

# ENSEMBLE

## MUSIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Volume 4 Number 3, 29 April 2010

- [CAMPAIGNS: Music – Count Us In](#)
- [AWARDS & PRIZES: ACMF National Song-writing Competition](#)
- [RESEARCH: \(2 items\)](#)
- [AUSTRALIAN PROFILE: Elena Kats-Chernin](#)
- [NEWS FROM HERE & THERE: \(5 items\)](#)
- [CONFERENCES & EVENTS: \(2 items\)](#)
- [REMINDERS](#)
- [ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS](#)

---

### CAMPAIGNS

#### Music – Count Us In:

Journeying together towards the big day: Thursday 2 September 2010

This is the big national event that links schools and communities together in all parts of the country, to create a nationwide celebration of the value of music education for ALL students.

Registrations for participating schools are now open.

After a nationwide call for aspiring songwriters in years 9 and above to join the co-writing teams to come up with this year's theme song, the following students will be taking part in the mentored workshop on 4th May.

- Anthony Barnhill, Yarra Valley Grammar, VIC
- Henry Beale, The Essington School, NT
- Madeleine Brenner, Scotch College, Adelaide, SA
- Clinton Cave, Cairns State High, QLD
- Shekinah Moye, Toormina High, NSW
- Olivia O'Brien, Santa Maria College, VIC
- Taylor Pomery, Albany Senior High, WA
- Lauren 'Lolly' Tarver, Wanneroo Senior High, WA
- Alissa Williams, Fairvale High, NSW

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

[< top >](#)

---

### AWARDS & PRIZES

#### ACMF National Song-writing Competition 2010

The Australian Children's Music Foundation conducts a National Song-writing Competition for every Primary, Secondary and Specific Purpose School right across Australia. This includes schools from both the public and non-government sectors. This is the eighth consecutive year the competition has been held.

Entry to the competition is free. A letter is sent to schools from the Federal Education Minister with the entry forms, encouraging teachers to engage children in this activity. Entries can also be sent via the ACMF website.

All prizes awarded are in the form of musical equipment/tuition for both the winning student and their school and the competition is divided into age categories to provide opportunities for children of all ages, from kindergarten through to Year 12.

Further details about the competition: <http://www.acmf.com.au/nsc-details.html>

Find out more about the ACMF and its activities: <http://www.acmf.com.au/index.html>

[< top >](#)

---

## RESEARCH

### **Hand-Clapping Songs Improve Motor and Cognitive Skills, Research Shows**

*Science Daily, 28 April 2010*

A researcher at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) conducted the first study of hand-clapping songs, revealing a direct link between those activities and the development of important skills in children and young adults, including university students.

"We found that children in the first, second and third grades who sing these songs demonstrate skills absent in children who don't take part in similar activities," explains Dr. Idit Sulkin a member of BGU's Music Science Lab in the Department of the Arts. "We also found that children who spontaneously perform hand-clapping songs in the yard during recess have neater handwriting, write better and make fewer spelling errors."

Dr. Warren Brodsky, the music psychologist who supervised her doctoral dissertation, said Sulkin's findings lead to the presumption that "children who don't participate in such games may be more at risk for developmental learning problems like dyslexia and dyscalculia. There's no doubt such activities train the brain and influence development in other areas. The children's teachers also believe that social integration is better for these children than those who don't take part in these songs."

Read entire article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/04/100428090954.htm>

[< top >](#)

---

### **Music Therapy Fails Dyslexics: No Link between Dyslexia and a Lack of Musical Ability, Study Finds**

*Science Daily, 10 April 2010*

There is no link between a lack of musical ability and dyslexia. Moreover, attempts to treat dyslexia with music therapy are unwarranted, according to scientists in Belgium writing in the current issue of the International Journal of Arts and Technology.

Cognitive neuroscientist José Morais of the Free University of Brussels and colleagues point out that research into dyslexia has pointed to a problem with how the brain processes sounds and how dyslexic readers manipulate the sounds from which words are composed, the phonemes, consciously and intentionally.

It was a relatively short step between the notion that dyslexia is an issue of phonological processing and how this might also be associated with poor musical skills - amusia - that has led to approaches to treating the condition using therapy to improve a dyslexic reader's musical skills.

Morais and colleagues demonstrate that theoretically this is an invalid argument and also present experimental evidence to show that there is no justification either for the link or for using music therapy to treat dyslexia.

Language and music are apparently uniquely human traits and many researchers have tried to find direct links between the two.

Read entire article: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/04/100408111313.htm>

[< top >](#)

---

## AUSTRALIAN PROFILE

### Elena Kats-Chernin: in the key of flat-out major

*Deborah Jones, the Australian, 24 April 2010*

It's from here in suburban Sydney that Kats-Chernin, 52, produces - no, pours out - the music that has made her one of the country's leading and most versatile composers. If you watched the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics you heard her music in the ravishing Deep Sea Dreaming sequence; if you're a fan of Phillip Adams's Late Night Live program you hear her theme introduce it; if you listen to ABC Classic FM her compositions fit into just about every timeslot.

