

Creative Partnerships to Maximize Youth Learning and Development

June 8, 2024

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Q: Good morning everyone. Thank you for joining us for this early morning session, “Creative Partnerships to Maximize Youth Learning and Development.” Before we get started with today's agenda and performances, I'd like to acknowledge our sponsor for today's session, MKI Artists. MKI Artists is a full-service artists representation agency that manages some of the world's best classical musicians. I'd like to introduce Laura Dunaway, artist manager and booking representative, to come up on — come on up and say a few words of welcome. Laura.

[APPLAUSE]

LAURA DUNAWAY: Thank you. Good morning. Thank you so much for coming to this session. And thanks to the League for making time to present this panel. Very excited about it. I like seeing everybody's happy, smiling face ready to play. So we're really happy to see you here, learn more about this case study of how guest artists and orchestras can develop bespoke community partnerships and commission new music that inspires young audiences to have a lifelong interest in music.

As the conference draws to a close today, it would be great to connect by phone or Zoom soon if we didn't get a chance to talk here in Houston. And please look us up at MKIArtists.com and get in touch. With no further ado, I want to turn things over to Amy of Houston Youth Symphony, along with Coda and WindSync Partners.

[APPLAUSE]

[0:08:03.6]

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AMY CHUNG: Good morning everyone. We are going to start this — start this morning with some music for you all, and then we'll get started with our discussion.

[MUSIC; APPLAUSE]

[0:11:20.8]

AMY: So as our — is this on? Okay, so as our musicians are exiting the stage, I wanted to tell you all what that piece was. It was arranged by Jackson Guillen, our coda director for our Coda students, plus WindSync as wind quintet. Anni Hochhalter is going to be joining us in a second and I wanted to just introduce myself. My name is Amy Chung. I'm executive director of Houston Youth Symphony. And I'd love for the rest of our guests here to introduce themselves as well.

KARA LAMOURE: Good morning everybody. My name is Kara LaMoure, I'm the bassoonist and artistic director with WindSync, our Houston based wind quintet. I also just want to just share who the musicians are today who are representing this project. We have Garrett Hudson, WindSync's founding flautist, and actually it was just our 15th anniversary season. So our 15-year veteran.

[APPLAUSE]

[0:12:55.4]

JACKSON GUILLEN: Good morning, my name is Jackson Guillen, I am the director of the Coda music program, of the HSY Coda music program.

AMY: So we're going to start with just a little bit of background about our organizations and what we do, and I'm going to start with Ani to describe just a little bit about what WindSync is and what they do.

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SPEAKER: So I'm going to give a little bit of background about our Coda music program at Houston Youth Symphony. We started in 2015, we are celebrating our tenth Season of Coda this upcoming '24/'25 school year.

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[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER: And Coda started because we had had, and we still do, have free private lessons program in schools in — in the neighborhood where many of our Coda students live and go to school. And we had been partnering with a community organization that was really focused on getting students ready for college, but also their founder was also very passionate about the arts. So they had been providing in school and after school arts for all of these elementary schools.

And in 2015, decided that that was not part of their mission and pulled all of their funding for arts education in these five elementary schools. Since we had been partnering with them for so many years, we decided what we can do as an organization to fill that gap, to make sure these musicians don't lose their ability to play and express themselves through music. And so we, the board, mobilized very quickly and decided we are going to invest in an after-school string program.

We started. The intention was just to start with one school and grow from there. But we had two very passionate principals who said, "You need to bring this into our school." So we started with two schools and about 30 students. These photos are from that very first year. We learned some lessons that year. We decided that separating schools by color was not always the best idea. They didn't want to talk to kids with t-shirts of different colors. So we are all united this year with green t-shirts as you can see.

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And we have grown now to serve nine schools in two different school districts, serving about 250 musicians each year. So it has — it has exponentially grown. We are now back into all five of those elementary schools that had lost their programming to begin with. And we continue to serve that community, which is the Near Northside community, as well as musicians in Fort Bend, in Fort Bend County. So as — as I reflect, it's — it's been a journey. We were there from the start.

Jackson has been with us from the start. And it's — it's amazing to see sort of the growth. And not only in numbers, but of the community that we built through this Coda program. So, let's move on to how this partnership even began. And I'm going to turn it over to Kara to discuss, you know, how did this begin? How did we start with this sort of small string program, jumping to a professional wind quintet? How did we connect and get started?

