

MUSIC in ACTION

Spring 2007 • Vol. 5, Issue 2

FOR AUSTRALIAN EDUCATORS

CHOIR AIN'T JUST CHOIR

Singing and other
learnings

RECONNECTING WITH MUSIC

'I haven't sung since
school days'

REMEMBERING THE MOMENT

Powerful techniques
to help choirs

THE SEVEN SISTERS OF THE DREAMTIME

A song for schools



MUSIC. COUNT US IN

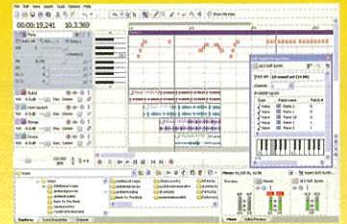
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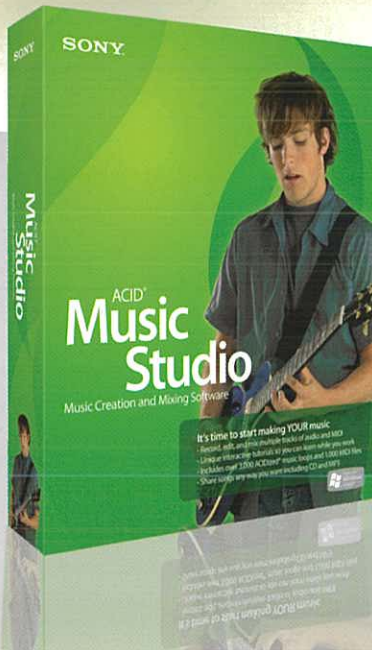
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EDITOR

Ann Blore

Email: ann.blore@australianmusic.asn.au
Tel: 03 5473 4022. M: 0412 343 343
PO Box 207, Castlemaine, Vic. 3450

EDITORIAL PANEL

Dr Pauline Beston
Greg Mason
Harley Mead

SUB-EDITOR

Tony Geeves

DESIGN, LAYOUT & PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Mediaville
Email: mediaville@netspace.net.au

NATIONAL

ADVERTISING SALES

Greg Phillips, Mediaville
Email: mediaville@netspace.net.au
Tel/Fax: 03 9712 0989

SALES AND SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES

Subscriptions@musicinaction.org.au
Tel: 03 9527 6658
Fax: 03 9507 2316
Website: www.musicinaction.org.au

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ABN 58 026 169 284,
MBE148, 45 Glenferrie Road,
Malvern, Victoria, 3144.

Email: info@australianmusic.asn.au
Website: www.australianmusic.asn.au
Tel: 03 9527 6658. Fax: 03 9507 2316

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FROM THE EDITOR



In recent months an amazing plethora of singing events have occurred that affirm the value, importance and enjoyment of singing in education and in our lives. For music educators, there was the announcement by the federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Hon Julie Bishop MP, of funding for *'Music. Count Us In'*. This national project to

promote the value of music education in Australian schools promises to be Australia's biggest school music event, so please be part of it: get your school involved with hundreds of other schools around the country as they simultaneously SING! (Start planning; 11.00 am on 30 August is the big moment.)

Meanwhile, ABC national television has had near record audiences watch the series about The Choir of Hard Knocks, followed by almost daily press on some aspect of this choir, its conductor, and upcoming concerts, all creating interest in the value of singing.

If that is not enough, in July there was the second Festival of Voices in Tasmania; the Live Earth concert in Sydney (well, they did sing!); and now here in your hands is the Music in Action singing issue, covering singing in as many ways as we can fit.

We explore reconnecting with singing in post-school life; profile a conductor known for her work with community choirs; have turned the Top Ten teaching resources into the Top 60 singing ideas and resources; and take a look at how singing fits with the new curriculum. Even our new products listings concentrate on voice!

But there's more ... We've commissioned composer Stephen Lalor to write a song specially for our readers, including a backing track, and suggestions on how teachers might use the song in classrooms. You'll find The Seven Sisters of the Dreamtime in the centre pages of this issue.

Our one regret is that there are not enough pages available to allow us to cover all the items we want to cover. We'll just have to do it again later!

As one of our writers says in conclusion, 'Sing! Sing! Sing!'

Ann Blore

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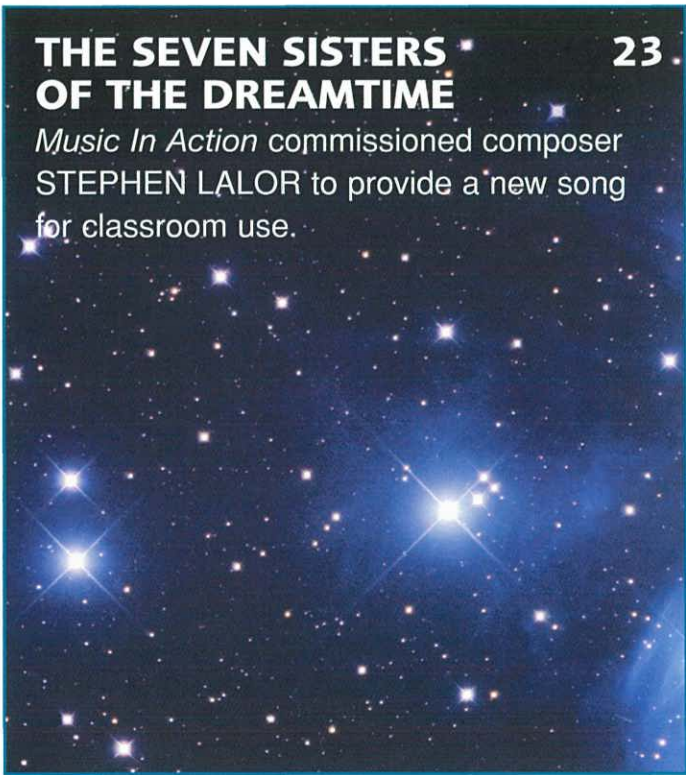


Photo: Joe Cauchi

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Music In Action commissioned composer STEPHEN LALOR to provide a new song for classroom use.

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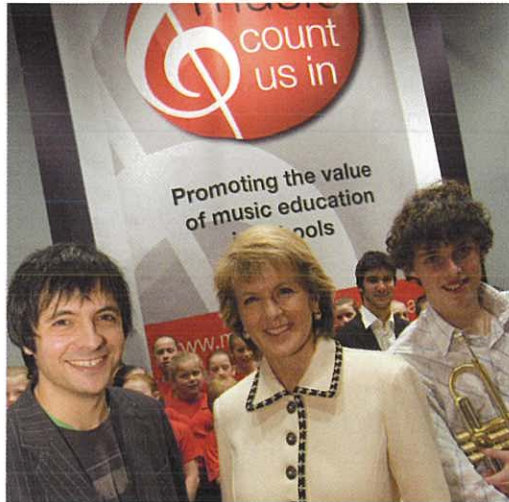
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ONE SONG. ONE DAY.

MUSIC. COUNT US IN ON 30 AUGUST at 11am!



Thursday 30 August will be a significant day for music education



At 11am on that day, schools across Australia will be involved in a national project to highlight the importance and value of music education, by singing or playing the Music. Count Us In song. We hope that this will be the biggest simultaneous music education activity ever undertaken in Australia.

The centrepiece of the activity is *Life is a Song*, a specially-written composition from John Foreman, musical director of Australian Idol, award-winning producer and composer for the Sydney Olympics and Melbourne Commonwealth Games.

Arrangements of *Life is a Song* are available for choirs, bands and school orchestras across a range of abilities. Classroom support activities for teachers are also provided. Getting involved with your class, choir and school will help to send the message that music education is important for every student.

Visit the Music. Count Us In website to record your involvement, obtain the song and arrangements, teaching materials and support information, at: www.musiccountusin.org.au

Get involved and support music education in our schools!

HILLARY TURNBULL from All Saints College Bathurst reports on her school's preparation for Music. Count Us In.

As a first year out music specialist, fortunate to be teaching music from Transition Year to Year 12, I am very aware of the benefits of a music education for all students and the need to advocate for music education Australia wide. I became aware

of Music. Count Us In through a circular from Charles Sturt University, School of Teacher Education suggesting that our school get involved in this event. The school was invited to join with the University Choir to perform the Music. Count Us In song on 30 August 2007

After accessing the Count Us In website I liaised with Dr Christopher Klopper at the University and with the Head of Music at school about our involvement. While our Head of Music was supportive of the idea, there were a number of issues to resolve. Time constraints had to be overcome, including a potential clash with the school's annual music camp and the type of ensemble and number of students we would involve was also to be decided.

After accessing the resources available on the Music. Count Us In website, I decided to use the concert band and orchestra arrangements from the website for the senior school ensembles and have the senior school choir and one of the junior school choirs to sing with the Charles Sturt University Choir. This has resulted in the involvement of around 80 students from Year 5 to Year 12.

We have used the normal rehearsal time of each ensemble to rehearse the song from the beginning of Term 3, which allows us 1 hour each week. Preparations for the performance have involved the students learning the song and rehearsing it in the individual ensembles as well as a combined ensemble. On Music. Count Us In day, the students from the University Choir and All Saints' College will have a combined rehearsal together before the performance at 11am. Both the students and the staff are excited about the opportunity this will provide for all the students involved.



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CHOIR AIN'T JUST CHOIR

The alluringly simple act of singing can have a powerful impact on students, but while we stress and strive for just the right elements, there are other learnings taking place in front of us, says SUZANNE ROGERS.

Those who saw the recent television series about The Choir of Hard Knocks will recall many memorable phrases about the power of singing, including that of the woman who said: 'It's a powerful feeling—something comes over me and I just change.' And for we teachers, its impact on our students can be a career high. For me, it was the wide-smiling child who bounced past me as she left the stage after a choral performance and exclaimed, 'I sang! I danced! I smiled!'

We had given that child a positive, affirming life memory

To know that we had given that child a positive, affirming life memory was worth so much more than how well she sang, how well she could read music, or any other musical outcome you might see in a curriculum document.

The power of singing

In the UK, the power of singing has been recognised with the funding and implementation of a nation-wide singing campaign leading up to the 2012 Olympics, entitled 'The Singing Nation: A Voice For Everyone'. Howard Goodall, the project's ambassador, says '*Singing is as natural and enjoyable to human beings as laughing. It is easy and universal, bonding us first to our mothers and then to each other*'. But why is it so important to give students these experiences and skills?

The world is changing exponentially. Students now in their first year will be undertaking jobs not yet invented. What skills will students need for this brand new world? For we teachers to fall back on the tried and trusted ways that we know is not enough.

