

# ENSEMBLE

## MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

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### AWARDS & PRIZES

#### Music: Count Us In

Australia's biggest ever school and community music event is on again.

Keep Thursday 22 October 2009 clear in your diary.

This outstanding successful Australia-wide initiative first ran in 2007 to include nearly 800 schools with the active support and involvement of their whole community.

Further funding provided by the incoming Rudd government for 2008, including a greatly expanded range of online resources and an array of professional development support for teachers, enabled this program to be taken up by some 1,700 schools and their communities with some 460,000 enthusiastic student participants from right across the country.

We hear that it's on again – bigger and even better than ever!

Meanwhile – as a start for your planning, check out what happened all over the country in 2008:

<http://tinyurl.com/3s6k75>

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### Flame Awards

The search for Schools that SING!

*Entries close Friday 17 July 2009*

Your school is invited to enter the Flame Awards 2009, the nationwide competition to highlight and reward schools with great music programs.

The Awards are run by Music. Play for Life in partnership with ABC Classic FM. The Australian Society for Music Education helps develop the entry criteria and manages the short-listing of entries.

This year the judges are looking for schools that SING! How does your school's program use singing to engage students in music education?

(Please note this is not a performance based competition so you are not required to submit DVDs or recordings. Participation and inclusion are the key things).

Public and non-government schools may apply. Awards will be provided to schools in each State and Territory, from which an overall National Winner will be selected.

This year there is a \$15,000 prize pool, made possible by the generous support of philanthropists Robert and Elizabeth Albert.

Enter online at <http://tinyurl.com/d4b5o6>

Find previous winners at <http://tinyurl.com/ng9jkn>

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## **Music in Communities Awards**

They're on again and this time the theme is Community Wellbeing

*Entries close 4 September 2009*

We know that active involvement in music and singing can help counteract many negative aspects of modern life such as alienation, isolation and depression by promoting mental health and physical well-being.

Everyone who is actively engaged in music-making in their local community understands the benefits – and it is no surprise that all the research around the world strongly illustrates the range of potential benefits for people of all ages and the ways in which this can make a difference in all kinds of community settings.

So: How does being musically active improve life in your community? Tell us about what you do, how you do it, who's involved and who benefits and you could win a chunk of the 2009 \$20,000 prize pool.

The Awards are open to:

- all forms of music groups including choirs, bands, orchestras, uke groups, drum circles, etc
- community and volunteer organisations delivering and supporting music programs in communities
- local Councils
- Schools
- individuals and others

Community music programs must have been running for at least three years to be eligible for entry.

Full details of criteria, online entry process etc at <http://tinyurl.com/lewddh>

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## **National Song-Writing Competition**

Categories for children from Kindergarten to Year 12

*Entries close 25 September 2009*

The Australian Children's Music Foundation conducts a National Song-writing Competition for every Primary, Secondary and Specific Purpose School across Australia. The competition has been running for seven consecutive years.

Entry to the competition is free and entry forms are mailed to 8,500 Primary & Specific Purpose Schools and 3,000 Secondary Schools, both public and private each year. This program is endorsed by the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training and sponsored by the APRA, Ampal, MIPI and Roland.

The competition is divided into several categories to provide opportunities for children of all ages, from Kindergarten through to Year 12. This competition has proved to be successful on a number of levels, with many students entering the competition year after year, demonstrating improvement with each year.

There are some fabulous prizes in the form of musical equipment or tuition for you and your school as well as a fantastic range of musical experiences.

Details and entry forms: <http://tinyurl.com/krsjtj>

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## RESOURCES

### Welcome to Music

A range of original resources and services designed to make teaching music easy and fun, by award winning composers, presenters and educators, Susie Davies-Splitter and Phil Splitter.

Includes CDs, teachers' manuals, choral arrangements, musical stories, teaching aids, professional development, artists in schools programs, presentations and performances.

"It's been a long time in the making, but our new website is now online. With a fresh new look, some great new products, video clips and an updated shopping experience, we think you will find the site easy and simple to use."

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

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### Moving Opera! Opera Queensland's In-school residency program

Moving Opera! is a unique residency program that brings a group of five professional artists (a director, musical director and three singers) into your school to work closely with a group of music and/or performing arts students.

During a week-long workshop, the program explores music theatre processes on a variety of levels, providing excellent opportunities for individual and ensemble development.

The residency culminates with a performance on the Friday evening, to which the students' peers and families are invited. This event may be used as a fundraising opportunity for the school, if desired.