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[0:21:52.4]

SPEAKER: So Jackson, can you talk a little bit about, you know, how that first piece went with Mark, and sort of what you thought as you heard you were going to be rearranging this music for our musicians? Then I think it was only the second year of — of our program — program's existence.

JACKSON: Yeah, so I remember getting the parts and thinking, our kids are not going to be able to play this. Even though the music was for beginner level. Knowing our students, I knew that I had to make some changes to it for them to be able to play it. So I reached out to Mark, and I said, "Is it okay if I made some changes to the piece?" And Mark had said — we went to school together, so we know each other really well. And he said, "It's — it's totally fine."

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And during that process — and we're going to talk more about this later, but it takes — it takes a little bit of effort to make sure that the kids have parts that they're able to play that also challenged them a little bit, and that they enjoy playing. So we have a set of tools that we know the kids have, as, you know, technical tools in their instruments. And getting those tools, and then making sure that the key doesn't have a million flats or seven million sharps. Then I start working with that until we can put together something that the kids can play and can enjoy.

And that's — that's the orchestra that played with WindSync that — that concert, and I think it worked out pretty well. And from that experience, I learned, okay, these kids are able to play anything if I give them the right tools to do it. So — so that's when I learned that it is my job to do that for the kids, so they have a meaningful experience.

SPEAKER: So how does this residency work? How do we collaborate? How is it more than just the performance aspect, which is a great culmination, and I think is really a cornerstone of what we do in the in the Coda program every year. But sort of what are the nuts and bolts of how it works.

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JACKSON: So we try to get the kids excited right at the beginning of the year. So right when I'm giving them the orientation, first year class, I said, "We're going to go on a big stage, and we're going to play with this amazing and famous group." And — and the kids get excited. And I usually show them videos of WindSync. We talked a little about what they do. And obviously, with our kids only

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learning stringed instruments, the other — the wind instruments, they catch their eyes. And we also show them videos of previous years of Coda kids playing with WindSync, and we tell them, “This is — this is where we're aiming for. At the end of the year, you're going to be able to play.” Especially those who are coming for the first time to the Coda program, they're going to start from scratch. We say, “At the end of the year, you're going to be able to play on stage with this amazing group.”

And we get them excited right at the beginning of the year. And then we schedule with WindSync, we work together, and we schedule some visits, so the kids can see their faces, can get to know them. The first visit — usually we have two, two visits, hopefully three if possible. But the first visit is just then coming, introducing themselves to the kids, had nothing to do with the concert yet. This is more like getting acquainted with — with the group. They talk about their instruments. They get the introduction; kids get familiar with instruments they play. They know that they're not string instruments.

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They play games with the kids, or they try to interact with songs with the kids, so that they get familiar to each other. And then in the second visit, we start actually working on the music that we're going to perform in the concert. And this second visit — the first visit usually happens in the fall; second visit usually happens in the spring. And prior to the concert, especially the week before the concert, we have these visits in which we do a run through of — of the pieces.

And since this happened in the spring, we need to make sure that the repertoire of the pieces that the kids are going to play with them are done way before so we can prepare the kids for this big concert. So around December, November, December, we start talking about what we can program in this concert. If there's a theme to the concert or not. If there's a composer, there's a commission piece. And then, right when we pick all the repertoire, I start working on the arrangement. We have a piece that is commissioned, but WindSync also play with us every single piece that we play on stage. So it is my job to make all the arrangements for — not only for the kid, but sometimes I have to transcribe music from string to winds, or just starting the arrangement from scratch so everybody can come together.

SPEAKER: I will say that Jackson is quite brilliant with how he creates these pieces, how he arranges the music. He was talking about the tools that he uses. You know, our program is Suzuki-based. So I'm sure you could hear some Mississippi stop stops in the previous piece. And it's just brilliant, the way he weaves what they already know and learned into the music that they play.

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JACKSON: And thankfully, over the years, everything has worked out pretty well. The kids are ready for the concert every single time, and — and what is getting smaller and smaller is the stage. The stage is getting smaller, because we have more kids, more schools. So this last year, we had to move to a new, bigger stage, which you probably see later in the concert. I prepare — going along with the preparation, I prepare parts for the kids. We are very — with all our Coda teachers, which are amazing, we prepare videos so they can practice at home. Practice packets, they can practice — they can use at home. We put videos in our own website, so they can just click on them, and they can hear my voice guiding them. And it's a huge process that — that takes time, but it's — once we are on stage with them, that everything is — is worth it for sure.