Professor Guy Claxton, a leading expert on practical ways of developing young people's learning and creative capacities, suggests that we need to move from helping students to *learn better*, to helping them to become *better learners*. So, what are the skills essential for the future world, and how does singing come into it?

A number of Australian education bodies call these skills Essential Learnings. In my state, South Australia, they are outlined in formal documents as

Identity
Futures
Thinking
Interdependence
Communication.

Many years ago these Essential Learnings were referred to as the 'hidden curriculum', the things other than music that were taught and learnt while students were participating in a music lesson. Now, it is these learnings that are central.

Essential Learnings in choir

Why would a choral program focus on and manipulate its design to target the Essential Learnings? Can't we hear the

cries? 'It's choir! It's 60 minutes a week! It's a voluntary extra-curricular activity! I don't have time for this!'

Yet I believe the Essential Learnings are the skills students will need to interact positively with the future, and that we should give them every opportunity to acquire them.

Essential Learning of: Identity

It's about 'me'—who 'I' am, how I fit into this world; about well-being—physical, social, emotional and spiritual; about being able to judge, persist and take on responsibility. It is about taking risks and learning from mistakes; developing self-confidence and resilience; about setting and achieving goals.

Being part of a choir supports student identity

Being part of a choir supports student identity. One belongs, one has a place and within the group, there are roles. Choir directors can ensure that each student is important and valued for their contribution to the whole.

Intrinsic in repertoire selection is celebration of the identity of various local minority cultural groups, including Australian Indigenous people. Their inclusion together with world music promotes an acceptance and appreciation of other cultures. This in turn provides improved identity to individuals from these cultures who sing in our choirs. We can also acknowledge the music of young people generally by including styles such as dance music, rap and beatboxing. We can select those songs whose lyrics promote student well-being and optimism.

If we are serious about sending our students into the future as *confident and capable citizens*, we owe them a place where they can belong and sing songs that develop and acknowledge them, showing them that the way forward has many possible paths.

The Essential Learning of: Futures

It's about 'us', about the interrelationships between the natural and constructed world; about sustainability and the environment. It is about understanding the world—how local decisions can impact globally; and the consequences of scientific and technological innovation.

Again, repertoire is central to learning about futures through choral programs—but singing Indigenous and world music is not enough. *Time* is needed, to discuss the repertoire and the context of the music. If you believe that choir is a means to an end rather than an end in itself, limited time cannot be an excuse for missing the opportunity to explore the context of a piece. Choir trainers do well to work with classroom teachers, facilitating connections between songs learnt in choir, and wider 'world learning' in the classroom.

If we are serious about sending into the future *well-informed caretakers of the world*, we need to ensure that they

understand how their actions and the actions of those around them will impact on the world. The opportunity to connect all their learning can happen in choir too!

The Essential Learning of: Thinking

It's about thinking flexibly and creatively; about the process of inquiry and reflection; about thinking around possibilities, analysing and evaluating proposed solutions. It is about building capacity to think in an empathetic and caring way—about experiences, emotions and beliefs; about acknowledging differences between 'self' and others. Repertoire choice, providing time to discuss and reflect on lyrics, rehearsals, and performances, and opportunities for student voice—all are critical to enable students to develop their thinking through music. The powerful messages of some lyrics can create student engagement that empowers choral music as a strong vehicle for thinking about, in and through music.

Thinking *about* music involves: Listening, melodic shapes, rests, rhythms, diction, inner hearing, practice, etc.; making decisions and solving problems.

Thinking *in* music involves: Analysing actual music and sound, the amount of breath needed to hold a phrase, working as team to reach collective goals, contributing suggestions for improvement, and evaluating performances.

Lyrics can create student engagement that empowers choral music

Thinking *through* music involves: making connections between music and past and present contexts; thinking through lyrics; and connecting experiences, emotions and beliefs. It is about being able to think beyond personal taste in an empathetic and caring way. For students to be able to expand their thinking through music they need to engage with the lyrics; how many of us have sung a song as a child with absolutely no idea what we were singing about?

Another way educators can give students an opportunity to think—about, in and through music—is to invite them to contribute to the repertoire (within guidelines of course; for example, no references to or implications of sex, drugs, swearing, suicide, weapons etc.) Contributing to the repertoire supports the student voice as well as thinking and identity. —'I chose that song!'

If we are serious about encouraging students to *think creatively, to be active participants in life*, enquiring and generating solutions, we need to give them opportunities to develop these skills.

The Essential Learning of: Interdependence

It's about valuing diversity; acting democratically; understanding the past and creating preferred futures. It is about community and social justice; about a strong self that connects to others; and taking responsibility for our own

behaviour. Working together to produce a musical work is all about social responsibility. This includes making choices to be available, arriving on time, being flexible when things need to change, supporting peers and valuing their contributions, understanding that some people react differently to stress and making allowances. Spending time during choir rehearsals reflecting on cooperation, commitment and working together is essential to students' understanding of social responsibility. For students to truly understand the interdependence that takes place within a choir, they need to be concerned with more than 'how we sang on the day'.

If we are serious about *developing socially responsible citizens*, we need to allow students to take responsibility for their learning and interact with the real world now! Take a risk, let them take some control—and learn from it.

The Essential Learning of: Communication

Communication is about being literate, numerate. Being information literate and arts literate. It is about making connections with others, resolving conflicts, informing, persuading and explaining. It is about communicating through art forms, and understanding how art forms are used to communicate ideas, opinions and views.

Communication is central to choral work. It is about expressing to others through music and lyrics the ideas and feelings of the composer. But communication as an Essential Learning in choir goes beyond being arts literate. It involves students being able to express, communicate and reflect on experiences and feelings. It is about giving students a voice within the choir lesson to articulate their learnings about identity and futures, interdependence and thinking—and it is worth listening to them.

If we are serious about *developing students who can express their thoughts and feelings*, connect with others and value the voices of others, we need to do this in choir. What better place?

Not the destination, but the journey

It is my belief that as music educators we can spend too much time focusing on the destination, the performance. We can place too much value on the concert as the outcome of our efforts. We can forget that students are at the centre of everything we do and that at the moment of performance it is not about the teacher, the conductor, the choral director, the school image or the music department.

To make choir a learning journey does not mean to dumb-down standards or to devalue excellence. It actually acknowledges the excellence of all learning outcomes, musical and non-musical, and celebrates all successes.

We know the power of music, and the benefits of music and singing, but as teachers we must provide opportunities for our students to engage with the Essential Learnings through music.

Howard Goodall comments:

We have had debates about what constitutes 'proper' singing, good pedagogy and appropriate challenges for the young voice. While I respect the experience and wise council that informs these discussions, there is also a sense in which we must walk before we can run: get them singing first, worry about the pedagogy later.

He says the UK pre-Olympics singing campaign ... is not primarily about the needs of the repertoire, our cultural heritage, the government, the music industry or even the long term health or future of 'music'—it's about the children.

So, let me leave you with this question: What are *your* students learning in choir? Because it ain't just choir! **M in A**

This is an edited version of an address given to the XVIth ASME Conference at Perth in July 2007. It was co-authored with L Rudiger.

Photo: courtesy Sonny Chua

Suzanne Rogers

Suzanne Rogers began her involvement in music through selection in the first SA instrumental music group, and is passionate about bringing similar opportunities to all students. She is Manager of the Primary Schools Music Festival in South Australia, a choral-based program involving eleven thousand primary students. Suzanne has been a generalist classroom teacher as well as a music specialist in primary schools. She has been involved with ASME for 10 years, currently as National Treasurer, and represents the SA Education Department on the Music Education Advisory Group established in response to the National Review of School Music Education.

E-CONTACT

Suzanne Rogers:

<suzanne.rogers@musicfest.sa.edu.au>

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PLAYFUL EDUCATORS

At a recent Living Music and Dance Workshop, organised by VOSA, presenter RICK LAYTON talked with Bronwyn Mitchell about being a music educator.

As a child, Rick did the usual things that form part of many childhood and adolescent musical experiences: he played in a band, sang in a chorus and had private piano lessons. He went on to study music education in college and, after graduating, a job opened up at the Key School in Maryland, USA.

Here he met and trained with Brigitte Warner who had studied with Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman. 'Brigitte became my mentor and changed my life in terms of teaching', Rick says.

'From the moment I was introduced to the Orff Schulwerk approach, I fell in love with it! I loved the xylophones, the movement, the stories and the way literature can be integrated. Most important of all, it was great for kids! Until then I had seen myself initially teaching high school rather

Children need to make music, not just learn about it.

than little kids, but then I saw the value of a sound musical education for children from a young age.'

'If the children begin to make music with 3-note melodies and drones when they are little, they can create (improvise) simple melodies and accompaniments. These "pieces" can, in turn, be used within stories, music plays and dances. As the children grow older, their "pieces" become increasingly more complicated, therefore maintaining age-appropriateness. In turn, the literature and movement become more sophisticated.'

Rick believes passionately in teacher training when it is done correctly. Conferences can inspire teachers and give them ideas to take away, he says, but they don't give the full picture. 'Conferences where we can explore all these facets are wonderful, but teachers are not necessarily taught how to apply this in the classroom. Good teacher training does this.'



So why is the training so important? Isn't it OK for the kids to just have fun in music? 'NO!' Rick is emphatic.

'If there is no joy in the classroom, nothing counts. It can't be only about having fun. There has to be joy and there has to be learning.'

Rick considers himself fortunate to be associated with the Key School, where music and music advocacy are given due importance. About teaching there he says: 'The Key School is a very enlightened school. The general music

program is exclusively Orff Schulwerk. Students in preschool through to Grade 8 have music classes from three to five times per week, and most students have Orff classes every day. The reason so much time is given to music is due to the Orff Schulwerk approach of assimilating music, dance, and literature all within an improvisational emphasis.'

Although he now works with older students, including conducting the school's Renaissance Consort, Chamber Choir, and Upper School Chorus, Rick still feels strongly about children being introduced to a sound musical education from a young age. Children are given a basis on which to build a lifelong love of music in all its forms, and this is what he feels is the most important aspect of advocating for school music programs. 'Children need to make music, not just learn about it. Children in a first grade language arts class don't learn about Shakespeare, they read age-appropriate literature. Similarly, first graders shouldn't be learning about Bach. Instead they need to be making age-appropriate music: simple yet elemental. This is what Orff and Keetman have provided.'

Rick Layton

Rick Layton is Head of the Fine & Performing Arts Department at the Key School in Annapolis, Maryland.

