

# ENSEMBLE

## MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Volume 2 Number 2, 14 February 2008

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Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at [info@ensemble.org.au](mailto:info@ensemble.org.au)

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*Welcome to this second edition of ENSEMBLE for 2008, which includes:*

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### REMINDER

#### Music in Communities Awards Program 2008

**Entries Close: 29 February 2008!**

Details at [www.musicincommunities.org.au](http://www.musicincommunities.org.au)

Info: Tina Broad, 'Music. Play for Life' on 0439 022 257

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### OPINION

#### It's Time for Music and the Arts

*Mark Sullivan*

*"If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my day dreams in music. I see my life in terms of music...I get most joy in life out of music." **Albert Einstein***

The dramatic expansion of secondary schooling that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s was underpinned by the significant movement of the workforce from primary and secondary industries to occupations in service industries and the professions. In addition, periods of rapid scientific and technological advancement led to a demand for increased numbers of skilled workers in these areas and retention rates at secondary school began to rise.

Governments responded to this period of great economic expansion by providing funding for infrastructure that supported the educational priorities of the time and the establishment of science laboratories, libraries and sporting facilities became a feature of schools across the country.

Owing to the rise of constructivist learning and teaching models, the explosion of computer technology, and the impact of high retention rates in secondary schools, the focus of education shifted to the student and the terms 'holistic education' and 'lifelong' learning became part of the education discourse.

Today, schools must be attentive to individual differences and build communities. Learning must be student-centred and foster ethical, fair-minded, disciplined, co-operative, thoughtful, considerate, problem-solving, creative citizens who achieve high academic standards.

Is there a magic formula that can achieve all these aspirations? A number of theories come to mind: more rigorous core curriculum, learning styles, new basics, outcomes-based learning, multiple intelligences and technology to name a few. Others believe the solution is with music and the arts due to their capacity to enhance learning outcomes by addressing the uniqueness of humanity, and imbue students with a love of learning, dignity, and enhanced creativity. They believe that with the arts students will be more prepared for the workforce of tomorrow.

Read more at [http://www.bggs.qld.edu.au/news\\_insight.php?action=itemDisplay&ItemID=4138](http://www.bggs.qld.edu.au/news_insight.php?action=itemDisplay&ItemID=4138)

*Mark Sullivan is Director of Instrumental Music at Brisbane Girls Grammar School.*

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## **WEBSITES OF INTEREST**

### **School Music Matters: A Music Education Advocacy Resource Centre**

The main goal of USA-based site SchoolMusicMatters.com is to help music teachers protect their school music programs. Below are some of the many resources it offers to help you:

- Ideas from your peers on how to promote school music
- Downloads, including graphics you can use in newsletters and music you can perform
- Facts to help convince the uninformed of just how vital school music is
- Links to advocacy and resource sites, with a brief site summary
- Quotations on music, education, and life to use in newsletters or on bulletin boards - or just for inspiration

Read more at <http://www.schoolmusicmatters.com>

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### **Northern Metropolitan Region Music Education Resource Centre**

This is another of the great community information sites developed under the aegis of the Victorian Department of Education & Early Childhood Development to highlight vitally important areas of young people's learning and development, with a focus on the great things happening in schools and their communities.

An array of resources to gladden the heart of everyone interested in the condition and future of school music education, this site is managed by Piero D'Elia, Music Co-ordinator of the Northern Metropolitan Region under a banner and working philosophy that strikes a chord with the ENSEMBLE team: "I have gathered a posy of other men's flowers, but the arrangement and the thread that bonds them are my own" (Michel de Montaigne).

Site features include:

- Past events and forward events calendar
- Resources for educators
- Music retailer information
- Venues for hire
- Workshops, conferences and PD activities
- Funding opportunities
- Community music resources; and, of special interest
- Featured schools (see featured extract)

Read more at <http://www.nmr.vic.edu.au/music/music.htm>

*Editor's Note: Are there other similar websites supporting and encouraging school community music education in other local regions of Australia? Are you planning to set up a site like this one? Let us know so we can feature this in a future edition.*

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## **YOUR STORY**

### **Carlton North Primary School, Carlton North, Victoria**

#### ***The Lee Street "Rhythm of Life" Performing Arts Festival***

While the Melbourne International Arts Festival was buzzing around town in October, Carlton North Primary School joined the performance spirit and conducted a three – day extravaganza of their own: The Lee St 'Rhythm of Life' Performing Arts Festival.

The school has never tried anything as challenging or as innovative as this before, but the project turned into twenty solid, fabulous and fun-filled hours of music, dance and drama!

Launched by the playwright Michael Gurr and Neighbours star Janet Andrewartha, the Festival kicked off on Tuesday 24th October with a re-jigged version of the song 'The Rhythm of Life' sung by the whole school, followed by a School Parade through the streets of Carlton.

Multi-layered in format, the festival gave students countless opportunities to enhance their learning and to 'strut their stuff.'

Over the three days students were involved in small individual performances, large scale original grade plays and whole school events. Local high schools were invited to perform and this offer was taken up most enthusiastically by Fitzroy High School, who brought rock bands, dancers and singers to entertain their primary school mates, who loved every minute of it.

