

ENSEMBLE

MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Volume 3 Number 5, 4 June 2009

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COMMUNITY MUSIC

Launch of new community music network & research study

Music Council of Australia, 13 May 2009

The Music Council of Australia launched the national Music in Communities Network. The Network is part of the Council's ongoing campaign to get more people making music, titled Music. Play for Life. The campaign has directed most of its efforts so far towards boosting music education in schools.

After all, we know where the schools are, they are systems run according to policies, they are an easier campaign target than community music. Community music is not a system, it takes myriad forms and setting and implementing policies and getting change is much more difficult.

The Council knows that support for community music is minimal. In Australia, a very large and sparsely populated country, the amateurs are scattered over vast distances and although they may have satisfying company within their community groups, they tend to be isolated from each other.

The network will bring them together, provide a network, information, mentoring and other services. It is being organised on almost no money so one of its first tasks is to try to build income to support these services.

At the launch of the network, the results of a research project were also announced. The project, named Sound Links, a partnership between the Music Council and the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University Research Centre, was funded by the Australian Research Council (see RESEARCH below).

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/qu8rvz>

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RESEARCH

Sound Links: Community Music in Australia

Brydie-Leigh Bartlett, Peter Dunbar-Hall, Richard Letts & Huib Schippers

Sound Links examines the dynamics of community music in Australia, and the models it represents for music learning and teaching in formal and informal settings. While the project finds itself in an environment where the importance of learning music is hardly disputed, it addresses a major gap in research and literature, and indeed in awareness at

large, of the activities of vast numbers of Australians who engage in learning and making music outside of formal (music) education.

The Saatchi & Saatchi report *Australians and the Arts* (2001), and the two consecutive reports for the Australian Music Association *Australian Attitudes to Music* (2003, 2007) indicate that 36% of households contain at least one person who currently plays a musical instrument. For instrumental music alone, this equates to a rough estimate of four million people of all ages (5+ yrs) who engage in practical music-making on a regular basis. Such numbers constitute a significant artistic, social and economic force in the country's cultural landscape.

Recent major reports and reviews (most significantly the 2005 National Review of School Music Education) have indicated—but not examined—the important realised and potential role of community music activities for a vibrant musical life across Australia. As the first national study of community music in this country, this report aims to address that hiatus through an in-depth qualitative analysis of both actual practices and ideas.

In addition, from an international perspective, *Sound Links* constitutes the first study that considers six widely different practices with a consistent approach, creating the opportunity to draw conclusions about site and project specific characteristics, as well as more general features of community music activities and their potential to inform music education in schools.

Read entire report: <http://tinyurl.com/qbud6m>

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Arts' role in brain development

Liz Bowie, Baltimore Sun, May 18, 2009

For years, school systems across the nation dropped the arts to concentrate on getting struggling students to pass tests in reading and math. Yet now, a growing body of brain research suggests that teaching the arts may be good for students across all disciplines.

Scientists are now looking at, for instance, whether students at an arts high school who study music or drawing have brains that allow them to focus more intensely or do better in the classroom.

Washington County schools Superintendent Betty Morgan would have liked to have had some of that basic research in her hands when she began building a coalition for an arts high school in Hagerstown. The business community and school principals worked together, and the school will open this summer, but even at its groundbreaking, a man objecting to the money spent on the school held up a sign of protest reading "Big Note\$ Wrong Music."

Scientists and educators aware of the gap between basic research and the school systems are beginning to share findings, such as at this month's seminar on the brain and the arts held at Baltimore's American Visionary Art Museum.

"The argument for an arts education is based not on sentimentality but on pragmatism," he said. "If an arts program only helped the 7 million children in the bottom quartile, the dropout rate would drop."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/odqjpt>

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USA study says bringing art to students takes everyone:

Parents, teachers must coordinate better to fulfil potential

Arlene Martínez, Morning Call, 9 May 2009

Area educators see the arts as a critical component of a child's education, and overwhelmingly students are exhibiting their work or strutting their stuff in performances. But there exists a disconnect in how teachers work with each other to incorporate the arts into their subject areas as well as how much support parent groups give arts programs.

