

ENSEMBLE

MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Volume 4 Number 2, 25 March 2010

- [EVENTS: Music – Count Us In](#)
- [AWARDS & PRIZES: National Awards for Excellence in School Music Education](#)
- [RESOURCES: \(3 items\)](#)
- [MUSIC PARTICIPATION: \(2 items\)](#)
- [PERSONAL VOICES: Talking about the power of music](#)
- [RESEARCH: \(5 items\)](#)
- [NEWS FROM HERE & THERE: \(6 items\)](#)
- [CONFERENCES & EVENTS: \(5 items\)](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

EVENTS

Music – Count Us In 2010

The date is announced and it's time to synchronise all our diaries!

Thanks to the continuing support from The Australian Government, plans for Music: Count Us In for 2010 are in full swing.

Reserve Thursday, 2nd September 2010, 11.30 am AEST for the focus event.

Registrations for participating schools will open shortly. Why not join this year's song-writing team? If you're in Year 9 or above and write great songs, download the song brief here for your opportunity to help write "the Song That Links-up Australia".

Last year, all around Australia, hundreds of thousands of students, teachers, parents and families performed the song 'The Music is Everything' at the same time. The music and singing rang out from primary and secondary schools, in every part of this great country to create a nationwide celebration of the value of music education for ALL students!

Meanwhile, see it all happening last year - the wrap-up footage of the Music: Count Us In 2009 final events in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne featuring Arts Minister, Peter Garrett and many, many more! Music: Count Us In 2009 wrap-up events

Find out more: <http://www.musiccountusin.org.au/>

[< top >](#)

AWARDS & PRIZES

National Awards for Excellence in School Music Education 2010

Nominations closing 16th April 2010

Funded and strongly supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment, Training & Workplace Relations (DEEWR), these well established and highly regarded Awards aim to recognise music teachers and school leaders for an exceptional contribution to enhancing the status and quality of music education in their schools and communities.

There will be up to eleven teacher Awards and up to two school leader Awards. Each recipient of an Award will receive a certificate and a cheque for \$5,000, which is intended to be used to further their professional learning related to music education.

As the closing date is now rapidly approaching – and so is the Easter Break and Term Holidays – there is no better time than right now to get your nomination in!

All details about the 2010 Awards, including Guidelines, and nomination forms are available on the website at: <http://musicawards.asme.edu.au/>

[< top >](#)

RESOURCES

New music education portal goes live

If you're a music teacher, check out the new music education portal developed by the Music Council of Australia.

The site at musiceducation.edu.au is designed to support teachers in teaching music to students at all school levels from early childhood through to high school graduation.

It will also assist music education researchers, university music education lecturers, school principals and others.

It enables you to find high quality Australian and international music education resources through a rich, searchable database.

This site is currently under development and we will welcome and appreciate your feedback to let us know how the site can be made progressively better and more useful to everyone engaged in the important work of music education.

Find out more: <http://www.musiceducation.edu.au/>

[< top >](#)

The Song Room

Engaging young people through creativity

The Song Room 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. The Song Room is a National not-for-profit organisation that provides opportunities for enhanced learning and development for disadvantaged children through music and creative arts.

Whilst international research has demonstrated the children who learn music and arts have improved educational, social and personal outcomes; currently in Australia, up to 3 out of 4 children in Government Primary School have no music teachers. That equates to over 700,000 children missing out - and often they are the children who need it the most.

The Song Room targets its long-term, free and tailored programs to disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have such opportunities, including socio-economically disadvantaged children, urban and rural Indigenous youth, children with learning, health or behavioural challenges, new migrant arrivals and children for whom English is a second language, children at risk of juvenile crime involvement, very young children (0-5 years) in disadvantaged areas and children in geographically isolated and remote regions

So far The Song Room has reached over 200,000 disadvantaged children with its unique, free and tailored programs and is currently reaching over 45,000 disadvantaged children in 250 programs per year across Australia.

Further details: <http://www.songroom.org.au/home/introduction>

[< top >](#)

Musica Viva

Education Programs

Musica Viva's education programs offer a variety of learning and participation opportunities for all ages ranging from Pre-School to seniors. These include:

Musica Viva In School (MVIS) - a broad range of programs for primary and secondary students as well as their teachers including

- Music Education Packages with a Live Performance in your school
- Composer in the classroom
- Professional Learning Courses
- Australian Music Days
- Teacher Resources

Music for Life - singing for people 55 years plus currently run in NSW, WA and Queensland.

MusicAlive- a holiday program currently run in Sydney only for children 3 years old up to 8 years old.

