

ISME Conference 2012 Spoken Paper Special Interest Group Submission

In Harmony Sistema England: a coherent music education

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Background:

Three pilot projects, inspired by *el Sistema*, were established in England in 2008. Membership criteria, drawing on the best and most effective practice in each project were devised linking to the underlying philosophy and values of *el Sistema*. All three projects continued to be funded by the Government until July 2012 through successfully meeting or demonstrating that steps were being taken to meet these criteria. Associate membership criteria were developed and links with the wider music education agenda and initiatives were established. This research reviews the impact of these developments in the context of the wider music education context in England and *el Sistema* inspired international developments.

Aim of the Project

This aim of this project is to review the impact of these initiatives and policies. Conclusions will be drawn and implications for England and the international community will be considered in terms of entitlement and inclusion; access and progression; quality and links with other aspects of music education.

Method

Policy documents and project evaluation reports were reviewed to analyse commonalities and differences. Interviews were held with policy makers and managers; practitioners, including head teachers and class teachers, visiting instrumental and vocal teachers; community and professional musicians; parents and children.

Results

The projects have all resulted in improvements in inclusion, musicianship, motivation, self-esteem, self-confidence, and in other areas of learning. Policies are promoting greater coherence between those organisations involved in the provision of music education. The programme is now being expanded in England.

Conclusions and Implications

The *Sistema* inspired programmes impact positively on all young people's personal, social, musical and educational development. The child's experience of music education is improved when there is greater coherence between the different elements and providers. There is still much work to do before these initiatives form a coherent whole.

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Background:

Three pilot projects, inspired by *el Sistema*, were established in England in 2008. Membership criteria¹, drawing on the best and most effective practice in each project were devised linking to the underlying philosophy and values of *el Sistema*. All three projects continued to be funded by the Government until July 2012 through successfully meeting or demonstrating that steps were being taken to meet these criteria. In Harmony Norwich found that delivering the programme across three schools was not working effectively within the constraints of the pilot. In July 2011 one school left the project and the programme continued in two schools until July 2012. Associate membership criteria² were developed and links with the wider music education agenda and initiatives were established. This research reviews the impact of these developments in the context of the wider music education context in England and *el Sistema* inspired international developments.

For the previous 20 years, England's national curriculum had included music as a statutory requirement for young people aged 5 to 14 years. Under 'the importance of music' it stated that:

Music is a unique form of communication that can change the way pupils feel, think and act. Music forms part of an individual's identity and positive interaction with music can develop pupils' competence as learners and increase their self-esteem. Music brings together intellect and feeling and enables personal expression, reflection and emotional development. As an integral part of culture, past and present, music helps pupils understand themselves, relate to others and develop their cultural understanding, forging important links between home, school and the wider world.

Music education encourages active involvement in different forms of music-making, both individual and communal, helping to develop a sense of group identity and togetherness. Music can influence pupils' development in and out of school by fostering personal development and maturity, creating a sense of achievement and self-worth, and increasing pupils' ability to work with others in a group context. Music learning develops pupils' critical skills: their ability to listen, to appreciate a wide variety of music, and to make judgements about musical quality. It also increases self-discipline, creativity, aesthetic sensitivity and fulfilment.

There are a number of key concepts that underpin the study of music within the English national curriculum which pupils need to understand in order to deepen and broaden their knowledge, skills and understanding. These concepts are the integration of practice, cultural and critical understanding, creativity and communication. Performing, composing, listening, reviewing and evaluating are the essential skills and processes in music that pupils need to learn to make progress. Children are required to learn to sing and to play a musical instrument as part of the statutory curriculum and, through the National Plan for Music

¹ See appendix 1

² Associate membership criteria are the same as full membership criteria with the exception that the category of Associate membership of In Harmony · Sistema England has been created to support those projects that *aspire* to become full members of In Harmony · Sistema England but, for whatever reason, do not yet meet the criteria of full membership. Associate membership is thus considered to be a stepping stone to full membership.