Read more at <http://www.nmr.vic.edu.au/music/featured.htm>

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## **IMPROVING STUDENT WELL-BEING THROUGH PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Festival for Healthy Living**

The Festival for Healthy Living, developed and co-ordinated by Harry Gelber and his team based at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, has grown progressively over each year of the past decade, engaging students, schools, parents, families and whole communities in performance activities that have demonstrated their capacity to build ongoing community partnerships and to support young people's well-being and their positive personal development.

#### ***What is the Festival for Healthy Living?***

The Festival for Healthy living aims to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing. It provides opportunities for students to explore these issues using the performing and visual arts.

It involves students developing solution-based performance pieces, art work and written work facilitated by teachers with assistance from the professional performing artists who work in the schools over the duration of the project as artists in residence.

Opportunities develop for schools to enhance their whole-school wellbeing programs by linking learning areas and by being involved in reflective ongoing professional development.

#### ***Why have a Festival?***

One in five children and adolescents experience mental health problems. Half of these show impaired schooling and social developments

To remove stigma that can be associated with mental health

Research has shown that the performing arts are an effective tool when working with children and adolescents to explore issues that underpin good mental health.

### ***What's in it for Schools?***

The Festival for Healthy Living provides support for improving teaching and learning in schools across schools and within clusters.

The program not only fits the models for best practice in the development of Middle Years pedagogy, but it also fits all the requirements of the Public Health Framework.

Research and program development in both education and public health have increasingly focused on the years of early adolescence as crucial in promoting engagement with learning and enhancing physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Independent evaluation has shown that the Festival is an instrument for change among staff and students involved, and it is an effective means of promoting mental health issues to students and the broader community.

The Festival focuses on the transition between primary and secondary schools and it recognises the critical role teachers and parents can play in increasing mental health literacy in the school setting.

Because the Festival promotes a whole school approach to wellbeing and mental health, it is designed to be sustainable for school communities.

The Festival provides life long learning skills for students.

Read more at [http://www.rch.org.au/fhl/index.cfm?doc\\_id=3967](http://www.rch.org.au/fhl/index.cfm?doc_id=3967)

Contact Harry Gelber 9345 6011 or 0419 378 042 or email [harry.gelber@rch.org.au](mailto:harry.gelber@rch.org.au).

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## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES**

### **University of Sydney: Primary Music Education Workshop**

#### ***A 2.5 hour workshop delivered at your school at a time suited to your timetable***

These primary music workshops are filled with useful and fun activities based around the requirements of the Music component of the Creative Arts syllabus, using resources readily available in schools, including the ABC Sing Books from 1993 to 2007 (whichever you have), Sync or Swing and Vocal-ease. We also use a lot of environmental percussion so no need for expensive equipment. Activities include dancing, singing, games, and learning how to create music – from the most simple steps and building to the more complex. Chants and raps, songs and instrumental music can be included.

The workshop is suitable for both experienced and non-experienced teachers and is accessible to all. Comprehensive notes are provided, including the relationship of each activity to the musical concepts and skills. Dance elements can also be touched upon.

Presenter: Rhonda Macken (Coordinator of the ABC The Sing Book)

This 2.5 hour workshop is delivered at your school at a time suited to your timetable.

For more information please contact Margaret Day ([m.day@edfac.usyd.edu.au](mailto:m.day@edfac.usyd.edu.au)) at the Division of Professional Learning.

[http://www.prolearn.edsw.usyd.edu.au/teachers/flexible\\_learning/primary\\_music\\_education.shtml](http://www.prolearn.edsw.usyd.edu.au/teachers/flexible_learning/primary_music_education.shtml)

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## **TERTIARY MUSIC EDUCATION**

### **Music Education in Search of a Future**

*Stephen Whittington*

There are changes sweeping through Australian tertiary music education, but the mood of staff across the country is far from optimistic. Many music schools are struggling with budget deficits and politically driven demands for more accountability that are constant distractions from the real business at hand.

Most staff cannot remember a time when it was otherwise. They have begun to doubt whether such a time ever existed. And some are apprehensive about the direction in which change is taking us. Yet the real reason for their gloom is not the lack of time or money, but the nagging fear that these problems are merely symptoms of an underlying problem: that the educational ideal they still believe in is not shared by the community or by the system in which they work.

We are partly to blame. We have acquiesced—passively or otherwise—in the creation of the world we now live in. We have not been effective advocates for what we do. And we have been slow to respond to changes in the art of music as it is practised outside the academies.

#### **a special case**

The situation may be similar in other art practices, but music is a special case. In no other area of the arts (aside from classical ballet) is professional education predicated on the assumption that a significant proportion of students have been engaged in the disciplined study and practice of the art since childhood.

The nearest point of comparison is not with the other arts but with sport, which enjoys strong government and community support. The situation of tertiary music schools cannot be considered in isolation from the music education system as a whole. Without the foundation of strong music programs at primary and secondary levels and high quality private teaching, the tertiary music enterprise is doomed to failure.