SPEAKER: So we can move to sort of this culminating performance with WindSync and how it ties into WindSync's festival that they have, usually in the spring.

SPEAKER: Yeah, so we present the On-Stage Off-Stage Chamber Music Festival each spring, and this project has seriously woven itself into the fabric of this festival. In fact, this project almost feels like it is a festival. And I think that's because of, again, how connective it is.

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SPEAKER: So for those of you who might be in the audience and thinking, how do I do this, why would I want to do this? I'm going to ask Kara to start. Why do we continue this? We've been doing this since 2017. It's evolved. But why — why do we keep doing this partnership? It's a lot of work, I will say. Getting 250 elementary school students to one location. Our teaching artists are smiling, because they know what goes into that process. But why do we take on such a large — a large project to make this happen.

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SPEAKER: So what role do each of us play, I guess, in this process? From the start, you know? We were sort of working our way through what this might look like right at the beginning that first year. And, you know, I think we've all sort of settled into different roles to pulling this off. So Jackson, I want to know sort of what your role in all is of this.

JACKSON: So I — my focus is on making sure that the kids get a positive, meaningful experience out of this. So besides the fact that I have to arrange the music, make sure that the music is ready, and
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the kids have all the tools they need to learn the music, I also have to make sure that the program, the pieces that we play, are pieces that are meaningful for the kids, are culturally relevant for them as well.

And then making sure that our Coda teachers also have the tools they need so they can teach the kids. It's not just giving the kids music, but it's making sure that our teachers, which are amazing, by the way, our teachers are just amazing and incredibly supportive, that they have the tools, they know that they have the parts, they have the music, that everything is ready at the beginning of the year, so they can start the process. There are other aspects of the residency that I take care of.

For example, making sure that the kids get to the place by hiring buses. [LAUGHING] Making sure that they have snacks, making sure that they're not hungry on stage, and they're not cranky on stage, that they get back to school safe and they get picked up. So our teachers do that. I want to say that that day is the longest Coda day of the year, because it's probably a six, seven hour day, from the moment that our teachers get to each school, bus them to the place, feed them, and then taken back to their schools, and then make sure that every single student is picked up and is safe. Also, make sure that WindSync can come, that the kids are ready when they come, that we scheduled all these things. So it's quite a bit of work, I want to say. [LAUGHING] Sometimes a little more stressful than I wish. But again, it's — it's very rewarding.

SPEAKER: So what is WindSync's I guess role? What do you all take on in this process?

SPEAKER: Yeah, I do want to start by saying there's absolutely no way we could pull off this project without a partner who is contributing so much and is so invested. And without the kind of unbelievable, multiple talents of both our people here with me.

[0:40:17.5]

SPEAKER: So what is the benefit, I guess? You know, we — we continue to do this, we know that the benefit is there for the students. We know that our communities feel engaged and — and part of something that is larger than just their own school. This concert is the one time that all nine schools come together. So what is the benefit beyond just, you know, the students for, let's say, WindSync and Coda?

SPEAKER: Yeah, I think I've touched on why this is so important to WindSync. And then, you know, you can take whatever you've programmed for, and then adapt it within a community.

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SPEAKER: So for the orchestras in the room or youth orchestras who maybe want to also start this sort of partnership, let's say you don't have something like this. Jackson, any words of advice? And I can also chime in here, but —

[0:43:40.0]

JACKSON: Well, I remember I recently attended actually a League session with Eric Booth. And he mentioned something very, very important. He said, “We need to identify where is the need. So if we can identify, in your communities, a small community that you feel like this will fill that need, that gap.” I think that's the — that's the first step. Because at the end, it's more than just the kids performing. It's actually coming to the community and helping and making sure that the kids understand that they can also be good examples in their — in their community.

Our program it's El Sistema based. And El Sistema already has a set of values that we embraced. It's not just — not creating musicians per se, but also good citizens. So part of that, it's — that part of the program, it's very important. So if you can identify a community that have that need, in which we can make a big impact, and a meaningful impact, I feel like that's — that's the first step.

SPEAKER: And I would say, you know, going along with what Kara was saying about, you know, finding that partner, it is finding the partner that — you know, thinking a little outside the box. I will say when we first were approached by WindSync to possibly do this collaboration, I didn't immediately understand how that would work because they're a woodwind quintet and we are string players. And I thought, well, how is this going to be meaningful for our musicians?