Those are the major findings of a survey being released today by the Lehigh Valley Arts Council at a forum called "Arts, Education, Imagination: Connecting Schools and Community."

"The thing I'm most pleased about is having a large majority of all the schools invest time and energy in having performances open the public," said Randall Forte, arts council executive director. Of more than 700 educators who responded, 80 percent said their students had exhibited their artwork or performed in events open to the community.

The study also showed that while 94 percent of teachers believed the arts could help their content areas, just 40 percent reached out to teachers of other subjects to try to do so.

And less than half of parent-teacher organizations support arts programs, respondents said.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/qmv96z>

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RESOURCES

Keys to Music

Graham Abbott, ABC Classic FM

In May 2009 Graham Abbott broadcast a sequence of four programs on Music Education. For the entire series Graham was joined in the studio by Richard Gill, one of Australia's leading conductors, music educators and public advocates for music.

Music Education 1: The Body – 9 May 2009

In Part 1 of the series they discuss the importance of dance and movement in a child's musical experiences. In this program they will be joined by Dr Micheal Giddens, a leading exponent of Dalcroze Eurhythmics.

Music Education 2: The Voice – 16 May 2009

Graham continues his series on Music Education with Richard Gill. In this program they discuss the importance of singing in a child's life. They will be joined by Kathryn Sadler, one of Melbourne's leading singing teachers and choir directors.

Music Education 3: Instruments – 23 May 2009

Part 3 of Keys To Music's series on Music Education sees Graham and Richard Gill discuss why learning an instrument is good for children. They will be joined by Alastair McKean, Director of Border Music Camp in Albury, NSW.

Music Education 4: The Mind - 30 May 2009

Graham and Richard Gill conclude their discussion on the importance of Music Education for children. In this program they focus on the proven benefits of musical experiences for a child's intellectual and social development.

Listen online to each of these programs at: <http://tinyurl.com/qh4gmn>

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UK Sing Up Program – Song Bank

Song Bank is a flexible, diverse singing resource designed especially for primary-school teachers. We've created it to help teachers use singing as an additional tool to teach all subjects across the curriculum.

It includes songs from different cultures to be used throughout the year, in diverse musical styles for multiple year groups and Key Stages. Each song has links to subjects in the National Curriculum and a range of related teaching activities, including:

- Lyrics/context of the song
- Audio tracks
- Printable/interactive song sheets
- Activities

Find out more – and register - <http://tinyurl.com/pd94l4>

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AWARDS & PRIZES

Flame Awards

This year the theme is: schools that SING! Judges will be looking for schools that use singing to develop their students' skills and engagement in music.

Entries close 17 July 2009.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/d4b5o6>

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Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF): Annual Song-writing Contest

The ACMF conducts a National Songwriting Competition for every Primary, Secondary and Specific Purpose School across Australia.

Entries close 25 September 2009.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ddo6at>

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MASTERCLASSES

WAAPA Music Theatre Audition Masterclass

Sydney – Brisbane – Melbourne – Adelaide: July 2009

Perth: September 2009

The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts continues its acclaimed Music Theatre Audition Masterclass to help demystify what can be a daunting process – the musical audition.

This workshop offers insights for professional and amateur performers, as well as teachers, and potential WAAPA students. The Masterclass, held annually in Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Auckland, New Zealand, is conducted by permanent staff members of WAAPA's Music Theatre Department.

The three-hour session includes mock auditions for singing, acting and dance and prepares auditionees for all challenges from 'cattle-call' to 'call-back'. Whilst not a singing lesson, selected participants are used to demonstrate successful singing & acting approaches, and the session concludes with everyone experiencing a rigorous dance call-back.

