

ENSEMBLE

MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

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FLAME AWARDS WINNERS 2009

2009 – The schools that SING

Victoria & National Award: Melbourne High School

"Here is a selective State secondary school where all 1358 students - boys - sing. The school shows that communal singing can be at the heart of important rituals and ceremonies for young men. Melbourne High deserves reward and recognition for the ways in which it provides such a rich and varied program to engage and stimulate its students.

WA: Walpole Primary School

"This rural primary school clearly has a big commitment to enriching its students' lives with singing. ...We were also pleased to see recognition at this school that active music involvement impacts positively on students' academic achievements and behaviour."

SA: Port Lincoln Primary School

"There's a philosophy at Port Lincoln Primary to ignore disadvantage and make the most of what it has. Consequently music permeates the entire school. Port Lincoln Primary impressed us because it clearly recognises the flow-on benefits to students when music is integrated into school life."

Tasmania: South Hobart Primary

"We are impressed by the strategies used at this school which see students encouraged to develop many important life skills via the singing program. There is a real sense that this school uses musical involvement to empower kids to step up and grow."

NT: Bees Creek Primary School

"We like the way singing is integrated into the daily learning program as an activity in its own right as well as a tool for learning in other subjects across the curriculum. The students' own testimony revealed a real joy of learning and a sense that singing helped build confidence and helped kids apply themselves to their school work."

QLD: Sandgate State School

"This is a wonderfully student-centred program. Kids are encouraged to compose and perform their own songs from very early on; there's a highly successful boys-only singing group, BOSS; the school makes regular music tours across the State and it forges close musical ties with its local high school to help ensure its students continue their musical involvement once they hit secondary school.

ACT: Ainslie Primary School

"This school covers a lot of bases with its singing program! There are weekly outreach sessions to local nursing

homes which help create powerful connections across the generations. We like the way in which this school focuses as much on musical intent as musical skill. There's a caring and compassionate musical heart beating at this school."

NSW: Methodist Ladies College, Burwood, Sydney

"Students are closely involved in commissioning, writing, performing and recording new works and there is a commitment to reaching out beyond the school gates with the singing program. This is a school where the commitment to the musical education of its students is palpable.

For full details: <http://www.abc.net.au/classic/flame/>

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AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S MUSIC FOUNDATION

National Song-Writing Competition 2009 winners announced

The Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF) has announced the winners of its National Song-writing Competition, now in its seventh year.

First prize for the secondary school category A went to **Kahlia Ferguson** from the Narangba Valley State High School, QLD for her song *Little Bird*

First prize for the primary school category A went to **Adrien Nookadu** The MacDonald College, North Strathfield NSW for *You're Too Beautiful*.

The competition is open for every Primary, Secondary and Specific Purpose School across Australia. Entry to the competition is free and a total of \$40,000 in prizes will be distributed by the ACMF to the winning students and their schools to encourage music participation, creativity and imagination. Entry categories are by school year group and two open categories for the best instrumental and song about Australia or Australian theme.

The competition Ambassador, Ian 'Dicko' Dickson from Australian Idol and Vega 91.5 said: "The calibre of song-writing has been exceptional and yet again the judging panel had a difficult challenge awarding prizes in each of the categories.

"School students from all around the country have demonstrated the wonderful creativity and talent that exists in our schools. Our message to school kids is: if you didn't have a go this year, then make sure you have go in 2010; it's a wonderful experience."

The ACMF Founder, Don Spencer OAM said "We know that music fosters better educational outcomes and emotional well-being in Australia's school students. The National Song-writing competition is as much about celebrating our talented youth as it is about reminding parents, teachers and policymakers about the important role music plays in developing the minds and spirits of Australian youth."

A full list of winners can be seen at <http://www.acmf.com.au>

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THE SONG ROOM

Providing opportunities for disadvantaged schools

"Since seeing The Song Room program in operation I now realise the true value of such a program and what it brings to a community and school. Wonderful! The Teaching Artists went over and above the call of duty – an awesome program that should be at every school."

The Song Room is a national not-for-profit organisation that provides learning opportunities to disadvantaged children through music and the creative arts. The Song Room's vision is that all Australian children have the opportunity to participate in music and the arts to enhance their education, personal development and community involvement.

So far The Song Room has reached over 170,000 disadvantaged children and youth and provides long-term programs in over 200 schools and communities a year in every State and Territory, reaching a further 45,000 disadvantaged children each year.

