

Read the article below: How is music changing the lives of young people in Venezuela?

Music is changing their lives

Inside the **concert hall** a top **orchestra** is playing brilliantly. Their young **conductor**, Gustavo Dudamel, is one of the best in the world. But we are not in New York City, London, or Vienna. We are in Caracas, the capital of Venezuela. The orchestra is the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, and its conductor and young musicians come from the poorest families in the country. They are a product of *El Sistema* ("the system" in Spanish), a project started in 1975 to save poor children from crime and drug addiction through classical music.



Today, more than 270,000 young Venezuelans from the *barrios* (poor areas in Caracas) are learning to play instruments. They **practice** Beethoven and Brahms instead of learning to steal and shoot. Gisella, aged 11, says "I am learning the **viola** because I want to escape from the *barrio*. In Venezuela, now it's cooler to like Strauss than salsa." Edgar, 22, who plays in the orchestra, says "sometimes when we finish late, I stay in town – it's dangerous to go home at that time. But now, most of my friends are here. We are a family as well as an orchestra."

Dudamel is now also the Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, one of the US's top orchestras. But he returns frequently to Caracas to conduct. "I miss my orchestra, but I will never leave them. They're family," he says.

Now answer the questions below:

1. What is the young's conductor name?
2. Where is it?
3. What is the orchestra's name?

4. Where are the conductor and the kids from?
5. What does Gisella, aged 11, say?

Teacher Roxane