Education's core requirements, their curriculum is augmented and supported by specialist teachers and professional musicians. Working with instrumental specialists they should all experience first access through whole class ensemble tuition. Those that so choose should then be able to perform and to continue through affordable progression routes through to excellence.

The theoretical overlap between the statutory requirements of the national curriculum, the aspirations of the National Plan, and the membership criteria of *El Sistema* inspired In Harmony programmes is evident. The next sections go on to describe the research methodology and findings from the In Harmony · Sistema England programme as to how well these aspirations are realised in practice.

Method

Policy documents and project evaluation reports were reviewed to analyse commonalities and differences. Interviews were held with policy makers and managers; practitioners, including head teachers and class teachers, visiting instrumental and vocal teachers; community and professional musicians; parents and children.

Findings

The main difference between *El Sistema* and the English music curriculum is that *El Sistema* has an even stronger emphasis on the social and personal benefits of music. *El Sistema* exists to achieve social outcomes, but it does this through the pursuit of musical excellence. In Harmony · Sistema England (IHSE) is providing strong evidence of the importance of pupils learning together in meaningful musical ensembles and demonstrating that these ensemble experiences can be introduced from the earliest stages of playing an instrument.

In Liverpool the project is engaging with over 151 children and is extending beyond the immersive engagement with the pupils in Faith Primary and working with children within the community who attend other schools. In 2009 In Harmony Norwich delivered the programme to 600 children in three schools. Of these a core of 165 children from 138 families accessed the programme intensively through whole class school sessions, individual support sessions and after school sessions. In Lambeth the project is engaging over 450 children aged 1 to 13 based in two core schools with a further school joining with the after school activities. Other pupils who live on the estate also attend in the afternoonsⁱ.

As a social programme first, the evaluation reports and interviews with parents clearly show that IHSE is having a positive impact on the wider community. In Liverpool there is significant qualitative evidenceⁱⁱ that the project is impacting on the community as a whole and that engagement in music is generating a strong sense of pride, increasing confidence and a strengthened sense of identity in West Everton.

'Loads of people are now involved in the school who weren't before. It's great when we all come together, it's like a big family. It's great when new people and new kids get involved' (Liverpool parent)

'It's brilliant when other people from outside the school get involved – we can see the other side of each other' (Liverpool parent)

This is evident in Norwich too:

‘This has made the whole family aspire to better things in life, the whole community is behind them you know and that is a lovely feeling. The children have more belief in themselves, (Norwich parent)

Ofsted, England’s official body for inspecting schools, reporting on Faith School in July 2010ⁱⁱⁱ, just one year into the project, found that:

“Your school is providing you with a good education. Some of the work of the school is outstanding, for example, the way the school works in the local community

“Through links between the two faiths, its work in the wider community and its partnerships with schools beyond the immediate experience of the pupils, the school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well. By its success in musical performances the school is raising the self-esteem and pride of pupils and their parents and carers.”

This raising of aspirations and increased parental involvement in their children’s futures is further evidenced through the following quotes:

"It's like a dream come true," says Christy's father, Tony. "A dream I never had, never imagined it."(Liverpool parent)

'I boast about it in work and it is brilliant because most people would never expect instruments and orchestras round here. I think it challenges them about what they think this place is like. They can't look down on us so much' (Liverpool parent)

'The achievement is now something they are all proud of. And that will pass on – to other people and to other generations. In time it will change this place. I am so proud of her' (Liverpool parent)

Kristy's 30-year-old sister, Natalie, says with an expression of both pride and sadness: "It's something we never had. She has a totally different attitude from the rest of us because of all this – she's talking about university, and she's off to the Tate tomorrow."^{iv}

"I can't believe that my child says she wants to do well at school and then go to university to study music because she loves the In Harmony orchestra so much, I can't thank them enough for this she will have a better future than I had." (Norwich parent)

Indeed there has been a huge impact on parental involvement in all of the schools in each of the three projects. Some of the parents that previously did not engage with school in the past have started coming to the school since In Harmony commenced.

