

ENSEMBLE

MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Volume 2 Number 7, 25 September 2008

Having trouble reading this email? Read it on the web at <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news1080925.pdf>
Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at info@ensemble.org.au

=====

- [Music - Count Us In!](#)
- [Designing the Future for Music](#)
- [Opinion: What About Early Childhood Music Education? Dr Peter de Vries](#)
- [Opinion: Inequality of access - or are things much, much worse than that? Thomas Canter](#)
- [Views from Abroad: Musical youth: How can we get boys singing?](#)
- [Views from Abroad: Why is music important?](#)
- [Views from Abroad: Julian Lloyd Webber on teaching classical music to deprived children](#)
- [Views from Abroad: The functions of music in education](#)
- [Views from Abroad: 'Music raises people up: they find the best of themselves by performing'](#)
- [Conferences & Events: 15th Annual Music Council of Australia Assembly](#)
- [ACSSO Newsletters](#)

=====

MUSIC - COUNT US IN!

It's all happening again in 2008

Thursday October 23rd 2008 at 11.30am

Last year, more than 200,000 kids from over 850 schools performed the same song together on the same day. From tiny rural schools with as few as 13 students to big city schools with many hundreds, 'Music. Count Us In' gave principals, teachers, parents and students a focal point for discussions about the value of music in our schools - and an opportunity to celebrate it in every school community, right across Australia.

There is a brand new song this year - written by young people, for young people. Called 'Sing' - (what else?) - it is the work of four Melbourne high school students in a songwriting workshop led by John Foreman (MD, Australian Idol). Kate Ceberano has lent her incredible voice to recording the song with John. You can hear them performing the song at the Music Count Us In Website.

The website provides arrangements of the song for your school orchestra, concert band (including an easy version), rock band, string ensemble or choir. There's even a backing track of the recording, so you can replace Kate and John's vocals with yours! You can register on the site and also download everything else you need, free.

This year there is an expanded professional development element to 'Music. Count Us In', which will be delivered in each State and Territory to help get even more schools involved. It's designed for primary school teachers with little musical training who want some extra help in learning the song, teaching it to their students - teachers who may generally feel like they could do with some confidence-building around classroom music.

If that sounds like you, contact <mailto:emma.mpfl@mca.org.au> for more info.

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

[< top >](#)

=====

DESIGNING THE FUTURE FOR MUSIC

The National 2020 Summit began a wide array of important conversations about where we should aim to be twelve years down the track - the road maps we need to build if we really want to get there - and identifying the first key steps of the journey.

The Music Council of Australia has recently convened a meeting of 100 key people from across the music sector to shape up those road maps and milestones for the future of Australian music and a vibrant, inclusive musical life in every community.

That forum explored the factors, opportunities and challenges impacting on the future of the music industry - including the barriers to every Australian child receiving a good music education and the poor recognition and resourcing of 'community music'.

Urged by the MCA's executive director, Dr Richard Letts, to 'look to the horizon', Summiteers came up with recommendations which will be taken to the MCA's Annual Assembly later this month for action. These include proposals to:

- Deal decisively with the desperate situation of music in state primary schools where only 2 out of 10 children get a satisfactory music education, as compared with 9 out of 10 in independent schools.
- Address the even worse situation in early childhood education where there is no requirement for music.
- Hold the Rudd government to its election promises to act to implement the recommendations of the National Review of School Music Education
- Organise a gathering of key thinkers to develop ideas to better exploit the new opportunities created by digital technologies and outflank the current difficulties for musicians and the recording industry.
- Mount a national campaign to increase support for Australian music through the reinforcement of Australian content in all electronic media, a national Australian Music Day, Australian support acts on tours by foreign artists, fostering live Australian music at all levels - from pubs to concert halls...
- Develop more comprehensive research programs to combat a lack of factual information to guide action and support advocacy.
- Build exports and the international profile of Australian music through a comprehensive scheme of collaboration between the music sector and relevant government departments: building export income, supporting international careers for artists, stimulating inbound musical tourism, including music in diplomacy.
- Realise greater recognition, visibility, networking and recognition for music-making in communities by establishing a national community music network, developing mutually beneficial connections with school music, and initiating a national community music week with a symposium and awards, feeding into the production of a TV documentary series.