Further information: <http://www.musicaviva.com.au/education/home>

[< top >](#)

MUSIC PARTICIPATION MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Playing along with the Mozart effect:

If you want music to sharpen your senses, boost your ability to focus and perhaps even improve your memory, you need to be a participant, not just a listener.

Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times, 1 March 2010

Five months after we are conceived, music begins to capture our attention and wire our brains for a lifetime of aural experience. At the other end of life, musical memories can be imprinted on the brain so indelibly that they can be retrieved, perfectly intact, from the depths of a mind ravaged by Alzheimer's disease.

In between, music can puncture stress, dissipate anger and comfort us in sadness.

As if all that weren't enough, for years parents have been seduced by even loftier promises from an industry hawking the recorded music of Mozart and other classical composers as a means to ensure brilliant babies.

But for all its beauty, power and capacity to move, researchers have concluded that music is little more than ear candy for the brain if it is consumed only passively. If you want music to sharpen your senses, boost your ability to focus and perhaps even improve your memory, the latest word from science is you'll need more than hype and a loaded iPod.

You gotta get in there and play. Or sing, bang or pluck.

Read entire article: <http://www.latimes.com/features/health/la-he-0301-brain-music-20100301,0,3251510.full.story>

[< top >](#)

Music is good for you at any age:

It may be easier to learn young, but it may be more fun to learn later.

Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times, 1 March 2010

Let's face it: Many of us looking to sharpen our intellectual edges have already passed the age when becoming a prodigy is an option. We missed the opportunity to start clarinet lessons at five. We lacked the discipline to practice for hours on end. We were told we couldn't carry a tune in a bucket.

It's never too late, say researchers.

Just as second languages are more easily learned young, neuroscientists point to periods of heightened sensitivity — particularly before the age of 8 or 9 — when minds are more readily shaped by musical instruction.

With age, the "plasticity" that allows experience to mould the brain so easily declines. But it doesn't disappear. At any age, learning a challenging new set of skills such as instrumental music is likely to return cognitive dividends, says Harvard University neurologist Gottfried Schlaug.

Read entire article: <http://www.latimes.com/features/health/la-he-0301-brain-music-adults-20100301.0,1807398,print.story>

[< top >](#)

PERSONAL VOICES

Talking about the power of music

Over recent months, Richard Aedy and the ABC's unique program Life Matters have featured a number of people talking about the power of music in their lives. These interviews include:

The Foundling: Mary Gauthier

For American singer-songwriter Mary Gauthier, music has provided a lifeline and a way to cope with a traumatic upbringing and personal loss. She has described her life as 'Jack Kerouac in reverse'. After troubled teenage and early adult years she went on to study philosophy, and run an award-winning restaurant. And, although Mary was 35 before she wrote her first song, she's now an acclaimed singer-songwriter who's just released her seventh and most personal album, *The Foundling*. 15/03/2010 <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2010/2844034.htm>

Choir man: Jonathon Welch

Jonathon Welch took Melbourne's Choir of Hard Knocks all the way from the streets to performing at the Sydney Opera House. More recently he's worked with women prisoners on a choir called 'Voices the Inside' which became the TV series 'Jailbirds'. But where did his passion for social justice come from? He shares more about his background and early influences in a newly published memoir, *Choir Man*. 07/01/2010 <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2010/2749027.htm>

'Jail Bird' Heather

We meet Heather, who has been a member of the Voices from Inside choir, featured in the TV show *Jail Birds*, screening on ABC1. Heather is no longer inside -- she's done her time. Now she wants to talk about what prison is really like and the value of the choir project, led by Jonathan Welch. 08/12/2009 <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2009/2764083.htm>

Talkback: the power of music

The transformative power of music - guests and listeners talk with guest presenter Guy Noble about the moment they were switched on to music, powerful musical influences in their lives and how music connects us with other people. Our guests include opera singer and composer David Hobson, singer and music entrepreneur Tania de Jong, Robbie Buck from Triple J and playwright Wesley Enoch. 17/07/2009 <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2009/2627645.htm>

[< top >](#)

RESEARCH

Why music training should be a mainstay of K-12 education

Science Daily, 22 February 2010

At a Feb. 20 press briefing held during the American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting, a Northwestern University neuroscientist argued that music training has profound effects that shape the sensory system and should be a mainstay of K-12 education.

"Cash-strapped school districts are making a mistake when they cut music from the K-12 curriculum," says Kraus, director of the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory in Northwestern's School of Communication.