The Norwich evaluation report^v found that the holistic, innovative, and creative approach to delivering the programme has led to the involvement, engagement, and commitment of parents, communities and children, not only in access to music and its impact, but also for the sustainability of the programme as the following example shows:

From the families within each community they had created a team of 12 volunteers who attended rehearsals weekly and a further 12 volunteers who supported the programme at concerts. The volunteer crew established their own identity through dedicated clothing and became integral to the community change, promoting the work through local informal networks.

There is also clear evidence of significant improvement in achievement in school. This is strongly supported by attainment data, Ofsted reports and triangulation of data from parents, teachers and pupils. This is despite a reduction of core curriculum time of 4.25 hours. (In Harmony Liverpool)

*‘The school’s involvement in a national music project is reaping **exceptional rewards**, especially in how it engages pupils in their learning and motivates them..... attainment at the end of Year 2**has shown considerable improvement**, indicating that **pupil’s progress is improving quickly**. For example, more pupils now achieve the level expected of them at this age and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are achieving better than predicted. In addition, more pupils are reaching above the expected levels for their age.’^{vi}”*

Teachers and parents are equally aware of these changes:

‘He has really settled down and really improved in class, particularly in his handwriting – his eye-hand coordination’ (Liverpool parent)

‘She loves coming to school now’ (Liverpool parent)

‘It’s great being more involved with the teachers, it’s easier to talk to them and share problems. I love coming into school now, I see them in a different light’ (Liverpool parent)

‘Her school work is far better because she is able to concentrate far more now’ (Liverpool parent)

‘I think there must be a link between music and maths. She has so much confidence in her work now especially in maths. School is now a really enjoyable place. She really takes an interest in maths now, she wants to do a sheet of sums when she goes to bed. She was never like that before’ (Liverpool parent)

‘She is far more willing to do her homework and she doesn’t mess about at all, it’s an improvement. This would not have happened without In Harmony’ (Norwich parent)

‘He is very keen on doing his reading now and much more focussed on his homework’ (Norwich parent)

‘SAT³s scores and attainment have improved’ (Liverpool teacher)

‘Attainment and progression is really good now’ (Liverpool teacher)

‘The children have great pride in what they play – that transfers into the classroom’ (Liverpool teacher)

‘In Harmony is having a direct impact on the way children learn’ (Liverpool teacher)

³ SATs Standard Assessment Tests

In Harmony has raised the children's levels of concentration, their attention, their co-operation skills, their pride and self-esteem. This already is making an impact on other areas of the curriculum including reading. ' (Lambeth head teacher)

Music helps academic development and this was evident in our school' (Lambeth head teacher)

'When thinking about certain students I can endorse that they have engaged more meaningfully with their learning, they concentrate much better in their study. We are seeing that they are very excited about learning now and I consider that this is a result of learning an instrument' (Norwich teacher)

'I have noticed a marked change in this child, a fresh approach to her learning that certainly I would not have commented on previously. I believe that In Harmony has given the children more drive to learn, it's shown them that learning can be fun and inspirational' (Norwich teacher)

'The children seem to share a love of learning that I for one have not seen in these children before, it is so good to see them achieve' (Norwich teacher)

'We are seeing these children progress not only in musical ability but in other areas of learning and self-development.' (Norwich teacher)

These academic and educational gains were not at the expense of musical improvement. Musical knowledge, skills and understanding were reported as improving in all three projects. For example, in the Liverpool evaluation it was found that musical progression was significant and evidenced across most of the children in the school with very few cases of slow progression being evident. An Ofsted Good Practice Survey Inspection in Music supported this and provided valuable correlation that the work being carried out by the In Harmony musicians in Faith Primary was “outstanding” and the programme of work was meeting National Curriculum requirements in Music.

“The consistency of approach, founded on strong principles that draw on a range of pedagogical and musical approaches, is commendable. Every opportunity is taken to immerse the pupils in musical language and not a minute is wasted. The In Harmony teachers are excellent musicians and their expert modelling sets the standard for the technical and musical quality that pupils are expected to match. At the same time tasks are sequenced thoughtfully and musically so that pupils are able to master new ideas in small steps. Pupils of all ages contribute creatively by suggesting ways to improve their work and by inventing new melodic and rhythmic patterns to perform.”^{vii}

In a general school inspection Ofsted also reported

“Your achievement in playing musical instruments and performing in concerts as the West Everton Children's Orchestra is astonishing”^{viii}.