“The confidence of students and their literacy levels have increased significantly. This is no small feat in an Indigenous community.”

“It gave me the opportunity to notice how a child who experienced difficulty learning in a regular classroom setting responded to music in a way I would have never have known. As a result I now adjust regular lessons to help make more sense to this child by using a musical focus. This child is now experiencing success instead of failure and frustration!”

The Song Room offers two levels of support to schools.

The first level is membership of The Song Room Online, a website for member schools that provides access to a range of resources for non-specialist educators. Membership of The Song Room Online is limited to schools serving disadvantaged and high needs communities and costs \$100 per annum. A full list of membership criteria and application details are here.

The Song Room also offers more intensive, on-site programs for selected member schools. These are long-term programs that are free to the school, tailored to specific, identified needs, with key program components including:

- Tailored workshop programs by locally based Teaching Artists;
- Performance programs with arts/community partners;
- Community holiday programs;
- School and community capacity building.

Applications for membership and school workshop programs can be found on The Song Room website:

<http://songroom.org.au/school/becoming-a-member>

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MUSICA VIVA

At Musica Viva In Schools (MVIS), music education is our passion; quality music education in all Australian schools, our goal. MVIS is a not-for-profit organisation and is the largest provider of music education programs across Australia.

The program is a unique blend of practical teaching resources, in-servicing for teachers and live performance – all linked to creative arts and other syllabuses in each state and territory.

Through performing, listening, moving and creating music, MVIS reaches over 300,000 students annually across metropolitan and regional Australian schools – small and large, government and non-government.

We encourage you to be one of those schools in 2010. Australia’s future rests on the creativity and imagination of its people. Let’s ensure this future, through live music.

Primary School Program

The fully integrated Musica Viva In Schools Primary school program will assist you in fulfilling key music curriculum requirements in 2010, whilst also ensuring the best learning outcomes for your students. The 2010 program will equip you with everything you need to fulfil educational outcomes, but just as importantly, to inspire a love of music within your students.

Secondary School Program

The Musica Viva In Schools 2010 Secondary School program will bring fresh energy, inspiration and creativity to your classroom. The core program is ideal for Junior Secondary music classes whilst the flagship Australian Music Days challenge even the most advanced elective music students in the art of composition and analysis.

Read more at <http://www.musicaviva.com.au/education/home>

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MUSICAL FUTURES

Readers may recall an Ensemble article in August (<http://www.ensemble.org.au/news/090806.htm>) about the prospect of the UK-based Musical Futures programs starting in Australia. This is from the latest Musical Futures newsletter:

The success of Musical Futures has spread to Australia, where Dr Michael Webb of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, based at the University of Sydney, outlines the trial implementation of the Musical Futures programme into the initial teacher training programme there.

A number of very pleasing pieces of evidence show some of the highlights and challenges of implementing the Musical Futures ethos into their teaching, and the student teachers are all helping to show how the informal learning approach can enhance the teaching of Music in the classroom.

Read more at <http://www.musicalfutures.org.uk/resources> and let us know what you think!

An official Musical Futures development programme will begin in the New Year in Australia, part funded by NAMM, in California, and education departments in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

We'll be welcoming our Aussie colleagues to some of the training courses in January.

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

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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

How to Become a Music Teacher

In response to the increasing demand for music teachers in NSW Schools, the Australian Institute of Music (AIM) and Australian Catholic University (ACU) have launched an exciting new initiative - Pathways to Music Teaching. This initiative is specifically for all musicians interested in qualifying as a school music teacher.

To gain a music teaching qualification to teach in High Schools, you will need to complete:

- a Bachelor of Music at AIM (2 years) PLUS
- Graduate Diploma in Education at ACU (1 year) OR Masters of Teaching (2 years)
= Music Teaching Qualification for both Government and Private Schools

Graduates of the BMus at AIM can be automatically accepted into certain post graduate courses offered at ACU.

Read more at http://www.aim.edu.au/future_students/post_graduate_studies/pathways_to_music_teaching_1.html

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OPINION

Why Music Matters

David Hobson

How often have you heard someone say, 'I wish I'd learned a musical instrument,' or 'I wish I understood a little more about classical music'?

Giving people the opportunity to learn, to know the rules of the game – as we do, say, a football code – deepens their knowledge and therefore enjoyment and appreciation of, and participation in, music while optimising their potential by improving their capabilities.