You can see the ideas take shape first hand by attending the Music Council's Annual Assembly, in Adelaide, 28-29 September (SEE BELOW).

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

[< top >](#)

=====

OPINION

What About Early Childhood Music Education?

Dr Peter de Vries, Monash University

I was very disappointed that the 2005 National Review of School Music Education did not have as part of its brief what occurs in music education prior to so-called formal schooling. That is, what happens in pre-schools, childcare centres and with private music education providers for the Under 5s?

It is essential that this aspect of music education in Australia be addressed, as little is known about the content and practice of early childhood music programs. However, research does tell us that early childhood teachers do not feel confident about teaching music, believing they lack requisite musical knowledge and skills. Some early childhood researchers are critical about the delivery of music instruction in early childhood settings, noting that day care and early childhood programs are often lacking in musical direction, with an absence of planned music lessons. Others

have criticised early childhood music programs for being teaching, rather than learning, oriented and advocate for more child-initiated music activities.

In her 1998 survey of childhood music education programs in Australian music centres and private music studios, Nita Temmerman provides the most comprehensive examination of music instruction in the nation's early childhood music settings. Forty music education programs were surveyed, indicating 'that early childhood music programs in Australia attempt to include what music educators agree are the essential elements of a music program for young children. These are active participation in a variety of music-making experiences aimed at fostering children's enjoyment of music'. Aims of such programs focus on enjoyment of music, rhythmic games, proficiency in singing and singing games, along with listening, creating, moving and aural activities.

But what about music education programs in childcare centres?

Read more at <http://www.mca.org.au/web/content/view/48/6>

This article appeared in 2006 but remains highly relevant - especially as the Rudd Government is currently developing a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

[< top >](#)

Inequality of access - or are things much, much worse than that?

Thomas Canter, 2007

Senator Fifield has said (in an article in the Music Forum Magazine, 2007), "Only 23 per cent of kids in government schools have access to any form of music education".

As a national figure it is bad. But what happens to it when you take out Queensland?

Queensland's population is very close to 20% of Australia's total. Somewhere above 80% of students in Queensland government schools receive music programmes.

Assuming the state/private split in Queensland is similar to that elsewhere, a simple calculation shows that the figure in the rest of the country is nowhere near 23% but somewhere around 8%, which is not just bad but downright shocking.

And this is "any form of music education", not necessarily the continuous, structured programme delivered by specialist teachers in the majority of Queensland schools.

Read more at <http://www.mca.org.au/web/content/view/45/6>

[< top >](#)

VIEWS FROM ABROAD

Musical youth: How can we get boys singing?

James Morrison, The Independent (UK) 4 September 2008

Exclusive new research suggests that many schoolboys never do any singing - even at home - because of peer pressure. But a Government campaign aims to change that.

The perception that male participation in choirs and concerts has tailed off more than that of girls was for a long time largely anecdotal. But thanks to recent research we now know it to be true. Figures released exclusively to The Independent by Sing Up - the £40m campaign launched nearly a year ago by the Government's singing tsar, Howard Goodall, to make singing integral to every primary school curriculum by 2011 - reveal more than one in 10 boys still don't sing at all, compared to just two per cent of girls.

While nearly half the girls surveyed for the campaign say they sing regularly in the school playground, this applies to barely a fifth of boys. The only time most boys admit to singing at school is in assembly, when it is all but compulsory, and even then fewer than half do so. Even in the privacy of their homes, where three-quarters of girls break into song, 48 per cent of boys claim they never sing a note.

Sing Up's findings strike a familiar chord. Last autumn, Dr Martin Ashley, professor of education at Edge Hill University, published a study based on interviews with 400 boys aged eight to 14, in which the majority confessed they were afraid to continue singing into secondary school because of concerns about seeming effeminate.

So what can be done to dispel these fears? Ashley identifies two influences capable of transforming boys' attitudes: enthusiastic teaching, and suitable male role models. But far from advocating schools put up posters of teen pop stars or cherubic chart-toppers The Choir Boys, he says for most schoolboys the best examples are other boys like them.

