

ENSEMBLE

MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Volume 3 Number 8, 10 September 2009

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MUSIC EDUCATION ADVOCACY

Drumming up support for music lessons

Robin Usher, Sydney Morning Herald, September 3, 2009

A national campaign has been launched to make music classes compulsory in all primary schools after the head of the Music Council of Australia, Dick Letts, said this week that he favoured making it optional.

One of the campaign's leaders, Richard Gill, who is the artistic director of the Sydney Symphony's education program, said there was scientific evidence that children undertaking serious music education improved in all other subjects and general wellbeing.

"Music is the senior service of the arts," he said. "Everything else benefits if children study music."

The national curriculum authority is considering the make-up of the syllabus for 2012 and the competing demands of visual arts, media studies, dance, drama and music. Letts said every school would have to offer at least two art forms and he did not want to create a dispute between advocates of the different disciplines.

"The last thing I want to see is the authority throw up its hands if we start fighting among ourselves," he said.

"At present, 80 per cent of schools have no music worth mentioning and there is an urgent need to improve resources."

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/met37c>

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NETWORKING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ACT Music Educators Network

The ACT Music Educators Network (ACTMEN), launched as a professional educational association on 6 August 2009, is a collective of individuals, music organisations and industry partners who are jointly concerned for Music Education in the ACT.

ACTMEN represents school teachers, instrumental teachers, conductors, directors, event promoters, institutional educators, musicians, schools, educational institutions, community music organisations, music businesses and music retailers.

ACTMEN believes outcomes for Music Education in the ACT should be of the highest priority when reflecting on a holistic and liberal education for students. ACTMEN recognises the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, artistic and creative benefits of Music when active participation is fostered and a quality curriculum is promoted.

This is best achieved by facilitating professional conversation, collaboration and professional training of Music Educators and associated stakeholders.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/kqx7gz>

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RESOURCES

Choosing a Music Teacher for Your Child or Yourself

Elna Myburg, Kingwood.com, 31 August 2009

Anyone who has the desire to teach private music lessons may advertise and teach anyone who is willing to pay, whether or not they have any relevant music teaching qualifications or experience. Since it is up to the adult student or the parent to do some research when choosing a teacher, I thought of several [nine] important questions which will be helpful in the process:

1. What is your professional background?

Learn all you can about the teacher's degrees and performance experience before choosing a music teacher.

2. What is your experience teaching adult students or students the age of my child?

Especially for young children, does the teacher have the appropriate vocabulary and expectations to really connect and stimulate the child's interest in making music?

3. Would I or my child have any input in the instruction process?

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

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Music Teachers - Must Have Downloadable Freebies For The New School Year

J. Pisano, MusTech.Net, August 31, 2009

I've been wanting to compile a list of useful and free-to-use programs for the music teachers with "little-to-no budget" for some time now...

With the start of the (USA) school year upon us -I guess there is no better (or no more!) time to accomplish this!

I've tried to include a number of programs that comprise most of the "sub-disciplines" of the field of music.

In addition to trying to post direct links to the most current versions of the software in each category, I've also tried to include at least one program from each of the major operating systems (Mac, Windows, Linux).

The following is a brief (but current) compilation of downloadable programs that can be acquired for "no cost" and are easily implemented into the classroom (or any teaching) environment:

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ldu83c>

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Music for Everyone

Music for Everyone (MFE) is an ACT community arts organisation that provides musical tuition, performance opportunities and workshops for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

MFE programs are designed to promote participation in music, encouraging people to enjoy and experience a wide range of hands-on musical activities. While it has a community focus, MFE engages professional tutors and artists with high levels of experience to deliver MFE programs.

Music for Everyone is a major and unique contributor to the accessibility and diversity of music practice and activities in the ACT region, as there is no other community based organisation in the region providing programs of similar scope and quality for such a broad range of participants.

The scope and range of the Music for Everyone Program include:

- music education options for children and adults in group and individual contexts;
- specially designed programs of music for people with disabilities;
- performances of music in a range of concerts and stage productions by participants aged from six years to adult;
- commissioning of new Australian works;
- exploration of music from more than one cultural tradition through workshops and performances; and
- community access to the skills of visiting artists of a national standard.

