

ENSEMBLE

MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Volume 2 Number 5, 24 July 2008

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MUSIC: COUNT US IN

One Day – One Song: One Day in October 2008

As you know, "Music: Count Us In" ran for the first time last year, linking hundreds of schools and communities right across Australia.

Based on the Canadian national "Music Monday" initiative, it was one of the recommendations of the National Music Workshop held in 2006.

The first stage in 2007 saw more than 250,000 students, teachers and family members joining together to play and sing the same song, on the same day, in all parts of the country – to proclaim the importance of music education in our schools.

It became the biggest-ever co-ordinated school music performance in our history.

This year, 2008, we aim to set a whole new record!

The scheduled performance day is Thursday 23 October - at 11.30 am.

... And the new song is being completed by John Foreman, via a songwriting workshop with four talented Melbourne high school students: Jordan Scotney and Hayden Schueler from Blackburn High, and Olivia Hally and Charlotte Nicdao from VCA Secondary School.

Their brief: to create a song catchy enough to engage primary school students, simple enough for teachers with few musical skills to learn and pass on, and providing opportunities for high school students with a musical bent to put their own stamp on the performance by arranging for their particular ensemble and style.

The song will be recorded and launched shortly. All materials – the recorded version, an instrument-only track, arrangements for different ensembles, even stem files for the technically gifted – will be freely available and downloadable via the website www.musiccountusin.org.au

Register Now!

Be part of Australia's biggest school music event. Add your voice to the call for more music in ALL of Australia's Schools and for EVERY student.

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

Helping All Primary School Teachers Get Involved

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This year we plan to widen participation to include greater involvement of all teachers, whether or not they have any background of music training.

Especially all teachers in primary schools – the area where the National Review of Music Education found school music experience and involvement most lacking.

The federal government has agreed strongly with us that primary "generalists" need extra help to give them the confidence and capacity to tackle the learning and teaching of the song. With this backing and the enthusiasm which teachers bring to the opportunity, the results in each community will be amazing.

So the government has agreed to fund targeted professional development in all states and territories.

This provides a great opportunity to engage with each Department of Education to build music skills and confidence levels as boosters to primary school teachers – using the new song as the springboard

Further details will be provided as the PD program takes shape and rolls out.

Meanwhile, to register your interest in participating in this PD initiative, please email us at <mailto:emma.mpfl@mca.org.au>

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NATIONAL NEWS

National Performing Arts Advocacy Campaign Launched in Queensland

9 July 2008

Old Education, Training and Arts Minister Rod Welford today helped launch a national advocacy campaign to promote the benefits of performing arts in education.

Mr Welford said the Australian Major Performing Arts Group selected Queensland as the location for the launch of the We All Play a Part education module due to the state's proven track record in arts education.

"I am a strong supporter of arts in education because of the positive benefits it offers students in other areas of learning," Mr Welford said.

"Research shows that involvement in the performing arts can improve academic outcomes and help students to develop confidence and creative thinking skills.

"In the Queensland school system we have a significant emphasis on arts education.

"Educators and music industry professionals regard Queensland's world-renowned instrumental music program as the finest and most extensive in the country."

Read more at <http://www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=59083>

Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG)

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Every one of the 28 companies in AMPAG sees young people as a vital audience for the present and the future. Being exposed to live music, drama, dance and opera is an essential way of experiencing Australian culture and stories, as well as providing the well-documented benefits of increased literacy, numeracy and creative thinking.

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AMPAG is delighted with the new commitment, and looks forward to new partnerships with schools as Australia readies itself to develop the creative talent of its young people across the country.

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February 2008

Education and the Arts

Ministers

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Entry is by competitive audition which is held in August each year. Overseas students are able to audition by video.

The VCA Secondary School provides a secondary education devoted equally to academic studies and the study of music or dance. Its purpose is specifically to prepare talented young people for professional careers in music and dance. Students spend approximately half of their day studying their academic work and half of their day in dance or music studies. VCASS students must be highly motivated in order to manage the heavy workload.

The VCASS also provides a specialist academic education to the Australian Ballet School, Victorian Institute of Gymnasts and Tennis Australia's Targeted Athlete Program.

Academic studies include a full range of subjects from Year 7 through to VCE and also include a number of VET studies. VCE results are consistently high, the school being ranked in the top ten state schools for VCE achievement in 2004. Teaching staff at the school are employed by the Department of Education and Training.

