

ENSEMBLE

MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Volume 1 Number 3, 8 November 2007

Having trouble reading this email? Read it on the web at <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news1071108.pdf>
Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at info@ensemble.org.au

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THE STATE OF THE STATES

An Invitation

In the next edition (No. 4) of **ENSEMBLE** in early December, we propose to publish a Statement by the National Music representative groups about the current situation of music education in Australian public schools across the country and its appropriate forward directions.

Before we do so, we wish to invite people in each State and Territory to contribute an update on the initiatives put in place in their state subsequent to the National Review of Music Education in Australian Schools, and the outcomes that are being achieved through the work of their state school authorities.

Your input will enable us to present to school communities around the country, a balanced national round-up of developments and progress in school music education, two years after the 2005 review Report and a year out from the National Workshop 2006.

Send your response to info@ensemble.org.au by 30 November 2007.

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HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE

Education Queensland's Positive Messages for Parents and Families

There is no disputing the value of music to children. Research shows music study increases all areas of a child's intellectual development as well as making them happy.

This confirms what musicians have known through the ages - that music provides pleasure for people of any age. It does this by tapping directly into our innate pleasure systems and stimulating the brain's opiate and dopamine circuits.

It is not surprising that the recent National Review of School Music Education found that "music education is valuable and essential for all Australian school students".

It is no coincidence that Queenslanders are making a big splash on the world's music scenes.

Associate Professor Huib Schippers from Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University says "Queensland is strikingly visible on the national and international music scene.

"The report on the state of music education in Australia has made it clear that Queensland is - and deserves to be - the envy of all states and territories for its music in schools program.

"But there is no need for complacency. The world of music is in constant change"

Music is a mandatory subject for students in Years 1-7 and there is a strong emphasis on music education across all school sectors - state, Catholic and independent.

Tips for Parents

- All children can benefit from music
- Encourage your child to sing and play to you
- Take your child to musical events - classical, rock, country, world music
- Provide a quiet place and time for your child to practice at home
- Encourage your child to practice regularly (5-6 times a week is ideal)
- Attend school concerts and other performances to support your child

Did you know

- Babies are born with perfect pitch - that's how they recognise their mother's voice and learn language
- A Swiss study of 1200 children shows how playing music improves children's reading and verbal skills, by improving concentration, memory and self expression
- A Hong Kong study found that adults who had music training before the age of 12 are better able to recall spoken words than adults who had little or no music training.
- A US study showed that children aged 5-7 who had been lagging in school performance, caught up with their peers in reading and were ahead of them in maths after just seven months of music lessons

Read more at http://education.qld.gov.au/publication/reporting/parents/pdfs/12006_p20_21.pdf

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RESEARCH

"The Four Benefits of Music Education"

1. Success in Society

Perhaps the basic reason that every child must have an education in music is that music is a part of the fabric of our society. The intrinsic value of music for each individual is widely recognized in the many cultures that make up American life - indeed, every human culture uses music to carry forward its ideas and ideals. The importance of music to our economy is without doubt. And the value of music in shaping individual abilities and character are attested in a number of places. Read entire article at: <http://www.encoremusiclessons.com/benefits-of-music-education-success-in-society.php>

2. Success in School

Success in society, of course, is predicated on success in school. Any music teacher or parent of a music student can call to mind anecdotes about effectiveness of music study in helping children become better students. Skills learned through the discipline of music, these stories commonly point out, transfer to study skills, communication skills, and cognitive skills useful in every part of the curriculum. Another common variety of story emphasizes the way that the discipline of music study - particularly through participation in ensembles - helps students learn to work effectively in the school environment without resorting to violent or inappropriate behavior. And there are a number of hard facts that we can report about the ways that music study is correlated with success in school. Read entire article at: <http://www.encoremusiclessons.com/benefits-of-music-education-success-in-school.php>

3. Developing Intelligence

Success in school and in society depends on an array of abilities. Without joining the intense ongoing debate about the nature of intelligence as a basic ability, we can demonstrate that some measures of a child's intelligence are indeed increased with music instruction. Once again, this burgeoning range of data supports a long-established base of anecdotal knowledge to the effect that music education makes kids smarter. What is new and especially compelling, however, is a combination of tightly-controlled behavioural studies and groundbreaking neurological research that show how music study can actively contribute to brain development:

Read entire article and research study findings at: <http://www.encoremusiclessons.com/benefits-of-music-education-developing-intelligence.php>

4. Success in Life

Each of us wants our children - and the children of all those around us - to achieve success in school, success in employment, and success in the social structures through which we move. But we also want our children to experience success on a broader scale. Participation in music, often as not based on a grounding in music education during the formative school years, brings countless benefits to each individual throughout life. The benefits may be psychological or spiritual, and they may be physical as well.