It was also noted that:

“Assessment is particularly good in the group lessons, which typically include between 8 – 15 pupils with a member of the school staff. Here close attention is given to every learner; misunderstandings are spotted and rectified quickly. Consequently, working relationships are excellent, pupils’ behaviour is very good, and they make secure progress in developing their musical understanding.”^{ix}

As well as the tracking of musical development showing clear and considerable progress in all children engaged in the programme. The evaluation of In Harmony Norwich showed that, as well as the project delivering musical experience, it is increasing aspirations, improving social and emotional development that is in turn leading to improved relationships within families and schools, across schools within disadvantaged parts of the city.

Ofsted reinforced this success in the good practice survey visit to Liverpool:

‘It is very clear that participation in the In Harmony programme has a much wider benefit for the pupils’ personal and social development as well as for their general educational attainment parents and staff speak passionately about the way that involvement in music has changed children’s attitudes and expectations ‘Music has given our children respect for themselves, respect for each other, and respect for education.’ It is clear that the project has brought about a cultural change in the school’s wider community^x’

There is also significant qualitative evidence from parents and teachers that self-esteem, self-confidence and well-being have increased and remain high. With improved behaviour and relationships contributing to the academic and musical successes outlined above.

‘I can’t believe how much she has changed since doing the music. She used to cry whenever anyone spoke to her – now we can’t shut her up’ (Liverpool parent)

‘The school is now very good at managing the kids and keeping them interested. That is a major weight off your mind when you are at work because you know they are enjoying their day’ (Liverpool parent)

‘Her concentration has improved in school work’ (Norwich parent)

‘She used to be so much trouble before but In Harmony has given her so many friends now she doesn’t feel neglected by children or school now’ (Norwich parent)

‘They now have respect when other people are talking, they have learned that from being in the orchestra, (Norwich parent)

‘Her behaviour has improved and she’s not so moody’ (Norwich parent)

‘Much calmer and able to express herself in a more calm and confident way’ (Norwich parent)

‘Never had any self-confidence but since doing In Harmony I have seen it grow more and more’ (Norwich parent)

‘Confidence grown and is able to easily and comfortably communicate with people of all ages’ (Norwich parent)

'She's more confident in taking on new things and participating' (Norwich parent)

'She communicates her needs much clearer now without shouting, she waits her turn to speak and she can make decisions which before the orchestra just didn't happen.' (Norwich parent)

'He used to be so shy but is really confident now' (Liverpool teacher)

'Pupils working well together now and are more cooperative'. (Liverpool teacher)

'Collaboration has definitely improved. There are fewer cliques.' (Liverpool teacher)

'Older and younger pupils play together more. Year groups used to be very separate'. (Liverpool teacher)

'Before In Harmony I was sending 3 or 4 pupils out of class each day – now none' (Liverpool teacher)

'Pupils have more respect for each other and will listen when others are speaking. They are not just waiting for their turn, they are listening to each other.' (Liverpool teacher)

'Listening skills have definitely improved' (Liverpool teacher)

'Pupils are more tolerant of each other' (Liverpool teacher)

'The children's listening skills have improved dramatically' (Liverpool teacher)

'Attention has increased and they are more focussed' (Liverpool teacher)

'I can now do maths in the afternoon, that would never have happened before In Harmony' (Liverpool teacher)

'The children have far better concentration and energy levels. They have a positive attitude' (Liverpool teacher)

'Group work is now excellent, previously was very poor' (Liverpool teacher)

'Self-esteem has improved across the board' (Liverpool teacher)

'The children don't give up so easily. They have more self-belief. They are more prepared to have a go' (Liverpool teacher)

'There is great pride in work now – pupils more willing to show their work around school – especially boys' (Liverpool teacher)