Music and dance are taught by lecturers from the VCA of Dance and Music who are highly skilled, experienced performing artists and educators. VCASS students also have access to visiting national and international artists and master classes throughout the year.

Dance subjects include classical ballet, contemporary and world dance, jazz, tap, kinetic studies, theoretical studies, acrobatics, music and anatomy.

Music subjects include a principal and optional second study, performance skills, ensemble, orchestra, musicianship, history and literature. All our students complete choir work as part of their training as a musician.

Many performance opportunities are offered to students. These performances take place at professional venues such as Federation Hall, Iwaki Auditorium, St John's Church at Southgate, and the Grant Street and CUB Malthouse Theatres.

Graduates from the school gain placements and performing at the highest levels in Australia and throughout the world.

Read more at <http://www.vca.unimelb.edu.au/vcass/>

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Music Education Online

Music Education Online provides a wealth of online information for anyone interested in music education.

Established in 1993, Music Education Online is one of the most referenced web sites for music education on the Internet today.

Children's Music Workshop is a music education company which specializes in a variety of products and services including custom designed band and orchestra method books, school site music instruction, instrument sales and rentals, music education advocacy and more.

Children's Music Workshop currently coordinates instrumental music programs at more than two dozen public and private schools in the greater Los Angeles area.

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

Responsible Downloading Guide

Australia participates in global music download education campaign for parents and teachers

Music Industry Piracy Investigations Media Release 30 April 2008

Explaining the dos and don'ts of music downloading will be easier for parents and teachers with today's launch of Young People, Music and the Internet, a multi-language, international education campaign.

The new guide, published with the support of Childnet International (a children's internet charity), Pro-Music (the international alliance of music sector groups) and Music Industry Piracy Investigations (the anti piracy organisation for the Australian music industry, MIPI) in Australia, will be distributed through schools and universities, libraries, record stores, teaching portals and websites in 21 countries.

The simple and concise guide aims to help young people use the Internet and mobile phones safely and legally download music. It comes as millions of people take advantage of the explosion of new ways of accessing music digitally, but still lack clarity on safety and legal issues, on finding legitimate sites, on the basics of copyright and on how to unpick the jargon of digital music.

"In Australia, over 2.8 million people download music illegally and 1 in 3 young people", said Sabiene Heindl, General Manager of MIPI. "For parents and teachers who are in the dark when it comes to deciphering legal and illegal music sites, this campaign is a great way to provide them with some clear guidance on the key issues."

The Young People, Music and the Internet guide:

- Explains how to download music without exposing the computer to viruses and other security risks;
- Identifies legal sources of music;
- Clarifies the basics of copyright and its relevance to online music;
- Gives tips for young people on the basic do's and don'ts; and
- Deciphers the jargon surrounding online music.

Countries that will launch the new leaflet in the coming months include Argentina, Australia, Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand and the USA.

Read more at <http://www.mipi.com.au>

OPINION

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

Allan Kozinn, New York Times, 25 December 2007

Recently a musician whose ensemble performs in schools told a radio interviewer that she and her colleagues "sometimes even let the kids touch the instruments".

Sometimes! Even!

Cue the Ghost of Music Education Past.

If you look at how music was taught in public schools 40 years ago - and for decades before that - you'll see exactly what's needed now.

Back then it was simple: Music was part of the curriculum, like math, science and social studies.

Kindergartners and first graders began with singing, note-reading and rhythm-beating, and as the course continued through high school, it touched on the history of music and how it works - much as the 2004 blueprint does, except that schools offering this curriculum were the rule, not the exception.

Even more crucial, if you wanted to play an instrument, lessons were free, and the school would lend you an instrument until you felt sufficiently committed to buy your own.

As interesting as the class work could be (depending on the teacher), the real business of getting to know how music works took place in instrument lessons, and, after a couple of years, the orchestra or band, which gave students a taste of performing music rather than absorbing it passively.

Annual trips to the New York Philharmonic and classroom visits by musicians were part of the program as well, but they supplemented the curriculum.

Today, too often, they are the curriculum.

Read more at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/25/arts/music/25musi.html>

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MAKING NEWS OVERSEAS

USA: Taking Capitol Hill by Storm

Roz Fehr, National Association for Music Education, 27 June 2008

On June 13 MENC President and choral director Barbara L. Geer conducted 1,000 music students and their teachers in singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." The MENC event took place at the Capitol Hill Reflecting Pool.

Students from throughout the United States sang the national anthem in the June 13 Capitol Hill event designed to bring attention to the importance of music education.