Students have their say about singing at school

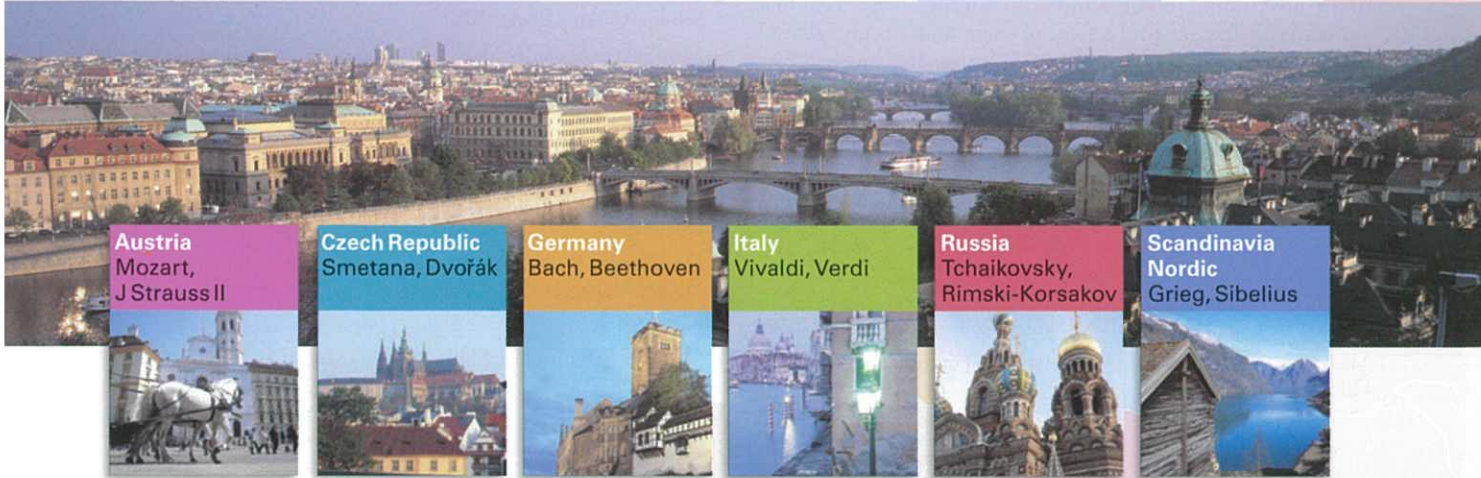
'... singing with everybody [in the school] is a unifying experience' –Tallon

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MUSIC EDUCATORS REWARDED

The recipients of the 2007 National Awards for Excellence in School Music Education were announced by The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Education, Science and Training at the opening ceremony of the XVI Australian Society for Music Education 40th Anniversary National Conference, held in July in Perth.

In making the awards, Minister Bishop said, 'I congratulate these outstanding teachers and school leaders who have made a positive difference to the lives of their students and school communities through their devotion to quality music education. The Australian Government is committed to music education in our schools and I congratulate the teachers and school leaders nominated for these awards.'

2007 Awards

School Leader Awards

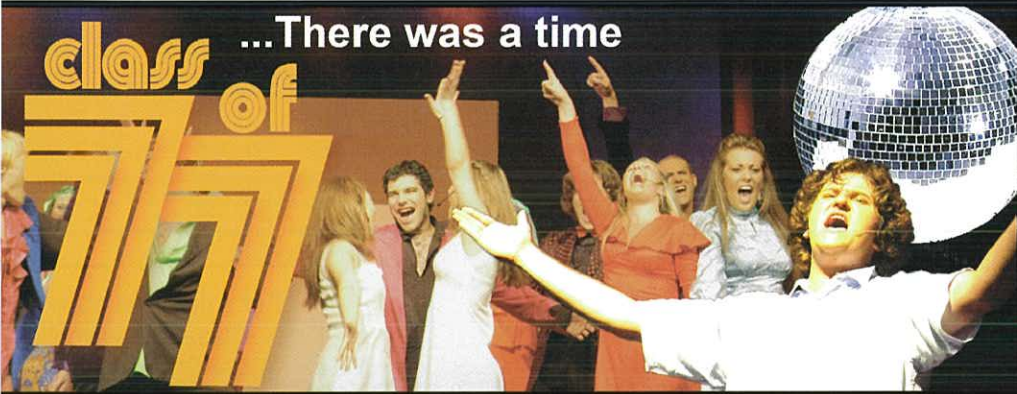
Special Commendation

Dr Geoffrey Shaw, Principal, All Saints' College, Bull Creek, WA
Ms Amanda Bell, Principal, Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Spring Hill, Brisbane, QLD

Teacher Awards

Special Commendation

Ms Julie Mayhew, Music Teacher, Ainslie School, Braddon, ACT
Mrs Karen Carey, Director of Music, MLC School, Burwood, NSW
Mrs Liese Gordon, Head Teacher, Northern Territory Music School, Alice Springs NT
Mrs Susan Gouchee, Director of Performance Music, Canterbury College, Beenleigh, QLD
Mrs Mary-Anne Goyder, Music Specialist, Quinns Beach Primary School, Quinns Rock, WA
Miss Sharee Haberle, Music Specialist, Glenorchy Primary School, Glenorchy, TAS
Mrs Gayle Judd, Music Teacher, Reception-Year2, Mitcham Junior Primary School, Kingswood, SA
Mrs Kerry Martin, Music Specialist Teacher/Instrumental Coordinator, St Francis Xavier's Regional Catholic School, Wynn Vale, SA
Ms Merrilee Mills, Team Leader:Music Advisory Support Team; Project Manager: LYNX Project
Northern Territory Music School, Nightcliff, NT
Mr Peter Schumacher, Music Teacher, Macintyre High School, Inverell, NSW
Mr Michael Travers, Performing Arts/Music Teacher, St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, North Fawkner, VIC



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TECHNOLOGY IN THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Can there be a role in singing for digital technology? As either a value-neutral tool or a positive, transformative influence, says CHRISTINE STOREY, it can offer positive benefits for choral directors prepared to acquire some new skills.

When teachers and conductors decide they wish to use any form of technology, there are complex issues at play: whether they have the skill set required, whether they have access to the technology (including time and financial constraints, physical availability) and whether their educational value assumptions allow part or full integration of technology. Also to be considered is the basic question of what ‘music making’ is, and how it may be altered by the inclusion of new technologies.

Technology in our rehearsal rooms may include many things, from the humble tape recorder (now such dated technology that our students are unlikely to own one) and CD player, to fully integrated web-based learning modules. Contemporary hardware and software is available that facilitates learning modes and strategies that we, as teachers and conductors, have practised for eons. For example, there is software that can change key without changing tempo, or change tempo without changing key; or that individualises orchestration, instrumentation and style. There are available metronomes, tuners, interactive lessons—the list is extensive. The possibilities can be daunting, but functionality remains the key to the success of technology in our rehearsal rooms, and keeps the focus on what we want to accomplish educationally and musically.

Some teachers and conductors view technology solely as a value-neutral tool. From this perspective, some of the technological aspects may help them become more efficient in their individual ways of teaching and rehearsing. Others are learning that web-based and technology-enhanced learning can present many positive outcomes. It may offer possibilities for potentially transforming educational/musical experiences by changing the ways conductors and teachers think about choral and vocal music education. At the very least, enhancing choral rehearsals with web-based learning may assist in shifting the focus away from teacher/conductor-centred paradigms, toward more student/singer-centred models (where learning is more individualised, contextual, critical). Some examples of this may include ‘relating choral music learning/teaching to multiple modalities, critical thinking skills, individualised/independent learning, project-method inquiry, enhanced collaborative/cooperative opportunities.’* Whichever perspective the teacher/conductor comes from, the use of technology in rehearsal can affect the culture of that rehearsal/learning environment. Because of this, it is important that the teacher/conductor has the

technological skills to be in control and make the decisions about how they wish that culture to develop.

Examples of areas in which current online-based technology may be used by vocal and choral directors are:

Diction practice

Some websites have links to the International Phonetic Alphabet and other, context-specific, language pages (also see E-contacts). For challenging languages, conductors can structure ‘exercises, moving from individual phonemes, to words, to sub-phrases, to phrases, to full phrases in rhythm . . . if one anticipates or encounters chorister problems with only specific words or sections of the text, practice can be structured only around such problem areas.’*

Parts practice

MIDI files presented and practised as parts separately or together, can be linked to scores. Several websites contain MIDI files for a wide variety of choral compositions, for example, Silvis Woodshed. There are an increasing number of MIDI files available for individual part learning on the Web. It is always advisable to review and evaluate them individually, as quality (and musical) control is in your hands. You can also record your own files and upload them to your server. Web-based audio files are a useful way for choristers to hear native speakers delivering the text of a composition.

Vocal health and voice care

Use links to university sites, which are often excellent.

Sight singing/reading practice tools

For example, use Kodály tools (Curwen hand signs), obtainable through the various Kodály sites, especially Australia and Canada.

Music theory, aural and analysis

Some free and useful tools include GNU Solfege, Ear Steady, Earpower.com (see E-contacts). Some are programmable to address a student’s weaknesses, or to reflect the skills required for a specific work being studied.

Socio-cultural context research and reflection

Be prepared to surf: explore links from known sites to music/history pages, guest books and online discussions. Actively use your search engine (learn to use ‘advanced search’ functions) and explore known choir/university/educational sites.

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Quizzes, assessment and evaluation pages

Sometimes found on choir/ensemble sites, providing useful feedback to students and teachers alike. These may conform to individual educational rubrics and form part of assessments, both formal and grade-based, or function as self-assessment. They are often password-protected (requiring registration), but archived web pages can sometimes be found by search engine queries.

Information sharing

Perhaps the most common and easiest way to use technology in the vocal and choral studio is by sharing information, usually via the Web. These often include ensemble/studio calendar and syllabus, handbooks, forms, tours and audition information.

Music programs such as Sibelius, Finale, Acid XPress and Aurelia are commonplace in many rehearsal studios and choral classrooms/rehearsals, as are backing tracks (bought/downloaded online). Websites such as those listed below have many resources and links and are almost daily visits for some. The Australian site Music.Play for Life is useful for music advocacy, as is MENC.

Music technology hardware and software can be expensive. There are, however, many free resources to be found; an Internet search will yield a wealth of these. At Earpower.com, for example, you can download free metronomes, ear training and music reading exercises. RehearScore changes keys and shifts tempi of music theatre pieces. PD sessions and conferences can be useful for discovering resources, either by colleague discussion or through formal presentations, so keep an eye (or ear) out.