But I will say, having that variety and exposing our musicians to other instruments that they wouldn't necessarily know about, I'm sure Kara has many stories about whether — you know, if they know all the instruments that — that are in a wind quintet or not. And it's perhaps their first time seeing a French horn or a bassoon. And just knowing that that exists, I think, is worth it in itself. So it's sort of thinking outside the box. Thinking, who are — who is a group that you really love, that you want to — that you believe in what they do and could really align with what you do. And just have the conversation, I think. Get the talking going.

[0:46:09.3]

JACKSON: I do want to say that the Coda program has a curriculum set. But this partnership gives a [520 8th Avenue, Suite 2005, New York, NY 10018](https://www.americanorchestras.org)

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very nice, positive boost to our curriculum, in the sense that the kids are exposed to playing with professional musicians on stage. And probably you'll see this in the video later, but they feel the kids feel like they're professional musicians too playing on a big stage. This also helps us reach out to the community through the excitement that we see in their parents when they see the kids performing on stage with professional musicians. They also get this excitement that, oh, this is what the Coda program does. This is amazing. My kid is on stage with this professional group. So we can reach out to the community that way as well.

SPEAKER: So we have a short video that we wanted to share that has some of our Coda musicians and a Coda parent talking about this partnership and what it means to them. And I'm going to ask our Coda musicians to quietly return to the stage, because they will perform it just a minute while we watch this video. And hopefully it works all right. Technology.

[VIDEO PLAYS; MUSIC]

SPEAKER: It's fun to learn about the violin instrument and go to different places to perform for people, to interest them in playing the violin.

[MUSIC]

SPEAKER: It was exciting to learn about new instruments and hear them and hear the sounds that they make.

SPEAKER: It made me feeling amazing. It made me feel like I'm in a magical place.

[MUSIC]

[VIDEO ENDS]

[APPLAUSE]

[0:50:29.8]

SPEAKER: So Jackson, Yardbird Suite, as you all are about to hear, is not your typical piece that we might play in Coda. So if you want to talk a little bit about the challenges or opportunities for our musicians to learn this piece.

JACKSON: So, the first thing I did, I met with — I got the score, and my first impression is, how am I going to do this? The key is — has no sharp or flats. But every single measure has a bunch of flats, a bunch of sharps. It starts in three fours, go to four, five eight, seven eight, two four, and it changes throughout. So I want to say that this probably was the biggest challenge for me.

Because I mean, I could have said this is not possible. But I sat down in my little office. [LAUGHING] And as you will hear, I found specific spots in the piece in which I thought the kids could play and can contribute — could contribute to the piece. The kids — I need to think about what the kids can do. I know — I know they can play certain amount of rhythms; they can play a handful of notes. The key that we usually use is D major, because it's easy. Maybe G major. But the piece is jazzy. So finding a key is very difficult.

[0:54:02.8]

So I found spots in the piece where I felt like the kids could play. And I had to go chord by chord, [LAUGHING] making sure that I could find notes that the kids could play, that they were within their — their technique range. And also make sure that — without taking the character of the piece away, making sure that the kids could — could contribute. So they are not going to be playing throughout the piece. But there are moments in the bits and pieces in which they're shining. And I felt like it worked out pretty well. [LAUGHING]

And at first, the kids were, what is this piece? Well, I haven't heard this piece before. So, and that's when — when having Nikki come and speak about the piece and tell them all about it. And they speaking Nikki and saying, "How did you come up with this? What was your inspiration?" So little by little the kids got familiar with it. And I want to say that that was probably the best piece — the best piece that we played in the concert, because we drilled. [LAUGHING] Because work on it a lot. But it was not easy, but thankfully we were able to put it together.

SPEAKER: So, we have a short video from Nikki, who was originally supposed to attend but was unable to attend. So she — she made a short video for us to hear her thoughts.

[VIDEO PLAYS]

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[VIDEO ENDS]

[0:57:56.6]

SPEAKER: So we're going to perform Yardbird Suite for you for strings and wind quintet.

[MUSIC; APPLAUSE]

[1:02:20.0]

SPEAKER: So we have a little bit of time for any questions that anyone might have. And then we have one more piece to close out our session. If you have any questions. Yes, I think there's a microphone.

[OFF-MIC QUESTION]

SPEAKER: Yeah, so I'll start with the instrument question. So when that community partner decided to pull all their funding, we actually — it was decided to purchase many of the instruments that they had. So that sort of started our collection of Coda instruments. And then we purchased instruments as we have needed, repairs, all of those things. Students, when they start Coda, if they are a first-year student, or maybe Jackson can speak about this, about when they get to take their instruments home, and if they do.