Sydney Saturday 4 July
Auckland Sunday 5 July
Brisbane Tuesday 7 July
Melbourne Wednesday 8 July

Adelaide Friday 10 July
Perth Saturday 5 September

Admission to the Audition Masterclass is on a strictly first-come, first-served basis. The course is open to individuals 15 years or over. For applicants under 18 years, permission from a parent or guardian is required. Please note: this Masterclass is neither a pre-requisite nor a guarantee of entry to the Music Theatre course. The course fee is AU\$130.00.

Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/qfdw3j>

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OPINION

Embrace Haydn, innovator and creator of music fit for a banquet

Anthony Pateras, The Australian, May 29, 2009

AUSTRIAN composer Franz Joseph Haydn died in Vienna 200 years ago, on May 31, 1809. Two days later, his corpse was decapitated. This was the undignified enterprise of two phrenologists, Carl Rosenbaum and Johann Peter, seeking a scientific explanation for the gifted musical brain that produced 104 symphonies, 83 string quartets and the oratorios *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.

The posthumous career of Haydn's head reflects classical music's obsession with the notion of genius. The key is unattainable, immeasurable and mysterious, and defining it is impossible: one person's musical genius is another's sonic travesty. But if we were to try to identify a uniform quality across all great artists, it is an open mind and the desire to explore possibilities.

It is often forgotten that Haydn, with Mozart (his friend) and Beethoven (his pupil), was an innovator. Not only was Haydn constantly evolving the harmonic complexity of his musical language, he helped develop the orchestra. The clarinet, for example, is mostly associated with Mozart, but Haydn introduced it to his music as early as 1751.

He had sensitivity for acoustics and insisted on ripping up the marble floor of the Esterhazy Palace and replacing it with wooden floorboards to provide a superior resonant space for his orchestras. These renovations would have highlighted another of his innovations: his use of dynamics. In the baroque period, terraced dynamics (soft-loud) were the norm.

Haydn helped introduce the incremental gradations in volume we take for granted, absorbing them into his thematic developments rather than deploying them simply for "call and response" effects. Through his engagement with music's malleable qualities, he was a participant in the ongoing practice of musical experimentation.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/o54e18>

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NEWS FROM HERE & THERE

AUSTRALIA: Never too late to take up the piano or learn Italian – or both!

Caroline Overington, The Australian, May 21, 2009

YOU are middle-aged or maybe older and maybe thinking you've left it too late to learn Italian or take up the piano. You're wrong. Your brain is as nubile and elastic as it was when you were a child (well, more or less) but you must keep it active, or parts of it will atrophy.

"The brain is definitely use it or lose it," says Canadian Norman Doidge, MD, author of *The Brain that Changes Itself*, the top-selling non-fiction book in Australia.

"That is one of the things I enjoy, when travelling and talking about the book. People will come up and say, 'I'd always wanted to learn the piano and a year ago I started, and now I'm 60 years old and I'm playing it'."

Doidge, who will speak at the Sydney Writers' Festival today and tomorrow, says languages are a good way to improve the brain's functioning "because the part of the brain that has to concentrate ... well, it's like a muscle, and most people haven't used that muscle since high school".

"It does atrophy or waste away, but when you start using it, you not only get the language skill, you sharpen other skills," he says.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/oe6h5a>

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AUSTRALIA: Garrett teaches schoolkids how to rock

Patrick Donovan, the Age, May 7, 2009

Brunswick Secondary College was transformed into the School of Rock yesterday as dozens of students were given a lesson in the machinations of the music industry.

But where the movie had Jack Black covertly teaching his aspiring musicians, sound engineers, managers and roadies the tricks of the trade, Rock the Schools had the official imprimatur of no less an authority than federal arts minister (and former rock star) Peter Garrett.

"It's not only about the performance, which is incredibly important. It's about the staging, the lights, the sound, the promotion," said Mr Garrett of the new vocational training program, which includes live lunch-time performances in schools.

"This is an industry that generates about \$2 billion into our economy every year. Lots of people are employed in music, so if you love music, keep on at your school, but think there's a potential career there for you as well," the minister said.