Awareness, accessibility and professional/skills development remain the issues for voice teachers and choral conductors wishing to integrate new technologies into the studio. However, we cannot deny that technology offers new ways of structuring our rehearsal and non-rehearsal time, as well as having the potential to change the roles, for the better, of both singers and singing leaders. That which is practical and functional is essential to the integration of technology in our rehearsal rooms, thereby maintaining the focus on musical and educational outcomes. **M in A**

Christine Storey

Christine Storey is a choral conductor, voice teacher, singer and adjudicator. She is Head of Choral at Yarra Valley Grammar; Music Director of the Berwick Youth Choir; and co-conductor of the Victorian Honour Choir. She received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship for post-graduate study in Performance (Early Music) at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, where she studied with Emma Kirkby, Nancy Argenta, Philip Pickett and Nigel North. Career highlights include performing in a BBC-TV live-to-air broadcast of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, and the title role in the Australian premiere of Handel's Alceste. Christine has performed and toured in Australia with The Song Company and La Romanesca, and is active in ANCA and local choral activities.

Notes

* James F Daugherty, PhD, Orpheus in the Cyberworld: *Strategies & Implementation of Web-based Electronic Learning for Music Ensembles & Classes*, (n.d.), ChoirOnline, University of Kansas, Division of Music Education & Music Therapy, retrieved April 2007 from <http://web.ku.edu/~cmed/acdapres/index.html>

Key websites visited in the preparation of this article are listed under E-contacts, below. Many other excellent university, choral and vocal websites also were accessed—too many to be specifically cited. The writer acknowledges them with appreciation.

Reference was made to respondent submissions of a preliminary survey of technology use in vocal and choral rehearsals, distributed through ANATS, ANCA and aMUSE.

E-CONTACTS

ACDA American Choral Directors Association: www.acdaonline.org

ANATS Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing: www.anats.org.au

ANCA Australian National Choral Association: www.anca.org.au

ChoralNet: www.choralnet.org

CPDL Choral Public Domain Library: www.cpdll.org

EarPower, EarSteady: www.earpower.com

Florida State University College of Music: <http://music.fsu.edu/choral.htm>

GNU Solfege: www.solfege.org

International Federation for Choral Music: www.ifcm.net

International Phonetic Alphabet and the Sounds of English: www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc-soundsipa.htm

International Phonetic Alphabet in Unicode (UCL): www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/wells/ipa-unicode.htm

Kodály Music Education Institute of Australia: www.kodaly.org.au

Kodály Society of Canada: <http://kodalysocietyofcanada.ca>

MENC National Association for Music Education: www.menc.org

Music.PlayforLife: www.musicplayforlife.org.au

RehearScore: www.mtishows.com/resource_rehearscore.asp

Silvis Woodshed: <http://gasilvis.net>

Voice care/vocal health—various: www.tinyurl.com.au/x.php?87r

Fantastic Voyage—a narrated voyage of the throat with the aid of a videostroboscope: www.tinyurl.com.au/x.php?87t



RECONNECTING WITH MUSIC

Or, ‘I haven’t sung since school days’

For SUE JOHNSON, inspiring creativity in people is a life's work. She helps make music accessible in the community by enabling people to find their 'voice'

Some years ago I was invited to create an improvisation with the audience and massed choir at a concert in Sydney Town Hall. The sound of 2,000 voices creating this instant improvisation was magical. The audience had no idea that they would be expected to sing, but when the piece ended there was a long moment of silence as we took breath to reflect and enjoy the wonder of the moment.

So often people say to me ‘I haven’t sung since school’. Music making seems to get lost for many people once they reach adulthood. Yet we know that creativity is vital to our lives, not only for building community but also for nurturing our souls.

My life’s work focuses on enabling people to access creativity through music making, usually by singing. Voice is immediate and universal, requiring no equipment—just a wish to be involved. I rely on the aural tradition as a direct and effective way of communicating great complexity simply and quickly. I find improvisation, composition and creativity are central to this work. For adults I compose simple songs and chants that are not complex in terms of reading music, but sophisticated enough rhythmically to hold interest and be rich and rewarding to sing.

I direct singing groups in many places and find that people are very keen to reconnect with music, whether it is as a school parents’ group, a club, or even at their place of work. An interesting setting for music making is the boardroom or office. At book publishers Allen & Unwin we have been singing together every week for the past seven years. This

activity arose from a simple suggestion by a manager who observed a number of staff regularly humming and singing at morning tea breaks! It was decided that interested staff members would meet once a week to sing and I was fortunate to be asked to lead the group. Over the last seven years the group has met weekly; their priority is to enjoy the experience and its capability to ease stress, and allow them to express themselves in interesting ways.

Children’s Publishing Director, Rosalind Price, has another perspective on what impact the choir has in Allen & Unwin’s workplace:

‘The experience has been immensely enjoyable and has added a new dimension to our working life. It’s creative, cathartic, energising and fun. It brings people together on an equal footing and engenders trust. It encourages each person to develop their own voice, to listen to others and to aim for harmony. I can’t think of a better basis for work relationships—or for life.’

Unexpected rewards

In these workplace choirs I have seen people laugh, cry and share their stories. Participants come to realise they haven’t lost their access to music and can actively participate in its creation again.

Feeling connected feeds us all and music brings rewards on so many levels, including the opportunity to be heard, the sharing of meaning in the collective activity, and the capability to shed light on who we are and who we might become.



Getting going

Here are some practical ideas and original scores that I hope will inspire ideas for your choirs, students, work colleagues or community choirs. Feel free to compose your own—and to let me know of your progress! (See E-contacts).

Warming up

One of the first things I do in my workshops and with workplace choirs are spontaneous improvisations. I sing a melody and ask the group to echo in unison, then I split them into parts, usually three or four, and bring all voices to the singing circle by improvising melodies and chants that build and cycle. I then move around the circle changing a part at a time. It may include hand claps, stamps, vocal percussion or chanting melodies and sounds. It's a great way to tune into how people are feeling, how the voices are blending, and to focus people into the singing circle. In essence improvisation is a simple thought or idea with infinite possibilities. There is no wrong or right way to do it. So start simple and explore.

Magic

Magic is the simple improvised structure I have led as an effective exercise with small groups, large audiences and massed choirs, in which I divide the audience into three and improvise a counterpoint using a major scale.

To prepare the choir for the improvisation, use hand movements to direct them to sing up and down a major scale slowly in unison, using the sounds air and or.

Sing the scale again, but this time use hand movements to direct them step-wise up or down, improvising a melody by changing direction at any point. Move slowly, or it will be difficult for the choir to anticipate your moves.

Once that is settled, split the voices into two parts. Start each part on the same note then slowly move one part at a time, up or down. Just do a few phrases to demonstrate the idea so the choir can get used to your hand movements, and to holding or moving their note against the other part.

Now divide into three parts, designating them as high, middle and low. When leading the voices up or down, try to keep the three parts within range. Instruct the group to start softly so they can tune into each other and focus on the harmonic movement.

As the conductor and creator of the piece you can weave the parts step-wise up or down, holding the parts to create harmonic tension and release. Improvise and change the way you manipulate the harmonies.

Every time you do it the piece is unique and the result can be a magical three-part counterpoint. If the group is less skilled try a two-part counterpoint.

Chants and vowel sounds

Fugue and *Sun Raise Up* (see scores) explore the power of the

vowel sounds ah, air, ee, oh, and oo. Practising vowels is fundamental to singers of any genre and the interweaving harmonies of the four parts are based on these five core vowel sounds. These chants can simply be sung by choirs as a vocal warm-up, or used as a vehicle over which a soloist improvises melodies. The soloist is encouraged to explore these five vowel sounds; this gives first-time improvisers a simpler starting point and something safe and tangible to work with. Limiting the choices enables the improviser to focus on what they can create within a defined context. There are still many choices to make—length of note, placement, harmony, rhythm, etc.

Both chants illustrate the emotive quality that each vowel sound has. The changing resonance can be used in very powerful ways by singers and help them understand the quality each possesses and how to place them for greatest effect.

Fugue

Fugue is a simple four-part chant as recorded by Coco's Lunch on their 'Blueprint' CD, in which Nicola Eveleigh plays a superb flute solo over the top.

Sun Raise Up

This is a simple chant that builds in dynamic as you cycle around the chant. Change the vowel sounds as directed on the score. You can decide how many rounds to sing before you instruct the choir to change the sound. Invite a soloist to sing an improvisation over the top using the vowel sounds.

The Earth Is In Trouble

This is a simple three-part song that illustrates the joy of placing syncopated melodies against each other to create a sense of swing. The three lines swing against and bounce off each other, at times meeting and at times moving against the other parts. It is a good song to teach to multi-aged choirs.

This was written in February 2007 for a festival at the City of Whittlesea. A massed choir sang the work in a dried-out lake bed, which was a powerful setting. When I taught it while working as artist-in-residence at Wenona Girls School, it was one of the surprise highlights. The students were so willing to offer their best birdcall to highly impressed friends and it was very special to hear the results. You just never know where improvisation may take you!

Sue Johnson

Sue Johnson lectured in improvisation at the Victorian College of the Arts for over a decade. She was co-founder of the internationally acclaimed and award-winning vocal group Coco's Lunch with whom she has toured throughout Europe, Asia, Australia and Canada. Sue's original compositions are performed and recorded by choirs throughout Australia, Canada and the USA and are in the repertoire of Coco's Lunch and Musica Viva's Music in Schools program. With author Elizabeth Honey, she is co-writing a book of new songs (Allen & Unwin, forthcoming 2008). Sue directs workshops and works as an artist-in-residence at festivals, community arts projects, schools and choirs.

Fugue

Composed by Sue Johnson © 2003

Parts enter one at a time: part 3, part 4, part 2, part 1

Part 1
Oo Oo

Part 2
Ah air ee ee Oh

Part 3
Ah air oh Oh

Part 4
Ah Ah yair ee oh Oh

Part 1
Oo

Part 2
Ah air ee ee Oh

Part 3
Ah air oh Oh

Part 4
Ah Ah yair ee oh Oh

This vocal warm up uses five vowel sounds: ah air ee oh oo
 The piece can be sung as a repeated chant with a soloist improvising over the top.
 The soloist may experiment with vowel sounds as a basis for their improvisation or improvise freely.

Enquiries: songs@herwork.net
 Recorded by Coco's Lunch on CD 'Blueprint'.

E-CONTACTS

Sue Johnson: <songs@herwork.net>

Original scores: Original scores for choirs by Sue Johnson and Coco's Lunch are available at www.cocoslunch.com

Sun Raise Up

Composed by Sue Johnson © 2006

Parts enter one at a time: part 1, part 2, part 3, part 4

Part 1
Oo.
Ee.
Air.

Part 2
Oo.
Ee.
Air.

Part 3
Oo.
Ee.
Air.

Part 4
Doom da doom doom doom doom ba doom doom doom doom

This vocal warm up uses five vowel sounds: ah air ee oh oo. Parts enter one at a time as per above. Once settled do two repeats of 'oo', two of 'ee', two of 'air' and then start the cycle again. The piece can be sung as a repeated chant with a soloist improvising over the top. The soloist may experiment with vowel sounds as a basis for their improvisation or improvise freely.