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

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OPINION

Why we MUST fund Music Education

Ted Barone, San Francisco Chronicle (USA), 31 July 2009

The budget straits the state of California is facing are forcing our leaders to make a series of pernicious choices with legacy implications. One such choice is whether to fund music programming - or refocus our funding priorities to the "core academics" (which happen to be those subjects tested in the state-wide testing system).

I propose that we really don't have a choice. We must fund music.

From the rhythm of our breathing as infants and the comforting lullabies that helped us sleep, to the cacophony of song and sound that envelops our modern everyday lives, music is an essential factor in what defines us as human. Music is a messenger that carries the history and collective experience of a people across time and space.

Music also helps develop our brains in a way that will increase our ability to address and solve the extraordinary challenges that lie ahead of us as a people. The musical key is the proverbial key.

In other words, the structure and organization of music is exactly what makes it so important for brain development. From the notes, chords are built. Chords determine keys, within which a skilful musician creates an experience, a message, a movement. Mix in rhythm and a new order of time emerges.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/m55a74>

Ted Barone is the principal of Albany High School.

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Bureaucrats should never call the tune for the arts

Emer O'Kelly, Independent of Ireland, August 02 2009

Lip service is always paid to the importance of culture in our society, but in times of recession, the arts are among the first to be hit, and usually the most savagely. In current circumstances, everybody is being hit, but unlike other areas, the margins are leaner for people working in the arts.

Politicians frequently quote Seamus Heaney when they're at gatherings that they think are "posh". He's usually the only poet they've heard of other than Shakespeare - and Shakespeare's a Brit and dead.

Their markers are always Heaney, U2 and Riverdance. Other than that, they figure that there are votes in sneering at the fine arts as elitist.

On the other side of the fence, those actually involved in the arts are more generous, and more realistic: they admit that in times of health and basic education shortages, it's a lot harder to argue the case for arts funding.

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

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We fail students by minimising music and arts

Millie Turek, Atlanta Journal-Constitution (USA), 2 August 2009

I believe the aesthetic education of every child is a fundamentally essential part of his development as a human being. I believe the human brain is hard-wired for the development of aesthetic expression through the arts. I believe artistic expression left undeveloped in a child leads to underdeveloped humanity.

Scientific research on the brain and educational research is just beginning to document the facts and uncover the benefits surrounding artistic development in humans. At present, this research is proving what artists throughout history have known — that there is an organic connection between art and humanity.

Instead of heading toward developing an education system that strives to educate the whole child, Georgia has continued to experiment with one reform after another that has resulted in less access to an aesthetic education for all children.

In the last 30 years, we have "reformed" ourselves through the middle school concept, block scheduling, the Quality Core Curriculum, and the No Child Left Behind Act. Each of these "reforms" has made it more and more difficult for all children to receive an aesthetic education.

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

Millie Turek is choral director and fine arts department chair at Fayette's Sandy Creek High School.

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RESEARCH

Choosing to Teach Music

Blog Post by Rick Dammers, Music Education Research, August 30, 2009

Linda Thornton and Martin Bergee conducted an interesting survey exploring why students choose to major in music education.

Their sample included 242 undergraduate students from music schools at 12 large research universities in the United States.

Participants were asked to indicate the influences that led them to choose music education. The results for the top influences were: influence of 'important others' 24%; love of music 20%; love of teaching 11%; and participation in a musical organization 10%.

These results mirrors what I see in my interviews of prospective music education students at Rowan University. While music is a central component in their decisions, the social factors play a critical role as well.

Another interesting aspect of the study explored the students' post-college plans. The respondents' plans included: 70% teaching, 13% graduate school, 5% leave music, and 4% music (non-teaching).

When asked how to best recruit future music teachers, the respondents' top two suggestions were: providing opportunities to teach (18%), and demonstrations of job satisfaction (15%).

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/o6msx7>

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NEWS FROM HERE & THERE

Australia: Conservatorium sound as a drum: 25th anniversary celebrated

Northern Daily Leader, 29 August 2009

Tamworth Regional Conservatorium will celebrate 25 years of excellence in music education tonight when it stages its annual Conservatorium Showcase in the town hall.

