

Symposium on Instrumental Change 2015

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Opening, Welcome and Keynote

Simon Brault (Director and CEO, Canada Council for the Arts), Robin Higham

Key messages:

- Leverage the power of the arts for community development.
- Keep making the case for the importance of the work that we do in arts and community development.
- Share research, share ideas, translate discoveries and statistics into concerted actions, and make sure that decision- and policy-makers know of and experience it.

Key learnings:

1. El Sistema is a model of public engagement in the arts that unleashes the potential of individuals and societies – an example of thinking globally and acting locally.
2. We need to expand our capacity to translate ideas, discoveries and statistics into concerted actions and make sure more and more decision-makers experience and see value to the work that we do in the arts.
3. We must invite ourselves to conversations around healing, peace and cultural diversity in the country and the world – sharing values and creating trusting spaces between countries and people cannot happen without culture as a way to create common ground between human beings.

Compelling stories:

Both Simon Brault and Richard Hallam, in a comment, noted repeatedly the importance of influencing policymakers by impressing on them how effective these programs are at addressing social challenges. Unless policymakers understand this, they might not know to invite arts leaders to participate in finding solutions – so we have to reach out in unexpected ways and opportunities, and help them understand. In England, health and wellbeing are now at the top of the national agenda – not education – yet music education funding has been restored, because politicians are starting to make the connection between their goals and the effects of music education.

The full text of Simon Brault's keynote address is available upon request. Please email admin@leadingnotefoundation.org.

Plenary Session 1: Start-Up

Tina Fedeski (Leading Note Foundation), David Visentin (Sistema Toronto)

Key message:

If you think you're beyond start-up, think again.

Key learnings:

1. Know the community you're working in – its demographics, challenges, assets – and engage with it actively through performances and mentorship. Showing how much you care about the students and how they're thriving encourages them to take ownership of the program and their own progress. It is possible to be inclusive and foster excellence at the same time.
2. An effective board is crucial to your organization's success, providing perspective and oversight – cautioning against getting ahead of yourselves, but invested in the organization's evolution. Know what skills your board members bring and what they're willing to develop, and figure out how best to work with what you've got. Consider carefully how the board is created, who's on it, and the relationship between the board and Executive Director.
3. Partnerships take time and effort to develop, but are well worth it. Collaborate with other programs doing similar or complementary work, and draw on the community knowledge of existing organizations and programs – this is not only advantageous in itself, but often required by funders. But don't lose your focus or commitment to your mandate in the process.

Compelling stories:

Many Symposium participants shared great success stories. Tina discussed the evolution of OrKidstra's in-school program and emphasized the importance of opportunities for increasing commitment, mentorship, and teaching. Ken from Sistema New Brunswick shared his organization's four-year plan and evolution from one to four programs, guided by the goals of including urban and rural communities, operating in French and English, and reaching out to First Nations students. David and Clark Bryan from El Sistema Aeolian discussed how inclusivity extends to repertoire choices as well – selecting music that students readily engage with, using improvisation to foster confidence and identity.

Slides from Tina Fedeski and David Visentin's presentations are available upon request. Please email admin@leadingnotefoundation.org.

Plenary Session 2: The Fundraising Challenge

Clark Bryan (El Sistema Aeolian), Ken MacLeod (New Brunswick Youth Orchestra), Julia Huffman (Moderator, Leading Note Foundation)

Key message:

Fundraising gives people an opportunity to do good – so embrace it as a key part of your mission and invite people to participate.

Key learnings:

1. Fundraising is about creating relationships. Raise awareness about your program and its place in your community. Reach out to potential supporters by finding shared values, beliefs and goals – make sure that your priorities are the same – with a clear, well constructed case for support that appeals intellectually and emotionally.
2. Don't be afraid to ask for what you need, but always do it in a respectful way. Find creative ways for donors to contribute and be involved, and make a clear link between their gifts and its effects.
3. Recruit donors and supporters who are powerful – business and community leaders who are well known, respected by their peers, influential – and encourage them to be advocates for your organization among their peers.

Slides from Clark Bryan and Ken MacLeod's presentations are available upon request. Please email admin@leadingnotefoundation.org.

Plenary Session 3: Staying On Course & Evaluation

Dr. Lisa Lorenzino (McGill University), Richard Hallam (Sistema England)

Key message:

Research has two primary purposes: To find out if you're doing what you think you're doing – and if it's having the effects it's intended to have – and to help make your case with funders. 'If you don't know exactly what you're trying to do, how will you know if you're succeeding?'

