

ORCHESTRA PROGRAM FOR YOUTH AT RISK IN THE CARIBBEAN
2009 WORKSHOP

YOA Mission for the Organization of American States

Castries, St. Lucia / Kingston, Jamaica / Port-au-Prince, Haiti
October 2 to November 2, 2009



THE MISSION BEGINS

On 2 October 2009, YOA violinist from Brazil, Deborah Wanderley dos Santos, went on a very special mission to the Caribbean. She joined a team of 10 Orchestra School experts to launch *Orchestra Program for Youth at Risk in the Caribbean*. This Program is an initiative of the Organization of American States (OAS) with Youth Orchestra of the Americas, FESNOJIV (Fundación del Estado para el Sistema Nacional de las Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela), and Fundación Batuta (Colombia).

OAS TEAM

The OAS team of experts was comprised of a core team of 4, who would participate in the implementation of the Orchestra Schools in all 3 countries:

Mariano Vales: Program Developer and Coordinator from OAS

Role: Mission leader and administrator

Deborah Wanderley dos Santos: YOA violinist and founder of the YOURS Project in Chicago

Role: violin teacher, pedagogy advisor, photographer, handbook developer, and expert in Orchestra School start-ups

Amalia Diaz: BATUTA Nucleo Director

Role: violin teacher, pedagogy advisor, handbook developer, and expert in education for vulnerable population

Alejandro Beltran: BATUTA Nucleo Director

Role: Cello teacher

Groups of experts from FESNOJIV (Venezuela) joined the OAS Core Team in Santa Lucia and Jamaica.

SANTA LUCIA



PLANNING

October 3. Mariano Vales, Program Developer and Coordinator from OAS, gave the Team two main responsibilities: (1) select and train local musicians on Orchestra School methodology and philosophy which is famous for lifting at-risk children from impoverished environments, (2) prepare a side-by-side concert where local musicians and potential teachers would perform together. The concert would be a high-profile event performed on October 13 for local authorities and the media, to promote the OAS *Orchestra Program for Youth at Risk*.

A feeling of excitement filled the room while the team worked out a detailed curriculum of four levels of repertoire. Material chosen was easy for teachers to implement and attractive to the young students. The curriculum included: works from standard orchestral repertoire, national anthems, folk tunes and arrangements of some of the childrens' favorite popular songs. Bi-monthly goals were set to assess progress and record impact, to be monitored by local teachers and the OAS team from abroad.

After setting up tools of pedagogy, the team worked with a violin teacher from Santa Lucia Music School to recruit as many musicians as possible to play in the October 13 concert. Santa Lucia Music School was set up as OAS headquarters of *Orchestra Program for Youth at Risk* giving full access to music faculty, administration and expertise. Working with OAS staff, Santa Lucia Music School secured endorsement from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, school principals and parents to enable the young school-age musicians to participate in one-week of intensive full-time preparation for the October 13 concert.

THE ST. LUCIA TEAM

OAS Core Team + Orchestra School experts in Santa Lucia:

Miguel Salas: FESNOJIV Nucleo Director

Role: Choir director

Andres Herrera: FESNOJIV founding member

Role: cello teacher and team leader

Jesus Sira: FESNOJIV conductor.

Role: violin teacher, conductor, and artistic director

Heemath Jahoor: FESNOJIV founding member

Role: violin teacher and Caribbean expert.

Antulio Duboy: FESNOJIV teacher.

Role: viola teacher

Jogli Encinosa: FESNOJIV teacher

Role: Double bass teacher and luthier

WORKSHOPS AND ORCHESTRA REHEARSALS

October 4. OAS Program Team went to Santa Lucia Music School to listen to an ensemble of potential teachers and young musicians. After a brief assessment, repertoire was decided:

Trepak by Mussorgsky (adaptation for string orchestra)

Themes from 1812 Overture by Tchaikovsky (adaptation for string orchestra)

Ukrainian Carol, Traditional

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 by J.S. Bach

Folklore of St. Lucia, Traditional

St. Lucia National Anthem

Alma Llanera (Joropo) by Pedro Elías Gutiérrez

Rehearsals started immediately. As progress on the repertoire was made, the potential teachers gained invaluable hands-on experience with the unique methodology and teaching style of the Orchestra School. It was also an ideal context for them to demonstrate and develop essential teaching qualities such as leadership, responsibility and patience.

Intensive training and rehearsals followed throughout the week. Sessions began at 7:30 a.m. with individual lessons, followed by pedagogy workshops from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Music-making continued throughout the afternoon with orchestra and sectional rehearsals from 1:30 to 6:00 p.m. The team displayed incredible passion for the mission and approached their many hours of work with a good disposition. Their enthusiasm and dedication was infectious; little by little, the potential teachers and young musicians became more and more enthusiastic and dedicated.

