

LA Philharmonic violinist, TED speaker and visionary Vijay Gupta joins Longy's 2017 Gala Celebration with a shared message and mission

Featuring over 100 students from El Sistema-inspired programs throughout Massachusetts and members of the Longy Conservatory Orchestra

March 13, 2017, at 5:30 p.m. | Harvard University's Sanders Theatre

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. | On March 13, [Longy School of Music's](#) acclaimed [Sistema Side by Side Orchestra](#) will take center stage at Harvard University's Sanders Theatre. Since its grand kickoff gala in 2014 under the baton of **Gustavo Dudamel, Grammy Award-winning music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic**, the orchestra has worked with members of the **Simón Bolívar String Quartet**, opera legend **Frederica von Stade** and the **Boston Cello Quartet**. It has also given an enthusiastically received performance for **Maestro José Antonio Abreu**, founder of El Sistema. For this year's celebration, the orchestra will be joined by **Vijay Gupta**, Los Angeles Philharmonic violinist, TED speaker and visionary.

The celebration showcases **Longy's social mission to prepare its conservatory students to make a difference in the world** and features the **Sistema Side by Side Orchestra**, which pairs students, aged 7 to 15, from El Sistema-inspired programs throughout Massachusetts with [Longy's Conservatory Orchestra](#) musicians and Longy faculty. In 2014, the program served 35 students. It has since grown to include over 150 students from over a dozen programs in Massachusetts, such as the Boston String Academy, Kids 4 Harmony and Boston Conservatory Charter Lab School.

In addition to rehearsals and other activities that build community and valuable life skills, the program presents unparalleled opportunities for children from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods to perform in world-class venues, often accompanied by nationally renowned conductors and guest artists.

“A master of music and medicine”

Longy's Sistema Side by Side Orchestra will be joined on March 13 by **Vijay Gupta**, a renowned advocate for the regenerative presence of artistic voices in social issues. Gupta joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2007 at the age of 19, after completing his undergraduate degree in biology and his master's degree from the Yale School of Music. A passionate advocate for the dedicated presence of citizen-artists in social and civic discourse, he founded and directs [Street Symphony](#). This nonprofit organization is dedicated to engaging distinguished musicians in performance and dialogue with marginalized communities of people experiencing poverty, homelessness and incarceration. Called “a master of music and medicine” by “The TODAY Show,” he is a gifted spokesperson for the power of arts to change lives and reconnect us to our shared humanity. Gupta is a senior fellow, and in 2015, at the age of 27, he received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of La Verne. In 2016, Gupta joined the faculty of the Longy Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, which prepares musicians to become agents of change through the study of performance, music pedagogy and social justice.

“We're delighted to have Vijay perform with our Sistema Side by Side orchestra,” said Longy President Karen Zorn. “He embodies what we strive to cultivate here at Longy — exceptional musicians who combine their passion for creating and performing music with a commitment to use their talent to change the world.”

From Schubert to The Avengers

New this year, the Sistema Side by Side program has launched three ensembles — **advanced Symphony Orchestra**, **intermediate String Orchestra** and **intermediate Wind Ensemble** — all of whom will perform at the gala. The Symphony Orchestra will perform the first movement of Bach's Violin Concerto in A minor with Gupta, the first movement of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony No. 8 and Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 1. The String Orchestra will perform an arrangement of Rimsky-Korsakov's “Alborada,” and the Wind Ensemble will be playing Latin street music as well as music from “West Side Story” and “The Avengers.”

A celebratory dinner will follow the concert in Annenberg Hall. Tickets to the event are available at Longy.edu/gala. Proceeds from the gala will support Longy's ongoing work as a leader in the El Sistema-inspired movement in the U.S. and scholarships and teaching assistantships for Longy Conservatory students.

About Longy School of Music of Bard College

Longy School of Music of Bard College is a conservatory whose mission is to prepare musicians to make a difference in the world. World-class faculty and an innovative curriculum encourage students to push their artistic presentation beyond the proscenium model. Longy promotes musical understanding and technical mastery, and inspires imagination and inquiry into the musician's role in the world. Longy serves graduate and undergraduate students from over 35 states and 16 countries between its Cambridge and Los Angeles campuses, with the latter housing the El Sistema-inspired Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program.

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