Classroom content:

- Workshop music theatre and opera repertoire and techniques
- Development of vocal and choral techniques
- Coaching in performance skills, including stagecraft, character exploration and development, improvisation and scene devising
- Integrating music and drama skills
- Discussion of career opportunities, including training pathways and audition preparation

Further information: <http://tinyurl.com/mquur7>

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## NEWS FROM HERE & THERE

### Dr Brendan Nelson appointed to Children's Music Foundation board

*Simon Jenkins, the Age, May 21, 2009 (AAP)*

Former opposition leader Brendan Nelson has been appointed to the board of the Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF). It's the first appointment Dr Nelson has accepted since announcing in February he would not contest the next election.

ACMF founder Don Spencer said it was a "great privilege" Dr Nelson had decided to join the board. "Dr Nelson shares a personal interest in music, and has shown a dedicated commitment to the importance of making music education available to all Australian children," he said in a statement.

In 2005, as minister for education, Dr Nelson commissioned the National Review of School Music Education.

Dr Nelson said he was honoured to join ACMF. "Every child should have the opportunity to learn not only of the joy of music, but its power to fulfill human potential," he said in a statement: his position on the charity board is voluntary and takes effect immediately.

Since its inception in 2002, the charity organisation has donated and distributed more than \$300,000 worth of instruments to children and youth in need, including free musical equipment and tuition to young offenders in juvenile detention centres across the country.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/pzr585>

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## **Melbourne University: reshaping College of the Arts & Music**

*Corrie Perkin, The Australian, June 05, 2009*

THE elegant three-storey 1920s building in Melbourne's St Kilda Road is an unlikely place for a revolution. But inside the dean's office at the Victorian College of the Arts and Music, Sharman Pretty is preparing to unveil courageous plans for her institution's future.

Recent speculation about the strategy has caused anguish within the tight-knit student and academic community which fears the original goals of the VCA are being diminished. But Pretty, a former dean of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, is confident that once her vision is revealed, it will have more supporters than detractors.

No one is certain yet how many teachers, courses and opportunities will remain, but one thing's for sure: the new strategy will change forever the culture of elite training that has dominated the college since it opened its doors 37 years ago.

VCAM - the VCA's new name since the University of Melbourne's music faculty came across in April - is at a critical junction. In 2007 financial pressures forced it to become a faculty of the University of Melbourne. Supporters suspected it was only a matter of time before the VCA's operating model and independence were threatened.

Like other university faculties, the college will adopt vice-chancellor Glyn Davis's Melbourne model, a course structure that offers students several broad undergraduate programs followed by a professional postgraduate degree. This is despite lobbying from previous VCA staff and board members for it to remain separate.

The college already has streamlined its number of schools to three: art, music and performing arts. In 2011 it will introduce the new model, although existing degree students will be allowed to finish their courses. The college will continue to nurture talented young artists. But it will no longer allow them to focus solely on their special fields of endeavour such as art, ballet, violin, set design or acting.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/lky8sw>

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## **Why Can't I Learn to Play Guitar at School?**

*Chad Criswell, Music Ed Magic, 21 June 2009*

Why is it that many music educators have an inherent distaste for the guitar?

Why is it that the vast majority of music educators that I have come in contact with know very little about the guitar when it is the most popular instrument on the planet?

My personal take on it is that music educators associate the guitar with pop music and through association subconsciously see it as not worthy of inclusion in the music education curriculum.

Perhaps this harkens back to the old stereotype that rock and roll is the music of the devil.

Today our society has emerged from those dark ages of ignorance, but yet the guitar remains frozen out of the vast majority of schools. Why?

There are many contemporary reasons, but here is my personal opinion.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ko6esu>

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### **A need for music even in cave era: Flute fragments found 35,000 years old**

*Carolyn Y. Johnson, Boston Globe, June 25, 2009*

Archaeologists said yesterday that they had unearthed the oldest musical instruments ever found - several flutes that inhabitants of south-western Germany laboriously carved from bone and ivory at least 35,000 years ago. The find suggests just how integral artistic expression may be to human existence: Music apparently flourished even in prehistoric days when mere survival was a full-time endeavour.

Fragments of the instruments were found in a cave, amid bones from bears and mammoths and flakes of flint from a prehistoric tool shop. The discovery is the latest in a string of archeological finds - including a sculpted female nude - which reveal that even tens of thousands of years ago humans had a sophisticated cultural and artistic life.

There are numerous theories about why music emerged. Charles Darwin thought that music might give individuals a better chance of attracting mates and reproducing. Others believe it is a way to demonstrate a group's strength and unity. Some think that music may be a by-product of the evolution of other cognitive abilities, such as language.

The discovery of the flutes does little to settle this debate, since many musical traditions - such as singing - wouldn't have been preserved in the archeological record. But it does demonstrate how established music was, especially since the flutes were mixed in with other remnants from daily life, which indicates to scientists that they were used in many contexts.