TEACHER TRAINING

October 10. Local teachers were chosen by OAS Team of experts and individuals from Santa Lucia Music School. Pedagogy advisors Amalia Diaz and Deborah W. dos Santos concentrated for the next three days on thoroughly training the Program's faculty. Deborah W. dos Santos adapted her YOURS Project Handbook to the specific circumstances of the St. Lucian program, thus providing a valuable and detailed tool for administration, faculty, students and their families to better understand the underlying philosophy and unique methodology of the Orchestra School.

THE CONCERT

The **October 13** inaugural concert took place at Marchand's Elementary School, an inner-city school where a permanent OAS orchestra will be formed. The school's Hall was filled with diplomats, members of the business community, the media and most importantly, the families whose children were eligible to participate in the Program. The orchestra played with great and uncommon emotion, each note representing the hope that this program brings to these children and their families. Family members listened from their seats in the darkened concert hall, just beginning to realize how this program might help move them from life's shadows to the spot-light.

JAMAICA



ARRIVAL IN JAMAICA

October 14. Mariano Vales, Deborah W. dos Santos, Amalia Diaz and Alejandro Beltran arrived in Kingston. A new group of Venezuelan experts arrived **October 15** to join the Team.

THE JAMAICAN TEAM

OAS Core Team + FESNOJIV experts:

Jose Fuentes: FESNOJIV teacher

Role: Viola teacher.

Luis Guillermo Perez: FESNOJIV founding member

Role: Bass teacher.

Javier Montilla: FESNOJIV teacher

Role: Flute player and manager of the woodwind section

Alexander Barrios:

Role: Trumpet player and manager of the brass section

Edgar Saume: FESNOJIV founding member

Role: Percussion teacher, conductor, and musical director

Libya Dadonn: FESNOJIV teacher

Role: Choir director

PLANNING

October 15. OAS Program Team met with Ann Mc Namee, representative of Edna Manley College of Music, the OAS headquarters of the *Orchestra Program for Youth at Risk* in Jamaica. FESNOJIV team members concentrated on planning repertoire and rehearsal strategies. OAS core team focused on developing strategies to select and train prospective teachers for a permanent OAS Youth Orchestra at Edna Manley College of Music.

WORKSHOPS AND REHEARSALS

October 16. Amateur and professional musicians came from all over Kingston to make music. People were extremely excited with the novelty of participating in a Symphony Orchestra, a rare occasion in Jamaica.

The repertoire:

Fanfare for the Common Man by Aaron Copland

Gypsy Overture by Merle J. Isaac

Danzon No. 2 by Arturo Marquez

Malambo from “Estancia Suite” by Alberto Ginastera

Concerto in D minor Op 3 No. 11 by Antonio Vivaldi

Hallelujah from Oratorio *The Messiah* by GF Handel

Marley Symphony No. 1 by John Williams



October 17. OAS Team started intensive week-long preparation for concert on October 23. Sectionals took place from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00p.m. and full-orchestra rehearsals from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m. The musicians were very enthusiastic and dedicated. Many cancelled school and work for the entire week to be able to participate in all the musical activities.

Lunch break was a very special moment. Around 80 musicians and trainers had lunch together in the orchestra rehearsal room every day. It was a fun time where musicians networked and had countless reggae jamming sections. By the end of the week, many groups and music projects were born out of the extraordinary experience of being part of a symphony orchestra.

OUTREACH

October 20. OAS Team reached out to the community by coaching a children’s orchestra at a school for girls. The girls had a fearful and shy approach to classical music. They were so afraid of making mistakes that they could not enjoy the music. The OAS team of experts brought in so much light, fun and laughter to those walls, that by the end of the morning the girls were completely in love with classical music. By then, not only were the girls having a blast while playing, but they also improved into a whole new level of musicianship. The girls were invited to participate in the OAS Program launching concert on October 23.



TEACHER TRAINING

During all rehearsals, OAS trainers were identifying the most suitable candidates to be trained in the philosophies and pedagogies of the Orchestra School. A different approach from Saint Lucia was taken in Jamaica. Potential teacher-musicians in Jamaica were selected based on a similar socio-economic background to the students who will participate in the Program, not for technical skill of musicianship as in Saint Lucia. OAS Team experts observed that the best brass players in the country grew up in a house for orphan boys. It was very clear that their contribution to the OAS *Orchestra Program for Youth at Risk* was going to be of high value and impact.

October 21. Teachers of OAS Program in Jamaica were appointed and immersed in intensive pedagogy training.



THE CONCERT

On the evening of **October 23**, the Jamaican concert hall was filled with leaders of government, foundations, companies, diplomats and celebrities. A *60 Minutes* television special on FESNOJIV, presented at the beginning, was a powerful tool to illustrate the possibilities and future of the OAS *Program for Youth at Risk in the Caribbean*. The excitement in the hall was inebriating. The orchestra played with inspiring passion and the audience responded accordingly.