The program will comprise a wide selection of musical items presented by the 2009 scholarship winners and the cream of the conservatorium's ensembles.

It will culminate with a performance by the 100-strong combined conservatorium orchestras including former staff and students.

The conservatorium was established in 1984 following extensive lobbying by members of the Australian Society for Music Education.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/q2fm7f>

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Brazil: Music education for low-income children opens doors to social inclusion in Brazil

Mario Osava, IPS News Agency, 28 August 2009

Every Tuesday and Thursday, da Cruz and her daughters make the long trek to the Guri Project centre in Itaquaquecetuba, a poor municipality of 350,000 people on the outskirts of the southern Brazilian city of São Paulo.

"Guri" means child in the language of the Guarani Indians. The project, launched in 1995 by the state of São Paulo Secretariat of Culture with the aim of fomenting "the sociocultural inclusion of children and adolescents through musical education," gives free classes to around 40,000 mainly low-income youngsters.

Although that number is a record for initiatives of this kind in Brazil, it is equivalent to just 0.5 percent of the state's primary and secondary school students.

The program serves as an unprecedented source of work for musicians, offering 1,800 posts to teachers and their assistants.

The classes are given in 362 centers scattered around 302 municipalities, which are financed by the Guri Project Association of Friends, mainly with state government funds, as well as contributions from sponsors and from partners like city governments and institutions that offer facilities.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/o9fyx6>

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Malaysia: Let's keep the music!

Johami Abdullah, President, Malaysian Association for Music Education (MAME), 2 August 2009

THE Education Ministry has just announced its plans for a reduction in the time allocated for Music Education in the primary school curriculum.

It may surprise many that a holistic approach towards education is indeed the main intent and purpose of our National Education Philosophy (NEP): the aim is to produce individuals who are well balanced physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually.

MAME has repeatedly expressed its disapproval of the practice in certain schools in which Music Education has been dropped or replaced. This is in contravention to an Act of Parliament that has made music a compulsory subject in the primary school curriculum.

The ministry used to have a Ketua Penyelia Muzik (Chief Music Supervisor) who was able to co-ordinate between the various divisions, but this post has been scrapped for some time now.

In January 2007, The National Education Blueprint 2006-2010 was launched by the then Prime Minister to lay the foundation for educational reform. It identified six areas — developing human capital, nation-building, strengthening national schools, narrowing the education gap, improving the teaching profession and accelerating excellence at educational institutions.

Sadly, except for a mere mention of music in association with cluster schools, the role of Music Education is totally and significantly absent in all the six areas.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/oqsf3>

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UK: Ed Balls announces national year of music

Music Manifesto, 13 July 2009

Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls, has announced plans for a national year celebrating music, starting in September 2009.

To coincide with Shine Week, which celebrated young people's talents in everything from sewing to singing, Balls outlined the plan for a national campaign "to give every child the chance to get more from music", which will run throughout the 2009/10 academic year and offer "unprecedented opportunities for children and young people across the country to participate in a range of music-related activities".

"There is tremendous value in providing musical activities for young people," said Balls. "That's why we've already invested over £330 million to 2011. This year of celebrating music, starting in September, will be a wonderful opportunity for schools, young people and their families to get involved in the magic of music.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/lrl734>

Read Ed Balls' letter to UK music organisations at <http://tinyurl.com/p6xm9p>

Watch video of launch of National Year of Music at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/>

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USA: Why music education is important in the valley

Louisa Castrodale, Desert Sun, 27 July 2009

It is no news to anyone that the state of California is in dire straits financially, and that is having a direct result on the educational system. On a daily basis, Palm Springs Unified School District is sorting through the alternatives of making it all work with a drastically reduced budget and educational goals that are as critically important as always.

Unfortunately, the first items to be considered when making cuts are arts programs, such as music. It is understandable, of course, when there are so many other considerations that come before it. Certainly the basic educational courses of reading, writing and arithmetic must come first, and from there, no easy answers exist.

It is miraculous and heartening that our district has managed to preserve our music education, especially in the elementary schools, despite all of the financial pressures. That is because of the continued support of the superintendent, cabinet and school board — which then begs the question: Why is it important? Why fight to keep it as part of the school day?