The flutes were made by Homo sapiens who evolved in Africa and spread across the world, arriving in Europe around 45,000 years ago. Radiocarbon analysis by two laboratories indicate that the flutes are at least 35,000 years old, and given their distribution in the excavation, Conard estimates that they date back to about 40,000 years ago.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/lodb36>

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### **A Music Service Corps could address disadvantage and develop creativity for young people**

*Chris Gallagher, Huffington Post (US), July 21, 2008*

Everyone agrees that solving today's complex global challenges will require new ways of thinking and working. A majority of Fortune 500 companies tell us that, even more than reading and math, American students need to be learning the core skills of innovation to succeed in a competitive world economy.

How do we ingrain our future workforce with the common skills of the most successful innovators -- the scientists, technologists, entrepreneurs and policy-makers who conceive and create solutions to our most vexing problems? Skills like: imagining possibilities; having the courage, persistence and discipline to pursue them; working on a team, integrating feedback and performing under pressure.

In the spirit of thinking outside-of-the-box, I'll submit a word: music.

We should create a national service corps for musicians and artists to work in public schools and underserved communities. Not only because the arts are important. But because the critical skills a child develops when she struggles with her instrument, writes a song, joins a band or finds her voice in a choir are the same ones needed to succeed in the creative economy and solve our greatest future challenges.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/5fgn4x>

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## Research shows teacher skills out of tune with music curriculum

*Adi Bloom, Times Education Supplement, 6 February, 2009*

Lack of training and confidence among staff means many children are denied opportunities to sing and learn instruments. Most primary teachers have had no training in music, and lack the confidence to be able to teach the subject effectively, according to new research.

A survey of teachers in 116 primaries reveals that music is often overlooked in the infant curriculum, with many teachers lacking the knowledge to teach it properly. And, while many primaries have a piano on the premises, there is often no one on the teaching staff who is able to play it.

Susan Hallam, of the Institute of Education in London, reveals that

- many primary teachers are so unconfident about teaching music that they are unwilling to sing in front of a class of four-year-olds.
- fewer than half received any music training during their teaching degree. Only one in four of those teachers who had received music tuition claimed that it had been effective, and one in 10 received so little training that it had minimal impact.
- almost three-quarters of teachers admitted that they can only read music at a basic level.

Professor Hallam said the problem is that music is competing with core subjects such as numeracy and literacy. And even where teachers are suitably trained, primary music lessons are often hindered by a shortage of supplies.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/nbzm7t>

Read Institute of Education Media Release: <http://tinyurl.com/kspsqp>

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## New music to Afghan ears

*Jill Rowbotham, the Australian, June 10, 2009*

THERE hasn't been much to sing and dance about in Afghanistan in the past 30 years, or much traditional music to sing and dance to.

Ahmad Sarmast had been living abroad for 13 years when he returned in 2005 to gauge just how sorry the state of affairs was for music in his homeland. That there was any music at all was a good sign, the honorary research fellow of the Monash Asia Institute and Monash School of Music-Conservatorium says. "But generally, then, there was not strong support in the government for music," he says. "There was not a policy or a project to revive music in Afghanistan."

The son of one of the country's most respected composers, musicians and conductors, Ustad Sarmast, Ahmad Sarmast had left Kabul in 1992 to study first at the Moscow Conservatory of Music, where he gained a masters degree, then at Monash University, where he obtained his doctorate in music, the first Afghan to do so. Now Sarmast, a permanent resident of Australia, is spending most of his time back in Kabul, as project director of an initiative of Afghanistan's Ministry of Education, aimed at rebuilding music education and establishing the first national institute of music.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/m8wdw3>

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## The Court Music of Peking Is Revived by Chinese Youth

*Jakarta Globe, Marianne Barriaux, 15 June 2009 (Agence France-Presse)*

Ji Rou sat nervously as a helper applied makeup to her face just hours before she took the stage for a performance of Peking opera, an arcane Chinese art form the government wants to revive. Her school — the No. 171 middle school — is one of 22 in Beijing to have introduced regular voluntary classes as part of government efforts to ignite interest in Peking opera among young Chinese.

The lessons aim to explain the stories of the centuries-old operas, and inspire a fascination for what can seem, to lovers of modern music, a tuneless cacophony of falsetto trilling set to clanging drums and out-of-time percussion.

“Before, I never really understood Peking opera, I never understood its role or the stories, and I thought it was something that old people enjoyed,” Ji said before rushing off to get her elaborate green costume and headdress. “But now I really like watching and studying it.”

Peking opera is considered one of China’s national treasures — an art form more than 200 years old made famous abroad by films such as “Farewell My Concubine” and the more recent “Forever Enthralled” starring Zhang Ziyi.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/me5rtd>

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## REMINDERS

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

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

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>

24 October - SEMPRES Music and Familiarity Conference - University of Hull, UK - <http://tinyurl.com/pyr6b6>

1-6 August 2010 - International Society for Music Education World Conference - Beijing, China - <http://tinyurl.com/omlwoh>

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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](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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