

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Collaboration to Bring El Sistema to Somerville is in the Works

Boston, Massachusetts – October 27, 2011 – The El Sistema music program at the Conservatory Lab Charter School in Brighton and the East Somerville Community School will unite for a joint concert to gain support for an after-school El Sistema music program in Somerville. This concert will be free to the public on Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 3pm at the Somerville Public High School Auditorium.

El Sistema is an innovative and successful approach to building community through high-quality orchestral music instruction. Originally developed in Venezuela, in recent years this initiative has become highly sought after in the US.

In 2010, the Conservatory Lab Charter School, a 169-student, pre-K-6 public charter school in Brighton, fully incorporated El Sistema into its daily structure by elongating the day to 5:00 p.m., thus allowing for almost 3 hours of daily music instruction for every one of its students. After a highly successful launch year, program co-directors David Malek and Rebecca Levi are now working hand in hand with Richard Saunders, Music Director of the Somerville Public Schools, to expand El Sistema into Somerville.

The overarching goal of this collaboration is to create an El Sistema-inspired *núcleo* that would function as an everyday afterschool instrumental ‘during the day’ program at the Conservatory Lab. This will rely heavily on “voluntary participation” from students, says Richard Saunders, “but starts with parent support for the long term. Structure, commitment, and involvement from the community will keep it going.”

The collaboration will give a taste of what might be possible with an El Sistema music program in Somerville. Excitement from the administrations, staff and students from both Somerville and Conservatory Lab are fueling this community-building concert. “This is one of the first collaborations for El Sistema in greater Boston!” says Rebecca Levi. “Students as young as 8 years old are creating music with kids their own age from across town.” What is needed is community support. This starts with an audience at the November 16th concert.

This November 16th concert was sparked by From the Top’s Center for the Development of Arts Leaders who have been working at Conservatory Lab since January. This cohort of four Arts Leaders and one Mentor are helping support this initiative to expand El Sistema in the greater Boston area. From the Top’s Center for the Development of Arts Leaders is focused on giving pre-collegiate musicians mentorship, opportunities, and support as they work with community partners to take their music beyond the concert hall.