YOLA National

YOLA National Festival 2026

Symphony Orchestra & Overture Chamber Music Program Eligibility

Students applying for the Symphony Orchestra or Overture Chamber Music Program must meet program and age requirements to be eligible to participate. These requirements are explained below.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENT
Students must be enrolled in a music program that is either directly inspired by El Sistema*, or in a program similarly invested in youth empowerment. While each El Sistema-inspired or aligned program operates differently, there are basic tenets associated with such programs which this Festival aims to support. All previously evaluated programs are listed in the dropdown menu in the application. If you do not see your program listed, please email YOLANationalTeam@laphil.org to request a formal program evaluation *(see below)*.

All programs will be evaluated on the following criteria, and must successfully pass a program evaluation by YOLA National Staff:

- Students participate in at least 5 hours of music on their primary orchestral instrument each week in a program emphasizing ensemble-based learning.
- The program's mission focuses on using music as a vehicle for social change and community development.
- The program is tuition-free programming or full scholarships are awarded or available to at least 80% of students, ensuring accessibility. No musician should be turned away from the program due to inability to pay.
- The program commits to supporting students from childhood through high school and into adulthood and evaluates success through both musical and behavioral development.
- The program collaborates with key partners in music and social development and is part of a national or regional network of El Sistema-inspired programs.

PROGRAM REVIEW
When submitting an official program review, it is helpful for the musician / program to offer the following:

1. Any information that highlights elements of the program that fall within the criteria listed above
2. A website, informational booklet, or program contact who can certify the program information

Once a program is successfully evaluated, the musician / program will be offered a code that allows them to complete the application. Please do not share this code with others.

If you are a past participant of the YOLA National Festival but are no longer part of an approved program, please email YOLANationalTeam@laphil.org

**Please note that in-school programs are typically ineligible, however please submit a request for a formal evaluation.*

LA Phil
GUSTAVO DUDAMEL MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

YOLA National

AGE REQUIREMENT

Symphony Orchestra: High school musicians (please note musicians must be enrolled in high school or in their summer after their senior year) between the ages 14-18 may apply to the Symphony Orchestra. This is a highly competitive large ensemble, open to the most advanced players from Sistema-inspired and aligned programs from across the country. Excerpts for the Symphony Orchestra can be found on the Audition Requirements page. Applicants who are 14 years old and apply to the Symphony Orchestra will automatically be considered for the Overture Chamber Music Program.

Overture Chamber Music Program: Musicians aged 12-14 are eligible for the Overture Chamber Music Program. Musicians who are 14 years old can either apply for the Symphony Orchestra **or** Overture Chamber Music Program but will first be and be considered for the program they apply for. Excerpts for the Overture Chamber Music Program can be found on our Audition Requirements page.

If you have questions regarding student/program eligibility, please contact YOLANationalTeam@laphil.org.