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The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Awards the
Longy School of Music of Bard College a \$100,000 Grant to Partner with
WolfBrown to Study El Sistema-Inspired Orchestra
Education Programs

Grant will allow research team to add three additional El Sistema sites
to two-year national evaluation study.

Cambridge, MA: The [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) has awarded a \$100,000 grant to the [Longy School of Music of Bard College](#) – which will partner with [WolfBrown](#), an international arts research firm – to support a two-year (2014-16) evaluation of the effects of orchestra-related *El Sistema*-inspired music education programs in the United States. The Mellon Foundation grant allows the research team to expand and enhance its study – the first ever U.S. national multi-site evaluation of the benefits of youth participation in *El Sistema*-inspired programs.

“The awarding of this Mellon Foundation grant demonstrates that Longy is uniquely positioned to coordinate this research project for the maximum benefit to the field,” stated **Longy President Karen Zorn**. “This grant will ensure a greater number of orchestra-based programs become an integral part of a major national study of the outcomes of *El Sistema*-based work.”

The Mellon Foundation grant complements an earlier grant from the New York-based Buck Family Foundation and provides additional support to the study in three important ways:

1. Expand research to include additional orchestra-based *El Sistema*-inspired programs, including orchestras that have *El Sistema* sites as major components of their community programs, youth orchestras, and affiliations between orchestras and *El Sistema* sites;
2. Collect initial data about how implementing *El Sistema*-inspired education programs affects orchestras; and
3. Support the training of Longy graduate students as *El Sistema* Research Fellows

This additional funding has come at a critical time. The enhanced scope of work will create an orchestra-based network that can share tools, strategies, opportunities and challenges on behalf of the *El Sistema* field. The research team will make the research tools, as well as emerging findings, publicly available online.

The following sites have been invited to participate.

Core Sites

1. Incredible Children's Art Network (iCAN) (Santa Barbara, CA)
2. Kalamazoo Kids in Tune (Kalamazoo, MI)
3. KidZNotes (Raleigh, NC)
4. New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) Champs (Newark, NJ)
5. OrchKids (Baltimore, MD)
6. The People's Music School Youth Orchestras (Chicago, IL)
7. Play On Philly (Philadelphia, PA)
8. Reno Philharmonic Celebrate Strings (Reno, NV)
9. San Diego Youth Symphony (SDYS) Community Opus Project (San Diego, CA)

Collaborating Sites

1. Austin Soundwaves (TX)
2. Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra (CKYO) North Limestone MusicWorks (KY)
3. Conservatory Lab Charter School (MA)
4. Corona Youth Music Project (CYMP) (NY)
5. Enriching Lives Through Music (ELM) (CA)
6. Josiah Quincy Orchestra Program (MA)
7. Juneau Alaska Music Matters (JAMM) (AK)
8. Miami Music Project (FL)
9. MY Cincinnati (OH)
10. Oregon BRAVO Youth Orchestra (OR)
11. Paterson Music Project (NJ)
12. Sister Cities Girlchoir (NJ)
13. Soundscapes (VA)
14. Union City Music Project (NJ)
15. Valley Vibes Orchestras (CA)
16. Yakima Music en Accion (WA)
17. Youth Orchestra of Salinas (YOSAL) (CA)

Companion Sites

1. El Sistema Lehigh Valley (PA)
2. Youth Orchestras of San Antonio Music After School (YOSA – MAS) (TX)
3. Youth Orchestra of St. Luke's (NY)

The Los Angeles Philharmonic and its Sistema-inspired initiative YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles), Longy's partner in training music-teaching graduate students, will also participate in specific pilot aspects of the study. The short- and long-term benefits of training Longy students to participate in this study will strengthen both the students and the field at large.

About El Sistema

El Sistema founder Dr. José Antonio Abreu has developed a comprehensive music education philosophy that stresses the important link for children between the intense study of music, and a host of social benefits – including improved self-esteem, communication skills, and curiosity. Abreu's model program offers young children and teenagers the opportunity to participate in rigorous music training – from the basics of rhythm to advanced orchestral performance – in intensive El Sistema community music programs, or nucleos. Since its inception over 35 years ago,

the program has taught more than one million of Venezuela's underserved children, changing students' lives and transforming the communities around them.

About Longy School of Music of Bard College

Longy School of Music of Bard College, founded as Longy School of Music almost one hundred years ago in 1915 by renowned oboist Georges Longy, is a degree-granting Conservatory located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The school serves 250 undergraduate and graduate students from 37 states and 20 countries at its central Cambridge campus and recently opened Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Los Angeles, California on the campus of Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), with YOLA at HOLA serving as its anchoring learning lab for Sistema-inspired programs. Longy's mission is to prepare musicians to make a difference in the world. It is rapidly gaining international recognition for its efforts to meet a changing musical landscape head-on, giving its classically trained graduates the skills to perform, the ambition to teach, and the ability to reach new audiences and new communities beyond those traditionally associated with classical music.

About WolfBrown

WolfBrown is an international consulting group focused on knowledge building in the fields of arts and culture. In the field of music and music education, the firm has worked with major cultural organizations, including symphony orchestras, community schools of music, national service organizations, school systems and city governments. Their work with youth and families in the arts focuses on innovative methods to investigate both intrinsic impact and longer-term youth development outcomes.

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