There are many responses to this line of inquiry. For instance, early musical training develops the areas of the brain involved in language and reasoning. There is a connection between music and spatial intelligence. Students who study the arts learn to think creatively and solve problems.

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

Louisa Castrodale is the visual & performing arts specialist for the Palm Springs Unified School District.

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USA: Arts Programs in Academia Are Forced to Nip Here, Adjust There

Patricia Cohen, New York Times, August 9, 2009

If you are looking for a sign of how strapped the University of California, Los Angeles, is for cash, consider that its arts and architecture school may resort to holding a bake sale to raise money.

California's severe financial crisis has left its higher-education system — which serves nearly a fifth of the nation's college students — in particularly bad straits.

But tens of thousands of students at public and private colleges and universities around the country will find arts programs, courses and teachers missing — victims of piercing budget cuts — when they descend on campuses this month and next.

At Washington State University the department of theatre arts and dance has been eliminated. At Florida State University the undergraduate program in art education and two graduate theatre programs are being phased out. The University of Arizona is cutting three-quarters of its funds, more than \$500,000, for visiting classical music, dance and theatre performers.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/qgkv5b>

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WALES: A review of extra-curricular music education in Wales is finally happening

Katie Norman, Western Mail, Sep 10 2009

AFTER years of campaigning by renowned musicians from across Wales, the country's extra-curricular music education is to be reviewed

A host of stars including Bryn Terfel, Katherine Jenkins and rock band Super Furry Animals, signed a joint letter to First Minister Rhodri Morgan in 2006, calling for an end to Wales' postcode lottery for provision of young people's music lessons outside the curriculum.

Now, Education Minister Jane Hutt has announced that a task and finish group, headed by Emyr Wynne Jones, will review the state of music education in Wales and identify any areas for improvement.

Mr Jones, music adviser for Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion, said he was going into the process with an open mind about what the right approach for Wales would be – but he was clear that something had to change.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mgp6sm>

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Music is the Language of the Brain

18 & 28 September, North Rocks, Sydney, NSW

Half Day workshop - for Parents and Music Educators - with Dr Christobel Llewellyn ATCL, LRAM, BA,LLB, M.Mus, PhD, founder of Kinderjazz.

You've probably heard about music raising your maths score but music provides much more than that. Music is the driving force behind all other learning.

If your children aren't learning music they are DISADVANTAGED. Find out why ...

This is an interactive workshop (for parents with young children and music teachers) based on proven scientific research.

Have FUN while you -

- Learn how your brain works.
- Learn why music plays such an integral role.
- Learn how to get your kids involved in music.
- Learn what music your children should be listening to.
- Learn how to get the ADVANTAGE.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/mxz3yb>

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musiclearninglive!2010

25-26 February 2010, Manchester, UK

It's not like other conferences.

Take a radical, fresh and challenging look at the ever-transforming music education landscape and the unique blend of conference, festival and trade exhibition that is musiclearninglive!2010.

Building on the successes of the initial events in 2008 & 2009, and responding to a wealth of feedback from presenters, performers, delegates, and exhibitors alike, ml!2010 will be the most exciting and challenging yet.

Event producer Zone New Media Ltd has been able yet again to bring together an impressive programme spanning music education at all levels, statutory & non-statutory, and to present this work alongside current developments in professional music and the music industry.

musiclearninglive!2010 will offer challenges, stimulation, advice, networking opportunities and some world-class performances in equal measure.

A key focus will be Digital Learning. We've got thought-provoking sessions by leading practitioners, case-studies, live video-conference demonstrations and the launch of Zone's own national digital community for music educators.

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

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REMINDERS

26-29 September - National Conference of the Musicological Society of Australia - Newcastle, NSW - <http://tinyurl.com/myy23g>

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

13-16 October - Music China - Shanghai, China - <http://tinyurl.com/nuptuy>

22 October - Music: Count Us In - Australia - <http://tinyurl.com/nbqclg>

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

16-21 November - South-East Asian Conference on Music Therapy - Bangkok, Thailand - <http://preview.tinyurl.com/lv8t3h>

24-27 March 2010 - Musikmesse Frankfurt - Frankfurt am Main, Germany - <http://tinyurl.com/dj3wqy>

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 (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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