Read more about Rock the Schools: <http://tinyurl.com/opbth2>

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/rxboqu>

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CANADA: Canadian kids sing out for music in education

Serena Ryder's "Sing Sing" is theme of Music Monday 2009

CBC News, 4 May 2009

On Monday afternoon close to two million children across Canada will be singing the same song — at the same time.

They'll be singing, shouting, hollering and chanting Sing Sing, an existing song written by Juno-award winning singer-songwriter Serena Ryder. She added a new verse for children for this year's Music Monday's festivities that aim to highlight the importance of music in education.

The Toronto-based artist said she was honoured to be asked by the Coalition for Music Education in Canada to "donate" a song for Music Monday 2009.

"Music is so important as we all know," she told CBC Radio's Metro Morning.

"It's one of those things that doesn't need a language, it doesn't need a sex, it doesn't need a race, it doesn't need anything. It's one of those things that bursts all bounds. And less than 50 per cent of schools in North America have music programs ... It's preposterous."

She said the first consideration is for kids to have fun with music.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/c98fkf>

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UK: Youth music: our own Sistema

Richard Morrison, The Times, 17 May 2009

Something remarkable has happened in the past decade.

On bleak inner-city estates thousands of kids at risk of dropping out of education and society itself have been given a new sense of purpose through music.

I saw that a few years ago when I visited a grungy South London studio and found a bunch of tough teenage dropouts, many already in trouble with the law, motivated and enthused — perhaps for the first time — by mentoring from professional musicians.

Writing songs gave them a creative outlet for their pent-up feelings, and some self-worth. Few went on to study music formally. But a good number, I later discovered, returned to education, got qualifications and found jobs.

That's one extreme of the spectrum. But this revolution has affected children everywhere. Thousands of redundant instruments, lurking unplayed in cupboards, have been rounded up and donated to youth bands for use by a new generation. Some 14,000 adults have been trained as music leaders for youngsters in their area.

Read more about Youth Music at <http://tinyurl.com/qll4bp>

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/dhv8nv>

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UK: A sound investment: Computing technology is finally proving its mettle in music lessons

Amy McLellan, The Independent, 14 May 2009

Musicians, creative lot that they are, long ago perceived the creative possibilities afforded by new computing technology. But it has taken a little longer for the technology to infiltrate the typical music classroom. This isn't down to the reluctance of music teachers but rather to the limitations of the hardware. That is, until now.

"When computers were first introduced into music departments, they generated a considerable degree of excitement as teachers could see the potential for using ICT in their teaching," says education consultant David Ashworth, editor of <http://www.teachingmusic.org.uk>. "Yet, affordable computers, powerful enough to realise some of this potential, have only been available relatively recently."

This is certainly the experience of many music teachers. Adrian Knowles, music teacher at Crawshaw School in Leeds, repeatedly asked the school to invest in a Mac in order to access the kind of processing power to support sophisticated music software.

This wonderful world of internet radio stations, online tuition, electronic recording studios and automated score-writing packages needs to sit within a traditional music department with old-fashioned pianos, metronomes and flesh-and-blood teachers. "This isn't an alternative to music teachers," says RM's Juliet Joy. "It's complementary and adds an extra dimension."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/oybftw>

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UK plans for more than 5,000 new jobs in culture, music and creative industries

Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 12 May 2009, United Kingdom

Government plans to create between five and ten thousand new jobs for young people in the culture and creative industries sectors were set out today by Work and Pensions Secretary James Purnell and Culture Secretary Andy Burnham.

Local councils, third sector groups, arts organisations and creative industry bodies will be able to bid for Government funding for new, innovative jobs.

The new jobs are being created as part of the £1.1bn Future Jobs Fund announced in the Budget last month. Plans for the culture and creative sectors will include working with orchestras, arts organisations, heritage bodies and the music industry.

The Culture Department is already working with key stakeholders in the cultural sector to put together partnerships that include music and arts leaders; the Heritage Lottery Fund; Arts Council England; the National Museums Directors Conference; the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and many others.

