

Nurturing Creativity, Curiosity, and Virtuosity

Inspired by Music & Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel’s belief that “music is a fundamental human right,” the Los Angeles Philharmonic is committed to bringing the transformative power of music into the lives of both Angelenos and audiences and partners across the US and world. During the 2025/26 season, the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s Learning, Community and Youth Engagement Programming is reaching students, teachers, young musicians, families, and concertgoers of all ages through free and low-cost concerts, intensive orchestral training programs, mentorship of young composers, complimentary concerts and events at Walt Disney Concert Hall and venues across Los Angeles.



YOLA

YOLA provides transformational and equitable access to music education for young people from marginalized communities to support their personal development, their communities, and beyond.

YOLA provides young people, ages six to eighteen, with free instruments, intensive music instruction, and opportunities to perform on stages in their communities and around the world. Launched in 2007, YOLA has adapted to meet the needs of communities across Los Angeles and beyond.

The work of YOLA is focused in two areas: local programs, which directly serve communities across Los Angeles; and national programs, which provide opportunities for young musicians, teaching artists, program administrators, and other stakeholders to learn from and create community with one another.



YOLA Timeline

At its founding, YOLA was given one key piece of advice from Gustavo Dudamel's mentor José Antonio Abreu: "Start small. Think big." Since 2007, the program's musicians, teaching artists, and leaders have been doing just that.

2007 YOLA at EXPO Center is founded with 80 students in South LA, in a partnership with Harmony Project and the EXPO Center, a City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks facility.

2009 YOLA debuts at the Hollywood Bowl as part of *¡Bienvenido Gustavo!*, a free community concert inaugurating the tenure of Gustavo Dudamel.

2010 YOLA's second site, YOLA at HOLA, is founded in partnership with Heart of Los Angeles.

2012 The inaugural Take a Stand symposium brings together hundreds of music educators from around the country, laying the foundation for YOLA National.

2013 Ten YOLA musicians accompany the LA Phil on tour to London—the first in a series of near-annual YOLA / LA Phil tours that have included trips to Boston, Tokyo, Seoul, Princeton, Edinburgh, Mexico City, Barcelona, Paris, and Colombia.

2014 YOLA's third site, serving East LA, is founded. Today, it's known as YOLA at Torres (Esteban E. Torres High School) and receives logistical and infrastructural support from Torres East LA Performing Arts Magnet, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Beyond the Bell.

2016 For the first time, a full orchestra of 80 YOLA musicians goes on the road for the California Tour, with stops in five cities up and down the state. The National Take a Stand Festival launches, bringing together young musicians from El Sistema-inspired programs across the country to participate in regional orchestras at the Aspen Music Festival and School (CO) and Bard College (NY).

2016 Dudamel conducts an ensemble of YOLA musicians performing with Coldplay's Chris Martin and Beyoncé at the Super Bowl 50 Halftime Show.

2017 YOLA at Camino Nuevo—the first YOLA program to combine in-school and after-school programming—launches in partnership with the Camino Nuevo Charter Academy.

2018 YOLA National is founded to provide opportunities for musicians, teaching artists, and leaders from youth development programs across the country.

2019 As part of its wide-ranging centennial initiatives, the LA Phil begins construction of the first purpose-built, permanent musical home for YOLA—the Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center at Inglewood. A cross-site YOLA orchestra performs in Mexico City while on tour with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and participates in an open rehearsal with 100 young Mexican musicians under Gustavo Dudamel at the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

2020 Working with incredible speed and dexterity, YOLA's teaching artists and administrators adapt the program to a digital platform within 48 hours of schools' closing due to Covid-19. YOLA remains a stable presence in the lives of its families throughout the pandemic.

2021 YOLA begins its 15th year of programming with the grand opening of the Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center and the launch of YOLA at Inglewood.

2022 As part of the pregame festivities at Super Bowl LVI, musicians from YOLA performed with gospel duo Mary Mary in an arrangement of "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

2023 The Beckmen YOLA Center opens with the program *Mad Libs: A journey through storytelling and the celebration of dynamic women composers*, presented by YOLA in collaboration with Juilliard musicians as part of the California Festival.

2024 YOLA musicians tour alongside Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Phil to Barcelona and Paris. YOLA takes the stage at Walt Disney Concert Hall with the National Children's Symphony of Venezuela as part of "Dudamel Leads Citizens of the World: An International Youth Festival."

2025 The YOLA Institute Symphony Orchestra performs the fourth movement from Mahler's Symphony No. 1 during the LA Phil's Mahlerthon, a milestone showcasing the program's highest level of artistry and excellence to date. The Beckmen YOLA Center hosted the *¡Gracias, Gustavo!* Community Celebration, a joyful day of dialogue and performances honoring Gustavo Dudamel.

YOLA Institute

The YOLA Institute provides enhanced musical training and experiences for musicians enrolled in the YOLA program. At its core, the YOLA Institute houses three orchestra levels (Children, Youth, Symphony), each connecting YOLA musicians who are inclined to pursue a musical pathway for their field of study or career.

