

Social Harmony Through Music Education

A symposium organized by The Leading Note Foundation
with the support of the Ottawa Chamber Music Society
Ottawa, March 31, 2012

The Leading Note Foundation organized this one-day symposium to discuss youth music education programming and the *El Sistema* model, which teaches children from challenging backgrounds to achieve their full potential through music-making in groups.

Moderated by CBC Radio One broadcaster Laurence Wall, the day included: presentations by four experts on the topic of music education and social change – Richard Hallam, MBE, from England, Dr. Jonathan Govias from Boston, and *OrKidstra* co-founders and directors Tina Fedeski and Margaret Tobolowska from Ottawa; a screening of the film *Teaching the Life of Music* (introduced by its producer Noemi Weis) which examines the *El Sistema* youth music phenomenon in Venezuela and in Ottawa; and a panel discussion moderated by Richard Hallam, with Jennifer McKenzie, Trustee and Chair of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, OCDSB Superintendent Dr. Peter Gamwell, music educator Jennifer Martinez of *OrKidstra* and the Ottawa Catholic School Board and Yasir Naqvi, MPP for Ottawa-Centre.



SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS

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.

PRESENTATIONS

About the Speakers

The Symposium’s main speakers included two internationally recognized experts on music and social-change programs, and the directors of Ottawa’s inner-city music program, *OrKidstra*.

Richard Hallam, MBE, is England’s National Music Education Grant Director and member of the steering group for *In Harmony Sistema England*. Globally recognized for his leadership in programs that use music to bring positive change to the lives of children and youth in some of the most deprived areas of his country, he shared his experience developing England’s National Plan for Music Education.

Jonathan Govias, based in Boston, is a distinguished conductor, author and speaker and a leading consultant on organizational, strategic and pedagogical practices for social initiatives. He brought to the discussions his passion for working with young orchestras and the transformative power of “social music.”

Tina Fedeski and **Margaret Tobolowska**, professional flutist and cellist respectively, are co-founders of the Leading Note Foundation and Executive Director and Artistic Director of *OrKidstra*, the Ottawa music program for inner-city children. They spoke of the many successes, lessons and challenges that they have experienced during the five-year life of the program.

Summary of Speakers’ Remarks

Dr. Jonathan Govias



Jonathan Govias’ presentation focused on the contrast between the highly-structured model of teaching/learning traditionally followed in schools and the freer environment found in the *El Sistema* model, which places much more emphasis on social interaction.

He began with a review of some of the research, psychology and sociology underpinning the learning process – highlighting “the fundamental of learning through interaction with the environment, repetitively.” He contrasted this with the hierarchical, highly structured and, for the student, largely passive environment which has traditionally marked educational practices, with little change in the past one hundred years - “*Moses on high, children of Israel below.*” This was illustrated by a dramatic photograph of a large classroom, with rows of desks and children uniformly resting their heads on folded arms.

By contrast, Govias highlighted the literature emphasizing the importance of social interaction and greater spontaneity in the learning environment in which expertise can be shared between children of different ages and/or different levels of competence. Two quotes underscored his emphasis on the importance of social interaction as a catalyst for learning: the significance of “*stimulation of the child’s powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself*” (Dewey); and “*Every function in a child’s cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, then the individual. All higher functions originate as actual relationships*” (Vygotsky).

Govias then introduced the *El Sistema* model as an example of what might result if one took away all the constraints which mark our traditional educational environment. He emphasized the compromises which *El Sistema* refuses to make – beginning with time. *El Sistema* restores the time appropriate to a child’s development. It offers a low-intensity setting where one learns through doing – and in a highly social learning environment where older children assist younger ones or where the more advanced work with the less advanced. He contrasted this to practicing solo in a lonely environment, a practice which, in his view, explains why many leave music around the age of 12. He also emphasized the inclusive nature of the *El Sistema* model. The less skilled can readily participate; in that regard, “bigger is actually better”.

In his view, Venezuela’s pursuit of the *El Sistema* approach reflects the fact that it is, first and foremost, a program for social development through music. Its emphasis on ensemble playing, peer engagement and aiming for excellence provides a “clear path for children both cognitively and socially – the uncompromising system.”

A participant asked whether the *El Sistema* model uniquely focused on classical music. Govias replied that, though late in coming, one now saw increasing diversity of musical genres within the program, citing jazz and aboriginal music as two examples. He suggested, however, that a major advantage of the classical music genre was the scale of its repertoire, permitting both small and very large ensemble playing.