Kraus presented her own research and the research of other neuroscientists suggesting music education can be an effective strategy in helping typically developing children as well as children with developmental dyslexia or autism more accurately encode speech.

"People's hearing systems are fine-tuned by the experiences they've had with sound throughout their lives," says Kraus. "Music training is not only beneficial for processing music stimuli. We've found that years of music training may also improve how sounds are processed for language and emotion."

Read entire article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/02/100220184327.htm>

[< top >](#)

Babies Are Born to Dance, New Research Shows

Science Daily, Mar. 16, 2010

Researchers have discovered that infants respond to the rhythm and tempo of music and find it more engaging than speech. The findings, based on the study of infants aged between five months and two years old, suggest that babies may be born with a predisposition to move rhythmically in response to music.

The research was conducted by Dr Marcel Zentner, from the University of York's Department of Psychology, and Dr Tuomas Eerola, from the Finnish Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Music Research at the University of Jyväskylä.

Dr Zentner said: "Our research suggests that it is the beat rather than other features of the music, such as the melody, that produces the response in infants. We also found that the better the children were able to synchronize their movements with the music the more they smiled.

"It remains to be understood why humans have developed this particular predisposition. One possibility is that it was a target of natural selection for music or that it has evolved for some other function that just happens to be relevant for music processing."

Read entire article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/03/100315161925.htm>

[< top >](#)

Music Therapy Can Assist Toddlers' Communication Rehabilitation Process

Science Daily, 7 January 2010

In the present study, Dr. Kerem examined the particular effects that music therapy has on the potential development of toddlers - aged 2-3 years - who have undergone cochlear implantation, specifically in terms of improving spontaneous communication.

"Music comprises various elements that are also components of language and therefore as a non-verbal form of communication is suitable for communication with these children, when they are still unable to use language. ...As such, music therapy lends itself to strengthening these children's nonverbal communication and thereby lessens the pressure on them for verbal exchange and response.

"Music can constitute the bridge between the quiet world that the child knew and the new world of sounds that has been unfolded following the operation. It is also important that the parents and staff learn the best way to expose

these children to music, the use of music for communication ... Music therapy is gradually penetrating the field of rehabilitation, but there is still a lot of work to be done in improving awareness of this important area."

Read entire article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/01/100106093636.htm>

[< top >](#)

Mozart Therapy: A Sonata a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

Science Daily, 8 January 2010

The music they listen to doesn't have any lyrics that tell them to grow, but new research from Tel Aviv University finds that premature babies who are exposed to music by 18th-century composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart gain weight faster - and therefore become stronger - than those who don't.

"It's not exactly clear how the music is affecting them, but it makes them calmer and less likely to be agitated," says Dr. Mendel, a lecturer at Tel Aviv University.

While the scientists are not sure what occasioned the response, Dr. Mandel offers one hypothesis. "The repetitive melodies in Mozart's music may be affecting the organizational centres of the brain's cortex.... This might be the musical explanation. For the scientific one, more investigation is needed."

Read entire article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/01/100107132551.htm>

[< top >](#)

Making Braille Music Universally Accessible

Science Daily, 22 January 2010

The iconic image of the blind musician dates back at least to the time of Homer. It's a fitting image, since music is an art form to which blindness does not raise any intrinsic barriers. Until the first quarter of the 19th century, however, blind musicians could learn music only by ear. Louis Braille changed that when he invented a system for transcribing musical scores into a tactile code.

Unfortunately, both transcribing - which had to be done by a sighted musician - and reading Braille music proved difficult. Braille's linear format makes it hard to decipher the many aspects of music that occur simultaneously, such as chords or multiple voices.

It's estimated that less than 15 percent of printed music has ever been transcribed into Braille, and much of that is only locally available.

Blind and visually impaired musicians worldwide can now enjoy the benefits of the CONTRAPUNCTUS system. They can download enriched, multimedia scores from a growing digital library, study them with greatly enhanced flexibility, and add new scores to the library as well.

Read entire article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/01/100121155222.htm>

[< top >](#)

NEWS FROM HERE & THERE

Australia: Promising support for regional NSW conservatorium

ABC News, 8 March 2010

A New South Wales South East centre of musical excellence has been given the green light.

About 20 music lovers met at Bega at the weekend to begin planning a conservatorium for the region.

The self-funded facility would provide musical tuition and a pathway to university for promising performers.

Meeting organiser, Chris Nicholls, says the strong turnout was unexpected.

"I think it says this is a very vibrant arts community, and the activity of music in our region is very strong," he said.