Enquiries: songs@herwork.net

The Earth Is in Trouble

Composed by Sue Johnson © 2007

Swing feel

Part 2
Give me rain in the val - ley___ Give me rain all peace

Part 2
o - ver the land___ The earth is in trou - ble___ This is what I wish for

Part 1
Part 1 enters
Give me rain peace in the val - ley___ Give me

Part 2
Change is in___ our hands___ Give me rain in the val - ley___ peace

Part 1
rain peace all o - ver the land___ The earth is in trou - ble]

Part 2
Give me rain all o - ver the land___ The earth is in trou - ble]

Enquiries: songs@herwork.net

THE SEVEN SISTERS OF THE DREAMTIME

A song for schools from Music In Action

We commissioned composer STEPHEN LALOR to provide a song suitable for classroom use. Here he gives an insight into the composition process, the song, and how it could be used in different ways.

The purpose of this original song is for use in classroom performance, for exploration of the composition process, and as a basis for arrangement and development. *Music in Action* asked for around 32 bars of melody line and words, suitable for upper primary/lower secondary students and their teachers.

Getting started

How to start composing? With such an open format, it's often difficult to get started: too much freedom. That's why templates, from sonata form to 12-bar blues, are so popular: they provide a framework. Much of my own creative process is unconscious, but the following steps explain how the process worked, and gives some ideas for students to try out their own composing.

Step 1: Ideas What shall I write about? I spend quite a bit of time with the idea of writing a song in the back of my mind, and have probably a few unfinished ideas/sketches either written, recorded or in my head. After a while, ideas come if I don't push it. This time, after a few dead ends, I came back to one of my favourite stories: the Aboriginal Dreamtime story of the Seven Sisters—the story of why a particular star formation (known to Europeans as the Pleiades) came into being. It's found with variations among Aboriginal people from all around Australia.

Step 2: Form I tend to let the form of songs look after themselves, based on years of listening, writing and performing. If you haven't composed much, I'd find a song you like and use its structure (phrase lengths, sections, rate of chord change etc) as a model. Most things I write come out of 'mental doodling'. This starts in my head, and when it gets more formed, I might go to an instrument before writing it down.

I play and listen to a lot of music from eastern Europe where 7/8 time is much used; it has a flow all of its own. So I started composing this song in 7/8, and although the final version is in 4/4, there remain some traces of 7/8 in the opening phrases. I decided to change to 4/4 because if you're not used to playing and singing in 7/8 it can be very difficult to pick up, and I didn't want to create a headache for students and teachers. And while Aboriginal music doesn't tend to have a set metre, 7/8 is certainly more suggestive of the music of a specific part of Europe, and wouldn't 'fit' the subject matter. Common time is more, well, common—i.e. more or less universal.

Step 3: Form Taking the original phrases and making something that has shape. Phrase 1 (bars 3 and 4) is answered by phrase 2 (bars 5 and 6); i.e. a kind of call and response. Repeated for phrases 3 and 4. Tonality/chord choices are suggested by the melody. For contrast, I made the phrases in the next section (bars 13–21) shorter and less flowing.

Step 4: Lyrics The title gets worked into the lyrics every second phrase, as it's so sonorous. This is also a good technique to use in a song like this, which doesn't have a clear-cut chorus. I just noted down the main features of the story from memory and a quick Net search, and wove these into the story in a more-or-less sequential telling of the story.

Step 5: Development Having arrived at the basic song form by the end of the first section (bar 21), this was used again in the second section (bars 22–38), allowing the story to unfold. If there was the option of composing a longer song, this is the point where you could insert either a bridge or instrumental solo based on basic chord structure, or both.

Step 6: Bringing the song to a close Rather than employing the whole section again, only the opening phrases were used, with further emphasis of the title.

Tonality

The use of the natural minor scale rather than harmonic minor is just a matter of taste: an F# major chord may work better for some ears instead of the F# minor.

Arrangement options

Many are available, such as:

- Choice of key: I wrote the first draft in D minor, but I have found that when not sung by specialist choirs, getting up over an octave above middle C can be problematic for reasons of range comfort. I dropped it down to B minor; but a higher key would be fine, depending on the voices used. The final section (from bar 39) could be in a higher key (e.g. C minor or D minor) for a final lift.
- Instruments: to emphasise the Aboriginal subject matter, yidarka/didgeridoo (B drone) and clapsticks would fit.

Other options

- Several points suggest harmonies for a second, higher vocal line.
- Consider the addition of simple idiophone percussion, classroom xylophone etc.
- Choirs can be split into 2 groups for the question and answer phrases e.g. at the beginning. Try improvising counter-melodies to accompany the song.

The Seven Sisters of the Dreamtime

Words and Music by Stephen Lalor

$\text{♩} = 120$
Bm
mf
 From the far end of ___ the Mil - ky Way the

5 **Em** **Bm**
 Se - ven Sis - ters of the Dream - time, Sent to

8 **Em**
 earth to make_ a bet - ter place the Se - ven Sis - ters of the

11 **Bm** **Em** **Bm**
 Dream - time, Made the flow - ers, ___ made the trees, made the

15 **Em** **A** **Bm** **Em**
 an - i - mals and birds that sing. ___ All was well, all was

18 **Bm** **Em** **F#m**
 fine, on the earth and in the sky. ___ Then one

22 **Bm** **Em**
 day, when ga - ther - ing their food, some ho - ney ants ___ that tast - ed

25 **Bm**
 good, The young - est sis - ter went ___ off to a creek to get some

The Pleiades star cluster. Photo by Joe Cauchi, NSW

© 2007

28 **Em** **Bm** **Em**



wa - ter so they could have a drink. And there a man caught her

31 **Bm** **Em** **A** **Bm**



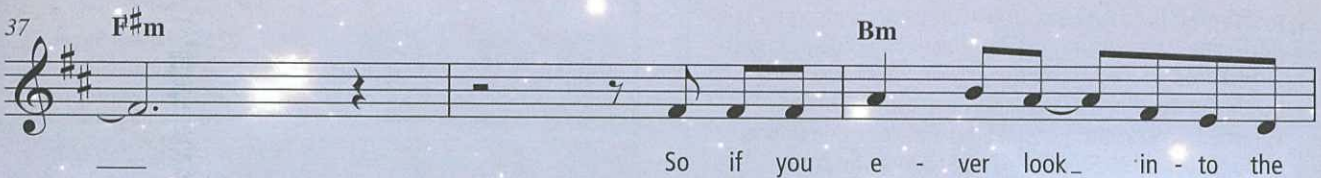
eye, they fell in love, the sis - ters cried. They knew she'd

34 **Em** **Bm** **Em**



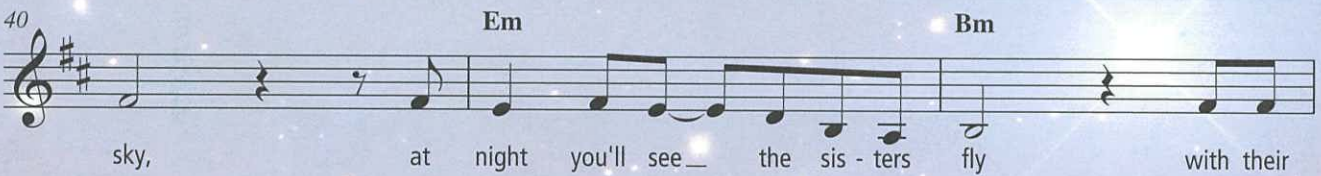
ne - ver go back with them, she'd stay on earth stay with her man.

37 **F#m** **Bm**



So if you e - ver look in - to the

40 **Em** **Bm**



sky, at night you'll see the sis - ters fly with their

43 **Em** **Bm**



sis - ter trail - ling far be - hind, the Se - ven Sis - ters of the Dream-time.

47 **Em** **Bm**



The stars, the Sis - ters of the Dream - time,

50 **Em** **Bm**



rit. the Se - ven Sis - ters of the Dream - time.

Links to wider curriculum

There are options here for astronomy, anthropology, Australian history, religion/traditional beliefs, drawing/painting.

About copyright

While the copyright in the song belongs to the composer, schools may make copies of the song for education use, under the AMCOS Schools Photocopying Licence. For details of this arrangement, check the AMCOS website.

Backing track

Teachers will find a backing track for the song on the *MiA* website for *three months only*, during which time usage of the track is free. The track will be removed on 31 October 2007.

Stephen Lalor

Stephen Lalor studied music at the University of NSW, and did post-graduate composition studies at the Tchaikovsky Conservatorium, Kiev. His compositions cover a wide range of styles and genres and have been performed across the country. Stephen is also an active performer, appearing regularly with the SSO and with world music and Aboriginal groups. His works are published and performed in Europe and North America. In addition, Stephen prepares educational material for the NSW Board of Studies and others.

E-CONTACTS

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The youngest participants in a San Francisco Music Week sing "America" at Excelsior Playground, circa 1925. Photograph by Haas-Schreiner, International. From the collection of the Music Educators National Conference Historical Center, University of Maryland, College Park. Used with permission.

Students have their say about singing at school

'... choir is not just a musical experience—it's about character building too: emotional connection, fun, new skills ...'—Tallon

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REMEMBERING THE MOMENT

There are a number of powerful techniques at hand to help choirs to make music better, as KATE ALBURY explains.

I can still remember sitting on the floor in a backstage room at Aspley State High School Hall. My white socks were pulled up with the garters carefully placed underneath so a short gold ribbon hung down, and my hair was scraped back into eye-wateringly tight ponytails. I was nine years old. We were competing in the Pine Rivers Music Contest.

More particularly I can remember closing my eyes and seeing a leafy green valley sweeping down towards a monastery, and hearing the beautiful sounds of monks singing in the distance. I'm sure there was a touch of *Sound of Music* images in my visualisation. Our teacher was whispering each line of the song, evoking wonderful images that we had carefully created for ourselves during rehearsals at our own Bracken Ridge State School.

Once on stage before a large audience, almost blinded by spotlights, we could have been thrown by nervousness, but we knew we were to look at only one person—our music teacher and conductor, Mrs Althea Barker. Thanks to our backstage preparation, upon the familiar piano introduction 50 primary school boys and girls were transported once again to that imaginary scene. The piece was *In a Monastery Garden* by Albert Ketèlbey. We were really making music—and I was never to forget the feeling.

Years later, I stood in that same backstage room as the conductor of a middle school boys' choir competing in the

Queensland Youth Music Awards. While busy reminding boys to tuck shirts in and to walk on stage with a 'mysterious smile', I wondered how 50 students had once been crammed into that tiny room, and truly appreciated the skills of Althea Barker to command such focused behaviour from primary school students.