We all know that active participation in music from an early age is good for children, but did you know it's been well documented that active participation in music can help children optimise their potential by improving capabilities in a number of essential learning areas – such as reasoning and problem solving, mathematics and language, lateral thinking and memory, time management and eloquence, social and team skills – not to mention the transformative impact music can have on a child for the rest of their life?

Unfortunately, though, not all of our students have the chance to enjoy, and learn from, musical experiences. The 2005 National Review of School Music Education, conducted by a team led by Murdoch University on behalf of the Commonwealth government, found that just 39 per cent of Australian students from Years 1 to 12 studied music in the previous year, with more than 60 per cent of public school students nationwide receiving very little music education.

The research is one thing, but I know from personal experience that every child has musical potential which, if not properly nourished, dies. When that happens, they miss out on a very important slice of their development at all levels – intellectual, creative and emotional.

Read more at http://www.musicaviva.com.au/downloads/Why_Music_Matters.pdf

David Hobson is one of Australia's most-loved tenors, a composer, the parent of two young children and recently-appointed Ambassador for Musica Viva In Schools.

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OPINION

The role of schools in cultural engagement

Richard Steinitz (University of Huddersfield), Guardian (UK) Letters to the Editor, 12 November 2009

Away from central London, professional theatre and music struggle to compete with multi-channel television, video games, pubs, clubbing and IT networking, a situation exacerbated by 25 years during which arts and culture have been downgraded in the curriculum, and the chance of being enthused decreased by the daunting documentation and fear of litigation that deters schools from organising trips.

There are exceptions, but many performing organisations appear to survive on an audience of pensioners. For the young who have not acquired the habit, the absence of a critical mass of their peers makes attendance feel anything but "cool".

How can this be reversed? I doubt if any of us really know, but it has to begin in school with a structured re-emphasis on cultural engagement.

El Sistema, the Venezuelan programme of free instrumental tuition that has turned hundreds of thousands of children, destined for a life of poverty, drugs and crime, into motivated young musicians, and delivered the sensational Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra to the BBC Proms, is at heart unashamed social engineering.

Few remember that Britain in the 1960s and 70s similarly funded completely free instrumental tuition as part of a broad-based state education.

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2009/nov/12/games-hoggart-culture-education-theatre>

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RESEARCH

More about the “Champions of Change” research report

“Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning” is a 1999 USA report which compiles seven major studies that provide new evidence of enhanced learning and achievement when students are involved in a variety of arts experiences.

As a result of their varied inquiries, the Champions of Change researchers found that learners can attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts. Moreover, one of the critical research findings is that the

learning in and through the arts can help “level the playing field” for youngsters from disadvantaged circumstances. In his preface, the then US Secretary for Education stated:

“The ultimate challenge for American education is to place all children on pathways toward success in school and in life. Through engagement with the arts, young people can better begin lifelong journeys of developing their capabilities and contributing to the world around them. Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning also shows that the arts can play a vital role in learning how to learn, an essential ability for fostering achievement and growth throughout their lives.

“A key factor in changing American education for the better is to increase high quality arts learning in the lives of young Americans.

“If young Americans are to succeed and to contribute to what Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan describes as our “economy of ideas,” they will need an education that develops imaginative, flexible and tough-minded thinking. The arts powerfully nurture the ability to think in this manner.

“These researchers investigated the content, process, and results of learning in and through the arts. Perhaps what makes their findings so significant is that they all address ways that our nation’s educational goals may be realized through enhanced arts learning. As the researchers discovered, learning in the arts can not only impact how young people learn to think, but also how they feel and behave.

“As these researchers have confirmed, young people can be better prepared for the 21st century through quality learning experiences in and through the arts.”

Access the Report online: <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/champions/pdfs/ChampsReport.pdf>

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NEWS FROM HERE & THERE

Obituary - Richard Meale: 1932-2009

Australian Music Centre Enews, December 2009

Composer Richard Meale (1932-2009) passed away on 23 November 2009, at the age of 77. Meale was one of the most important composers of his generation, and his opera *Voss* is regarded by many as the most significant Australian opera to date.

During his long career, he created an output of works with a wide range of stylistic expression, from his modernist 1960s pieces, such as *Homage to Garcia Lorca* and *Very High Kings*, to his later works, composed in a predominantly tonal idiom.