Already UK Music has been working with Government to explore how creative industries can help get young people into work. Following negotiations with the live music industry, UK Music has developed a programme, working with Jobcentre Plus, to offer 200 jobs to young unemployed people around this summer's music festivals.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/qragvsy>

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USA: Musical skills truly are a gift for kids in need

Darryl E. Owens, Orlando Sentinel, May 9, 2009

Music's benefits, particularly to children from disadvantaged homes, are well-known.

Echoing a raft of studies, Dorothy Kitchen, who directs the Duke University String School, which features five orchestras for about 250 kids, has witnessed the value of music exceed the divinity of a perfect note.

"Pride ... responsibility and reliability are the character traits music encourages," she says of the children from high-risk homes whom her program embraces. "It also develops concentration and ... a sense of precision, all of which are necessary ... to make a jump into a higher economic bracket and a more fully educated one."

Bianca Riley wasn't up on the research. But it wasn't long after she joined the program and picked up the violin that she began reaping the benefits. "It helped me become a better speaker and have more overall confidence in communication," says the 13-year-old Maitland Middle School student. "Music helps kids in all areas."

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/o7rrah>

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USA: The Music of Maths...

Terrie Jones, 8 May 2009

The Fo-Show is a radio programme in St Paul, Minnesota and a group of students put together a radio programme about the music of math – it begins with a catchy rap song and the link between amplitude and math and there are other songs with maths as a focus.

They are quite professional and although I am not much of a rap fan myself (!), plenty of students out there are - so follow the link and see the potential.

You might have a local radio station who might be interested in something like this or just a maths dept who is looking for ways to make maths relevant to disengaged students and this might help.

Check it out at: <http://tinyurl.com/ohwthl>

Terrie Jones is Director of Service Learning at Abbotsleigh School, Sydney.

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USA: Rap boosting kids' academics - from multiplication to Shakespeare

Colleen O'Connor, Denver Post, 11 May 2009

Math is not Koran Ray's best subject, but the 13-year-old student at Wyatt-Edison has figured out a trick to help him master his multiplication tables: He raps them.

"I can rap about social studies, language, even Shakespeare," he said, launching into a quick one that he learned from a video about Shakespeare being a mellow fellow who wrote "Othello."

He's part of a pilot program called Rap to Roots that debuted this month in Colorado after success in cities such as Chicago and Cleveland.

The after-school series — sponsored by Swallow Hill Music Association and Open Door Youth Gang Alternatives — teaches kids to use rap's rhythm, rhymes and even its history to boost their academics.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/ksn643>

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USA: Chinese have head start in perfect pitch league

Sydney Morning Herald, May 27, 2009 (from Washington Post)

WASHINGTON: Mozart, Frank Sinatra and Jimi Hendrix supposedly all had perfect pitch - the ability to identify or reproduce a musical note without any reference notes.

The rare skill is often thought of as a mysterious genetic gift, but researchers at the University of California at San Diego have found that perfect pitch is significantly more common among fluent speakers of Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and other languages that use tone to distinguish between words.

In a study published in the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America , researchers tested 203 music students for perfect pitch by asking them to identify 36 piano notes. The students disclosed their musical education and ethnicity, and which languages they spoke and how fluently.

More than 90 per cent of students who began musical training between ages 2 and 5 and spoke an East Asian tonal language very fluently had perfect pitch, compared with less than 30 per cent of Caucasian speakers of non-tonal languages who started to learn music at the same ages.

Because the East Asian non-fluent tonal speakers and the Caucasian non-tonal speakers had similar test results, the researchers concluded that their performance was based on language skills rather than ethnicity.

"It also raises the interesting question: what other exceptional abilities might be latent in an infant that we could bring out if we only knew what buttons to push?" said the study's lead author, Diana Deutsch, who has perfect pitch.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/o59f4j>

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USA: José Abreu's Wish

TED Prize

"I wish you would help create and document a special training program for at least 50 gifted young musicians, passionate for their art and for social justice, and dedicated to developing El Sistema in the US and in other countries."