But I also recalled the silent meditative moment of over twenty years before and was almost ashamed. Had I remembered to do that same level of preparation with my own middle and high school choirs? And how important it is to instil that 'mind picture' in my singers to help them connect with each piece? In all the choral workshops and conducting seminars I had attended, I had worked on my cues and cut-offs. I knew how to conduct in 4, 3, 2 and even 5 and 7 time; I knew fifty different clever warm-ups to encourage good breathing, posture, vowel shape, diction and choral tone. I was feeling quite pleased with myself and how my choirs were sounding—until I found myself standing in that small room and realised that I had almost forgotten why I started loving singing and choral music so much. How had I not remembered the importance of that moment of visualisation—that moment which almost certainly directed my own career path and love for choral music, which has endured and grown into a passion in my adult life.

I believe the use of images is a powerful tool in engaging children and young people with each piece of music. As a

middle school classroom teacher I find it a valuable tool to use pieces that have a story to tell, in order to open students' minds to the beauty of music. Music is a wonderful way of connecting students to the abstract; not every piece has been written with specifics in mind. Learning experiences should be open enough for students to decide for themselves whether they link each piece to a story or image.

No amount of emotion or sincerity will save an unprepared choir, or one without proper technique. I am not advocating overly emotional or sentimental performances, where every single word seems to be emphasised, or the final ritardando is extended forever until the last boring, inevitable chord. However, if you have never had a discussion with your choir members about the 'mind pictures' they have when they sing, I encourage you to try it and hear the difference.

This discussion should lead to decision-making about a whole range of musical elements such as dynamics, tempi, facial expressions, word stress and even overall choral tone. I will often ask my choirs to make a decision about a particular phrase. For example: 'Which word should be emphasised here?', then we will try the phrase several different ways with the choir deciding what makes the most sense. I guarantee your choir is more likely to remember such things next time they sing because they have been encouraged to really think about them; they also appreciate their opinions being heard.

Many times I have witnessed choral directors use the idea of linking the meaning of the text to musical interpretation. In 2006 I observed Heather Buchanan conducting a male choir working on *Sing Me To Heaven* by Daniel E Gawthrop; a wonderful piece with mesmerising words:

'If you would comfort me, sing me a lullaby. / If you would win my heart, sing me a love song. / If you would mourn me and bring me to God, sing me a requiem, sing me to heaven.'

Heather talked to those high school boys about the meaning behind each line, and asked them questions such as 'is a lullaby the same as a love song, or a requiem?' She challenged them to sing each of those words differently. The result was a very measured response with carefully nuanced phrase shaping.

Watching Christopher Kiver working with the well-known Brisbane choir Birralee Blokes was another lesson. Christopher uses many different physical gestures that he will also ask the students to do to achieve a desired effect. He suddenly stopped mid-rehearsal and asked the choristers to tell him something of the character they were singing about: 'What was he wearing? How old was he? What had his life been like?' I have since used this technique many times, and find that it can help a choir achieve the different choral sounds necessary for different pieces. For example, they might sing in the character of an English schoolboy singing to his sweetheart, but in the next piece they might be an African-American slave singing about freedom. In my opinion a choir singing these two pieces should look—and definitely sound—different.

I know very well that it's too easy to get caught up in choir administration tasks. You can find yourself getting disillusioned that your job seems to be all about nagging students who are late with forms or have missed another rehearsal without letting you know. The little frustrations and time-killers are seemingly endless: stamping and filing music, sweet-talking people to set your choir risers up, booking buses, organising accompanists, printing rehearsal schedules and planning performance opportunities. It is difficult to be inspiring when feeling weighed down by all the 'non-musical' tasks in our jobs. Then comes the heartbreaking groan from seemingly ungrateful students when you announce the next piece to be rehearsed—one that you have carefully selected during hours of sifting through choral repertoire!

In these moments I challenge you to remember what or who first excited you about choral singing. Don't underestimate the importance of your own influence as inspiration in the lives of your students, even if clear feedback may not be evident. Our job is to be the best we can, and to encourage our students to become story-tellers through our art form.

For at least four years the Bracken Ridge State School Choir was unbeaten in every choral eisteddfod they entered, and I'm sure that as a participant I loved the thrill of hearing our school name called out as the winners at the end of the night. However, that is not what has stayed in my memory. Instead I remember the power of the music; I remember those images that I was evoking when I sang my heart out; I remember the feeling of pride in the car on the way home as my parents told me how great we sounded. And, most of all, I remember that small, dusty room in which an amazing teacher changed my life. **M in A**

Kate Albury

Kate Albury is dedicated to encouraging young people to engage with choral music. Currently Choral Director and middle school Music Co-ordinator at Brisbane Grammar School, Kate regularly conducts five school ensembles ranging from a treble choir for middle school students to a 70-voice TTBB ensemble. Kate is currently secretary of the Queensland committee of the Australian National Choral Association; she has toured to Europe with choirs, and enjoys working as a conductor of choral workshops in the South East Queensland area. Kate recently completed a Master of Music Studies, majoring in Choral Conducting.

ALTHEA BARKER worked at Bracken Ridge State School from 1981 to 1987. She passed away in 1988 without knowing the influence she was to have on Kate's career and love for music.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA EXAMINES ITS PROGRAM

The results of the recent review of the South Australian Instrumental Music Service have just been announced. This program currently provides instrumental music tuition to around 9,000 students in South Australia.

Key findings of the review include:

- Maintenance of the current budget allocation to the program
- Updating the design of the program to reflect fairer access as identified in the Examination, and recommendations from the National Review of School Music Education and international best practice
- Provision of whole class instrumental music learning at Year 5, with opportunity to continue in Years 6 and 7, enabling access for some 28,000 students
- Year 5 teaching will involve team teaching by the class teacher and specialist music teacher
- Different approaches to introducing music making from Reception to Year 4 to be trialled
- A PD program will be provided for staff and schools to support the introduction of the new program
- Small group tuition to be phased out, with current allocations to high schools to be reduced by approximately 20% per annum for the next five years

Clearly there are details yet to be resolved and announced, including provision of instruments and future staff arrangements, but this major change will be phased in from the beginning of 2008.

WANT TO COMPLAIN? JOIN A CHOIR

For those who like the idea of creative complaining, a choir's just the place for you! In Helsinki and Birmingham, there are Complaints Choirs that will accommodate most comers. To see a sample, log onto YouTube for a snapshot of their styles. Or get involved with our very own Australian version – Melbourne Complaints Choir. Worth a look when you need a breather from real choir rehearsals, or when you want to vent frustration.

Students have their say about singing at school

'... our teacher has a vision, to create something with our choir' – Marc



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WIDENING THE CHORAL LANDSCAPE

Bringing community singing opportunities to these young people involved changing a life direction. JULIE CHRISTIANSEN followed her instinct—and hundreds of voices have since found homes in the Birralee family of choirs. —Story by Harley Mead

Birralee's Artistic Director, Julie Christiansen OAM, has had a significant impact on choral musical across Australia. Her generosity to share knowledge, musical experiences and the joy of choral singing seems endless.

Julie's working life started at 16, when she became a teacher's aide in Gold Coast schools. Although a self-taught singer and guitarist with no formal music training, this provided an opportunity to work with small groups of children, teaching them songs by rote. But it was not to be the start of her career in music: for the next 20 years Julie worked as a nurse, with her music only finding expression through church activities.

However, a love of music has a way of getting out. Julie felt more passionate about making music with children in the community than about nursing, so more and more of her time was dedicated to finding ways to work with students from state schools and listening to the choirs that were around. Asked how this work began, Julie says simply that she had 'a burning desire from within'. Realising that there was no opportunity in her community for young people to sing in a supportive environment, in 1995 she created her first group, Westside Youth Choir, with 50 voices. A musical journey began that has widened the landscape of choral singing.

a love of music has a way of getting out

Soon there was a need to incorporate the ever-growing number of children wanting to be involved from all over Brisbane—so Westside became Birralee, and one choir soon became six: The Brisbane Birralee Voices, The Birralee Blokes, The Birralee Singers, The Birralee Juniors, The Birralee Piccolos and Resonance of Brisbane. Today, choristers from age five to 26-plus are involved in the Birralee choirs, and auditioned singers can find a place in the Birralee family that will suit their ages and skills. Birralee gives every singer access to perform good music, lead by great conductors and fine accompanists.

As well as international touring, which demands that Birralee choristers reach ever-new levels of attainment and learning, there are recordings and performances, an OAM for their director and—for The Birralee Blokes—receipt of the ABC Classic FM inaugural Choir of the Year Award 2006. These



ongoing achievements tell us that in Brisbane, community singing opportunities for young people are in good hands.

Having attended to her own professional development through training in conducting with Dr John Nixon at the Queensland Conservatorium and in workshops with Professor Rodney Eichenberger (USA), Julie has a developed view of what constitutes a high quality choral sound; of repertoire available for varying choral needs; and of the skills and support needed to elicit the best results. This combination gives the Birralee choirs their unique sound—and her singers a great choral experience.

Julie works with some of the finest choral musicians in Queensland including Paul Holley, Justine Favell, Petrina Lewis, and numerous guest clinicians. In addition, she sees the need to nurture and collaborate with local composers to provide repertoire that is relevant to, and stimulating for, her choirs.

A number of principles inform Julie Christiansen's work as Artistic Director of Birralee. They are, to:

- Operate with integrity.
- Encourage others with a similar passion.
- Prepare for the future, including having a succession plan.
- Learn budgeting and financing to ensure a feasible and viable future.
- Surround the organisation with good colleagues to inspire and support.
- Support the Australian choral music scene.
- Support Australian composers, as they give a rich insight into our sense of identity.
- Ensure staff have respect for each other and are supportive.
- Remember that music can unify.
- Go with one's instinct.
- Choose performances that are enriching for both the singers and the families.
- Recognise that choral music is not only about the singers, but also about sharing across communities and cultures.
- Remember that the singing experience must be a joyful one.

Today, Julie Christiansen is known around the country—not as a nurse, but as one who has shaped community choirs, developed a joy for singing throughout south-east Queensland, and showcased the results internationally. She is increasingly involved in managing the six choirs and 300 choristers of the Birralee family, but to make sure that the singing experiences she envisaged years ago are continued, Julie still finds time to conduct. **M in A**

SONGS OF THE WORLD

The theme is 'singing' and the search was on for something special (alas, not without a struggle!). There's a seeming paucity of singing resources on the Web, but digging a little deeper, ANDREW SWAINSTON uncovered some gems. Yes, nothing can substitute for a genuine voice teacher—every school should have at least one—but don't think that gets you off the hook ...