Key learnings:

1. One of the first things you should do is find a researcher to write down the history of your program, write that article in detail – for example, a university graduate student in a Canadian Studies or music education program – so that we have these for the annals of history of music education in Canada.
2. Build a sustainable relationship with researchers in the areas that will best serve your needs. What sort of researcher you should approach depends on what sort of information you're looking for. Choose wisely, with the intention of building a long-term relationship. If possible, add a researcher to your board of directors.
3. Relationships between organizations and researchers, and researchers and their subjects, are most productive when there is a strong foundation of trust – so that subjects will be open and truthful with the information they give. Maintain open lines of communication so that the development of your students remains the priority.
4. Learn to read research properly – to analyze and critique it so that you understand its content and relevance to your work. From Richard Hallam: 'Policymakers and practitioners should have a strong evaluation framework in place. A good policy is an historically informed policy; contemporary policymakers fail to take advantage of resources, but reinventing the wheel is wasteful.'
5. The research and the data are only of interest if they help you use your time more effectively in doing what you want to do. There are other things to consider, and you're the one with the firsthand experience. Learn what you can from existing research, both to help narrow down what you're looking for, and to avoid wasting resources finding out what someone else has already shown.

Compelling stories:

Minerva from Sistema Aeolian described her experience as a research subject as awful. She commented: All your effort is put through a clinical lens, and even if it's a huge deal to people personally, that effort just gets turned into numbers. You have to be very strong and willing to go through the process and see yourself. You have to accept the possibility that at the end of it, you might have to decide, it's time to start again, we're not going in the direction we wanted, and ask, do we change what we're trying to achieve or change what we're doing? And researchers need to take this into account in their approach – the people they're talking to might feel vulnerable and be very protective.

*Slides from Dr. Lisa Lorenzino and Richard Hallam's presentations are available upon request.
Please email admin@leadingnotefoundation.org.*

Workshop 1, 7 and 13: KiddlyWinks

In this hands-on workshop, KiddlyWinks director Cendrine Despax led participants and students through a typical KiddlyWinks lesson.

Workshop 2 and 8: So, You Want to Teach Strings?

Theodora Stathopoulos

Key message:

'It's not what you do, but how you do it.' Everyone can teach a new subject without experience in the field, as long as they have good management skills.

Key learnings:

1. Create value: "Identify the value that they have been entrusted with". Valuing instruments – Repeat and reinforce care of the instrument, and keep nametags outside and inside the case. Valuing classmates and classroom setting – Zero tolerance for negative behaviour (including and especially violent or violence-influenced behaviour, like guns). "The beginning is half of the whole."
2. Keep things simple, orderly, and logical for yourself. E.g., everyone starts on violin; those who are keen and fast will eventually get cello; a very special person gets bass.
3. Empower the advanced students. Students can be tasked as helpers, with increasing responsibility as they gain experience.

Compelling stories:

Absolutely no tolerance for gun gestures with the instruments. It's imperative to address violence-themed behaviour.

Materials from the So, you want to teach strings? workshops are available upon request. Please email admin@leadingnotefoundation.org.

Workshop 3: Emotional Intelligence

Clark Bryan (El Sistema Aeolian)

Key message:

Music teachers can incorporate strategies to develop Emotional Intelligence – the ability to recognize and understand emotions in oneself and others, use this to inform decisions - into their lessons. Music lessons can be used to teach skills beyond the subject matter at hand.

Key learnings:

1. Emotional Intelligence a flexible, learnable skill that accounts for 58% of performance in all types of jobs. Its component skills are categorized into Personal Competence (self-awareness and self-management) and Social Competence (social awareness and relationship management).

2. Teachers must notice and understand the conditions their students arrive with, and help them optimize learning capacity. Starting classes by moving (e.g., using social dance, Brain Gym), stretching, hydration; introducing self-knowledge (e.g., Myers-Briggs); trying alternate educational approaches like Waldorf or Steiner (whose work influenced the Finnish school system, which includes no tests or scores but produces highest-scoring students in university entrance exams); and using peer teaching are all ways to increase students' learning capacity and subject matter retention while developing Emotional Intelligence.

3. Some practical suggestions for incorporating Emotional Intelligence into music exercises:

- When students play technique, vocalization, etc. – play in different moods
- Listening exercises – describe or draw moods; have students create in words, shapes, colours what they hear
- Improvisation – do this in a given mood state
- Mood sketch – have someone improvise a sketch of another person in sound
- Composition – compose within an emotional spectrum or structure, e.g. happy-sad-happy

Compelling stories:

Learning won't happen if there's a tremendous emotional issue at stake before the learning task. We tend to teach based on how we were taught, our own training, which didn't necessarily include these elements. Replace the tendency to repeat what we've been taught ourselves with being open and questioning everything we're doing. Remember that feeling like you know what you're doing can be a bad sign.