HAITI



ARRIVAL IN HAITI

October 24. OAS Core Team was schedule to depart Jamaica for Haiti, but a tropical storm kept the team in Jamaica for two more days. The team took advantage of the free time and finished all planning and preparation for the mission in Haiti. **October 26.** Four members of OAS Core Team arrived in Port-au-Prince.

THE HAITIAN TEAM

A planned team of 10 turned into a team of 4 because experts from FESNOJIV were only able to arrive 2 weeks after the project date. Luckily, experts in the OAS Core Team are versatile and were able to take on extra roles. The Haiti Team was determined to do everything necessary to turn the mission into a success. Mariano Vales took on the additional roles of Conductor and Director. Deborah W. dos Santos borrowed a viola from the music school and

became the viola teacher while Amalia Diaz took over the responsibility of teaching all violins. Alejandro Beltran took charge of the cellos and double basses.

PLANNING

October 26. OAS Core Team visited *Ecole de Musique Sainte-Trinite*. In addition to a regular academic program, this school offers a music program. It is also home to the Haitian Philharmonic Orchestra. *Sainte-Trinite* is the headquarters for OAS *Orchestra Program for Youth at Risk in Haiti*, thus providing teachers and physical space for lessons. The children participating in the OAS orchestra are residents of Bel-Air, one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince.

WORKSHOPS AND REHEARSALS



Daily workshops from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Orchestra rehearsals took place daily from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Most prospective teachers were advanced members of the Haitian Philharmonic. Since they already had the technical skills, the OAS Core Team concentrated in infusing passion and fun into their way of playing. There was much resistance in the beginning. They were afraid because Père David Cesar, the conductor of the Haitian Philharmonic Orchestra, had always instructed them not to move while playing for fear of jeopardizing technique. Père Cesar was himself playing the viola in one of the workshops. After much encouragement from the OAS trainers, he rose out of his seat spinning while playing his viola and shouting “Dance, dance, dance!” That was a Haitian breaking point in the motivation and approach to classical music. The orchestra busted into laughter and tropical dancing invaded the stage.

Repertoire selected:

Adagio para Cuerdas by Samuel Barber

Suite St. Paul by Gustav Holst

Bachianas Brasileiras N° 3 by Héitor Villa-Lobos

El Buchipluma / A sus horas (Pequeño mosaico de música de los llanos Colombo-Venezolanos, arreglado para cuerdas por Jorge Andrés Arbeláez)

Fuga y Misterio by Astor Piazzolla, arranged by Mariano Vales

Coro del “Aleluya” del Oratorio “El Mesías” by G.F. Handel

Encore: *Waio-Waio*, Haitian folkloric song

TEACHER TRAINING

Prospective teachers in Haiti were very advanced in their playing skills. This allowed the OAS team to focus on teaching the philosophy and pedagogy of the Orchestra School. Training started on the second day of the mission, and continued daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The sessions were always full, often with visitors curious about the phenomenon of an Orchestra School.

CONCERT

On **November 1**, a revolutionary concert took place in *Ecole de Musique Sainte-Trinite*. After much hard work, the musicians loosened up and played with unseen passion and enjoyment. Each note performed that night was dripping with huge hope and enthusiasm. The encore was in the best style of YOA: the orchestra performed WAIO WAIO conducted by a 9 year-old girl. The audience could not help but cheer when, for the first time in history, musicians from the Haitian Philharmonic Orchestra broke into a wild dancing movement while performing a concert.



REFLECTIONS by Deborah Wanderley dos Santos

On October 2, I left Chicago on a mission to help change lives. But I knew that my own life would be changed. I can never leave on a trip related to Youth Orchestra of the Americas and not have my life changed. In fact, YOA started changing my life when I was only dreaming about becoming a YOA musician. That dream helped me stay focused and dedicated to my development as a violinist.

My first experience with YOA was in 2005. My dream came true. I was on my way to Venezuela to participate in a Latin America Tour. I was so excited with the idea of playing with enthusiastic and passionate young musicians. I was happy with the opportunity of traveling and making friends who shared the same dreams, same aspirations, and same devotion to fighting for our dreams. But my experience with Youth Orchestra of the Americas turned out to be so much more. I joined YOA as violinist and came back as a music ambassador for social transformation. YOA not only challenged me to become the best violinist I can possibly be, but YOA took me out of my practicing cubicle and dared me to change the world through music.

I accepted the dare. I now dedicate my life to service. I am Founder and director of the YOURS Project; an Orchestra School that serves 150 children at-risk in South Chicago. I am Founder of the *Music for Peace Festival*. I am a member of *Build the Peace Committee of Chicago* and *Partners of Americas*. We will never know exactly the extent of YOA transformational influence. I am only one of thousands of lives who were changed. I am only one of many who, inspired by Youth Orchestra of Americas, dare to change the world through music.