"There's a lot of interest in anything that promises to offer a development of that, and an enhancement of what is currently going on in the community."

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/08/2839261.htm>

[< top >](#)

Singapore: A one-stop portal in support of the arts and culture

Ministry of Information, Communication & Arts, 23 February 2010

A new one-stop cultural philanthropy portal, www.give2arts.sg, has been set up to provide members of the public with a convenient and easy way to make donations and to volunteer their time to support the arts and culture in Singapore.

The portal, the first of its kind in Asia, allows donors to donate to either their preferred beneficiary or to a general Arts and Culture Development Fund (ACDF). The ACDF, a charity fund with an Institute of Public Character (IPC) status, aims to raise the professionalism of the arts and cultural sector as well as strengthen public engagement in arts and culture. Close to 80 arts and culture charitable groups have already signed up as beneficiaries and more are expected to join.

Donations to the ACDF or to beneficiaries with IPC status will enjoy double tax deductions as well as auto-tax deductions.

"The arts and culture is an important fabric of our lives as it reflects our identity, shapes our future, and adds colour and meaning to our lives. This portal will make it easier for Singaporeans to contribute to and take greater ownership of arts and culture. All donations, big and small, will go a long way to help our arts and culture flourish", said Mr Lee Suan Hiang, the Executive Director of ACDO.

Read entire release: <http://app.mica.gov.sg/Default.aspx?tabid=79&ctl=Details&mid=540&ItemID=1112>

[< top >](#)

UK: Weaponising Mozart: How Britain is using classical music as a form of social control

Brenday O'Niell, Reason.com, 26 February 2010

Britain might not make steel anymore, or cars, or pop music worth listening to, but, boy, are we world-beaters when it comes to tyranny. And now classical music, which was once taught to young people as a way of elevating their minds and tingling their souls, is being mined for its potential as a deterrent against bad behavior.

In January it was revealed that West Park School, in Derby in the midlands of England, was "subjecting" (its words) badly behaved children to Mozart and others. In "special detentions," the children are forced to endure two hours of classical music both as a relaxant (the headmaster claims it calms them down) and as a deterrent against future bad behavior.

One news report says some of the children who have endured this Mozart authoritarianism now find classical music unbearable. As one critical commentator said, they will probably "go into adulthood associating great music - the most bewitchingly lovely sounds on Earth - with a punitive slap on the chops." This is what passes for education in Britain today: teaching kids to think "Danger!" whenever they hear Mozart's Requiem or some other piece of musical genius.

The classical music detentions at West Park School are only the latest experiment in using and abusing some of humanity's greatest cultural achievements to reprimand youth.

Read entire essay: <http://www.sott.net/articles/show/203685-Weaponizing-Mozart-How-Britain-is-using-classical-music-as-a-form-of-social-control>

[< top >](#)

UK: Out of tune: can music education survive government belt-tightening?

Tom Service, Guardian UK, 26 February 2010

This is a crunch time for anybody involved in music education.

In many ways, there's a lot to be proud of in what's happened over the last decade or so: more money for Music Services, for instrumental tuition, for singing programmes like Sing Up, for bespoke pilot projects like In Harmony, and a sense that the argument that participating in music can help the whole of a child's education is being listened to by the government.

But how long will all this last? Would any government after the election have the guts to maintain spending on music education in a culture clamouring for cuts?

There's nothing more fragile than the advances that have been made in some schools in recent years, especially if primary schoolchildren's opportunities to learn an instrument or take part in extracurricular music are going to disappear almost as soon as they've started.

In the light of all this, there's some important evidence published today that shows real public support for money continuing to be spent on music education. The Incorporated Society of Musicians' poll found that 91% of adults want children to have the chance to learn a musical instrument at school- and most importantly, that 77% think the amount that music education costs the taxpayer – about 3p per person per week – is reasonable.

The Music Standards Fund runs out in 2011, and the question is what, if anything, will replace it. The ISM's poll gives some political heft to the arguments in support of music education, and reveals that music is a potential vote-winner across the population – if politicians have the courage and nous to act on its findings.

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/tomserviceblog/2010/feb/26/music-education-cuts>

[< top >](#)

UK: British public backs music education

Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM), Media Release, 26 February 2010

Ninety-one per cent of adults in Britain want children to have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument at school, according to research from the Incorporated Society of Musicians.

People from all backgrounds were strongly in favour of giving children the chance to learn an instrument, with 90% or more support in all age groups and social grades.

ISM Chief Executive, Deborah Annetts said: "These results are overwhelming evidence that people in Britain are hugely supportive of our world-class music education system. Now is the moment for us to speak up loudly and proclaim just how good music education is in this country and how much support it has.