"If you want 13-year-olds to sing they've got to see 16-year-olds singing," he says. "One idea is using 'singing leaders' - secondary school pupils who visit primary schools to demonstrate the benefits of singing."

He cites the good practice of the government-backed Choir Schools Scholarship Scheme, set up in 1991 to provide financial support for children from poorer households to attend one of Britain's 36 independent choir schools, which sends choristers into primary schools on recruiting missions. Similarly, specialist performing arts schools are increasingly undertaking singing outreach work with feeder primaries.

So what do girls think of all this fuss? Over to Kingswood pupil Kalysha Stapleton, eight: "If joining the choir gets boys off football and fighting and into singing, that's a good thing."

Read more at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/musical-youth-how-can-we-get-boys-singing-917732.html>

For further information, visit <http://www.singup.org>

[< top >](#)

Why is music important?

Besa Luzha - University of Prishtina, Faculty of Arts, Music Department, Kosovo

I am a new music educator coming from Kosova, a small country in South Eastern Europe that is better known on the basis of the terrible conflict and war that happened here during the years 1998-1999.

Since June 1999, when the International Community through the NATO Alliance intervened and brought peace to my country, life has come back to normal and now we are trying to fulfill the necessary standards to join the European Family.

There is a lot of work to be done and many processes have already begun. Among them are a series of reforms in many segments of our life, and the most special one the Education Reform in all the levels.

I personally am responsible for the coordination of the group of experts compiling the new reformed music curriculum for all the grades (K-12), and parallel this work by teaching the students in the Faculty of Music about the exiting opportunities available in the music teaching profession.

While working in this process I have been asked many times "Why is music so important?" And truly I have been trying to explain even to myself the reason why, and I have often thought why is it that we need to explain something very visible and evident.

In this article, I will not try to explain the scientific arguments starting from the theory of Multiple Intelligences and up to the benefits of music to the cognitive processes and results in overall tests in math and reading (as many researcher have already argued these benefits). I want to share with you a personal experience that has answered my question about the importance of music. I want to speak about another aspect of music that evoked to me the opinion of Plato and his "colleagues" from the ancient times about the opinion that "Music makes better people" or the opinion of Schopenhauer (the philosopher) that "music is the bath of the soul".

The power of music to touch our souls and evoke reactions and expression of different moods and emotions is for me the most important quality of music.

Read more at <http://www.isme.org/en/advocacy-articles/13-why-is-music-important.html>

[< top >](#)

Julian Lloyd Webber on teaching classical music to deprived children

John-Paul Flintoff, Sunday Times (UK), 14 September 2008

'All my life I have been a dedicated musician,' says Julian Lloyd Webber, cellist and slightly less famous younger brother of Andrew Lloyd Webber. 'But I know that there is more to life than just playing an instrument.'

We're sitting in the mansion block in South Kensington where Lloyd Webber has lived since leaving college in the early 1970s. He's invited me here to talk about his latest project - taking orchestral music to the most deprived children in the country. The project, In Harmony, is modelled on a similar scheme that has saved innumerable children from drug dealing, prostitution and other crime.

El Sistema was founded in Venezuela by José Antonio Abreu, an economist and musician. Today some 250,000 children take part in this scheme. Every child, no matter how poor, is offered an instrument and free tuition. Some are as young as two.

Like many others, Lloyd Webber was blown away when the flagship of El Sistema, the Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra, played at the Proms last year. One newspaper reviewer was moved to ask: "Was this the greatest Prom of all time?"

However, Lloyd Webber is keen to emphasise that the project he's running is not about hand-picking talent for what would amount, essentially, to a novelty orchestra. It's about taking orchestral music to the masses.

"To be part of a symphony orchestra is the most extraordinary experience. The sum of the parts is greater than the individual. The teamwork has to be of the highest order . . . This is a totally new idea. It's so different that I would not call it an educational programme - it's a social one, with music as the catalyst for change."

When people hear the name Lloyd Webber, he says, they tend to think of great riches. After all, Andrew in particular has been terrifically successful. "But my father was the son of a plumber, and I don't feel disconnected from that," says his brother.

When he was a student at the Royal College of Music, most students were from state schools. Today, he says, they're more likely to have been privately educated (as he was, despite his close links with manual work). "And that bothers me because all my life I have believed that music is for everyone. I have seen what music can do. It can change lives.