Interesting material can be found on Jonathan Govias’ website: www.jonathangovias.com.

Tina Fedeski and Margaret Tobolowska



Tina Fedeski and Margaret Tobolowska focused on the principles underlying the *OrKidstra* program – most of which have been drawn from the *El Sistema* philosophy. In brief, these principles are:

- Social change through musical excellence: accentuating the joy of making music together; inheriting the “play and struggle” (tocar y luchar) motto of *El Sistema*, playing as if it’s the last time one will be able to do so”;
- The fundamental role of the ensemble: mentorship, always helping each other; the importance of group interaction; and the social aspects of learning, working and performing together;
- Frequency: the development of “Kid-powered program levels,” which vary according to the degree of commitment the child is able and willing to make. These include: *Community Program* – once-a-week, introductory level, typically choral programming; *Commitment Program* – minimum of one/up to three times a week, instrument typically given; *Dedication Program* – additional instruction tailored to the interests/needs of the highly committed student;
- Accessibility: 85% of children receive free instruction; otherwise, contributions are made on a sliding scale based on income level; one intent is to accentuate that *OrKidstra* is a community, not a “poor kids’ program”;
- Connectivity: broad engagement of mentors, students, parents and volunteers; links with the local cultural, educational and social infrastructure.

Fedeski characterized her “Blue Sky” thoughts and ambitions as three-fold: a desire for *OrKidstra* to be the biggest feeder program to the Ottawa Youth Orchestra; a wish to inspire music educators and to create bridges between schools and the *OrKidstra* program; and optimism that this was a time of considerable creativity – a possible ‘tipping point’ in music education within the Ottawa educational community.

More information on the *OrKidstra* programs and on the work of The Leading Note Foundation can be found at www.orkidstra.ca.

Richard Hallam, MBE



Richard Hallam began his presentation, entitled “Dare to Aim High Enough,” by citing the key problems with traditional approaches to music education as “isolation, too little music making, and too low expectations.” These were not, he emphasized, a problem for *El Sistema*.

For those looking to develop *Sistema*-inspired programs, he suggested several challenges: what are the non-negotiable central features; what do you adopt, what do you adapt; what influences those decisions; and how do we learn from the phenomenal success of *El Sistema*?

Though *El Sistema* is primarily a social program, its relationship with music education program cannot be ignored. In England there is already an entitlement to music education for all children in school and for every child to learn a musical instrument from specialist teachers. In the last four years alone almost 2.5 million pupils have had the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. Forty-four percent have continued to learn. There are some 35,000 ensembles of varying sizes and composition, but these are not ‘joined up’ into a network as they are in Venezuela.

In the UK context Hallam cited *El Sistema* principles as six-fold:

- The importance of learning together and helping each other;
- The centrality of the ensemble;
- The importance of challenging repertoire and high expectations;
- The total commitment of all involved;
- The importance of performance; and
- The greater good of the whole.

Commenting on several of the salient features of England's National Plan for Music Education, he underlined the unswerving commitment by both the Department for Education and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport - a duality that recognizes the music education and social development objectives inherent in *El Sistema*. This commitment recognizes the importance of music in the lives of young people and the need to ensure that they are given a music education of the highest quality.

The engagement of the entire community is key. Hallam described great music education as a partnership between classroom teachers, specialist teachers, professional performers and a host of organizations, including those from the arts, charity and volunteer sectors. The National Plan was clear about the importance of music: it will ensure not just that more children have access to the greatest of art forms, but that they do better as a result in every other subject. Hallam emphasized that a high quality music education enables lifelong participation in, and enjoyment of, music, as well as underpinning excellence and professionalism for those who choose not to pursue a career in music.

Hallam urged the widest possible coverage, cautioning that a high quality music education must not become the preserve of those children whose families can afford to pay for music tuition. While music touches the lives of all young people, the disadvantaged can benefit most.

He noted that music helps bind pupils into the wider life of the school. He also emphasized that schools cannot do everything alone, but need the support of a wider local music structure. Accordingly, central to the National Plan, is the creation of new music education hubs – that will provide opportunities that reach beyond school boundaries and draw in the expertise of a range of education and arts partners.