Materials from the Emotional Intelligence workshop are available upon request. Please email admin@leadingnotefoundation.org.

Workshop 4: Look Who's Doing the Right Thing

Chelsey Hiebert (Sistema New Brunswick)

Key message:

Strategies for teaching self-discipline in a positive and consistent way, and giving children tools to help them learn appropriate behaviour in a group.

Key learnings:

1. Use words like 'expectations' rather than 'rules'. Rules are there to be broken. Model and encourage good behaviour.
2. Find an appropriate hand signal for gaining attention, e.g., "Give Me Five" – Raise a hand: The 5 fingers represent, 1. Eyes watching, 2. Mouth closed, 3. Ears listening, 4. Hands and feet still, 5. Brain thinking. This is represented graphically on a poster.
3. Have a clear step-by-step intervention protocol for repeatedly difficult students that also involves their parents.

Compelling stories:

Kids need to be taught how to behave in a Sistema class and need to be given clear, helpful, consistent tools to help them learn.

Materials from the Look Who's Doing the Right Thing workshop are available upon request. Please email admin@leadingnotefoundation.org.

Workshop 5: Changing the Orff Process in Batuta – Music for Social Change

Eugene Negrii (McGill University)

Unfortunately, a summary of this workshop is not available. The presentation slides are available online at:

http://prezi.com/bnwzny15zrs_/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share

Workshop 6, 12 and 18: Film Screening – Teaching the Life of Music

For more information about this film, visit:

<http://leadingnotefoundation.org/teaching-the-life-of-music/>

Workshop 9: Bringing Improv into the Classroom

Margaret Tobolowska

Key message:

A good musical/instrumental education should and can easily include improvisation.

Key learnings:

1. Rhythmic improvisation: One student starts a rhythm, and others add to it, one by one, e.g., Halloween-themed improvisation using scary noises.
2. Improvise using a scale by having different groups starting at different times – this creates unusual harmonies.
3. Two individuals or groups communicate in a musical conversation.
4. CBC: Any time someone plays CBC, everyone has to stand up and walk around their cello or wave their instrument.
5. TwinkleBel Canon: Combine the melodies of Twinkle, Twinkle and Pachelbel's Canon, and improvise on these – or use other simple and well-known melodies.
6. Rhythm Soccer: Pass a rhythm around or across the room – everyone has to be on the lookout in case it's their turn to receive or pass!

Compelling stories:

Margaret led many hands-on examples in which we all participated while sitting in a big circle – including cellos, violins, trumpet, flutes, drums, saxophone, voices. This workshop enabled everyone to participate in fun, non-threatening improvisation.

Workshop 10: Peer Leadership

Marcus Patteson (Sistema Norwich)

Key message:

The Sistema Norwich programme operates on the principle that young people should drive their own activities, rather than being led. Peer leadership techniques ingrain the idea that students are leaders in the classroom and rehearsal hall too, not just receivers – if adults are always leading, students are not really empowered to the degree they could be.

Key learnings:

1. The Sistema Norwich programme focuses on social impact, achieved through instrumental learning, taught in groups. It operates outside of school, but with potential to link curriculum. Students are part of the orchestra from beginning – attempting to incorporate of the best of conventional classical and community music approaches. Repertoire choices and adaptations are based on what needs to be done to make music playable and accessible.
2. The intention behind Sistema Norwich is to achieve something greater through social pedagogy – child-centred and addressing the whole child and whole musician. Musical exercises include reading, improvisation, and composition – encouraging full engagement with the music – while peer leadership fosters social focus.
3. Programme challenges include: Making provisions for older young people who have left primary; limited budget to achieve this and long-term sustainability; building in a process to develop music leaders (e.g., conductors); enhancing a natural process of young people supporting their peers; and supporting social impact.
4. Levels of peer leadership include setting up rooms, tuning instruments, taking registers; supporting within sections; planning sessions; co-tutoring; lead tutoring; conducting. Anyone can be a peer leader, regardless of level, but we must be careful not to put students in uncomfortable situations or demand things they're not up to yet.
5. Formal peer leadership training includes defining roles and responsibilities; skills such as listening-showing-modeling-mirroring; instilling values and beliefs; relationship building; setting boundaries; setting goals; assessing health and safety risks; safeguarding; planning; reflecting on experience; self-assessment; and co-teaching.