The President's own United States Marine Band traveled to Capitol Hill for a special performance.

The MENC National Executive Board attended advocacy sessions at the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill.

Read more at <http://www.menc.org/news/view/taking-capitol-hill-by-storm>

UK: New Web Portal "Teaching Music"

In April this year the Music Education Council and the National Association of Music Educators joined forces to produce Teaching Music, a web portal for teachers of music.

"Teaching Music is an innovative new portal to help you reflect and improve your knowledge, understanding and skills in music education. It is your space to access information, reflect on your practice, connect with others and contribute your own resources.

Teaching Music is available to all those involved in music education: teachers, community musicians, senior management and policy makers."

It's set for an official launch on 10 October 2008, but they've made available some screenshots and sample pages in the meantime.

Very snappy.

Read more at <http://www.teachingmusic.org.uk/>

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MUSIC FOR HEALTH & WELL-BEING

There's nothing more powerful than singing a song

Megan Doherty, Canberra Times, 26 June 2008

Tasmanian farmer Bill Chugg believes the restorative power of singing in a choir will help his struggle with the "black dog" of depression. "It's far nicer to be singing than crying. I've spent hours going off into the bush and crying and if only someone had come along and helped me sing a song," he said.

Mr. Chugg, a former farm manager from Campbell Town in Tasmania, said that as the impact of the drought started to affect even the "grand families" of that fine wool growing region, the prospect of being able to set aside his worries for a couple of hours singing in the community choir would be invaluable. "Believe me, there's nothing more powerful than singing a song," he said.

Campbell Town is the latest community to get a Sing Australia choir, a simple antidote to the pressures of rural life.

Under the leadership of Canberra's music man Colin Slater, Sing Australia has a two-year plan to establish up to 80 new choirs around the nation, focusing on drought affected areas.

Community Services Minister Jenny Macklin yesterday announced Sing Australia would receive more than \$446,000 for its Connecting Australians in Singing project.

Mr. Slater said song books and CDs were sent to rural communities to start the choirs, "to bring some good cheer and make some positive connections between the rural areas and the city."

Farmers and rural residents from Tasmania, NSW and South Australia attended the funding announcement at Old Parliament House yesterday.

Barry Kearsley, a wheat and barley farmer from Cummins in South Australia, said the stress of the continuing drought was debilitating. The fun and companionship of the choir made a real difference. "The really good thing is that we've got about ten blokes going and they're having a ball," he said. "I'd like to go to choir every day, actually."

Sheep farmer Wendy Goodridge of Dunedoo in NSW said her local choir encouraged people "to smile again. The transformation has been amazing."

Ms Macklin, who joined in the singing yesterday, said: "We hope that it will help. That's what it's about."

Read more at <http://www.singaustralia.com.au/>

Research Project on the Health Benefits of Group Singing

Researcher Heather Gridley and her colleagues at the Wellness Promotion Unit at Victoria University have been asked by Vic Health to investigate the health benefits of singing in groups.

If you are in Victoria and you sing regularly with others – or want to sing regularly with others – the research team would be keen to hear from you.

The main focus of this project is the mental health and well-being of people who regularly participate in singing groups. It is hope the information obtained in this research will provide us with a greater understanding of the impacts of singing in groups, for individuals and communities.

We are surveying singing group members around Victoria, as well as people wanting to join a singing group

We are interested in your perceptions of your own health and well-being and satisfaction with living in your community, as well as your experience of group singing.

All this information will be collected on a confidential basis, by a survey that can be completed on-line or in hard copy if you prefer.

Anyone completing the survey will be asked at the end of it whether they are willing to take part in a follow-up survey or interview in about 6 months time.

We'd particularly like to follow up people who have been singing with their group now for less than six months, so that we can get a sense of any changes for them over time.

Complete the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=a3_2bARwetSLmkqOffF9arcvw_3d_3d

Email for more information <mailto:heather.gridley@vu.edu.au> or <mailto:jill.astbury@vu.edu.au>

AWARDS & PRIZES

The Song Room Founder's Double Celebration

July 2008

Pot-Pourri was named Australian Event Entertainer of the Year 2007 in the BT Publishing E-Awards for Event Excellence in an awards ceremony in Sydney on 2 July.

Awarded for their consistently outstanding performances and constant innovation in corporate, community and charity entertainment, the award represents a significant acknowledgement and commendation from the Business and Tourism industry.