Read entire article at: <http://www.encoremusiclessons.com/benefits-of-music-education-in-life.php>

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WEB RESOURCES

Australian Music Centre

The Australian Music Centre publishes resources relevant to students and teachers studying Australian music, including teacher kits & repertoire.

As a national service organisation, the AMC is dedicated to increasing the profile and sustainability of Australian composers and other creative artists.

The AMC facilitates the performance, awareness and appreciation of music by these artists through resonate - its online magazine; composer and other creative artist representation; library and retail services; sheet music publishing; and the management, administration and publication of project-based initiatives. Its library collection holds over 30,000 items by more than 500 artists.

What genres of music does the AMC represent?

The genres of music included in the AMC's vision are notated composition, electroacoustic music, improvised music (including contemporary jazz), electronica, sound art, installation sound, and multimedia, web and film sound.

Who does the AMC provide services for?

The AMC fosters the development of an Australian community by providing specialist support to its membership of performers, composers, sound artists, educators, students, and music specialists across Australia and throughout the world.

Find out more at <http://www.amcoz.com.au/education/>

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AROUND THE WORLD

UK: Ten-year-old schoolboy musician can speak eleven languages

Arpan Sharma has astounded his teachers by learning to speak an incredible 10 languages on top of English. The primary school pupil has taught himself five of them by using interactive, multimedia CD-ROMs and has been fluent in another since he was practically able to talk. Aside from his mother tongue, Arpan speaks Hindi, after learning it from his parents, and has learnt French, Spanish, German and Italian in school.

In addition he also speaks Thai, Swahili, Polish, Chinese Mandarin and is currently studying the difficult Lugandan language of Uganda.

The youngster, a member of the National Children's Orchestra, uses his keen ear for music to listen to the correct pronunciation of words. His dream is to become a top surgeon able to travel around the world to different hospitals speaking in their native

tongue. Arpan, who lives in Oldbury, West Mids, said: "Learning these languages is my favourite part of school along with music.

"I have known how to speak and understand Hindi since I was very little because both my mum and dad speak it. French, Spanish, German and Italian, I learnt in school and I studied languages that were a bit more difficult by using CD-ROMs on the school computers. Learning Swahili was probably one of the biggest challenges I've faced and Mandarin Chinese was hard too.

"I want to carry on studying foreign languages at secondary school next year but I haven't decided which ones yet."

Arpan learnt Italian when he was seven, German when he was eight, Spanish a year later and French last term. This year he has studied a computer based programme called Junior Language Challenge, taking in Polish, Thai, Swahili, Chinese Mandarin and now Lugandan.

Languages teacher Nicky Lambert-Green, said: "Arpan has proven to be an incredible talent at learning so many languages at such a young age. It's basically a language for every year of his life. He is a pleasure to teach. At the school we offer an introduction to languages which then enables the children to make an informed choice of foreign languages when they move to their senior schools."

Deputy Headmaster Richard Lynn added: "Arpan is a language genius, a natural when it comes to listening to the exact pronunciation and repeating them perfectly.

"I think some of his talent is twinned with his ability as a musician. His good ear for music and tone is used for languages as well.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=490547&in_page_id=1770

US: "What good is music education anyway?"

Renovation in Music Education (RIME)

A growing body of research suggests that music education is not only intrinsically good, helping to enrich young lives, but also boosts overall student performance in and attachment to school.

Critical Links, a collection of 62 arts education studies and interpretive essays, establishes links between learning in the arts and improvements in reading and language development (basic reading skills, literacy, and writing); mathematics; fundamental cognitive skills and capacities; motivations to learn; effective social behavior; and school environment.

Critical Links was published May 16, 2002, by the Arts Education Partnership, a coalition of more than 100 national education, arts, philanthropic, and government organizations, administered by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts.

You can access and download the Report "Critical Links" at the Arts Education Partnership site at http://www.aep-arts.org/publications/info.htm?publication_id=10 or directly as a PDF file at: <http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/CriticalLinks.pdf>.

