

Symposium Highlights

The following is a summary of the most relevant ideas that came out of the symposium:

- El Sistema is, first and foremost, a program for social development through music, providing a clear path for children both cognitively and socially.
- Traditional approaches to music education suffer from “isolation, too little music making, and too low expectations.”
- The engagement of the entire community is key – a partnership between classroom teachers, specialist teachers, professional performers and a host of organizations, including those from the arts, charity and volunteer sectors.
- Cost benefit studies in the UK demonstrate the high value of introducing music education, with impacts on several fronts: economic achievement, academic standards, health goals, civic order and social justice.
- Studies show that replacing regular curriculum with equal amounts of music education not only maintains but raises literacy and numeracy scores. What then stops us from using this tool widely and immediately? A high quality music education enables lifelong participation in and enjoyment of music; as well, it inculcates the qualities of excellence and professionalism for those who choose not to pursue a career in music.
- The “blue sky” aims of *OrKidstra*’s Executive Director Tina Fedeski:
 - to see *OrKidstra* become the biggest feeder program to the Ottawa Youth Orchestra,
 - to inspire music educators, and
 - to create bridges between schools and the *OrKidstra* program.
- Teachers, school boards, politicians and community leaders must come together—in just the way The Leading Note Foundation has done in convening this Symposium.
- *OrKidstra*-like programs should be introduced to schools where social development is a challenge.
- Parents more often focus on achievement in ‘hard’ subjects even if they recognize the importance of an arts-influenced education. We need to create a new dynamic ... start a few pilot projects ... collect data, so that results can be measured in concrete terms. Broad-based change will follow.