Institute features include:

- Audition-based, cross-site orchestras
- Private lessons with LA Phil musicians and Teaching Artists
- Additional training opportunities through chamber music ensembles
- Performance and travel opportunities, including regional, national, and international tours

This season we are proud to feature 3 Cultural Ensembles: Mariachi, Big Band and Choir.

YOLA Alumni

Since the first class of seniors graduated in spring 2016, the number of YOLA alumni who have matriculated to institutes of higher education (both colleges and conservatories) has increased steadily. Many members of YOLA's growing network of alumni have stayed closely connected to the program, returning as YOLA staff and teaching assistants, mentoring younger students, performing alongside their peers in chamber groups, and helping to guide the program's development. YOLA provides alumni with academic and career development support, helping them navigate the next stages of their journey.

YOLA Opportunities

YOLA's young musicians have performed in concert halls all over the world as well as hundreds of venues throughout Southern California, on national and international television broadcasts, and alongside renowned artists from numerous genres.

Beginning in 2013, YOLA musicians have accompanied the LA Phil on nearly every one of its orchestra tours, traveling to cities on the East Coast of the US, in Europe, and in Asia. In fall 2016, a YOLA orchestra of 80 students embarked on a five-city tour of California.

Whether they are sharing the Super Bowl halftime-show stage with Coldplay's Chris Martin, Beyoncé, and Bruno Mars, or performing side by side with the LA Phil to open the Edinburgh International Festival, YOLA's musicians rise to any occasion.

The Leni Boorstin YOLA Administrative Fellowship

This two-year paid fellowship offers YOLA graduates the opportunity to learn the infrastructure of arts organizations by working side by side with LA Phil and YOLA staff members and to think critically about the ways in which the LA Phil and YOLA connect with the community. Fellows work on community projects and receive mentorship and professional development opportunities.

YOLA College Prep & Scholarship

YOLA's College Prep program reaffirms the commitment to the holistic development of young musicians as they prepare for their next steps in their college journeys. Students have access to tools that will set them up for success in the college audition process, including private lessons, recording assistance, and subsidized travel fee coverage. The program also provides support beyond music in topics and workshops such as college counseling, scholarship information, and peer mentorship within the YOLA alumni network. Many of these students are the first generation in their family going to college.

YOLA National

YOLA National programs bring together those who believe that music education has a powerful role to play in youth and community development.

Designed to respond to the changing needs of the field, YOLA National offers a number of opportunities for young musicians, teaching artists, program administrators, and other stakeholders to learn from and create community with one another.

Through YOLA National, the LA Phil places the lives, experiences, ideas, and artistry of young people at the center of our work while also fostering dialogue among practitioners who will help shape the future of the field.

YOLA National Festival

The YOLA National Festival is an intensive summer orchestra program dedicated to artistic development for young musicians from El Sistema-inspired and community-driven music programs across the United States. The festival's purpose is to provide the highest caliber of orchestral training, artistry, and musical excellence through community.

Musicians convene in Los Angeles for up to 14 days of learning with the festival's amazing faculty, guest artists, and performances with world-renowned conductors. Participation is free—travel, lodging, meals, and programming are provided to musicians at no cost.

YOLA National Institute

YOLA National Institute facilitates opportunities for young artists from historically marginalized communities, particularly communities of color, to actively participate in project-based learning, holistic practices, and personal explorations through music. YNI builds a year-round collaborative community of young people and adult allies to think critically about the arts, to question the role of music in their lives, and to develop a better understanding of themselves and their creative futures.

YOLA National Accelerator

A convening of key stakeholders invested in progressive music education and youth development, the YOLA National Accelerator is an annual gathering aimed at sharing best practices and engaging in dialogue around advocacy, research, and pedagogy.

Partners in Music Learning

This granting program provides resources and support to organizations in targeted regions across the US to help unite, galvanize, and advance creative youth development music programs.

Summer Music Festival Opportunities

YOLA Local musicians who have completed ninth grade, as well as alumni, are eligible to apply for summer music festivals across the country. These opportunities are fully covered by YOLA, including application fees, tuition, and travel. Each festival has been carefully reviewed by the YOLA team to ensure high quality and alignment with YOLA's values. Musicians may apply to up to three festivals and participate in one each year. Additionally, YOLA Local musicians may attend both the YOLA National Festival and one additional festival. These festivals provide powerful opportunities for artistic and personal growth, immersing musicians in new environments and expanding their perspective.

Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center

The Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center at Inglewood (BYC) celebrates its 5th year on October of 2026. Providing a central hub for YOLA, the BYC represents a bold commitment toward a haven dedicated to music education and the empowerment of people who walk through its doors.