'I have seen a real difference in the way that children accessing In Harmony are communicating in class, there are those that articulate much more clearly now,

expressing their needs and entering into conversations with teachers in a way that I have not witnessed before. (Norwich teacher)

Case Study^{xi} (Lambeth)

A particularly poignant story comes from Simi, now a 13 year old, who said: *'I used to get into trouble a lot at school. One lunch-time I was feeling very angry. My friend had a cello and he let me play on it. As I started playing the cello, my anger went away... So now I play the cello. I don't get into trouble anymore.'* Simi often turned up late for rehearsals and the project leaders noticed he didn't have a watch. They were so impressed by his enthusiasm that they bought one for him and now he turns up on time. Simi won an award in school for his success in a concert and his success was celebrated. Indeed, this year he has been appointed Form Captain. In Harmony • Sistema England has given him focus and self-esteem.

In her book: *Changing Lives*, Tricia Tunstall quotes Maestro Abreu:

"In their essence, the orchestra and the choir are much more than artistic structures. They are examples and schools of social life, because to sing and to play together means to intimately coexist toward perfection and excellence." (Page 133)

"There is no better way to build the life of a community than children playing music together." (Page 153)

This essential spirit of working as a team was also reported by parents and teachers in England:

'The music brings them all together – it's like a common denominator. They are part of a team and that gives them extra confidence especially with the performances' (Liverpool parent)

'At the start of the year I stopped PE and avoided science because they had to be in teams – they just couldn't work together. It was impossible to teach because most of the lesson was taken up getting them into teams and managing their behaviour. Now they work perfectly naturally in teams.' (Liverpool teacher).

One of the main differences between the English programme, *El Sistema* and many *El Sistema* inspired programmes around the world is the English insistence on these links with the school. What is essential is that it is the values and ethos of *El Sistema* that are adopted in the school, with the care of the child at the centre, not academic targets or learning outcomes. These are an automatic by-product of creating the appropriate environment and relationships between parents, teachers and children^{xii}. Access and inclusion, affordability, quality, progression and most of all the necessary immersion in music all become more achievable when part of the school day can be included as part of the overall programme.

There is no doubt that the total commitment of the whole school and the wider community to the values and activities associated with the *El Sistema* programme fully support the aims of

music in the national curriculum as well as having significant wider benefits. But it is the ethos of the programme that creates an environment in which the child can flourish and grow personally, emotionally and intellectually. Far from the programme being an ‘out of school’ programme – as is the case in many countries where placing the programme in school would change irretrievably the relationships between adults and young people as well as between the young people themselves – the embedding of the principles and values of *El Sistema* through In Harmony · Sistema England in English schools is central to its success. When teachers, dinner ladies, school helpers and parents all become involved the result is more effective outcomes for education generally for many of the most disadvantaged children as well as, at its most successful, Maestro Abreu’s primary aim of achieving the early stages of social and community regeneration within a remarkably short space of time.

There is still much to learn as the programme evolves in England. Financial pressures and a tradition of projects that ‘parachute in’, that ‘come and go’ without leaving a sustainable legacy, present risks. In Harmony · Sistema England is a way of being. It requires total commitment. Far from costs reducing in the short to medium term, they will rise as new cohorts of young people enter the programme. This presents particular challenges in the current economic climate. Programmes that reduce funding and dilute the experience run the risk of reducing the impact and reinforcing short-termism which inevitably leads to results that are not long-lasting. Thirty years of investment and experience in Venezuela has demonstrated what is possible. Can these same lessons be learned and applied to the rest of the world?

Appendix 1

Membership Criteria 2011

Principles

Membership of *In Harmony · England*

In Harmony · Sistema England projects are inspired by the five principles of *El Sistema*⁴ and use the unique power of music making to enthuse and motivate children, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, their families and their communities so that:

- children improve their skills, attainment and 'life-chances';
- families improve their well-being;
- communities improve their cohesion, mutual respect and can champion social justice.