Explore the RIME Website at http://www.rimemusic.org/new_music_education/benefits_music.asp

Finland: "On the Value of School Music"

Professor Tom Regelski, University of Helsinki

Social and cultural theorists from a variety of disciplines acknowledge that music in everyday life is in fact very healthy, robust and active. In traditional and modern societies alike, music serves countless and important personal

and social goods. Because it both 'carries' and shapes cultural life and individual consciousness and meets a wide variety of social purposes it is ever-present in any society.

The issue, then, is not the value of music but uncertainty concerning the value of music education. To the degree instruction is concerned with 'disinterested appreciation' or concerns itself with only the adept or self-selected few, music in school becomes disconnected from its important roles and functions in everyday life on the part of ordinary people.

It suffers from the arid, neutralizing "scholastic point of view" sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has described that is devoid of all practical intentions or tangible relevance. School music, as a result, becomes a praxis of its own, the value of which applies mainly to students only while they are in music class, formally taking lessons, or in connection with school-based performance.

As a consequence, too many music teachers have little evidence and thus little assurance that their efforts have made a lasting difference. They prefer to believe and contend that simply including music in the curriculum somehow has intangible benefits that are realized (and thus expressed) only in vague, almost spiritual terms.

It has been said, correctly I think, that music is too important to be left to musicians; and the same might be said for its academic study in traditional schooling - that music is too important to be reduced to a subject or a discipline or a vaguely described realm of abstract, metaphysical values.

Instead, music is a personal, social and cultural praxis that is more basic to the good life than many of the academic 'basics' featured in schools. As a socially created reality, music simultaneously participates in and contributes to the commonly shared sociality serving all human actions, institutions and needs. As such it is one of the greatest, on-going achievements of human kind; a major contribution of human intelligence, sociality and creativity.

As a social praxis of immense currency in every society, music continues on a daily basis to influence and enhance consciousness in ways far more important than the hallowed status it is often accorded when treated as a 'museum' rather than a 'living' art.

Many noble-sounding and august claims are made in behalf of this rarefied mode of musical "high" culture. In fact, sociologists and cultural theorists widely acknowledge that formal schooling ideologically favors this vague, cerebral and culturally 'elevated' conception of 'classy' music. Yet it is with music - of all kinds, types and 'levels' - as used in the living of daily life that we create and appreciate its value.

Read the paper at: <http://www.isme.org/en/advocacy/21-on-the-value-of-school-music.html>

New Zealand: Engaged and delightful learning: an online classroom music program

Jan Bolton, Computers in NZ Schools, July 2007

The New Zealand Arts curriculum statement acknowledges the value of musical composition as a means of personal expression, however studies of primary education have revealed that few primary schools offer opportunities for composition.

Barriers to classroom composition include the lack of confidence and competence of many classroom generalist teachers to deliver a music program, the low Government priority for provision of specialist music teachers, and the crowded school curriculum.

A new program aims to overcome these barriers by linking specialists/composers to primary classrooms.

The 'Compose' program consists of a series of lessons provided through Garageband files containing spoken explanations and audio examples which progressively familiarise students with features of Garageband and develop their knowledge of the elements of music.

Garageband is intuitive software which enables students to 'compose' music without the need for instrumental skill or knowledge of music notation. This makes composition more accessible for children, and empowers them to express ideas in new, culturally relevant ways.

In Compose, students receive online mentoring from a music specialist as they work through the lessons. Schools in New Zealand have integrated the Compose program into a literary unit called 'the Clubs project', in which the Compose lessons culminate in an engaging problem-based learning project. The project is based on the children's book Clubs: A Lolly Leopold Story, which explores children's clubs at a primary school.

Each student chooses one of the five clubs in the story to portray musically, and works in a group or individually to produce short musical works. Students upload successive Garageband files to shared drive, which the composition specialist accesses remotely. The specialist then emails each group with suggestions, reminding them of compositional strategies encountered in the Compose program. Students at the rural Opaki School concluded the project by travelling to a sound studio to produce a CD of their compositions, which each student received.

The program enables young people to identify as composers, and also provides a student-centred project in which students' creative ideas are valued and self-esteem is developed.

This article drawn from: <http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/default.asp?id=58&issueID=10961#art21013>

For an alternative view of Garageband, see New York Times article "Computer Software Can Turn You Into a Song Writer" at: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/02/arts/music/02walk.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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