JACKSON: Yeah, so when they start, we don't allow them to take the instruments right at first, until we know that they can take care of them at home. So this is a process that takes several weeks. And until our teaching artists think that they're able to take them home, that they have stuff to practice, especially first year. If they have nothing to play yet, then they don't take the instrument home. But once they have stuff to practice, we allow them to take the instruments on over the weekend. And then they bring the instrument back for their Coda classes during the week, and the instrument stays at the school. Second year classes, because your experience — they have one year experience in Coda, they can go ahead and take the instrument.

[1:04:10.2]

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SPEAKER: And just for context, our Coda students meet twice a week after school for two hours a day. So it's either a Monday, Wednesday, or a Tuesday, Thursday. So they're either taking our instruments home on Wednesday or Thursday for those days until they return for their next Coda class. And then the question about our teaching artists. Jackson has sung their praises, and I cannot speak more about how amazing our teaching artists are. We have three of them here with us today. We have Omar, Samantha, and Nora.

[APPLAUSE]

SPEAKER: They are — our teaching artists are generally freelance musicians here in Houston. They are educators, they are teachers, and we give them the training that they need to run our Coda classes. Our Coda classes are generally Suzuki-based. So some Suzuki training is a plus but not required. And it is — I think Jackson does an amazing job bringing — how many teaching artists do we have?

JACKSON: We have 15 right now.

SPEAKER: Fifteen teaching artists teaching across our five schools. Bringing them together to feel like they're a team, even though they're, you know, going to specific schools each week. They are — they are the ones on the ground, they are the ones working with our musicians every day, that they're at their campus. They're also the ones who are troubleshooting. If there's any issues, let's say, at the school, anything that might be coming up. So they're really equipped. We try to equip them with what they need to feel confident not only in the classroom, but also in the setting of supporting musicians outside of the classroom. Any other questions? Yes.

[OFF-MIC QUESTION]

[1:06:07.2]

SPEAKER: So our — some of our music — some of our elementary schools do have general music during the day, but they don't have any sort of orchestra after school or during the day. And then many of our schools don't have general music during the day. So this is their only musical outlet during the entire school day. Yes?

[OFF-MIC QUESTION]

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SPEAKER: So we do have a summer Coda session, it's about three weeks, and it's meant for anyone who's interested in joining Coda for the next year. It's also meant for anyone who wants to return and continue. And that is — it brings all the students from the different schools to one location. And it's, again, after school, but instead it's every day. So the progress is quite remarkable when they're meeting every day versus two days a week.

JACKSON: Two days a week. And the kids come with a different energy because they're not in school. Some of them come from home. The majority of them come from home. Actually, we're starting Monday, our summer session. And yeah, we bring students from all schools. And in this conversation, for example, we have students that were in Coda three years ago, they're coming back because their parents want them to, to still be in Coda. Or students that have never been in Coda, like second graders that are going to be third graders. We — our students are third to fifth. So second graders who are going to be third graders next year, some of them are in Coda this summer, so they can try it and see if they like it. And so we have a first-year class, a second-year class, and a cello class.

SPEAKER: And they can play a performance at the end of three weeks. It's quite —

[1:07:59.4]

JACKSON: Yeah, we put together a performance after three weeks. Again, the everyday aspect of it helps a lot. And again, the arrangement has to be even simpler. So they can learn it in three weeks. And have a small performance for their parents. And we give them ice cream. [LAUGHING] And that's our summer session.

SPEAKER: And we didn't say this, but this program is totally free for the schools and the musicians. They get to use the instruments at no cost. Back to the instrument question. We know that there is some amount of loss that might happen. Accidents happen, and we understand that. But we don't want to prevent students from being able to play at home, play for their families, practice because we might be worried that something might happen. So we definitely make it a goal that musicians take their instruments home and work for their families in that way. Yes.

SPEAKER: Great question. So Houston Youth Symphony is a youth orchestra program that is five youth orchestras. Some of you may have heard our symphony orchestra play at the opening session on Thursday. So that is, you know, a tuition based, very traditional youth orchestra program in that regard. We do have a chamber music program that is for our youth orchestra musicians. We have our free lessons program that I mentioned, that's called the Melody Program. It is — serves musicians in
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schools as well as students who just audition for a spot in our Melody Program. And then our Coda program, which you know, is, as you can see, about 250 students large.

