beneficial for both parties. They also wish to empower the community to start their own *El Sistema*-inspired youth orchestras by sharing resources, as seen on the YOLA Resource Library section of the L.A. Philharmonic website.

An important practice for providing access to music education is community coalition building with the extended community. YOLA accomplishes this through connecting with the media and inviting them to key events. They also invite important local, city and state political leaders to speak and endorse the program whenever appropriate. They are always open to welcoming new individuals and organizations into their group of stakeholders. In addition, the formal partnerships they have formed with both The Harmony Project and Hearts of Los Angeles have allowed them to excel and reach a significant number of students within a short period of time while maintaining a high quality program.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This study has focused on the research question: what practices do non-profit, non-governmental organizations, like YOLA, employ in order to provide high quality music education to Black and Latino students in the Los Angeles area? During this case study, I witnessed how YOLA used its resources and activated their network in order to make a high quality music program available to the impoverished youth of the Rampart District. Through observations, interviews and focus groups with parents, teachers and administrators, I learned how their practices in pedagogy, *El Sistema*-based philosophy, and community engagement contributed to the program's success and where they could improve upon their efforts.

While YOLA's pedagogical practices were a large contributor to their best practices, there were also areas for future improvement. For example, the programs repertoire was mostly from the Western classical music canon and featured composers like Wagner, Brahms, Sibelius, Rossini, and Beethoven. When they did include more culturally relevant music it was usually a traditionally song or a children's melody, with the exception of *Concierto Al Aire* by Fabian Andrades. Part of the issue may be that the instructors simply were not familiar with more well-known Latino and African descendent symphonic composers like Carlos Chavez, Manuel Ponce, Astor Piazzolla, Alberto Ginastera, Duke Ellington, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, George Theophilus Walker, or Hannibal Lokumbe. During an interview on August 9, 2012 with Dr. Steve Loza, UCLA ethnomusicology professor, he argued that, "Instructors should have workshops with people who know the repertoire." Although folk songs should not be considered a lesser style of music, if most of the pieces performed are symphonic works, then they should also perform symphonic works by Black, Latino, and Korean composers.

Teachers at YOLA contributed to the high quality of the program because of their high expectations of the students, constant reiteration of proper orchestra etiquette, and attention to details like dynamics and balance. The teachers accomplished this through asking leading questions, which reiterated concepts that the students were learning and encouraged them to engage in the learning process. The teachers also activated motivation through direct challenges, constantly engaged in problem isolation, providing constructive criticism, and encouraging the students to self-evaluate their playing. Their pedagogical practices created a safe space where students could be creative, and share intimate insights into their everyday lives.

YOLA's connection to *El Sistema*'s core values set the tone for the practices they would employ. Some of the most influential guiding principals by which YOLA's abides were practices the administrators observed in action in their Abreu Fellows training and visit to Venezuela. This study focused on four core values of *El Sistema* that YOLA folded into their everyday practices: (1) the Mission of social change; (2) Access and excellence; (3) The use of ensemble; and (4) The CATS Model: Citizen / Artists / Teacher / Scholar. Many of the programs, for the parents especially, were created to foster personal growth and empowerment. YOLA desired to give the residents of the Rampart district the boost and support that they needed now so that one day the residents could fully operate the programs themselves. By regularly administering parent surveys, both formal and informal, and through utilizing the parent liaison, YOLA can get a better idea of how to meet the parents' needs and desires for educating their children. Perhaps this open communication with the parents, when they aren't hindered by the language differences, may encourage parents to advocate for their children's education in other areas as well. When it came to access and excellence, YOLA wanted to position itself in a densely populated, low income, underrepresented neighborhood that had limited access to music

education. Their HOLA site, located in the Rampart District, fit the description. Since the program is free to its participants and most families live within walking distance from the site, the program was easily accessible for many people. At YOLA, their seriousness about learning music at a high level of excellence was evidenced by the frequency of classes—up to six days per week—and the variety of music areas covered in their two hours of music every day. In keeping with the CATS model (Citizen / Artists / Teacher / Scholar), YOLA administrators would regularly sit-in and play with the orchestra, and YOLA teachers would give performances and discuss their orchestral pursuits. YOLA teachers and students gave performances in the community and were often invited to give additional performances in other local venues. Teachers and administrators were demonstrating for the students that they could function in multiple roles in music while still being a serious musician. During my observations, their core values were apparent in nearly every area of engagement. By adhering to clearly articulated and well-vetted goals, YOLA was able to provide access to classical music education for Black and Latino youth.

YOLA used the L.A. Philharmonic's extensive network and the networks of their strategic partners (i.e., Hearts of Los Angeles and the Harmony Project) to expand quickly and efficiently. YOLA regularly partnered and collaborated with community members, businesses and organizations, and used support systems that were already in place like in-school teachers and other established organizations. They also actively expanded their network through their stakeholder meetings and other networking events. YOLA at HOLA had a steady stream of volunteers from various sources. As a result, YOLA was able to involve the greater Los Angeles community in the sustainability of YOLA at HOLA.

There are many important lessons to learn from YOLA as they export a model for music education and access from the South to the West. With the state of the scarcity of funding for in-school music programs, it may become increasingly important for us to understand and implement the best practices that we observe. One lesson to keep in mind is the importance of the students learning culturally relevant music. There is a wide array of symphonic composers and songwriters representing a plethora of ethnicities and cultures. It would also be advantageous for the teachers to honor and integrate the practice of passing along music through oral traditions common to so many cultures. This may be a vital piece to truly empower the students and develop them into well-rounded musicians. Diverse music from around the world is at our fingertips, therefore, teaching the usual composers in the usual way is not always reflective of this youth's culture nor of the wide range of interests of this generation. There is a growing divide between the culture kids grow up in today and the culture of a traditional band or orchestra program. As a result, a large segment of the population is not maintaining interest in the music they may learn in school. So even though, according to a Gallop Poll conduct for the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), the overwhelming majority of Americans think that music is a vital part of education (accessed 10/31/11), many school districts do not feel that their music programs are valuable enough to sustain in their current form. Meanwhile, organizations like YOLA aim to target underrepresented populations, by going around the structural boundaries of a neoliberal standards-based educational system.

By observing YOLA's practices, I learned how their actions contributed to their outcomes. With this knowledge, other programs nationwide may be able to learn from their methods or mistakes and improve upon their abilities to serve similar communities. It is also helpful that YOLA is backed by a large, well-established organization, the Los Angeles

Philharmonic, which has many relationships with funders. This type of program is also conducive to being located in a metropolis because many areas are densely populated. This case study is only the beginning of a much larger issue of access that can be explored in greater depth and detail in future research projects. Instead of simply focusing on the benefits of music and arts education or simply concentrating on music education inequalities in this country, we can take steps to focus on successful practices that organizations employ and share that information to increase access for the youth in this country.

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