Her latest work, a new 90-minute chamber opera titled *The Rage of Life*, opens at De Vlaamse Opera in Antwerp today, with performances in Ghent and Rotterdam in May and Stuttgart in November. It has been a huge undertaking, although by no means her first work of this kind. Kats-Chernin has written three other substantial music-theatre works: odd, then, that she describes herself as "probably a miniaturist".

It's perhaps best to describe Kats-Chernin as an astonishingly swift and prolific composer who works in just about every form for a wide audience. "She's ideal from an artistic point of view, very responsive to performers and their needs," says Davis. "From a publisher's perspective she's a dream, with an output that can be exploited. Not many people can produce at that level and that quality."

She hasn't written a symphony, but that's about it. Solo pieces, quartets, chamber works, oratorio, ballet, large-scale orchestral works -- four in the past year alone while, remember, she was writing *The Rage of Life* -- miniatures lasting only a couple of minutes and commissions from festivals, orchestras and private individuals are all in the mix. Then there are the little things, such as a song she wrote recently for a young singer, just eight or nine. "It took me a day; that's what you do in between."

Read entire article: <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/arts/composer-elena-kats-chernin-in-the-key-of-flat-out-major/story-e6frg8n6-1225855953871>

[< top >](#)

---

## NEWS FROM HERE & THERE

### USA: Computer program helps students sing on key

*Dave Aeikens, St Cloud Times, 7 April 2010*

Ryan Gilmore puts on a headset and the words to "America" run across the computer screen. As he sings, a blue line lets him know if he is singing on key. The line goes up if his pitch is too high and down if he is too low. The computer tracks what percentage of the notes he hits.

When he finishes, he has hit almost 80 percent of his notes and his classmates cheer.

Gilmore says after he finishes that he likes "the advanced technology and where you get to see where your singing is."

Teaching children to sing on key is one of the most important things in improving children's singing ability, Clearview Elementary School music teacher Karen Ingeman said.

Six of the eight St. Cloud elementary schools are using the software this year to measure students' ability to sing on key. The software, which the schools have on loan this year but will have to either buy or return next school year, has made it easier for students to recognize when they sing off-key, Ingeman said.

Less sophisticated methods of getting children to sing higher or lower include tossing balls in the air, Ingeman said. The ball going high in the air is a reminder to sing higher.

"I think the challenge of beating their own score; that is motivating," Ingeman said. "Ideally, they would do it at home."

Read entire article: <http://www.sctimes.com/article/20100407/NEWS01/104070004/Computer-program-helps-students-sing-on-key>

[< top >](#)

---

## **Venezuela: Conducting a movement: Charismatic Venezuelan leads classical revolution**

*Jeremy Eichler, Boston Globe, 16 April 2010*

The Venezuelan-born Dudamel is the most buzzed-about young conductor in the world. Having embarked as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic last fall at 28, he arrives today in Cambridge to accept an award at MIT. The musical movement he represents also has spun off a program based at New England Conservatory.

Meanwhile in his home country, Dudamel is the equivalent of a rock star.

Something remarkable has happened with classical music in Venezuela. The art form has been turned on its head, shorn of its elite associations, and harnessed as a vehicle for social change that reaches some of the poorest members of this society.

In a country whose homicide rates make it among the most dangerous in the world, this national music education movement — referred to simply as El Sistema — draws children off of the streets and into neighborhood centers for intensive musical engagement and orchestral training. The program, founded more than three decades ago, currently reaches 400,000 students. According to its organizers, 70 percent of the participating families live below the poverty line.

Dudamel is a product of this movement and is its most famous graduate.

Read entire article: [http://www.boston.com/ae/music/articles/2010/04/16/conducting\\_a\\_movement/](http://www.boston.com/ae/music/articles/2010/04/16/conducting_a_movement/)

[< top >](#)

---

## **USA: PMEA Annual In Service Conference**

*Pennsylvania Music Educators Association, Pittsburgh, 21-24 April*

Dr. James Frankel of SoundTree, an industry leader in music, audio and video technology solutions for educators, and a music teacher for 11 years before that, gave two particularly interesting presentations that are now available as online podcasts.

Technology Integration in Music Education: [http://fams.podomatic.com/entry/2010-04-27T11\\_18\\_55-07\\_00](http://fams.podomatic.com/entry/2010-04-27T11_18_55-07_00)

YouTube in Music Education: [http://fams.podomatic.com/entry/2010-04-27T11\\_14\\_12-07\\_00](http://fams.podomatic.com/entry/2010-04-27T11_14_12-07_00)

Dr Frankel has made available session materials - including links to music technology resources, software downloads and presentation files - available at <http://www.soundtree.com/pmea10>.