Hallam identified core roles of the National Plan for Music Education as follows:

- Ensure that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument;
- Provide opportunities to play in ensembles and to perform from an early stage;
- Ensure that clear progression routes are available and affordable to all young people;
- Develop a singing strategy to ensure that every pupil sings regularly and that choirs and other vocal ensembles are available in the area.

During the question and answer period, Hallam focused on the relative merits of in-school and out-of-school music education options and the connection between the two. He acknowledged the argument, consistent with the *Sistema* philosophy, that out-of-school options had the advantage of better breaking with the rigidities of the traditional school environment in favour of one of which the children could better “take ownership”. He also cited the “whole school engagement” model followed in one of the *In Harmony El Sistema* pilots. In short, he saw merits in both in-school and after-school programs and valuable connections between the two.

The U.K.'s national plan for music can be found at www.education.gov.uk/publications (see "The importance of music. A national plan for music education.") For more information on the El Sistema-inspired pilot projects, see www.ihse.org.uk.

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PANEL DISCUSSION

Relevance of Music Education for Ottawa Schools

Moderator: (centre, below) **Richard Hallam, MBE**, National Music Education Grant Director and consultant to the UK Department for Education in the development of the National Plan for Music Education.

Panellists: (left to right, below)

- **Dr. Peter Gamwell:** Teacher, author, Superintendent of Instruction and Member of the Director's Executive Council, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)
- **Jennifer McKenzie:** Trustee and Chair of the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)
- **Jennifer Martinez:** Head of Senior Music at Immaculata High School, instructor with the Ottawa Youth Orchestra Academy, Conductor of the New Horizons Advanced Band and *OrKidstra's* Band Director
- **Yasir Naqvi:** MPP for Ottawa-Centre and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance (Ontario)



Summary of Discussion

The Moderator invited panellists to describe the context for music education in Ottawa.

Jennifer McKenzie noted that the OCDSB is strengthening music education across all its schools. Some years ago, the position of music in schools was weakened and there is still some variation between schools. Some are very strong, others lag. The Board is now hiring qualified music teachers which will support her 2011 motion directing staff at the Board to make music education a priority in elementary schools so that all children are exposed to learning and understanding music, and can experience playing an instrument.

Peter Gamwell, a self-confessed avid rock, jazz and blues practitioner, pointed out the fun and energy that music-making brings. This feeling of joy and achievement has a life-long effect on people. He commented that Ontario's 'reform agenda' (initiated 30 years ago) is based on assumptions which are now challenged by the research community. There is a new understanding of intelligence and motivation which is changing approaches to learning—in the fields of business and politics as much as in education.

MPP Yasir Naqvi explained that Ontario's Ministry of Education operates at a macro level: setting the curriculum and providing funding. Not long ago, studies revealed a major problem in literacy and numeracy levels in Ontario in comparison with other provinces and countries. The Government has worked hard to raise levels and Ontario now enjoys top ranking. Arts and music were not actively promoted during this period but he surmised that, now that the 'hard' goals have been achieved, there is room for a new focus.

Jennifer Martinez, who teaches music "to students from 3 to 93", noted that recent brain research shows a strong relationship between emotion and information processing capacities. The current education system may be missing out by not teaching music more intensively. Teachers tend to be generalists and to overcome this the Catholic School Board has hired five roving music coaches to help teachers become more comfortable teaching music. There are still large gaps between desire and achievement, but she reported that Superintendent Brenda Wilson¹ is keen to explore *OrKidstra*-like programs for the schools.

Moderator Richard Hallam referenced studies showing 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?

Panelists agreed that music should be more closely integrated into schools, as promoting an holistic education is more in line with current research. Even business schools are changing their approach to learning and leaving behind a 100-year old model. Schools are generally behind the game. Teachers often panic if traditional subjects are pushed aside for music and although it is easy to show how mainstream subjects can be taught or supplemented through music, there is resistance. Perhaps the answer lies in adopting a few pilot projects to develop local statistics which might then convince educators that music is a fundamental and beneficial teaching tool.

The Moderator commented that members of the panel seemed to be of one mind: music education is nothing but a good thing. How then to turn words into action?

McKenzie felt that even though individuals might be passionate on the subject of introducing music to schools, only *collective* thinking would make change happen. Teachers, school boards, politicians and community leaders must come together—in just the way The Leading Note Foundation has done in convening this Symposium. A collective approach would end siloed thinking. In addition, there could be better focus on social development needs in the City, where much more could be done. *OrKidstra*-like programs should be introduced to schools where social development is a challenge.