Five principles of *el Sistema*

- 1) **Emphasis on social change:** *el Sistema* organizations seek social change *through* the pursuit of musical excellence. One happens through the other, and neither is prioritized above the other.
- 2) **Focus:** *el Sistema* organizations are centred around ensembles. Musicians come together to rehearse and perform, because these are the acts that yield social benefit.
- 3) **Frequency:** *el Sistema* ensembles meet at least twice a week.
- 4) **Accessibility and inclusion:** *el Sistema* programs are accessible - not free, necessarily, but based on the ability to pay.
- 5) **The Network:** *el Sistema* organizations are not selective. This doesn't mean that everyone gets a chair in the top orchestra automatically, but that the organization finds an appropriate outlet within its programming or within a partner's for every person who comes to the door.

Many pursuits that capture the imagination and motivate young people can have life-transforming outcomes. These may be sport or other musical ensembles. *In Harmony · Sistema England* focuses on the symphony orchestra.

Playing in a symphony orchestra develops a child's sense of loyalty and commitment; responsibility; self-esteem and self-confidence; teamwork and leadership. The orchestral structure provides a number of key benefits:

- Opportunities to involve more than 100 young musicians to perform in a single ensemble;
- A dynamic and complex interaction of individuals playing both leading and supportive roles;
- Opportunities for smaller ensembles such as brass groups, percussion ensembles, string orchestras and wind bands.

⁴ (Govias) <http://jonathangovias.com/2010/06/08/when-schroedingers-cat-came-back/>

Membership criteria

Any project wishing to become a member of *In Harmony · England* will be able to demonstrate that it **meets or is addressing** the following:

- The project is primarily a social programme, using music through the model of a symphony orchestra to improve the lives of individuals and communities.
- The project has a mission statement and a statement of the aims, objectives and overall vision, identifying what will change as a result of the project and how it will develop into a sustainable element of the community. The project has on-going monitoring and evaluation which feed back into the programme. There is clear accountability.
- The project is developed by and rooted in the community and has the support, goodwill and commitment (financial and/or in kind) of parents and carers, children and young people and community and voluntary organisations in the area. The lead organisation will have the management and financial capacity to ensure the sustainability of the programme and musical progression for the young people.
- The project works effectively with its partners by establishing mutual trust and confidence; fully involving the community; its local school(s) and the local authority officers; music services; music teachers and music organisations and orchestras in the area.
- The project initially targets children aged between 4 and 11 in areas considered to have above average levels of deprivation. There are no financial or attainment barriers to participation. All children in the area are able to attend if they wish, but ways of reaching the particularly disadvantaged and at risk have been built in to the project. Over time, placement auditions will be required to ensure fairness and excellence.
- The project has the total commitment of the head teacher and the whole of the staff in the school(s) involved with the whole of the school population promoting a shared ethos in relation to the programme. The staff learn alongside the children to promote a learning community.
- Getting the 'right' people involved is critical. The project has a lead organisation and a charismatic leader with a clear vision that is communicated effectively to the team. Recruitment and training needs are identified and ways of addressing them are built into the programme for paid staff; older children who act as mentors; and for volunteers. All involved understand the backgrounds of the children and community, and are able to interact positively and successfully with the children, parents and carers.
- The social development of the participants is seen as more important than 'musical' skills. There is additional support for those children who need it. The projects are

achieving excellence in music, but this is achieved through positive and constructive relationships. The focus is what is best for the children.

- The project addresses how other music programmes fit with the plans for the project and how these help to make the project a success. Links with other community development projects are also made, showing how these complement the project.
- The project requires long-term, sustained and intensive involvement of the children. Commitment is developed from the children and parents and carers to ensure regular and prolonged attendance. The children are immersed in music.
- The focus is on ensemble work with regular, daily music sessions for children (see further guidance below).
- There are frequent opportunities to participate in performances, including high prestige performances, and opportunities to attend performances of outstanding professional musicians who can act as role models.
- New cohorts join the programme each year. Older children (who may have been learning instruments through other routes) are involved in the project and mentor the younger children who start on the project.
- Instruments are available to all children who participate – these need not be of the highest quality, but they are of sufficient standard that they do not hinder the child's learning.
- Progression routes ensure that the child's musical needs are met. The ethos and early experiences of the programme ensure that, as the young person progresses beyond those able to be offered by their local opportunities, they wish to and are able to continue to support their local organisation and act as a role model for their younger peers. The principle of *el Sistema* (the network) ensures that organisations work together in the interests of the child.
- There is access to appropriate accommodation and storage. Group practice sessions are held at the project's base. Where more than one school is involved, this may be at a 'neutral' community base. A growing sense of community cohesion exists as the children make progress both in musical ability and social skills.