[1:09:58.8]

And within the general mission of HYS, we want to create and nurture personal growth through exceptional music education. And Jackson is full-time on our team, running the Coda program. We're so lucky to have him. I can't imagine this program without him. And the rest of our staff, you know, support the different programs. And artistic director, Michael Webster, who is here in the back, oversees all the artistic aspects of our various programs. But we are a small team, but we're a mighty team. We do a lot. [LAUGHING] We have a lot on our plate. As you can see, there are a lot of different programs that we have. But you know, it fits within the larger mission of just having exceptional music education and meeting students wherever they are.

SPEAKER: Oh, yes. So one of our musicians who started actually in our Melody Program, the free lessons program when it existed, and they — we had that community partner, he continued in Melody, he auditioned for our youth orchestra program. He was in Michael's most advanced symphony orchestra. He graduated and went into music performance. And now he has returned and as one of our Coda teaching artists.

So we — we want our musicians who graduate out of the program to come back. We find opportunities. We want them to continue on. Even our recent Coda graduates who maybe are in middle school and high school, we want them — as Jackson said, they come back during the summer, they can serve as mentors alongside playing with musicians. So it's — it's really this family that we have within the Coda program. And then also extending into our youth orchestra program. We do have one musician who started on cello. We started him in our Coda program. And he just graduated high school. He was in one of our string orchestras in our youth orchestra program. And he's going to continue on and do music recording, I believe, when he graduates next year.

[1:12:12.0]

SPEAKER: So I'll start with the first part of your question. Our Coda students, once they graduate out, many of them are going to go to a middle school that has some sort of orchestra program. So they are now equipped to participate in that orchestra program. And they can tap into our free lessons program to help support their growth in that way. So in the Near North Side, that middle school is an arts magnet program for now. I don't know if you will follow the news, but Houston district is going through a lot right now.

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So for now, they are an arts magnet school that has an orchestra program. And we provide, during the school day, free lessons for those musicians. And then the high school after that middle school, again, they have an orchestra program. We provide free lessons during the school day for those musicians as well. And the Melody Program free lessons is also open to anyone who applies and shows need. So any of our musicians could also apply through that avenue. And then remind me of the other question, sorry.

[OFF-MIC QUESTION]

SPEAKER: Yes, great question. So we have usually a holiday concert that happens in December. Each of the musicians perform at their schools for their student body, so school assembly style. So you know, one school performed for their school, but then they also came together and did a community performance at a community center. Reaching, you know, the senior center there during, you know, the morning hours to watch that performance. So that's one of the performances that we do. We have other performances throughout the year. We've performed at the Art Car Parade. If you haven't heard about the Art Car Parade, you should look it up. It's quite amazing and — and, you know, part of Houston culture. We've performed there. There's a Heights Kids Day of Music that we've performed at. So there are performance opportunities for musicians throughout the year.

[1:14:35.6]

JACKSON: And just to add to that, the curriculum also includes music reading, and rhythm classes during the two hours. So it's not just the instrument per se, but we actually introduce the kids to music reading. I don't know if you saw it, but we have a bucket band. [LAUGHING] Which is quite challenging. But we — some of our kids rotate through the — I rotate the bucket band through the schools through the year. So they get the opportunity to learn some rhythms with the bucket. And they also — we give them time for snacks. We — we have built in the curriculum that our teachers talk to the kids, get to interact with them, not just a musical part of it, but also as — in a personal way. So the kids feel safe. The kids feel like they come into a safe environment when they come to us as well.

SPEAKER: I think we might have time for one more question, if there are any Yes?

[OFF-MIC QUESTION]

SPEAKER: That's a great question. I wish we had software. We will be acquiring software. We just have lots of Excel spreadsheets. [LAUGHING] That track our students for now. But our retention rate I don't know off the top of my head.

[OFF-MIC QUESTION]

SPEAKER: So we — you know, we do know the students who are auditioning for and — and getting accepted into the youth orchestra program. That number is not huge yet. But again, the point of the program is not necessarily to have musicians be part of the youth orchestra program. It's something that we — it's never a requirement to be part of the program. It's an option if they want to take it on. But again, it's an — it's not the goal. It's not the end goal of why we do the Coda music program.

So we wanted to close our session today with one more piece. It's called Tico-Tico. As our musicians get back into place, I want to just thank everyone for joining us this afternoon. Thank you to WindSync and the musicians for being here. And thank you to our teaching artists, to Jackson. And thank you to the League for allowing us to present this session for you all.

[APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC; APPLAUSE]

END OF TRANSCRIPT