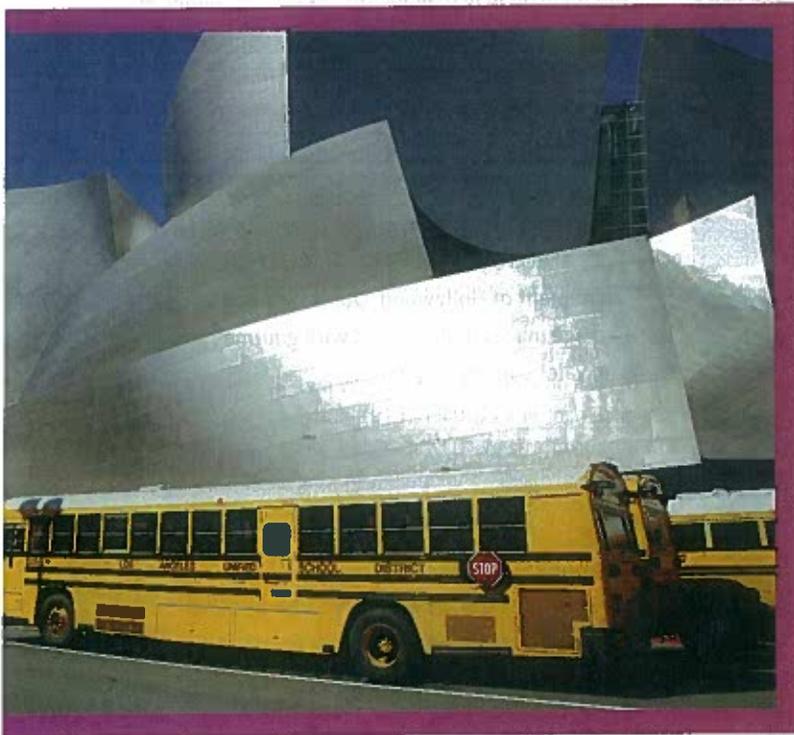


MUSIC MATTERS

THE SCHOOL PARTNERS PROGRAM

"We will show them the joy of playing music, and then, the people will see that you can change a life with music."

— Gustavo Dudamel



Incoming Los Angeles Philharmonic Music Director Gustavo Dudamel is a man on a mission. For Dudamel, the transformative power of classical music should be available to everyone, but especially to our children. A product of Venezuela's revolutionary youth orchestra movement, *El Sistema*, Dudamel is keenly aware of music's ability to help children transcend whatever challenges they may face. As he told *60 Minutes'* Bob Simon, "The music saved me. I am sure of this."

When Dudamel assumes the post of Music Director in the fall of 2009, he will lead an organization equally dedicated to enriching the lives of children and their families through music education. The Los Angeles Philharmonic's education programs reach over 100,000 students each year and have set a standard for excellence nationwide. Foremost among those programs is the Philharmonic's in-school initiative, the *School Partners Program*.