Pot-Pourri founder Tania de Jong is delighted at the accolade, having recently been honoured herself with membership in the Order of Australia, announced as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2008.

The membership celebrates Ms de Jong's continuous efforts over the last 21 years as a businesswoman, performer and philanthropist, particularly her role as founder of The Song Room, a charity bringing music to students of underprivileged schools across Australia.

Read more about Pot-Pourri at <http://www.pot-pourri.com.au>

Read more about the Song Room at <http://www.songroom.org.au/>

Music in Communities Awards

June 2008

Eight inspirational community music organisations have taken top honours in the inaugural Awards, which received 225 entries from all over Australia. They will share a boosted prize pool of \$22,000.

Best all-round program (all ages, all abilities, all types of music)

Winner: Dandenong Ranges Music Council (VIC) \$4,000

For over 25 years, this pioneering music-specific community council has been inspiring people of all ages and abilities to listen to, learn, participate in and perform music in the Yarra Ranges region and encouraging people to start their own bands and choirs. Music making is at the heart of this regional community.

Judges' comment: "When she returned from having lived with her family in the US, DRMC founder, Bev McAlister, was disappointed in the comparatively few opportunities to make music in the Dandenongs. In her inimitable way, she set about changing all that - creating the DRMC as a community-led initiative and taking it to a point where, today, music is entrenched in just about every aspect of community life. The DRMC is a remarkable musical and social success story which should motivate every Australian community to say: we want what they're having!"

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

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Australian Music Association Convention (AMAC) 2008

9-11 August 2008, Melbourne Convention Centre, Victoria

The only music products trade convention in Australia with trade show, social events, education and training – and much, much more...

For details: <http://www.australianmusic.asn.au/DefaultNew.asp?ID=6>

MIAC with PAL Showcase

24-25 August 2008, Toronto Canada

MIAC 2008 is Canada's largest trade show for musical instruments and accessories, keyboards, print music, software and professional sound and lighting equipment. Trade only

For more information on MIAC: <http://www.miac.net/tradeshaw.php>

For more information on PAL Showcase: <http://palshowcase.com/>

Australian Instrumental Convention

10-13 April 2009, Grafton NSW

Melissa Philp is a music teacher and performer in Grafton in northern regional NSW whose passion is to set up a music network for small communities that are so often disadvantaged and overlooked in terms of exposure to quality musical experiences, in comparison with larger metropolitan areas.

"I have performed and given workshops in many rural areas in the last couple of years and it is just amazing to see how many communities don't even have a music teacher."

"To help fill this gap, I am directing the Australian Instrumental Convention in Grafton over Easter 2009. This is my own initiative and it is shaping up really well. I wanted to be able to give country kids a 'big city event'."

Can you lend a hand to ensure this event is a major success?

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

To unsubscribe from ACSSO mailings click here: <mailto:webmaster@ensemble.org.au?subject=unsubscribe>

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS (ACSSO)
The national voice of parents of children in Australia's public schools and their school communities

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Music Industry Piracy Investigations Media Release 30 April 2008

Explaining the dos and don'ts of music downloading will be easier for parents and teachers with today's launch of Young People, Music and the Internet, a multi-language, international education campaign.

The new guide, published with the support of Childnet International (a children's internet charity), Pro-Music (the international alliance of music sector groups) and Music Industry Piracy Investigations (the anti piracy organisation for the Australian music industry, MIPI) in Australia, will be distributed through schools and universities, libraries, record stores, teaching portals and websites in 21 countries.

The simple and concise guide aims to help young people use the Internet and mobile phones safely and legally download music. It comes as millions of people take advantage of the explosion of new ways of accessing music digitally, but still

lack clarity on safety and legal issues, on finding legitimate sites, on the basics of copyright and on how to unpick the jargon of digital music.

"In Australia, over 2.8 million people download music illegally and 1 in 3 young people", said Sabiene Heindl, General Manager of MIPI. "For parents and teachers who are in the dark when it comes to deciphering legal and illegal music sites, this campaign is a great way to provide them with some clear guidance on the key issues."

The Young People, Music and the Internet guide:

- Explains how to download music without exposing the computer to viruses and other security risks;
- Identifies legal sources of music;
- Clarifies the basics of copyright and its relevance to online music;
- Gives tips for young people on the basic do's and don'ts; and
- Deciphers the jargon surrounding online music.

Countries that will launch the new leaflet in the coming months include Argentina, Australia, Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand and the USA.