Compelling stories:

Within a few weeks of starting the Sistema programme, six of Sistema Norwich's younger peer leaders went back to their primary schools and offered to help out with primary programme – without prompting. The hardest aspect of teaching peer leadership is getting teachers to change their mentality – not to spend all their time teaching, but to allow student leaders to emerge and encourage them. Teachers need to receive training in how to foster peer leadership.

Materials from the Peer Leadership workshop are available upon request. Please email admin@leadingnotefoundation.org.

Workshop 11: In Harmony – Stories from England

Mandie Haywood, Head Teacher, Old Park Primary School, Telford UK

Key message:

Old Park Primary School in Telford, UK has adopted the In Harmony program with passion. Teachers are open to rearranging their classes so children can take music lessons when the music-teaching space is available. A staff orchestra has started based on interest generated within the school and this contributes to a stronger team feeling. “Music has become our culture.”

Compelling stories:

Ms. Mandie Haywood has been Head Teacher of Old Park Primary School since it opened in 2007. Old Park Primary is one of three English schools provided with funding from In Harmony UK. The other two are in Norwich and Liverpool. Funding for Sistema programming started in 2011.

There are 650 children at Old Park Primary, aged 11 weeks to 11 years (daycare on premises). All children are given music classes, ranging from 1 hour per week for the youngest, to three hours per week as they get older, with about 350 taking a further two hours per week of instrumental and orchestral lessons.

In Harmony’s funding has been divided equally between the three UK schools. Old Park Primary School has by far the largest enrollment but this has not affected the funding provided. Apart from the challenge this limited budget poses, the school faces four major problems: space, storage, teachers and public performance space.

Open space within the school is limited so age levels must practice in rotation rather than all together. This also extends to concerts where age levels and their parents are shuffled through the concert area.

There is no room to store instruments centrally in the school. This problem was solved by lodging instruments in each classroom. This means children do not have to go to a single spot to check out their instruments but see them all day long in the classroom where they are easily accessible. With the teachers’ full agreement, music has become visibly part of the daily scene.

There are few musicians amongst the teaching staff and to begin with it was hard to attract and train sufficient teachers.

Telford is a new town and there are few public spaces where the children can perform publically. The closest centre is Manchester, which means organizing transport and logistics for full-day outings. Two consequent problems are: the children have to make up their lessons when they miss regular class time; and there is little opportunity to grow a local audience to support the school’s efforts (apart from parents) and the Manchester audiences do not feel close to the children who perform.

In Harmony is studying the results of in-school programs, but Ms. Haywood believes that even with positive evidence in place it will be hard to influence the larger educational system to adopt Sistema programming holus-bolus. Moreover, she worries that if In Harmony programs were to spread widely round the country, there would be insufficient teaching capacity available. At the local level, Ms. Haywood wonders what will happen to Old Park Primary children when they move to middle schools which will likely not offer music to the same degree, if at all.

Ms. Haywood listed what she sees as the benefits of In Harmony music programming at Old Park Primary:

- Engagement & enjoyment
- Self-confidence & improved communication
- Social inclusion (special needs children are fully part of classes and activities)
- Resilience & grit
- Community impact (on parents, teachers)

Workshop 14: Tuning In

Unfortunately, a summary of this workshop is not available.

Workshop 15: Growing Creativity and Engagement In Your Music Class

Jeannie Hunter

Key message:

“The enemy of creativity is fear.” You need to care passionately about your students and make them feel welcome and safe.

Key learnings:

Jeannie provided lots of examples of games, toys, and ways to make the kids feel self-confident and valued.

1. Create musical toolboxes on different themes: The composer’s toolbox has information about modes and ideas for starting to compose. The rhythm toolbox has rhythm games and instruments in it.
2. Clapping and singing games (with plenty of silliness) loosen up the kids so they don’t feel self-conscious.
3. Games using flashcards that encourage kids to find creative solutions; e.g., kids each receive a note name card, then must form a scale, then must alter the scale, etc.
4. Encourage and provide a structure for kids to mentor each other.
5. Create opportunities to welcome alumni and family, such as performances with an Alumni and Family Band.
6. Create a variety of ensembles to appeal to a variety of tastes; Jeannie leads 7 ensembles at her school

Compelling stories:

Jeannie is a powerhouse, bursting with ideas and passionate about her work. Every child is loved and valued.

Workshop 16: ETAP Presentation & Panel

Unfortunately, a summary of this workshop is not available. For more information regarding the Experiential Teaching Artists Program (ETAP), visit:

<http://leadingnotefoundation.org/experiential-teaching-artists-program-etap/>

Workshop 17: OCDSB High School Teachers' Workshop

Unfortunately, a summary of this workshop is not available.