Launched in 2001, the *School Partners Program* represents

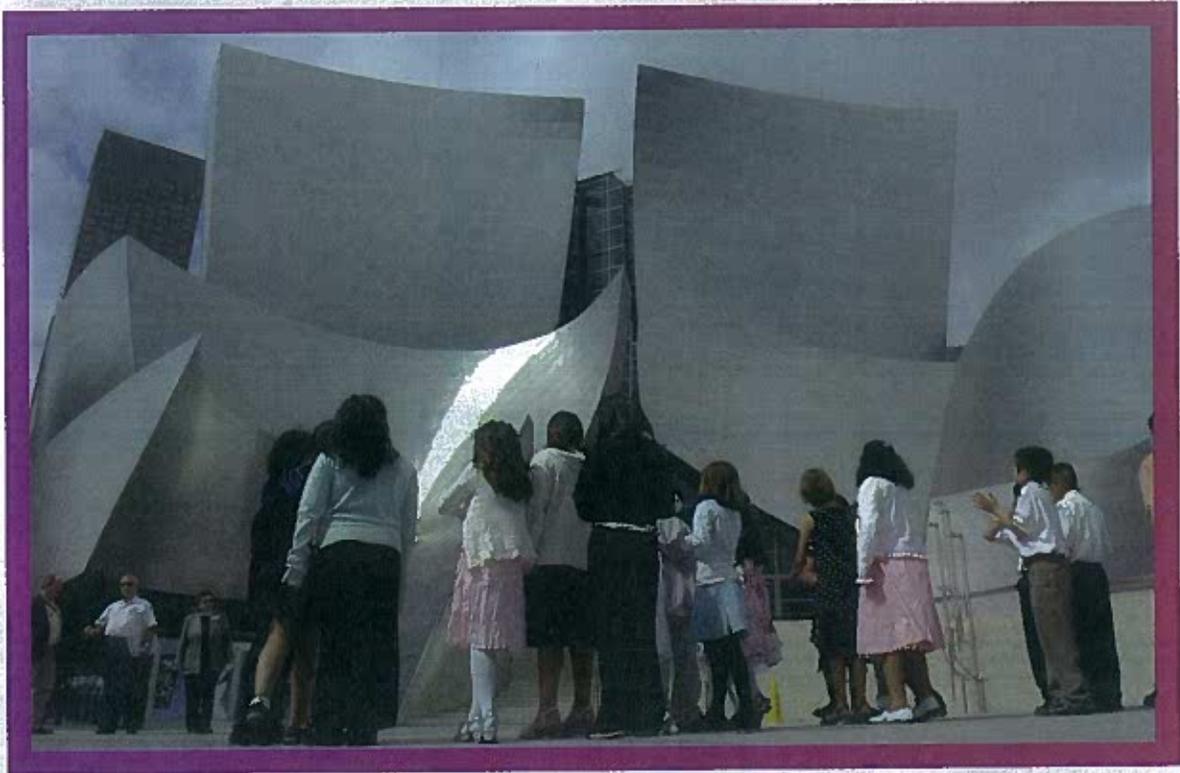


the Philharmonic's long-term, intensive collaboration with select public schools. The program has grown dramatically since its inception. In its first year, the *School Partners Program* reached five elementary schools. Today, the program has brought high-quality musician residencies to 136 elementary, middle, and secondary schools. In elementary schools, the program works to introduce students to general music concepts through classroom lessons, instrument instruction, and concert visits. The middle and secondary school program pairs a roster of musician teachers with school orchestras to raise the level of instruction available to students and to connect those students with the Philharmonic's iconic venues and resources.

One of the Philharmonic's most exemplary *School Partner* collaborations takes place in the flight path of LAX, at Moffett Elementary School. A partner since the program began in 2001, Moffett Elementary School is a Title I school. Close to 100% of Moffett's students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches. There are 18 active gangs in Moffett's Lennox neighborhood, and the school is very much a safe haven for the committed teachers and students who call Lennox their home. The *School Partners Program*, with its musician residencies and instrumental instruction, brings to students music-making experiences they would not otherwise have.

Moffett's principal, Jo Ann Isken, notes that the *School Partners Program*, "...has become part of our school culture. The fact that we've had this relationship with the Philharmonic over a long period of time has made a significant difference... I believe that communities know when people are sincere in their intention, and they're not just driving by. Children know. Parents know. Communities know – and the Los Angeles Philharmonic is now a presence in this community."

A testament to the power of the long-term relationships created through the *School Partners Program*, Moffett has all but adopted LA Phil harpist Lou Anne Neill. Over the last nine years, Neill has served as the orchestra's ambassador to the



students of Moffett. Through the *School Partners Program*, the students are introduced to rhythm, and learn how to read music and how to play percussion instruments and the recorder. Through Neill, they are given the rare opportunity to apply that learning to the harp and to discover the joy and discipline that comes from continuing their musical journey.

Neill's creation of The Harp In Our Public Schools Project is a natural extension of the *School Partners Program* and is funded by the Young Musicians Foundation. For Neill, "The opportunity to introduce the instrument I fell in love with as a child has been so important to me. I'm thrilled to be able to bring this gift of music to the students of Moffett."

The Harp In Our Public Schools Project has provided 200 students with the opportunity to study on student-sized harps. The harp is known for its therapeutic qualities, and the program's teachers note its ability to ease children's stress and increase their academic focus. This is of particular importance when dealing with students considered "at-risk" and often faced with severe financial and social disadvantages.

Programs like the Los Angeles Philharmonic's *School Partners Program* and Young Musician Foundation's The Harp In Our Public Schools Project work to create a continuum of learning for the students of Moffett Elementary School and students throughout Los Angeles County. Without these programs, far too many children would not have access to sustained, high-quality music education – and music education,

as Gustavo Oudamel will tell you, is far from a luxury. (In this evening's tribute to Music Matters, students from Moffett Elementary School will be performing on the Hollywood Bowl stage.)

Countless studies testify to the academic and social benefits of music instruction, but enhanced abstract reasoning abilities and higher math test scores aside, music's true power may lie in its ability to make a child a promise – a promise of a better world, one built on creativity, joy, and connection. As Gustavo Dudamel reminds us, art is not separable from education, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic is not separable from its community. From the orchestra's most esteemed player to the Moffett third-grader confronting her first percussion recital, "No one makes music alone."

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