

INTRODUCING SOL-LA MUSIC ACADEMY

Mission of SOL-LA Music Academy

SOL-LA's mission is to provide high quality music education to students from all backgrounds and economic circumstances, in an engaging and encouraging environment fostering achievement and community. Our comprehensive program reflects the belief that vibrant cultural education nurtures all areas of learning, connects diverse societies and enhances enjoyment of life.

SOL-LA stands apart from other music education programs by providing:

- *Tuition assistance* for 49% of its own students, rapidly approaching its goal of providing tuition assistance for 50% of students.
- *Excellence of faculty* of which all faculty are graduates of the nation's top music schools, and/or highly accomplished and experienced performing artists;
- *Performance-based programs* to develop standards of excellence and build community among students starting at early childhood;
- *Collaborative community partnerships* to provide music instruction to students in underserved schools;
- *Mentorships* for advanced level students to work with renowned SOL-LA faculty while mentoring younger students through after school sessions;
- *Adult Education* including parent workshops with guest artists and critical thinkers that convey the benefits of music education as a critical component of general education and a universal form of communication.

Background & History

Since the 1980's, public school cutbacks in the arts have left our youth bereft of an essential part of education. Founded in 2007 as a non-profit 501 (c) (3) performing arts community school, SOL-LA's programs are designed to fill the gap in our youth's music education by providing comprehensive music and performing arts education from early childhood through high school and, and through music, transform the lives of children and the communities around them.

SOL-LA Music Academy was built upon five basic commitments:

- To provide innovative arts education to children from all backgrounds and income levels
- To enable students of all socio-economic backgrounds to develop strong artistic and musical educational foundations
- To develop the artistic abilities and technical skill of students through instrumental studies and the language of music and the performing arts
- To create bridges across diverse cultures and communities through music education and to make music relevant and exciting to today's youth
- To foster a creative community for students by providing artistic mentors and an environment for students to bond through healthy, joyful and creative pursuits.

Description of SOL-LA Programs

SOL-LA offers performing arts study in instrumental music, a range of ensemble classes, music theory, choral classes and theatre improvisation, from pre-school to adult students. The research-based program begins with foundational instruction and proceeds through an interactive program of individual and group instruction in instrumental music, music composition and theory, and performance to provide for optimal growth.

One of SOL-LA's core strengths is the excellence of its faculty comprised of accomplished leaders in pedagogy and professional musicians, who are committed to the concept that music education is a fundamental right, and an essential foundation for intellectual, spiritual and emotional growth.

Performance plays a key role at SOL-LA. In order to keep practice relevant, develop standards of excellence and build community, students perform regularly, throughout the year.

From the very beginning, students participate in improvisatory interaction, which helps them to experience performance as a communal activity and allows them to experiment with the musical, technical and physical challenges of performance in a friendly and non-judgmental environment. Students are also encouraged to compose and perform their own music and to use the most current tools available, including computer composition programs.

Performances include weekly recitals, a range of student musical ensembles from classical, jazz, chamber music groups, chorus, regular group class performances, monthly Saturday performance recitals, quarterly school-wide recitals, participation in master classes by world renowned guest artists, The Southern California Band and Orchestra Association (SCSBOA), Solo and Small Ensemble Festivals, Community Concerto Competitions, Los Angeles Music Center Spotlight Awards, and Santa Monica community events. In addition, students have several performance opportunities with our education and performance partners: The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage at the Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, and the Ann and Jerry Moss Theater at New Roads School's new Capshaw-Spielberg Center for Art and Educational Justice.

Mentorships

Mentorship is a defining element of the SOL-LA program that provides university and advanced-level high school students the opportunity to work with accomplished and renowned SOL-LA faculty, while mentoring younger students through after-school instrumental practice sessions. The role of the mentor is to serve as a practice supervisor, coach, friend and role model. It is this preparatory stage that introduces mentors to the art of teaching.

Adult Education

Parent and adult education workshops, a series of informal presentations within the community, are a vital part of the SOL-LA program. Guest artists and critical thinkers share research and ideas that convey the benefits of music education as a critical component of general education and a universal form of communication.

Communities Served

Scholarships for Low to Moderate Income Students

Since its inception, SOL-LA has been committed to attracting, engaging and serving children for whom quality music education would not otherwise be available. A goal of SOL-LA's Director and Board has been to increase tuition assistance to 50% of its student population, enabling the school to increase the number of students from diverse backgrounds participating in the program. This year SOL-LA is rapidly approaching its goal: 49% of SOL-LA's 550 students on campus and at satellite locations will receive full or partial scholarships, compared to 25% three years ago.

SOL-LA's school partnership program has grown to encompass 40 local private and public schools, and now reaches approximately 1,200 participants who engage in SOL-LA art activities during the school day.

Partnerships and Outreach

Saint Anne School String Program

In 2010 SOL-LA, Crossroads School's Elizabeth Mandell Music Institute (EMMI) and Crossroads Community Outreach Foundation formed a partnership with Saint Anne School to provide music education to underserved children. Saint Anne School, founded in 1908 with the mission of providing quality affordable education regardless of a family's capacity to pay, is the only non-public Title I school in the Santa Monica-Malibu school district.

The Saint Anne School music program began with a fourth grade class of 15 beginning violin students and has grown rapidly to now serve 230 K-8 students. The essential aspects of the String Program are weekly lessons with a SOL-LA master teacher in violin, cello, guitar and chorus and daily peer-to-peer mentorship/practice buddies for string students from EMMI at Crossroads School, Santa Monica High School Symphony Orchestra students and UCLA music students. Saint Anne School students receive full scholarships to attend ensemble, theory and chorus classes on the SOL-LA campus.

Other Outreach and Partnerships

SOL-LA's teaching practices embody the belief that building a supportive community is integral to making a difference in the lives of children. In addition to offering events to the community throughout the year, SOL-LA has become a collaborative resource in the community, acting as a catalyst to build strong networks and partnerships among education institutions, performing arts organizations, families and community organization throughout the Los Angeles region.