Mama Lisa's World

This is a collection of thousands of traditional folk songs from over a hundred countries around the world. But wait, there's more. Teachers, musicians, embassies, and cultural organizations from around the world donated the songs. All songs come with a standard score; lyrics in the original language plus English and French, and most include at least one MP3, RealAudio or MIDI track recorded by a teacher, musician, or group of children. These recordings are generally 'authentic' and of good quality. The site has obvious appeal to primary music teachers and classroom generalists but plenty to offer the secondary music teacher (not to mention the LOTE teacher). **Go to:** www.mamalisa.com/world/index.html

Oxfam Cool Planet Global Music Lesson Plans

Lesson plans and resources for singing, from primary through to secondary level, among a range of other excellent classroom music units. Songs from Mexico, Botswana, Congo, Jamaica and South Africa and other places are compared, contrasted and performed. **Go to:** www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/oxjam/index.htm

Folk Music of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and America

Folk and traditional music and popular songs with lyrics, tune information and history behind the folksongs and ballads. Includes Francis J. Child Ballads and Sea Shanties. Extensive list of traditional songs with MIDI files often in three- and four-part harmony. **Go to:** www.contemplator.com/folk.html

French as a Second Language

A compilation of fun French kids songs, lyrics and recordings, and some cheerful beats and rap chants, which kids seem to enjoy. Access (including recordings) under Printout, French Songs and Poems.

Go to: <http://fslactivities.sd61.bc.ca/songs.html>

Australian Folk Songs

This site provides an extensive list of Australian folk songs (you know—shearers, sheep and bushrangers, settlers and convicts), along with scores and MIDI files.

Go to: <http://folkstream.com/index.html>

Morganics

From the bloke who recorded the Wilcannia Mob's *Down River*, one of Triple J's hottest hits in 2003. Includes recordings from Bali's Ubud High school, the NT's Mt Liebig aboriginal community, and Tanzanian street kids. **Back into the site from:** www.morganics.info/live

Vocalist

Describing itself as 'the singers resource that helps you learn to sing!', this highly rated music education site is for 'singers, vocalists, singing teachers and students of voice of all ages,

standards and styles'. It has articles and advice on such topics as breathing, posture, ear training, sight reading, diction and timing. **Go to:** www.vocalist.org.uk/ or back in through a page dedicated to singing exercises and scales complete with MIDI file recordings to get you going:

Go to: www.vocalist.org.uk/vocal_scales.html

Choir of Hard Knocks

Official site with some interesting video of the choir performing and discussing their work.

Go to: <http://abc.net.au/tv/hardknocks/video/default.htm>

CyberBass: Vocal Exercises and Warm-ups

Cyberbass is a free service which offers a 'collection of choral scores (mainly classical) converted to MIDI format for play back on your computer' and which is 'used by over 500 choirs around the world'. For extensive sets of vocal warm-up exercises for group or solo recordings (MIDI files), basic warm-up 1 and 2, Breathing, Timing, Runs and Turns, Vibrato exercises.

Go to: www.cyberbass.com/content/vocal_warmups.htm

Music at School

This major music education resource website from the UK offers around 30 extensive units of work for Years 7–12 classroom music, including the study of vocal music/singing on a theoretical and practical basis. Other units include 'Gospel' and 'Opera', both Year 8, and 'West Side Story' and 'Song Writing' at Year 9. Well worth checking out.

Go to: www.musicatschool.co.uk/worksheets.htm

For schemes of work go to:

www.musicatschool.co.uk/schemeofwork.htm

Teachers TV

Four brilliant programs on singing in school aimed mainly at primary level, but with plenty of relevance to early secondary levels.

Inspirations—The School is Alive A revealing look at the benefits of whole-school singing: 'This programme looks at how whole-school singing can improve children's behaviour, raise esteem and help to develop a strong sense of community.'

Go to: <http://www.teachers.tv/video/3117>

Singing for teachers Strategies in the Classroom, in a real school.

Go to: www.teachers.tv/video/2550

KS1/2 Music for Pupils—Three Songs.

Go to: www.teachers.tv/video/2558

KS1/2 Music—Singing for Teachers, an INSET (in service) Workshop: **Go to:** www.teachers.tv/video/2549

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MⁱⁿA

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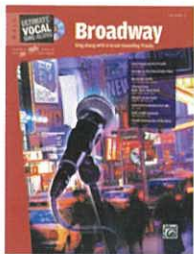


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The Language Of Song, by Heidi Pegler and Nicola-Jane Kemp



ABRSM examiners and professional singers have written a graded series of songbooks that provide classic song repertoire, carefully selected to develop the vital skills required to sing in a foreign language. Invaluable for singers of any age, exploring international song repertoire up to university and college level.

Born To Sing, by Elisabeth Howard and Howard Austin *Book, 4 CDs & DVD*

This voice training program includes four CDs that focus on techniques such as power, range expansion, vibrato control, volume, dynamics and pitch.

The Jazz Singer's Handbook, by Michele Weir *Book & CD*

This Handbook provides an inspiring and practical window of insight into the world of professional jazz singing. The writer has distilled her experiences and observations into two handbook sections: the artistry and the mastery of singing jazz.

Young Voiceworks—36 Songs for Young Singers, by Jo McNally

A great collection of songs and vocal activities to help young singers (age 5–7) and their leaders develop healthy voices for a lifetime of singing. Accessible and fun, the songs explore basic musical concepts and make up a 'working repertoire'.

All Together! Teaching music in groups



An excellent resource for instrumental and singing teachers who teach in groups. Covers approaches to group work, specific skills, links with instrumental and curriculum and practical strategies for pupils. Together! celebrates the value of group teaching in today's music curriculum.

FROM AMPD

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Designed to give you the confidence to perform in public using well known songs. Written for instrumentalists, each book contains the same 11 songs and is supported by a backing CD which has 2 versions of each track.

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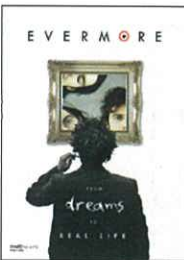


On A Clear Night, by Missy Higgins

Missy's new album retains the hallmarks of her earlier work - irresistible melodies and 'arrow through the heart' lyrics delivered by a voice that clearly means it. Presents all the songs from the album in PVG format.

Young Modern, by Silverchair

Silverchair's fifth album is the long-awaited successor to 2002's Diorama. Presented in Multiscore, this format shows musicians all of the main significant lines. As well as this, the entire track is presented with a keyboard part, vocal line and guitar chord symbols.



From Dreams To Real Life, by Evermore

A compilation of 10 tracks taken from the band's albums and EPs. Presented in Multiscore, all of the significant lines are shown in guitar tab along with the keyboard part, vocal line and guitar chord symbols for the whole album.

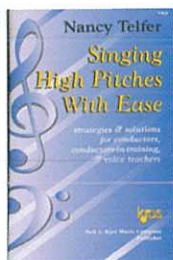
FROM ENCORE MUSIC DISTRIBUTORS

Kjos Choral Resources

Successful Performing Book 1, by Nancy Telfer



Helps choirs achieve a higher standard of performance. Concise and inspiring weekly lessons provide instruction in a variety of technical and expressive skills. Each book included two years' worth of lessons. The conductor's edition provides comprehensive information for creative rehearsal ideas, score interpretation and concerts.



Singing High Pitches With Ease, by Nancy Telfer

Contains strategies and solutions for conductors, conductors-in-training and voice teachers.

Singing in Tune, by Nancy Telfer

Geared towards conductors, conductors-in-training, and voice teachers, it also serves as an invaluable resource for the individual

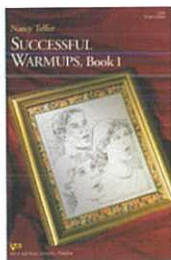
singer wishing to achieve good intonation. It provides concrete strategies and solutions to help singers improve their intonation.

One-Minute Theory, by Ronald Slabbinck & Holly Shaw-Slabbinck

Teaches the essentials of music theory without cutting into valuable rehearsal time. The curriculum, structured as a collection of one-minute lessons, is designed to target issues of music literacy specific to the choral classroom.

Successful Sight Singing, by Nancy Telfer

Singers Edition Books 1 & 2, Teachers Edition Books 1 & 2
Progressively develop the basics of rhythm and pitch, as well as skills such as finding cues. Appropriate for fourth grade through adult singers.



Successful Warmups, by Nancy Telfer
Singers Edition Books 1 & 2, Conductors Edition Books 1 & 2

Helps bring focus and organisation to choral warm-ups. A wealth of materials for all ages helps singers develop vocal agility and better tone quality.

Mayhew Publications

Giving Voice, by David Hill, Hilary Parfitt and Elizabeth Ash

This book will prove invaluable in developing your training skills, giving you the confidence to bring out the very best in your singers.

Warm-up Rounds for Choirs, by Clive Walkley
50 More Warm-up Rounds for Choirs, by Clive Walkley

The 29 rounds in this useful book are ideal for warmup session, serving to settle the voices through controlled breathing, open throats, clear vowel sounds and expressive phrasing. An essential resource for the choir director's shelf.

Teaching Adults to Sight-Sing, by John Bertalot

Full of sound practical advice, teaching tips and words of wisdom for choir directors. Includes 32 short productive sessions of immediately practical ideas.

How to be a Successful Choir Director, by John Bertalot

A distillation of the author's experience of training choirs over half a century. It addresses all the most common problems associated with choir direction and proposes easily understood and actioned solutions.

LOCAL PUBLISHERS

From CURRENCY PRESS:

The Singing Voice: An Owner's Manual, by Pat Wilson

Full of hints and short-cuts essential to anyone who is a professional singer, actor-singer or for anyone embarking on a singing career. Shows how to keep the voice in good condition and how to tackle the tough world of auditions, rehearsals, tours and much more.

From DIVA PUBLICATIONS:

Vocalises and Exercises for Beginners, by Amelia Peri

These vocalises and exercises are designed for the beginner. They have been written primarily in the medium voice range, but may be transposed if required.

A World of Folk Songs, Compiled and arranged by Sophie Lin & Harold Behr

Compiled primarily as an introduction to the classic singing languages for beginning voice students and including foreign languages at the very beginning of vocal training, so that the student becomes increasingly comfortable with both the pronunciation and meaning of the new languages.

From LINDA GEORGE & STEVE VERTIGAN

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A must-have package of essential skills, warm-ups and pieces for every contemporary singer.