Read more about PMEA and its conference at:

<https://netforum.avectra.com/eWeb/StartPage.aspx?Site=PMEA&WebCode=HomePage>

Read more about Soundtree at: <http://www.soundtree.com/>

[< top >](#)

---

## **Canada: 700,000 students across Canada unite in song on Music Monday**

*Coalition for Music Education, 27 April, 2010*

More than 700,000 students from over 2,000 schools in every province and territory across Canada are today celebrating the sixth annual Music Monday – a nation-wide, simultaneous concert to celebrate the importance of

music in our lives – and especially in our schools. Students and teachers from coast-to-coast will take their music programs outdoors into their communities and perform the same song at the exact same time, uniting the entire country.

The theme song for Music Monday 2010, "Sing Sing," was written by multi Juno-award winning Canadian artist, Serena Ryder.

New this year is the Music Monday Showcase Concert that will be held in downtown Vancouver as a symbol for the hundreds of celebrations taking place in communities across the country. Next year, the showcase will move to Winnipeg. Also new is a partnership with Ticketmaster Canada that will see 10 participating Music Monday schools from across the country awarded \$2,500 to support their music program.

Music Monday was created by the Coalition for Music Education in Canada in 2005 to celebrate the importance of music in our schools.

Read more at: <http://weallneedmusic.wordpress.com/2010/04/27/music-monday-2010-press-release/>

Read more about Music Monday at: <http://www.musicmonday.ca/>

Read more about the Coalition for Music Education at: <http://www.weallneedmusic.ca/>

[< top >](#)

---

## **Australia: Koori students take steps in the right direction**

*Jewel Topsfield, the Age, 29 April 2010*

BEBOP, a type of jazz characterised by complex harmony and rhythms and improvisation, is not the standard tool used by schools to improve student attendance. But while Ballarat Secondary College principal Paul Rose may not be a jazz musician, he is an expert at improvising to help solve complex problems.

The secondary college, which has one of the highest numbers of Koori students in Victoria, has run everything from a "very effective bebop dance program" to a music program based around rock bands, to encourage students to attend school.

"We recognised that dance was a pretty important element for our Koori kids," Mr. Rose says. "A number of Koori kids play in rock bands around town, so that's another avenue to get Koori kids engaged in school."

This year a Wannik dance academy was set up at the school, a state and federal government program to help engage Koori girls from years 7 to 10 with their schooling. The girls attend two dance sessions a week with a qualified teacher.

The group will perform the welcome ceremony at the Victorian State Schools Spectacular in September, which features a range of performance styles from pop, rock and musical theatre to rap and classical. There is also a dedicated co-ordinator who ensures their dance links in with the work they do in the classroom.

Read more at: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/education/koori-students-take-steps-in-the-right-direction-20100428-tsi2.html>

[< top >](#)

---

## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **Community Music Conference**

*21 May, Wollongong, NSW*

Do you lead, or are you part of, a community music group or choir? Are you interested in the role music can play in developing stronger communities? Are you a music therapist or teacher?

This special one-day conference will feature:

- Music Therapist, Janet Andrews on the links between music making and individual and community wellbeing.
- Social Networking expert, Music Council of Australia's Eve Klein on how to get Web 2.0 working for you and your group.
- Liane Clarke, president of award-winning Leichhardt Espresso Chorus, on how amateur' groups really CAN achieve musical and performance excellence – and how to bring your local Council along with you to help support your journey!
- Andrew Snell, Wollongong Conservatorium's Director, on lifelong music learning.
- Alex Masso, Chair, Australian Youth Music Council, on regional performance opportunities: where to play and how to build your audiences.
- Tina Broad, national director of Music Play for Life, Australia's grassroots music advocacy program, on a snapshot of national research: who's making music, where and why.

Read more at: <http://musicincommunities.org.au/blog/2010/04/community-music-conference-wollongong-21st-may/>

[< top >](#)

---

## Music Education Week

*24-29 June, Washington DC, USA*

Music Education Week is a new annual event created by the National Association for Music Education (MENC). It is built around a new format, different from that of past national biennial conferences, designed to provide members with opportunities for music education advocacy, intensive professional development, and performances in a destination location on an annual basis.

Read more at: <http://www.menc.org/events/view/2010-music-education-week>

[< top >](#)

---

## REMINDERS

7-8 May - Living Music and Dance - Preston, VIC -

<http://www.vosa.org/events/?do=eventView&action=detailed&ID=159>

17-23 May - Making Music Being Well - <http://www.makingmusicbeingwell.org.au/>

21 May - Music in Communities Network Forum - <mailto:admin@musicincommunities.org.au>

1-6 August - ISME World Conference - Beijing, China - <http://www.isme.org/2010/>

26-29 September - Kodaly Music Education Institute of Australia National Conference - East St Kilda, VIC -

[http://www.kodaly.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=61](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](mailto: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.

To unsubscribe from Ensemble click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribeENS>

To unsubscribe from all ACSSO mailings click here: <mailto:webmaster@acsso.org.au?subject=unsubscribeALL>