Read more at <http://www.mipi.com.au>

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OPINION

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

Allan Kozinn, New York Times, 25 December 2007

Recently a musician whose ensemble performs in schools told a radio interviewer that she and her colleagues "sometimes even let the kids touch the instruments".

Sometimes! Even!

Cue the Ghost of Music Education Past.

If you look at how music was taught in public schools 40 years ago - and for decades before that - you'll see exactly what's needed now.

Back then it was simple: Music was part of the curriculum, like math, science and social studies.

Kindergartners and first graders began with singing, note-reading and rhythm-beating, and as the course continued through high school, it touched on the history of music and how it works - much as the 2004 blueprint does, except that schools offering this curriculum were the rule, not the exception.

Even more crucial, if you wanted to play an instrument, lessons were free, and the school would lend you an instrument until you felt sufficiently committed to buy your own.

As interesting as the class work could be (depending on the teacher), the real business of getting to know how music works took place in instrument lessons, and, after a couple of years, the orchestra or band, which gave students a taste of performing music rather than absorbing it passively.

Annual trips to the New York Philharmonic and classroom visits by musicians were part of the program as well, but they supplemented the curriculum.

Today, too often, they are the curriculum.

Read more at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/25/arts/music/25musi.html>

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MAKING NEWS OVERSEAS

USA: Taking Capitol Hill by Storm

Roz Fehr, National Association for Music Education, 27 June 2008

On June 13 MENC President and choral director Barbara L. Geer conducted 1,000 music students and their teachers in singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." The MENC event took place at the Capitol Hill Reflecting Pool.

Students from throughout the United States sang the national anthem in the June 13 Capitol Hill event designed to bring attention to the importance of music education.

The President's own United States Marine Band traveled to Capitol Hill for a special performance.

The MENC National Executive Board attended advocacy sessions at the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill.

Read more at <http://www.menc.org/news/view/taking-capitol-hill-by-storm>

UK: New Web Portal "Teaching Music"

In April this year the Music Education Council and the National Association of Music Educators joined forces to produce Teaching Music, a web portal for teachers of music.

"Teaching Music is an innovative new portal to help you reflect and improve your knowledge, understanding and skills in music education. It is your space to access information, reflect on your practice, connect with others and contribute your own resources.

Teaching Music is available to all those involved in music education: teachers, community musicians, senior management and policy makers."

It's set for an official launch on 10 October 2008, but they've made available some screenshots and sample pages in the meantime.

Very snappy.

Read more at <http://www.teachingmusic.org.uk/>

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MUSIC FOR HEALTH & WELL-BEING

There's nothing more powerful than singing a song

Megan Doherty, Canberra Times, 26 June 2008

Tasmanian farmer Bill Chugg believes the restorative power of singing in a choir will help his struggle with the "black dog" of depression. "It's far nicer to be singing than crying. I've spent hours going off into the bush and crying and if only someone had come along and helped me sing a song," he said.

Mr. Chugg, a former farm manager from Campbell Town in Tasmania, said that as the impact of the drought started to affect even the "grand families" of that fine wool growing region, the prospect of being able to set aside his worries for a couple of hours singing in the community choir would be invaluable. "Believe me, there's nothing more powerful than singing a song," he said.

Campbell Town is the latest community to get a Sing Australia choir, a simple antidote to the pressures of rural life.

Under the leadership of Canberra's music man Colin Slater, Sing Australia has a two-year plan to establish up to 80 new choirs around the nation, focusing on drought affected areas.

Community Services Minister Jenny Macklin yesterday announced Sing Australia would receive more than \$446,000 for its Connecting Australians in Singing project.

Mr. Slater said song books and CDs were sent to rural communities to start the choirs, "to bring some good cheer and make some positive connections between the rural areas and the city."

Farmers and rural residents from Tasmania, NSW and South Australia attended the funding announcement at Old Parliament House yesterday.

Barry Kearsley, a wheat and barley farmer from Cummins in South Australia, said the stress of the continuing drought was debilitating. The fun and companionship of the choir made a real difference. "The really good thing is that we've got about ten blokes going and they're having a ball," he said. "I'd like to go to choir every day, actually."

Sheep farmer Wendy Goodridge of Dunedoo in NSW said her local choir encouraged people "to smile again. The transformation has been amazing."

Ms Macklin, who joined in the singing yesterday, said: "We hope that it will help. That's what it's about."