Gamwell cited the mantra 'think globally, act locally', suggesting that now that numeracy and literacy levels have been raised, Ontario might show world leadership on a new front. Governments everywhere struggle to meet budgets. Most progress relies on the magic of the collective. Public involvement is critical. If music education is strengthened, the joy and success achieved will speak for themselves.

Naqvi noted that parents more often focus on achievements in 'hard' subjects even if they recognize the importance of an arts-influenced education and may well pursue music education for their children outside school. We need to create a new dynamic. We need to start a few pilot projects and collect data so that results can be measured in concrete terms. Broad-based change will follow.

¹ Superintendent of Student Success Department (Elementary), Ottawa Catholic School Board

McKenzie agreed that parental views were most important to making change. She cited recent survey results where middle- to high-income parents were keen to foster music in schools, but lower-income parents were not as convinced. Martinez suggested that the weak response might be explained at least partly by lack of fluency in responding to surveys, a limited understanding of how music strengthens academic performance overall and lack of awareness of alternative education methods. She urged that music programs should simply start. The results would speak for themselves.

Gamwell predicted that things will change. Literacy and numeracy are indeed crucial, but there are many ways to reach these goals. Everyone learns in their own way; one single education model cannot produce the best results on an individual basis. Children need to feel the joy of learning; to be immersed in learning such that they forget time; to realize that there are many paths to success, not just the conventional way; to see that they each have something to offer in life.

Martinez agreed, saying that real learning depends on emotional involvement and social contact. Most school programs are overly structured, due to constraints of time, numbers, budgets and teaching skills. Out-of-school programs, such as *OrKidstra*, are more open and organic, more child-centered.

McKenzie felt that music should be offered during the school day *and* outside schools—as one of several after-school opportunities.

The Moderator then opened the mike to the audience for comments, questions and ideas on how to bring music education to the fore.

One participant, an expert in neuro-plasticity and a leader of Friends of Peace, commented that pursuing social harmony through music education represents a revolution in thinking. He felt such programming should immediately be introduced in at least three local schools. Evaluation results should be prepared as soon as possible so that other schools can benefit quickly. He invited skeptics to come to Peace Day celebrations in September, where *OrKidstra* would be performing. The children may speak two dozen languages as individuals, but their voice is strongest in the one they share when they are together: music.

Another participant suggested that Music Monday² should be adopted by schools. She also felt new teachers should study music or it should be made a pre-requisite to employment. The Ministry of Education could adopt this rule. She suggested more discussion aimed at educating those who do not understand the importance of music programs. She challenged parents and teachers to lobby for increased music education in at least the first three primary grades.

Dr. James Wright, music professor at Carleton University, picked up on the panel's desire to introduce new learning approaches. He noted we have always vested knowledge in verbal expression, but that there are other ways to express knowledge: through physical activity, artistic endeavour, and music-making. Although this is recognized in higher education practice, it needs to start at primary levels.

Noemi Weis, producer of the film *Teaching the Life of Music*, suggested that we already have over 35 years of research results on how *El Sistema* works. She urged that these programs be seen more through the lens of social development than as part of the formal education stream. Perhaps redefining this kind of music

² <http://musicmakesus.ca/musicmonday/>

program would lead to new sources of support: cultural institutions, social agencies or those responsible for immigration and citizenship.

Gamwell agreed, saying that we need to connect *El Sistema* and *OrKidstra* to themes of social justice and social interaction. This would provide a more hopeful future for societies which, in Ottawa and across Canada, are increasingly multi-cultural.

Jonathan Govias, conductor, author and *El Sistema* advocate, pointed out that there are two simple systems in use throughout the world, no matter the cultural context. These are Hindu/Arabic numerals and Western musical notation. Why should one be considered more important than the other in our education programming? Have we missed the boat?

A participant noted that he now sees a concerted effort to get children exercising to fight obesity and ward off future health problems. In the area of music education, despite its recognized importance and value, he sees no similar plan of action. He feared that today's discussions ran the risk of dragging on for years with no real results.

The Moderator pointed out that major changes do take time. They do have to follow a process. The important thing is to start and not waste more time. Statistics can help. 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.

