



3rd week - 3-6 december 2013

My third week with El Sistema France was another very successful week. Much like last week, lots of work was done focused on the fundamentals of music, namely understanding the three clefs and how they are read and exercises to further familiarize the children with scales and rhythmic relationships. These tasks are far from easy, and the children struggled at first to allow themselves absorb all of this information. By the end of the rehearsals, however, the majority of the children had a firm understanding of everything that was presented. It is so important to have a solid base of knowledge before one can start the music making process and the kids will be armed and ready when they all receive their instruments in the following months. I was also extremely impressed with the orchestral identity that is already evident. The children think, behave, and support one another like a functional group more and more each rehearsal.

In between full orchestra rehearsals, Alcides and I had the chance to do technical work (with instruments) with three students, Leah (violin), Medi (violin), and Mathilde (cello). We worked for nearly three hours on posture, bow hold, drawing an even bow, making a good sound, and string crossing! The three children were shocked at how many things they had to be conscious of all at once but stayed attentive and involved throughout. By the end, fully exhausted, they left satisfied with all they had accomplished and eager to get more instruction the following week. I am very excited to continue my work with El Sistema France in my final week here!

Harry Rich