Meale talked about his stylistic development in a 2002 radio interview: 'I found that I could not express certain things in the atonal idiom. I could not express genuine tenderness, affection... I thought there is something wrong with an art form that limits. It was then I began to have suspicion. I'm quite content, however, to say, look, it no longer suited me.' (ABC RN, August 2002)

Vale Richard Meale - feature article by David Worrall and Ross Edwards:

<http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/article/vale-richard-meale-24-august-1932-23-november-2009>

Richard Meale - eulogy by Andrew Ford: <http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/article/richard-meale-eulogy>

Richard Meale - AMC profile (works, recordings, other resources):

<http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/artist/meale-richard>

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Noisy parties no problem for musical brains

Aria Pearson, New Scientist, 12 November 2009

If you struggle to follow the conversation at noisy parties, music lessons might help.

Nina Kraus and colleagues at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, have previously shown that playing an instrument seems to enhance our ability to pick up emotional cues in conversation .

Now her team has found differences in brain activity that they say make musicians better at picking out speech from background noise.

After establishing that musicians are better at repeating a sentence heard in the presence of background noise, the researchers asked 16 lifelong musicians and 15 non-musicians to listen to speech in a quiet or noisy environment while they were wearing scalp electrodes to monitor their brain activity.

Background noise delayed the brain's response, but this delay was much shorter in the musicians. What's more, in the noisy environment, the musicians' brainwaves were more similar to the sound waves of the speech than in non-musicians.

The difference could be partly genetic, but Kraus says training is likely to help. "Musicians spend a lot of time extracting particular sounds from a sound-scape."

If that is the case, musical training could provide real benefits to children with autism or language difficulties, who tend to find understanding speech in a noisy environment particularly difficult, says Kraus – and for other children too.

"Music education is not just about teaching your child how to play the flute, it's about teaching your child to function better in our noisy auditory environment," she says.

Journal reference: The Journal of Neuroscience, DOI: 10.1523/jneurosci.3256-09.2009

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In Harmony may fall foul of Tory spending cuts

Rebecca Smithers, The Guardian, 10 November 2009

It's a glorious autumn morning in the seaside town of Aldeburgh on the Suffolk coast. Outside, the main attraction is the sunshine, drawing the crowds along the beach to Maggi Hambling's exotic "Scallop" sculpture, a memorial to local composer and conductor Benjamin Britten.

Inside a packed hall nearby, others have turned their back on the sunshine to listen to the views of the world-renowned cellist Julian Lloyd Webber on music education.

Lloyd Webber is here in his role as chair of the government's In Harmony project – a groundbreaking community programme aimed at using music, specifically orchestras, to transform the lives of young children in the most deprived parts of England. He says the project is the most exciting thing he has been involved with in his musical life.

The scheme was inspired by the hugely successful state-funded Venezuelan El Sistema scheme, which for 30 years has enabled more than 250,000 children from poor neighbourhoods to learn music, acquiring confidence and other key life skills in the process.

Read more at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/nov/10/in-harmony-music-project>

Watch YouTube video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTf-Su6pHOQ>

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Patricia Long \$850,000 bequest to Conservatorium High School (NSW)

Hon Verity Firth, Education Minister, 30 October 2009

An endowment fund of \$852,000 has been established by the late Patricia Long to assist students in the Conservatorium High School, Sydney.

"Thanks to the enormous generosity of the late Patricia Long, students at the Conservatorium High School will have the opportunity to benefit from scholarships to assist their studies," Ms Firth said.

"A staunch supporter of the school, Patricia Long become became the school's most generous benefactor donating funds every year to help students whose families were facing financial hardship. Her extraordinary generosity helped many students who otherwise might not have been able to continue their musical pursuits."

"The Conservatorium High School is the secondary arm of the Conservatorium of Music in Sydney and the State's only specialist music high school," Ms Firth said. "The school offers gifted music students an excellent general education while enabling them to focus intensively on nurturing their musical talent.

"Students from all over the state apply to enrol at the school and those who face relocation costs and extra tuition would really benefit from the Patricia Long Bequest."

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/aboutus/ministerial/yr2009/oct/mr301009_chs.pdf

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REMINDERS

25-26 February 2010 - musiclearninglive!2010 - Manchester, UK - <http://www.musiclearninglive2010.net/>

24-27 March 2010 - Musikmesse Frankfurt - Frankfurt am Main, Germany - <http://musik.messefrankfurt.com/frankfurt/en/besucher/willkommen/erleben.html>

1-6 August 2010 - International Society for Music Education World Conference - Beijing, China - <http://www.isme.org/2010/>

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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)
- Family School Partners : <http://www.familyschool.org.au/news/> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au.

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