"In a time of political and economic uncertainty with the threat of cuts, we need to fight for the importance of music education. We now know that the public is unquestionably behind us."

Read entire release: http://www.ism.org/news_campaigns/article/british_public_backs_music_education/

See also the keynote speech by Deborah Annetts on 26 February 2010 "Fighting for the Future" at: http://www.ism.org/images/uploads/files/ISM_Deborah_Annetts_speech_MLL_Feb_2010.pdf

[< top >](#)

Scottish Opera stars to perform Baby O program for infants

Marc Horne, Sunday Times, 14 March 2010

Scottish Opera is attempting to reach beyond its normal audiences of middle-aged music buffs by launching a series of concerts aimed at infants, aged between six and 18 months.

The experimental performances, to be staged at venues across the country, will feature no lyrics, narrative or plot. Instead, classically trained singers will create baby-friendly noises, such as Wellington boots splashing in puddles, buzzing bees, quacking ducks and the fluttering of feathers.

The audience will also be encouraged to gurgle along to the score and to crawl over a furry garden set, featuring hand puppets and a range of themed props.

The Baby O shows were devised by Jane Davidson, Scottish Opera's director of education, who described them as a "groundbreaking" fusion of touch, texture, sight and sound.

"When I first mentioned the idea of opera for babies, some people looked at me as though I was demented. People would roll their eyes and say, 'You can't expect a six-month-old child to sit through a performance of Wagner,'" said Davidson. "We believe this project will show just how robust and flexible an art form it is."

Davidson said the performances would improve the understanding of the impact of music on very young children.

Read entire article: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/scotland/article7061141.ece>

[< top >](#)

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Living Music and Dance (LMD)

Victorian Orff Schulwerk Association

7-8 May 2010: Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre, Preston, Victoria

A conference of creative music and movement for teaching professionals of any age group, community musicians and interested community members, and anyone who loves music!

Each day begins and ends with an All In session (some regard these as the highlight of the day!). Our key presenters will set the scene daily with exciting music and dance. Participants will then choose from a wide variety of vocal, instrumental and movement sessions. Electives will be offered on a wide range of topics.

Further information, registration etc: <http://www.vosa.org/events/?do=eventView&action=detailed&ID=159>

[< top >](#)

Making Music Being Well 2010

17-23 May 2010 – all over Australia!

An active national celebration of active music making for well-being.

MMBW is a joint initiative between the Australian Music Therapy Association and Music Play for Life. The Making Music Being Well phenomenon celebrates the links between active music making and wellbeing.

Everyone is welcome to register - musicians, teachers, music therapists, community musicians, performers, health workers, community workers, students - just sign up and plan an event!

The last time the initiative ran, in 2008, there were more than 130 events nationwide, involving more than 12,000 people! Celebrations took place in every state and territory: in hospitals, schools, nursing homes, community health centres, community arts spaces, concert halls, markets, churches, universities, parks - anywhere people can make music.

Register before April 30 to receive your promotions pack of great brochures, posters and stickers.

For further information go to <http://www.makingmusicbeingwell.org.au/>

[< top >](#)

Music in Communities Network Forum

21 May 2010 – Wollongong Conservatorium, Wollongong NSW

The Music in Communities Network will run a one-day conference at the Wollongong Conservatorium, an hour from Sydney, on Friday 21st May, providing community music leaders and players, music therapists and others an opportunity to connect and share skills.

To register your interest in attending - or in presenting - please email us at admin@musicincommunities.org.au

[< top >](#)

International Society of Music Educators (ISME) World Conference 2010

1-6 August 2010: China National Convention Centre, Beijing, China

For full details go to the Conference Website: <http://www.isme.org/2010/>

[< top >](#)

“Music Matters”

Kodaly Music Education Institute of Australia National Conference 2010

26-29 September 2010: Caulfield Grammar School, Glen Eira Road, East St Kilda, Victoria

This year's national conference features these outstanding international presenters (and much, much more):

- Fernando Malvar-Ruiz (USA) Choral specialist and director of the American Boy Choir.
- Géza Szilvay (Finland) Acclaimed string pedagogue. Author of the Colour Strings method.

Further details, registration etc: http://www.kodaly.org.au/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=61

[< top >](#)

ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/australian-education-digest/> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup/> (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/public-education-voice> (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au. Details of products, services, events, resources or points of view are provided for information only; publication does not imply endorsement or recommendation. No warranty is provided nor liability accepted by ACSSO, its members or employees.

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