The Plan:

Partner with the New England Conservatory of Music to create, implement and document a year-long educational program that involves hands on training in Boston, an extended time studying El Sistema in Venezuela, guided internships in the second semester with public programs that affect youth at risk, followed by a required year working to advance or found an El Sistema program outside Venezuela.

The gulf between the rich and the poor in Venezuela is one of the worst in the world. Dr. José Antonio Abreu, a retired economist, trained musician, and social reformer founded El Sistema ("the system") in 1975 based on the conviction that all Venezuelan kids can benefit from participating in classical music.

After thirty years and 10 different political administrations, El Sistema is now a nationwide organization of 102 youth orchestras, 55 children's orchestras, and 270 music centers.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/agvdyd>

Listen to a talk by José Abreu at <http://tinyurl.com/qj35wb>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Rally for Music Education

18 June 2009, Washington DC, USA

Ready, set, march!

Music educators, students, family members, and all school music supporters are invited to rally for music education during Music Education Week in Washington.

The signed Petitions for Equal Access to Music Education will be presented to Education Secretary Arne Duncan, followed by a march to Capitol Hill and visits to members of Congress.

MENC's [National Association for Music Education] invited guests include basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, actress/singer Florence Henderson, Mrs. America 2009 Maureen McDonald, and cartoonist Tom Batiuk.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/omv3l7>

Editor's note: Equality of access, eh? A petition, a rally, some well-known names. Is anyone getting any ideas?

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International Society for Music Education (ISME) & Asia Pacific Symposium on Music Education Research (APSMER) - Seventh Regional Conference

24-28 June 2009, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China

You are invited to share new research in music education, particularly on issues that bear upon the social, educational and cultural context of our Asian Pacific neighbours.

Since 1997 the Asia Pacific Symposium on Music Education Research has been a forum for the presentation and discussion of new studies and findings relating to music teaching and learning.

Further information: <http://tinyurl.com/rbnyew>

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SEMPRE Music and Familiarity Conference

24 October 2009, University of Hull, UK

The conference will include invited presentations and selected submissions from researchers.

"Our engagement with and exposure to music constantly changes and develops, whether through creative pursuits - such as composing, performing and listening - or through particular contexts, including education and therapy. This conference seeks to explore these changes and developments, notably in the ways our attitudes towards music evolve, how our perceptions, understanding and appreciation of it alters, in the strategies we develop as practising musicians and in the responses we experience when listening to or engaging with music."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/pyr6b6>

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PLAN AHEAD

International Society for Music Education World Conference 2010

1-6 August 2010, Beijing, China

Reasons for attending an ISME conference ...

- Networking - You will meet music educators from nearly 90 countries;
- Energize yourself - World renowned speakers will stretch your thinking in new directions;
- Professional growth - A host of presentations are offered in various styles: roundtables, symposia, lectures, workshops, demonstrations, posters;
- Communication and sharing - You will meet international colleagues who are eager to communicate and share ideas between conferences;

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/omlwoh>

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REMINDERS

17-23 June - Music Education Week, Washington DC, USA - <http://tinyurl.com/c5taof>

3-6 July - Research in Music Education Conference - Banks Peninsula, NZ - <http://tinyurl.com/cgxvpb>

1-5 July - EAS Conference, ISME European Regional Conference - Tallinn, Estonia - <http://tinyurl.com/ceyfun>

6-10 July - Music Education New Zealand Aotearoa Conference - Christchurch, NZ - <http://tinyurl.com/cfya5k>

10-14 July - Australian Society for Music Education National Conference - Launceston, TAS - <http://tinyurl.com/d9rjn4>

9-11 October - IMEX International Music Exhibition - Melbourne, VIC - <http://tinyurl.com/dbnjr2>

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ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://tinyurl.com/d2o8zu> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://tinyurl.com/cswpka> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dls7rv> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://tinyurl.com/c59eda> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://tinyurl.com/dedyz4> (monthly)
- Family School Partners : http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6 (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://tinyurl.com/cy7s78> (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at <mailto:letters@acssso.org.au>

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