Read more at http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/article4747007.ece

[< top >](#)

The functions of music in education

Elliot Eisner - Lee Jacks Professor of Education and Professor of Art, Stanford University

For those who work in the arts either as creators of an art or as teachers who try to foster the benefits of art to those in schools, the trip has always been uphill. The arts have suffered from a stereotype that regards them as more ornamental than essential, more emotional than reflective, closer to the rim of educational purposes than to its core. Those concerned with the arts and who assign them an important value in education are more often than not looking in from outside the window.

It is true, of course, that schools offer a modicum of arts activities to their students, but this offering is seldom considered a central part of the school's program. There are, sometimes, protestations from policymakers that arts are at the core of education, but the reality is that they are more often at the margin.

Just how does one make a case for the arts in education? One might ask why one has to make a case for a form of human practice that is as old as humans themselves. Nevertheless, cases do need to be made and, even more, the politics of curricular choice need to be addressed if the arts are to secure more than eloquent testimony.

There are, I think, a myriad of reasons why music of all the arts should have a central place in school programs. I will, however, describe three reasons for music's important role in education.

The first of these pertains to what can be regarded as its cognitive contributions, the second to what music enables one to express or know, and the third pertains to the kind of experience that music makes possible.

Distinctions such as the type I have made are necessary to be able to speak about most anything. Yet, in reality, to the extent to which we can know it, the distinctions meld and fuse, they melt and blend into each other. I am painfully aware of that. Nevertheless, for purposes of clarification, I return to the distinctions between what is mental, or cognitive, what resides in matters of meaning, and finally, in what is experiential.

Read more at <http://www.isme.org/en/advocacy-articles/4-the-functions-of-music-in-education.html>

[< top >](#)

'Music raises people up; they find the best of themselves by performing'

Gareth Malone, The Independent (UK) 18 September 2008

Arriving at Lancaster School in late April 2007, I met a frazzled-looking Helen Collins. As the head of music she was desperate to get the school singing but felt powerless against a tide of disinterest. So, she called me! It was a brave thing to do: asking for help and saying that you would benefit from professional advice takes confidence.

Of course, she was making it happen on a small scale: the occasional tuneful boy, a willing class and a thriving rock scene, in addition to some successful rap projects (and teaching successful music lessons for five periods a day). But to get the whole school to accept singing was a different matter. That would take more than six months and require the involvement of everybody from the dinner ladies to the head.

At times, setting up a choir can be a thankless task; it requires such energy and commitment from the students as well as the teacher. After-school rehearsals, when everyone is tired, can be a low priority. The music teacher has to be resourceful with the songs chosen or and plan the term carefully. enthusiasm will wane.

If there is more time to focus on the extra-curricular activities, then the school music can thrive. It often comes at a cost to the teacher, who is still there at midnight, lugging drum kits and amplifiers around the school hall. You can bet they'll be expected to be back in at 8am preparing another day's lessons. Music and the arts could slip down the priority list whilst the Head worries about the next Ofsted inspection. But that's skewed thinking, because it's through involvement in these extra-curricular activities that young people learn about pursuing goals and they bring that experience to the classroom. Head teachers know this... but do they know how beneficial singing can be?

Read more at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/gareth-malone-music-raises-people-up-they-find-the-best-of-themselves-by--performing-933837.html>

Grant Malone is conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra St Luke's Community Choir and recently appeared in the BBC2 series, The Choir

[< top >](#)

CONFERENCES

15th Annual Music Council of Australia Assembly

28-29 September 2008 Stamford Plaza, Adelaide SA

The annual assembly is the ideal place for brainstorming, raising issues and finding solutions, on the situation of music in Australia.

Read more at <http://www.mca.org.au/web/content/view/222/6>

[< top >](#)

=====

ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- **Australian Education Digest** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)
- **International News Roundup** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (monthly)
- **Values Education** : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Languages Education** : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Ensemble - Music Education** : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Public Education Voice** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)

[< top >](#)

=====

Details of products, services, events, resources or points of view are provided for information only; publication does not imply endorsement or recommendation. No warranty is provided nor liability accepted by ACSSO, its members or employees.

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