Read more at <http://www.singaustralia.com.au/>

Research Project on the Health Benefits of Group Singing

Researcher Heather Gridley and her colleagues at the Wellness Promotion Unit at Victoria University have been asked by Vic Health to investigate the health benefits of singing in groups.

If you are in Victoria and you sing regularly with others – or want to sing regularly with others – the research team would be keen to hear from you.

The main focus of this project is the mental health and well-being of people who regularly participate in singing groups. It is hope the information obtained in this research will provide us with a greater understanding of the impacts of singing in groups, for individuals and communities.

We are surveying singing group members around Victoria, as well as people wanting to join a singing group

We are interested in your perceptions of your own health and well-being and satisfaction with living in your community, as well as your experience of group singing.

All this information will be collected on a confidential basis, by a survey that can be completed on-line or in hard copy if you prefer.

Anyone completing the survey will be asked at the end of it whether they are willing to take part in a follow-up survey or interview in about 6 months time.

We'd particularly like to follow up people who have been singing with their group now for less than six months, so that we can get a sense of any changes for them over time.

Complete the survey at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=a3_2bARwetSLmkqOff9arcvw_3d_3d

Email for more information <mailto:heather.gridley@vu.edu.au> or <mailto:jill.astbury@vu.edu.au>

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AWARDS & PRIZES

The Song Room Founder's Double Celebration

July 2008

Pot-Pourri was named Australian Event Entertainer of the Year 2007 in the BT Publishing E-Awards for Event Excellence in an awards ceremony in Sydney on 2 July.

Awarded for their consistently outstanding performances and constant innovation in corporate, community and charity entertainment, the award represents a significant acknowledgement and commendation from the Business and Tourism industry.

Pot-Pourri founder Tania de Jong is delighted at the accolade, having recently been honoured herself with membership in the Order of Australia, announced as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2008.

The membership celebrates Ms de Jong's continuous efforts over the last 21 years as a businesswoman, performer and philanthropist, particularly her role as founder of The Song Room, a charity bringing music to students of underprivileged schools across Australia.

Read more about Pot-Pourri at <http://www.pot-pourri.com.au>

Read more about the Song Room at <http://www.songroom.org.au/>

Music in Communities Awards

June 2008

Eight inspirational community music organisations have taken top honours in the inaugural Awards, which received 225 entries from all over Australia. They will share a boosted prize pool of \$22,000.

Best all-round program (all ages, all abilities, all types of music)

Winner: Dandenong Ranges Music Council (VIC) \$4,000

For over 25 years, this pioneering music-specific community council has been inspiring people of all ages and abilities to listen to, learn, participate in and perform music in the Yarra Ranges region and encouraging people to start their own bands and choirs. Music making is at the heart of this regional community.

Judges' comment: "When she returned from having lived with her family in the US, DRMC founder, Bev McAlister, was disappointed in the comparatively few opportunities to make music in the Dandenongs. In her inimitable way, she set about changing all that - creating the DRMC as a community-led initiative and taking it to a point where, today, music is entrenched in just about every aspect of community life. The DRMC is a remarkable musical and social success story which should motivate every Australian community to say: we want what they're having!"

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

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Australian Music Association Convention (AMAC) 2008

9-11 August 2008, Melbourne Convention Centre, Victoria

The only music products trade convention in Australia with trade show, social events, education and training – and much, much more...

For details: <http://www.australianmusic.asn.au/DefaultNew.asp?ID=6>

MIAC with PAL Showcase

24-25 August 2008, Toronto Canada

MIAC 2008 is Canada's largest trade show for musical instruments and accessories, keyboards, print music, software and professional sound and lighting equipment. Trade only

For more information on MIAC: <http://www.miac.net/tradeshows.php>

For more information on PAL Showcase: <http://palshowcase.com/>

Australian Instrumental Convention

10-13 April 2009, Grafton NSW

Melissa Philp is a music teacher and performer in Grafton in northern regional NSW whose passion is to set up a music network for small communities that are so often disadvantaged and overlooked in terms of exposure to quality musical experiences, in comparison with larger metropolitan areas.

"I have performed and given workshops in many rural areas in the last couple of years and it is just amazing to see how many communities don't even have a music teacher."

"To help fill this gap, I am directing the Australian Instrumental Convention in Grafton over Easter 2009. This is my own initiative and it is shaping up really well. I wanted to be able to give country kids a 'big city event'."

Can you lend a hand to ensure this event is a major success?

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

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To unsubscribe from ACSSO mailings click here: <mailto:webmaster@ensemble.org.au?subject=unsubscribe>