Naqvi suggested that the time is ripe for introducing music programs. Now that the Government of Ontario has achieved its goals for literacy and numeracy, and has shown the benefits of all-day kindergarten, it is exploring before- and after-school programs for 6-to-12-year-olds. Programs should be developed by 2014/2015, using schools as city 'hubs'. We should work out how music programs could be part of this new model.

Other ideas emerging from participants included the following:

- School boards should fund the evaluation of the impact of music programs
- Requiring Ontario public officials to consult widely on the benefits of music programming before developing education policy proposals
- Introducing music to carefully selected schools in Ottawa—offering music once weekly, twice weekly or twice weekly with teachers included as students—and then comparing results. This might open a path for widespread *OrKidstra*-type programming in schools
- Could Symposium participants take up the challenge of spreading the word about music education? Could they identify those who would be willing to work with or fund music programming, such as that offered by *OrKidstra*?

In closing, the Moderator thanked panellists and the audience for their focused discussion, creative ideas and suggestions for next steps.

LINKING *EL SISTEMA* PROGRAMS WITH THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE University of Ottawa, March 30, 2012

As part of a three-day event built around the residency of the Simón Bolívar String Quartet co-hosted by The Leading Note Foundation and the Ottawa Chamber Music Society, a half-day session was held at the School of Music, University of Ottawa. The morning was built around three sessions: (i) a master class for University chamber ensembles guided by the Simón Bolívar String Quartet; (ii) student commentary on how mentoring with *OrKidstra* – the *El Sistema*-inspired program active in Ottawa – complements music programs offered by the University; and (iii) a roundtable discussion on the question of how best to link *El Sistema* programs with the university and the community at large. Highlights of the second and third sections follow.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING WITH *ORKIDSTRA*:

Observations of U of O students

Margaret Tobolowska, cellist, music educator, co-founder of The Leading Note Foundation and Artistic Director of its *OrKidstra* program, introduced three music students – Kim Shields, Meagan McPherson and Yolande Laroche – who had worked with *OrKidstra* under the U of O Community Service Learning (CSL) program, asking them to comment on how their participation in *OrKidstra* as mentors and teachers had enhanced their formal music education.

The students made the following observations:

- Participating in a live classroom setting provides immediate feedback on teaching methods; the tips and tactics remain fresh in the mind and increase my understanding of what it is to be a teacher. It also improves my own performance skills;
- In connecting with *OrKidstra*'s kids, we both teach and learn;
- Connecting with the teachers in a teaching environment provides practical insights that we couldn't otherwise get;
- Many, if not most, music students will fail to find a position in an orchestra. Teaching is a way to use our skills and knowledge. Those who do find permanent orchestral positions may want to share their skills in proactive ways. Working with *OrKidstra* prepares you for the real world;
- The *El Sistema* approach has opened me to a new understanding of the role of music as a social program encouraging interdependence and growth at an early age. I now understand Maestro Abreu's statement that "spiritual abundance overcomes material scarcity."
- Working with *OrKidstra* has provided practical experience working with real kids in the real world. It has given life to the theories I learn in my university classes;

- Receiving credit for this practicum justified our adding it to our class and practice schedules and workload.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:

Linking El Sistema programs with the university and the community at large

Moderator: Robin Higham, Senior Fellow at the University of Ottawa and Board Member of The Leading Note Foundation.

Participants:

- **Jonathan Govias**, conductor, teacher, author and *El Sistema* advocate;
- **Stéphane Lemelin**, music professor, Director of the School of Music at University of Ottawa, concert pianist, and recording artist;
- **Margaret Tobolowska**, co-founder of The Leading Note Foundation and Artistic Director of *OrKidstra*, former NACO cellist; and
- **Richard Hallam MBE**, National Music Education Grant Director, consultant to the UK's Department for Education, member of the steering group for *In Harmony Sistema England* and director of In Harmony Ltd.

Participants were invited to open with a few points about *El Sistema* and music education programs. What are the links? What should the links be?

Jonathan Govias drew a contrast between music education programs as understood generally in schools and universities, and the *El Sistema* approach: the former being inherently hierarchical and the latter focused on mutual sharing. He pointed out that the conservatory approach attempts to prepare 100% of students for a career in music when only about 5% would be successful. The remaining 95% were not given sufficient tools to pursue non-performance work in the field of music i.e. for a *life* in music.