Read more at <http://www.realtimearts.net/article/80/8633>

*© Stephen Whittington: who has taught music in the tertiary sector for nearly 30 years. In spite of that, he claims to have kept his sense of humour and love of music. He currently teaches electronic music, composition and theory at the Elder Conservatorium, University of Adelaide, and is an active composer and performer. This article appeared in RealTime Issue #80 August-September 2007*

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## **OVERSEAS PERSPECTIVES**

### **To Provide Quality Music Education Now, Schools Could Learn From the Past**

*Allan Kozinn, New York Times, December 25, 2007*

School's out for the holidays, and it's probably the last thing on anyone's mind. But in the marginalized world of music education, a good deal of serious thinking needs to be done. Now that Charles Dickens's Christmas ghosts have made their rounds for the year, perhaps they might be enlisted to provide perspective and encourage some soul-searching.

The crisis of the moment has partly to do with Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's announcement last summer that New York City schools would be required to teach the arts, and that principals would be rated annually on their success, much as they are in other subjects.

In theory this could put some muscle behind the adventurous curriculum (or blueprint, as it is called) that the city's Department of Education and a panel of arts consultants drew up in 2004: a kindergarten-through-12th-grade program that envisions choral and instrumental performance, the fostering of musical literacy and the consideration of the role music plays in communities and the world at large. The music proposed for this course was admirably boundary-free, cutting a swath from Beethoven and Puccini through folk songs, spirituals, jazz and pop.

The problem is that the 2004 blueprint is recommended rather than required. Given the paucity of music teachers in the system — there was one music teacher for every 1,200 students in 2006, Education Department officials have said — schools that could execute it in all its glory were few. Exactly how (and how quickly) that can change is unclear.

Mr. Bloomberg has also decreed that the \$67.5 million earmarked annually for Project Arts, a financing program started in 1997 by Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, will go directly to the schools. The fear is that it will be absorbed by programs other than those for arts education.

That's what arts organizations are worrying about publicly. But the fact is that Project Arts and grant programs like it have become a dependable gravy train for these groups. In the absence of the teachers and the budgets necessary to offer comprehensive and coherent arts courses, the schools, encouraged and financed by such programs, have formed partnerships with performing groups, charging the ensembles with the task of creating arts programs for children.

Typically that means a few performances for each participating school, dressed up with classroom preparation sessions and specially created handouts. They often include discussions with musicians, who are not usually members of the "partner ensembles" but young "teaching artists." They are paid fees equal to, and sometimes considerably more than, a classroom teacher's hourly wage (but a fraction of what a unionized orchestra member would receive).

Read more at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/25/arts/music/25musi.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

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## **NEW PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

### **World Music Choir of Shepparton**

In Victoria, the Greater Shepparton Council and the Fairley Foundation are starting a World Music Choir, open to all members of the community.

Council Festival and Events Officer Tricia Sargant said that the group will rehearse and perform music from all parts of the world.

"Shepparton is rich in cultural diversity and a multicultural choir can be an ideal means of expressing this diversity, preserving cultural traditions as well as developing an enjoyment of the cultural traditions of others.

"It also gives people a chance to meet and socialise with people from outside their own culture.

"There is no audition, no cost and all music is taught by ear, so you don't have to be able to read music, you just need to love to sing!

"As well as vocalists, we are also looking for traditional instrumentalists."

For more information, Contact Trish Sargant on 0409 855 434 or (03) 5832 9867

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## **CONFERENCES**

### **Australian Band and Orchestra Directors Association Conference**

*3-6 July 2008 – Adelaide, SA*

This year's conference is themed on "Advocating the Benefits of Music Education".

Participants include music educators, musicians and key figures from right across the music industry, with in impressive array of internationally known speakers and presenters.

For more information: <http://www.abodasa.com.au>

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## **28th ISME World Conference**

*Bologna, Italy July 20-25, 2008*

The theme for this international Conference is "Music at All Ages", with strands focusing on the issues and opportunities relating to:

- Music and Infants
- Music and Children
- Music and Young People
- Music and Adults
- Music and Seniors

Read more at <http://www.isme.org/2008/>

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## **MUSIC COMPETITIONS**

### **NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition**

Entries are invited in the 25th annual NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition, organised by the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra.

Open to young musicians throughout New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, winners are in line for significant cash prizes. The prize for the Outstanding Performer is \$5,000 and an invitation to perform with the KPO in 2009.

Every entrant receives a written appraisal from the adjudicators. There are special 25th Anniversary packs for all entrants too, including free admission to a future concert by the SSO.

**Closing Date is Friday 14 March 2008.**

Read more at <http://www.kpo.org.au>

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### **Australian National Eisteddfod**

An eisteddfod is a traditional festival of the performing arts from Wales based on the ancient bardic schools where lore and its presentation in various styles encouraged the development of cultural excellence by all.

The Australian National Eisteddfod covers 200 age based performance and composition competitions for 6 yrs to open in singing, drama and instrument(s) for solo and group performance.

This is a low cost opportunity to 'tell your story' in public performance and see and hear how others perform. Receive a confidential written assessment from a discipline accredited specialist with an award recognising your standing – including perhaps some cash.

Read more at <http://www.nationaleisteddfod.org.au/>

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