



california arts council
advancing california through the arts & creativity

MUSIC LA LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

In the summer of 2005, the [Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs](#) (DCA) launched Music LA, a citywide music education initiative for young people. Music LA gives youth from underserved areas of Los Angeles the opportunity to study music with professional teaching artists. Coordinated by Music LA, instruction is provided by a network of non-profit community based organizations that offer high quality music education programming.

The Music LA Summer Sessions give children and teens an intensive six to eight weeks of hands-on instrumental and/or vocal instruction in any musical genre. Each program site culminates in a free, public recital to showcase what the students have learned for family and friends.



Since 2007, the DCA has used the funds it receives through the California Arts Council State-Local Partnership Program to support the Music LA Program Summer Sessions. This support has allowed the DCA to leverage these dollars and grow the Music LA Program from a summer only program to a year-round program, with the addition of the Heritage Month Sessions sponsored by the Walt Disney Company.

In the past four years, the Music LA summer sessions have been able to reach 1,807 students. In addition, the program has touched the lives of the families, teachers, and community members that attend the culminating performances at each site.



The City of Los Angeles has one of the largest and most diverse populations of any municipality anywhere in the world. It is home to the second-largest population of people living outside of their native countries. As such, the Music LA course offerings and curriculum are based on ethno-musicological principles, embracing Western and non-Western musical genres equally. The curriculum offered at each Music LA program site is as unique and diverse as the local communities they serve. This nurtures a cross-fertilization of musicianship, local talent, and audiences to create a more sophisticated and rich musical palette reflective of the people that make up Los Angeles.



The diverse Music LA programs expose students to various musical genres including:

- Afro-Cuban
- Choral Singing
- Contemporary Pop
- Classical and Chamber Orchestra
- Early Childhood Music Readiness
- Hip Hop
- Indigenous Mexican Drumming
- Jazz
- Mariachi
- Musical Theater
- Son Jarocho
- Taiko Drumming

While each Music LA program curriculum is unique, all incorporate elements of basic music theory, oral tradition, and practice, including instrument and/or vocal musicianship and performance training.



All students' musical abilities are encouraged by offering four levels of instruction including: Early Childhood, Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Demonstration.

In addition to instrumental and vocal music instruction, some Music LA programs also train students in original composition, sound recording, and production. At the culmination of each program, students participate in public recitals which provide them with precious performance experience.

Developmental psychology indicates that prolonged experience with music and other related arts builds confidence, improves communication skills, and fosters creativity. With this cognitive information in mind, DCA structured Music LA to include demonstration program sites that offer a complement of multidisciplinary arts classes in music at various levels as well as classes in dance, theater, and the visual arts.



"It's loud, fun, AWESOME, social, stress-free, cool, far-out, worth my time. Makes me proud of myself." -15 year-old student

"I really enjoyed the program. It's a great learning opportunity offered by the City. I look forward to coming back again!" -11 year old student

"Music LA challenges you while encouraging you to try your best. It's altogether a very rewarding experience!" -16 year old student



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“Music LA is a wonderful program which gives students from low-income families the opportunity to learn music through culture, storytelling, and historical accounts ...The spirit of Music LA is reflected through the students and their dedication, commitment, and passion for learning and sharing knowledge in a creative, artistic setting. Thanks to the Department of Cultural Affairs we were again able to provide students with affordable music lessons and the opportunity to learn the music and art of their culture or other cultures.”

Karina Ceja
Site Coordinator
[Tía Chucha's Centro Cultural](#)

“In today’s trend of cutting the arts out of education budgets, tremendous pressure upon educators to teach toward standardized tests, and the reduction of public programming, it is definitely a sweeping breath of fresh air to see groups such as the California Arts Council and the City of Los Angeles’ Department of Cultural Affairs to take a bold stand by continuing to place value on the arts, and invest in a more broad and comprehensive education for our children.”

Peter Corpus, [Search to Involve Pilipino Americans \(SIPA\)](#)

[Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs](#) receives funding from the California Arts Council’s [State-Local Partnership Program \(SLPP\)](#) which supports county arts councils. SLPP is managed by Rob Lautz, rlautz@cac.ca.gov.