Stephane Lemelin commented that university music students have high ideals but it is hard for them to see how they might achieve their goals when they learn in isolation. Participating in a program such as *OrKidstra* gives them the chance to set their goals against reality, to see the impact of their skills and talents on children, while testing out interactions between teacher and student.

Richard Hallam stressed the importance of setting the vision of improved music education in the context of the times. He noted that early reports in the UK demonstrating the importance of music education were shelved due to lack of interest by policy makers at the time. Now the context in the UK has shifted and progress is being made. It is important to think through exactly what one is trying to achieve and not stray from that goal. He also cautioned that in defending and promoting music education it is very easy to fall into the trap of validating the opinion that music is not fundamental to good education. Instead of recognizing such perspectives—if only to negate them—he urged proponents of music education to *assume* the benefits and challenge naysayers to prove otherwise.

Margaret Tobolowska underscored the value of sharing a passion for music with children through *El Sistema* programs, such as *OrKidstra*. She pointed to the social change that occurs when professional teachers use their skills with kindness to teach music to children. She noted that such teaching could provide a valuable outlet to the 95% of music graduates who do not find, or do not want, performance roles.

Moderator Robin Higham then asked how the message could be conveyed successfully to the non-converted. How can funding be secured?

Hallam suggested that musicians and 'the converted' have to know how to identify central issues and how to network effectively. Then the message must be delivered consistently. A scatter-gun approach is not effective. Finally, although useful, the turning point is not reports and statistics, but actually seeing the children and how they are positively changed by music programs.

An audience member felt it would be useful to add teaching programs to performance programs at music institutions.

Govias agreed, iterating his earlier view that current music education is geared to disappoint 95% of students. He feels strongly that the Western approach to music has become so idealized that music is no longer a social activity for amateurs, but the domain of the 'professional' and of recording artists. It has become largely inaccessible on an individual basis (except as a 'consumer' good) and therefore the general public no longer relates to music or music education as it used to.

Lemelin suggested that music and music education should be seen more as a spectrum: leading to a 'life' of music not simply a 'career' in music.

An audience member wondered whether music education, specifically *El Sistema*, is better placed in schools or outside schools.

Govias felt strongly that music should not be part of the school experience. Schooling is top-down, tends to stifle creativity and would drag down *El Sistema* classes to an unacceptable level. Attaching them to school programs would also limit financial support to education budgets. He noted that in Venezuela *El Sistema* programs were tied to social budgets.

Hallam disagreed, believing the location of *El Sistema* programs could shift as the context evolved. Furthermore, he felt that instead of education influencing music negatively, perhaps music would influence regular education programs *positively*. Perhaps *El Sistema* programs could be the Trojan Horse to make education programs more responsive, creative and exciting for children.

The Moderator commented that schools were failing many children, especially boys who fail to engage with education. He thought that *El-Sistema*-like programs were another way to reach out to such children, involving them positively and making their time at school more meaningful.

A member of the audience, newly arrived from Venezuela and now resident in Montreal, queried the relevance of *El Sistema*-inspired programs given that Canada does not face the severe social challenges endemic in Venezuela. Hallam stressed that although Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Manchester or Liverpool—indeed cities throughout the developed world—may not present such immediately visible evidence as Venezuela's barrios, they do face major social development problems caused by poverty and lack of opportunity. Social change programs, such as *El Sistema*, are needed and effective.

An audience member pointed out that the current education system in Ontario still suffers from the Mike Harris philosophy “If you can’t measure it, it isn’t worth doing.”³ For this reason alone it is especially important to stress economic benefits when selling El Sistema music programs.

Tobolowska felt strongly that passion and conviction would be fundamental in convincing supporters and securing funding. Another audience member agreed, but suggested that as there are so many social programs vying for scarce dollars, an organization that speaks from the heart *and* the head would have a competitive edge.

Govias pointed out that although many financial decision-makers are quick to cut music and other cultural programs from official budgets, they nevertheless do participate and support the arts on a personal and individual basis—a chink in the wall, perhaps.

Members of the roundtable concluded that if we are to make progress on music education programs, we must focus our energies and work within the real world. To make change, we must marry passion to pragmatism.

The Moderator drew the panel to a close encouraging audience members to attend Saturday’s *Symposium on Social Harmony Through Music Education*.

³ A former Conservative Premier of Ontario