Practice – further guidance

The success of *el Sistema* in an English context requires an inversion of the ‘traditional’ English model. The focus is on the ensemble from the beginning. Young people making music together is central. ‘Group instrumental lessons’ are more like traditional ‘sectional rehearsals.’ If individual technical support is required, that cannot be accommodated within a large group context, it is provided through short, frequent remedial help for young musicians who are having particular problems, or extension work for particularly talented students who need to be challenged further to help them reach the next, more advanced ensemble. Repertoire in ‘instrumental lessons’ relates to the ensemble and focuses on enabling students to enjoy music making together in the full ensemble.

It is also about attitude. Booth⁵ speaks of work lit up by passion and drive - the impression of “a pedagogy of passion-precedes-precision.” This does not mean that matters such as posture and technique are ignored. Rather, they are dealt with in a positive and supportive way. Booth asserts that “a yearning for excellence produces passion and precision.” As in the best traditional instrumental lessons, warm ups and technical exercises are enjoyable and related to the music to be played later in the session.

The *el Sistema* principle ‘frequency’ requires that ensembles meet at least twice per week. Regular practice takes place on 5 or 6 days per week for 4 to 6 hours per day.

Well intentioned projects in England could easily argue that one lesson and one ensemble opportunity with no links to the school music curriculum should be allowed. Whilst even this would clearly be an improvement for many young people’s musical experiences, it would be significantly missing the underlying ethos and potential of *In Harmony · Sistema England*. Particularly for families and young people where there is no tradition of orchestral experience it is the immersion in music making together that leads to musical, personal, social and communal success. An ideal minimum would be a musical experience that ‘joins up’ the curriculum in school with two ensemble experiences and an instrumental lesson/sectional rehearsal each week with additional optional opportunities in each of the school holidays.

For *In Harmony · England* programmes the following is therefore offered as a guide:

- For the younger children: daily general music making including movement and singing.
- Once children are playing their orchestral instruments: in addition to the daily music making sessions, there are at least 3 instrumental sessions – two ensemble experiences and one instrumental lesson/sectional rehearsal. At least two thirds of the total time will be spent in large ensemble/group work.

Thus, for young musicians who are in the full programme a minimum of 7 hours per week in total will be expected, spread over at least five days per week. In addition there will be sessions in the school holidays.

⁵ *El Sistema’s Open Secrets* By Eric Booth, April 2010

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- ⁱ <http://www.ihse.org.uk/node/41> Lambeth Accessed 19/3/2012
- ⁱⁱ <http://www.ihse.org.uk/node/34> Liverpool Accessed 19/3/2012
- ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/134723> Ofsted July 2010
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/967917/urn/134723.pdf>
- ^{iv} Quoted in Ed Vulliamy article in the Observer 3rd October 2010
- ^v <http://www.ihse.org.uk/node/40> Norwich Accessed 19/3/2012
- ^{vi} <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/134723> Ofsted July 2010
- ^{vii} <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/1512829/urn/134723.pdf> Ofsted February 2011
- ^{viii} <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/967917/urn/134723.pdf> Ofsted July 2010
- ^{ix} <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/1512829/urn/134723.pdf> Ofsted February 2011
- ^x <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/1512829/urn/134723.pdf> Ofsted February 2011
- ^{xi} <http://www.ihse.org.uk/social> Accessed 19/3/2012
- ^{xii} See ISME 2012 world conference, poster presentation Hallam R; Hanke M 2012.