The National Take a Stand Festival will be designed and implemented by the LA Phil, Venezuela’s FundaMusical, Aspen Music Festival and School, Bard College, and Longy School of Music of Bard College, in cooperation with El Sistema USA.

Los Angeles - (January 8, 2015) – The Los Angeles Philharmonic today announced the National Take a Stand Festival, an unprecedented initiative to create a unified national platform for El Sistema-inspired programs throughout the United States.

World-renowned conductors, guest artists, and master teachers will bring their artistry and mentorship to students from underserved communities across the United States who have been learning in El Sistema-influenced programs. By offering young people the opportunity to learn from exceptional musicians, become ambassadors of their programs, and for many travel out of state for the first time, the project aims to develop a model for excellence and a national community of citizen musicians from historically excluded populations in the United States.
The National Take a Stand Festival is a three-year project that will begin in 2015 with a teacher training and pilot program, followed by the formation of regional youth orchestra camps in 2016, culminating in a 7-day national youth orchestra camp in 2017, featuring a final performance led by LA Phil Music Director Gustavo Dudamel.

An international team of top teachers, working together with faculty from the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Longy School of Music of Bard College, Aspen Music Festival and School and Venezuela’s FundaMusical, will lead the youth orchestra camps. Robert Spano, Music Director of the Aspen Music Festival and School, and Leon Botstein, President of Bard College and Music Director of the American Symphony Orchestra, will conduct the groups as part of the regional youth orchestras’ final performances in 2016. Students will not only have access to top artistic and educational resources, but will experience some of the world’s finest learning institutions and concert venues such as Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, Bard College’s Fisher Center, and Aspen Music Festival’s Benedict Music Tent.

Since being introduced to the U.S. in 2006, El Sistema has taken root in over 60 underserved communities across the country and today engages more than 10,000 students. As the movement matures, there is a critical need to move from independent organizations and programs to a cohesive network that shares philosophy, standards of practice, resources and vision. The National Take a Stand Festival will work in tandem with El Sistema USA, which serves as a resource network and advocate for the El Sistema movement in the U.S., to reach this goal.

“Gustavo Dudamel’s inspiring vision is that music is a fundamental right for all. The National Take a Stand Festival enables us to further this goal and bring together different cultures and communities aligned by shared values of music and social responsibility,” says Deborah Borda, President and CEO, Los Angeles Philharmonic Association. “A unified El Sistema-inspired project with shared resources, standards and access, truly makes this fundamental right a reality.”
"One of the greatest challenges of El Sistema is to involve as many excluded children as possible. We are thrilled to support the creation of a Sistema community above and beyond our own boundaries." says Maestro José Antonio Abreu, founder of El Sistema.

“We’re thrilled to be a participant in this organization, whose work is of the utmost importance in the worlds of music and education,” said Bard College President Leon Botstein.

“It’s wonderful that Take a Stand is working together with the Aspen Music Festival and El Sistema USA,” says Longy President Karen Zorn. “This project will give young musicians a chance to go beyond their own communities and work toward a common goal with fellow students from across the country.”

“Here in Aspen we well know how music-making can transform lives, and through individuals, transform whole communities,” says Alan Fletcher, President and CEO of Aspen Music Festival and School. “El Sistema is a powerful force for good, and we are very proud to be partnering with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Longy School of Music, and Bard College in supporting its growth in the United States. In Aspen, the children in this program will join a highly dynamic, international community of professional and student musicians. We look forward to their arrival and hope they will find the immersive musical experience – and the spectacular mountain setting – here as inspiring as we do.”

National Take a Stand Festival programming will be designed to strengthen student leaders in the El Sistema movement both musically and socially.

Pilot Program (2015)
Over the course of a week, the international teaching artist faculty for this three-year project will come together to train, design and lead a pilot program, which will serve as the model for the regional and national youth orchestra camps.
**Regional Orchestras Camps (2016)**

International faculty will then lead two regional youth orchestra camps (5 days each) focused on musicianship and leadership. Youth Orchestra of the West camp will gather students from El Sistema programs across the Western U.S. at the Aspen Music Festival and School; and Youth Orchestra of the East camp, comprised of El Sistema students from the Eastern U.S., will be hosted at Bard College. Robert Spano, Music Director of the Aspen Music Festival and School, will conduct Youth Orchestra of the West at the **Benedict Music Tent**; and Leon Botstein, President of Bard College and Music Director of the American Symphony Orchestra, will lead Youth Orchestra of the East at the **Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts**, in their final performances.

**National Take a Stand Festival (2017)**

Coinciding with the 10th anniversary of YOLA (Youth Orchestra LA) – the LA Phil’s El Sistema-inspired program – students from the regional orchestras will combine in Los Angeles for a 7-day national youth orchestra camp, culminating in a performance led by Gustavo Dudamel.

The National Take a Stand Festival builds on the success of the 2014 Leadership Forum for Young Musicians, part of Take a Stand 2014, which engaged student leaders from 16 El Sistema programs in the U.S. It is an evolution of **Take a Stand** – a national initiative, formed by the LA Phil in partnership with Bard College, and the Longy School of Music of Bard College, to advance work that supports social change through music.

For more information about YOLA, please visit http://www.laphil.com/education.

**The Los Angeles Philharmonic Association**, under the vibrant leadership of Music Director Gustavo Dudamel, presents an inspiring array of music from all genres – orchestral, chamber and Baroque music, organ and celebrity recitals, new music, jazz, world music and pop – at two of L.A.’s iconic venues, Walt Disney Concert Hall (www.laphil.com) and the Hollywood Bowl (www.hollywoodbowl.com). The LA Phil’s season at Walt Disney Concert Hall extends from September through May, and throughout the summer at the Hollywood Bowl. With the preeminent Los Angeles Philharmonic at the foundation of its offerings, the
LA Phil aims to enrich and transform lives through music, with a robust mix of artistic, education and community programs.

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