The 25,000-square-foot Beckmen YOLA Center is:

- • The home of the YOLA Institute and YOLA National Institute, both providing leadership, development, and preprofessional training opportunities, including private lessons, college application support,
- • expanded music ensembles, and additional performance opportunities.
- A rehearsal and performance space bringing together musicians from all of YOLA's community hubs to participate in programming.
- An international teaching center that hosts trainings and convenings for music educators from across the US and the world, including the annual YOLA National Accelerator.
- A community space built for the benefit of Inglewood families, musicians, and community groups in and around the area

The Beckmen YOLA Center Workforce Development Program

The Workforce Development Program is a two-year training program that provides young professionals with the opportunity to join the IATSE Local 33 and build their careers in stagecraft while working at the Beckmen YOLA Center. Participants in the Workforce Development Program gain technical skills in staging, carpentry, rigging, property, audio, video, lighting, and projection. In addition to becoming highly skilled technicians and stagehands, the WDP provides career planning, networking, and professional development resources.

Symphonies for Youth

The LA Phil believes in the profound and transformational experience that live music fosters. We are committed to creating innovative music education programs that provide teachers and young people throughout the greater Los Angeles area and beyond access to the world’s finest musicians and creative programming.

Symphonies for Youth

The Symphonies for Youth series showcases the Los Angeles Philharmonic in concerts curated especially for children aged 6–11 and their families and conducted by Dudamel Fellows. These multidisciplinary concerts are a perennial favorite of old and young alike and feature guest artists of the highest caliber. During pre-concert art activations, young people and families enjoy self-guided activities and fun for all ages throughout Walt Disney Concert Hall’s spaces.

An audience of approximately 13,590 served per season.

Symphonies for Schools

Elementary school-age children are introduced to the LA Phil and middle- and high-school music students experience their “hometown A-team” orchestra annually through these free concerts at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Curated student activities and teacher resources are sent to schools before the event to make musical connections in the classroom. The program culminates in unforgettable concerts developed especially for these age groups.

Approximately 14,500 students served per season.



Other Programs Supporting Young Musicians

The LA Phil has a deep tradition of involving accomplished musicians as mentors. Our programs for young musicians aim to help them reach their potential and to inspire virtuosity and creativity. With the support of Los Angeles Philharmonic musicians, students and teachers learn important lifelong lessons.

Invited Rehearsals

Invited rehearsals provide middle- and high-school music students and in-school instrumental music directors with a rare glimpse at the creative process of the Los Angeles Philharmonic as it prepares for a concert. As part of the experience, school ensembles receive information on the repertoire and composers, gain firsthand insight into the rehearsal process, and participate in a dynamic and interactive workshop.

Approximately 3,000 students served per season.

Composer Fellowship Program

The Composer Fellowship Program (CFP) is an opportunity for composers in grades 10 to 12 to become a part of the LA Phil's new music community. The innovative, multiyear program offers students a consistent and intensive focus on the process of music composition, giving them the tools and freedom necessary to shape the future of concert music. Students work with LA Phil musicians and guest artists in frequent reading sessions; hear their pieces performed by the LA Phil, chamber groups, and other ensembles; attend more than 20 concerts at Walt Disney Concert Hall; and engage with many of the world's greatest living composers.

Participants in the CFP program also receive the opportunity to apply for the Steven Stucky and Sue Tsao fellow chairs. The Stucky Fellow Chair is chosen from a pool of CFP alumni to compose a piece for the LA Phil to perform, and the Tsao Fellow Chair is chosen from the current CFP cohort to compose a piece for a youth ensemble.

15–20 students served per season.



Adults & Community

The LA Phil leads the field in designing engaging concert experiences for all audiences. We want to serve both tried and true audiences and new audiences with young faces, in unusual settings—such as churches and school auditoriums—for people less familiar with symphonic music or with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Upbeat Live & Casual Friday

These pre- and post-concert events are an informative and inspiring way to learn about the music and the artists. Over 100 talks by renowned musicologists and field experts, panel discussions, and/or other special events are held one hour before most concerts each season as part of Upbeat Live, and Casual Fridays feature opportunities to hear from the artists after select concerts. Both events are free with the purchase of a concert ticket.

Audience of approximately 350 served per event.

Neighborhood and Community Concerts

The LA Phil's concerts in the community include occasional free orchestra and chamber music concerts in churches, community centers, and other venues across Los Angeles. Concerts have been performed at East Los Angeles College, First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, Macedonia Baptist Church, and Morningside High School, among other sites.

Audiences of 4,000 served.

LA County Parks Program

This season, the LA Phil launched a partnership with the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation to support their afterschool initiative, Everybody Plays. As part of this collaboration, LA Phil Teaching Artists lead free music workshops at parks across all five supervisorial districts.

Workshop offerings will include choir and songwriting, exploratory instrument classes (such as mariachi, percussion, ukulele, and recorder), and community-building music sessions that introduce young people to the LA Phil and YOLA. The 20-week pilot program, running 1–2 days per week, aims to spark interest and create pathways for young musicians to connect with a YOLA Hub in the future and be inspired to experience the LA Phil at Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Participating parks include:

- SD1: Obregon Park (East Los Angeles)
- SD2: Jesse Owens Park (South Los Angeles)
- SD3: El Cariso Park (Unincorporated Sylmar)
- SD4: Sorenson Park (Unincorporated Whittier)
- SD5: Pamela Park (Unincorporated Duarte)

Enrollment reaches close to 200 young people.