FROM HAL LEONARD

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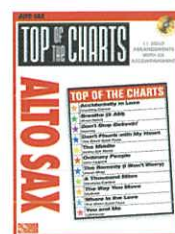
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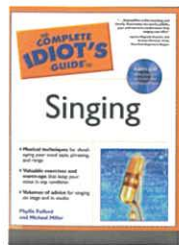
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EVENTS

Welcome to Music Sing, Jam & Jive

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La Trobe University, Bendigo

Details: www.welcometomusic.net
or 1300 769 803

Brisbane Music workshops

Two workshops with Susie Davies-Splitter & Phil Splitter
'Sing, Jam & Jive', Friday 3 August (Primary)
'Welcome to Music', Saturday 4 August (Early childhood)

Salvation Army, Stafford

Details: www.welcometomusic.net
or 1300 769 803

Sibelius 5 Tour

An Australia-wide tour to launch Sibelius 5 has been announced. Sibelius invites all music educators to attend the launch in their capital city.

Sessions will run from August 2 to 23 as follows:

Brisbane (Aug 2), Sydney (Aug 3), Adelaide (Aug 6), Melbourne (Aug 9), Hobart (Aug 10), Launceston (Aug 11) and Canberra (Aug 23).

<http://www.sibelius.com/products/sibelius>

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FROM RODE

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The Podcaster from RØDE Microphones has recently been awarded a prestigious Australian Design Award. RØDE's Podcaster is a unique and innovative consumer product that has filled a need in the world's fastest growing new-media experience – audio podcasting.

FROM SIBELIUS

Sibelius 5

Sibelius Software announces Sibelius 5, including new features include such as new built-in sounds, VST & Audio Units support and the groundbreaking Ideas Hub.

Ideas Hub makes it easy for users to capture, tag, find and bring together their musical ideas. Ideas Hub also comes pre-loaded with over 2000 professionally-written ideas that cover all genres of music, from classical through to hip-hop. These are perfect for inspiring music students, and for users wishing to try their hand at new styles of music.

New built-in sounds & playback with full VST & Audio Units support. Playback is handled by Kontakt Player 2, the latest version with much improved performance. Further improvement to playback is SoundWorld™, a revolutionary new way of categorizing sounds that ensures Sibelius always chooses the most suitable sound available on any device.

Panorama offers a clear, wide view of music that enables faster composition, easier revisions and, in education, clearer analysis of entire pieces. Sibelius 5 also offers many new plugins, including tools for splitting, joining and modifying tuplets, cleaning up played-in music, fitting music to video and transforming one scale into another, for example minor to pentatonic. The total number of available plugins for Sibelius is now over 80, and with Sibelius 5, users can now undo plugins.



FROM DYNAMIC MUSIC



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Music Composition Toolbox

by Hindson, Barbeler & Blom

Published by Science Press. Review by Doris Pavlovic

The 2007 debut of *Music Composition Toolbox*, a textbook/workbook by Matthew Hindson, Damian Barbeler, and Diana Blom, shows teaching experience in the classroom transformed into publication: a program of well-developed and structured topics that collectively work towards the goal of explaining and breaking down the creative process into a simplified language of musical components, processes and applications.

The book is unique in that it confidently presents a wide focus on Australian content, and contemporary music. Perhaps this is not a reflection of the direction of composition topics endorsed by the NSW Board of Studies only, but also of the work of Australian composers and educators who are creating their own unique musical domain with a fresh approach, originality and creativity. This in turn makes the language of composition accessible as a creative musical art form to students.

Music Composition Toolbox contains modules, music score excerpts and CD recordings, an appendix and a copy of Finale SongWriter 2005 software.

Modules There are 21 modules organising lessons into a logical succession of topics and subheadings, with the flexibility for use either in the prepared order, or by topics suiting the program plan. Content can be applied to teaching one-to-one, to small groups and larger classrooms.

Each module presents a variety of composition techniques and processes accompanied by visual and audio examples of music scores from the authors and other Australian and non-Australian sources. Well-structured exercises enhance each topic's processes, enabling students to actively participate in a prepared paradigm, followed by their own creative applications.

Music score excerpts and audio CD Well-illustrated musical excerpts visually and technically heighten understanding of the topic content. Further consolidation on the topic with the musical excerpt is provided by good quality audio examples. All musical excerpts are well-documented, providing the name of the composer, composition title, and year published.

The appendix Includes not only materials discussed in the chapters but also supplementary materials that will be of use to the student of composition when seeking greater detail and options in notation, instrumental ranges and editing.

Appendix 1 covers general and specific instrumental symbols, terms and techniques mostly applicable to contemporary music, in particular notation of musical symbols, and technical definitions of terms and techniques.

Appendix 2 covers instrumental and vocal ranges, as well as instructions for transposition instruments.

Appendix 3 introduces the dos and don'ts of notation and editing, geared towards understanding the importance of visual and

musical clarity of content, and the standards involved in a formal presentation of a music composition work.

Finale SongWriter

2005 This is introductory software containing professional editing tools for young composers, with a user manual, tutorials and instrumental templates.

Who is this book most suited for?

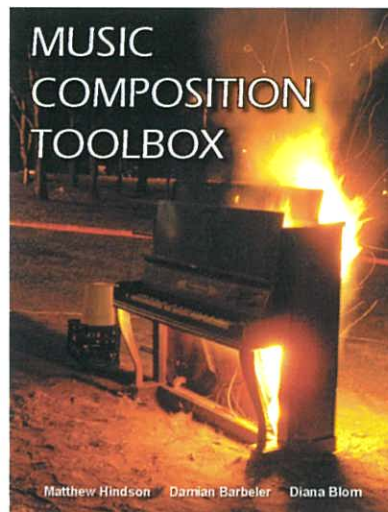
The modules and aids presented in *Music Composition Toolbox* are sufficiently comprehensive to serve the student of composition prospectively within the high school age group, but it could also be a refresher aid for first year tertiary students with a composition minor.

The book is well-structured and written within a language of conceptual clarity and simplicity. If musically literate high school students endeavored to attempt studying the modules on their own, they would be drawn in by the ease and clarity with which the ideas are explained, the creativity of the overall music-composition paradigm, all conveniently followed up in the musical illustrations. Furthermore, the student is immediately engaged into the simplicity of the follow-up exercises. Hence, at no point will the student be confused, dissuaded or bored.

One can see that by the end of each module students will be able to reflect with confidence in their own understanding, abilities and prospective creative ideas and applications. Teachers will enjoy using the workbook for classroom activities, or as a preparation aid.

Congratulations to the authors, Matthew Hindson, Damian Barbeler, and Diana Blom! As a teacher of composition I have thoroughly enjoyed reviewing *Music Composition Toolbox*. I recommend it highly to high school music departments, and to tertiary students who are newcomers to formalities of the craft of composition. **M in A**

Doris Pavlovich is a composer and teacher of composition at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music High School, who has written on this topic for Music in Action.



Classical Destinations Series One by Classical Destinations Educational

Published by Hal Leonard. Review by Jeffrey Leask

Those of us who took the virtual tour with Simon Callow in the recent television series *Classical Destinations* looked forward to revisiting and re-engaging with many of the musical icons of Europe. The series has been repackaged as an educational kit for schools, as an attractively-presented DVD/CD-ROM box set. It invites teachers and students to engage with classical music by means of an innovative, supplementary classroom music curriculum. With high quality audiovisuals (which can't help but stimulate and grasp interest) it is now a particularly well-designed curriculum unit of supportive multi-media classroom materials: interactive musical scores, quizzes, puzzles, and worksheets. Importantly, it invites creative participation using instruments, composition and up-to-date music technology. Teachers will be more than pleased to see and make use of the comprehensive, relevant student-centred guides and well-considered learning outcomes.

Individual volumes present each European 'destination': Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Russia and Scandinavia/ Nordic. Each contains a DVD and CD-ROM together with a simple booklet that clearly indexes the material and provides an introductory usage guide. The DVD material is state-of-the-art—beautifully photographed; well-paced in segments that are not too long; slickly edited and supported by a pleasant, engaging voice. The narration seems to have been rewritten [from the TV series] to appeal to younger viewers. The viewer may select sections as required. Overall, the approach is certain to capture and hold interest.

The kit attempts to cover the three main curriculum areas of music education: listening, performing and creating. The DVDs set the scene and impart historical and geographical information effortlessly. The Performance Kits invite student performers to experience the music of the 'greats' first hand, and the Creative Kits will appeal to the composers, arrangers and performers in the classroom. The kits' strengths lie in the introduction to classical music and in the Creative Kits.

The Interactive Scores are not especially interactive, if all one is required to do is watch the score as it plays and stop it whenever one wants. Nor are the aural challenges especially challenging, even for primary school children. To expect more musical responses to questions, or at least further music knowledge, might have been more appropriate to the current approaches in music curriculum. And while the quizzes revise what is (largely) seen (rather than heard) in the DVD component—and, to some extent, assist students in appreciating the classical environment—many answers to questions are better suited to a social studies quiz than a music one. True, there are questions which focus on musical knowledge such as naming an instrument, a composer or composition—but perhaps, if the aim of the kit is to develop familiarity with classical music, questions relating to sound (and using *sound*) rather than history or geography, may have been more pertinent: e.g., 'Of these four pieces, which two do you think are classical music?' or 'Here is Mozart's theme played in

three different styles: *rock, jazz and classical*. Name each style.'

For creative teachers and students the material comes to life with the MIDI files, which encourage compositional, improvisational and arrangement exploration as well as ensemble playing and group involvement. Teachers and students with a flair for music technology and sequencing software will embrace this aspect of

the kit wholeheartedly. The musical ideas and springboards contained in these files, though purposefully simple, should spark many creative endeavours and provide a wealth of opportunity for beginners to become quickly and painlessly involved in self-expression and group participation. The kit encourages teachers to 'find their own way through the materials' and so, in different classroom environments and in various teaching styles, there may be different starting points and different approaches. The range and variety of materials in the kit makes this possible.

Classical Destinations makes no claim to be a complete curriculum, but with such a wealth and variety of material, the creative teacher could easily develop a stimulating, comprehensive program which, on the one hand develops a clear understanding of classical music, but which could easily lead to a greater appreciation and understanding of music in the wider sense.

Classical Destinations should not be limited to 10 to 16 year-olds; it is a resource which, with little modification, could be used at all year levels at school and is therefore well worth including in any music or general school library. **M in A**

Jeffrey Leask is an educator, author and composer whose work ranges from curriculum design, Arts and Language development and advisory roles, to recording music and writing children's books.



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TOP TEACHING RESOURCES x6!

A gold mine comes to us with six lists from practitioners around the country, all focused on our singing theme to help keep you inspired.

Top Ten suggestions for years 4–6 choir

From Australian National Council of Orff Schulwerk members, Anette Kerkovius, WA and Jenny Birrell NSW.

Black Swan, Stephen Leek (unison). A beautiful legato song, which develops a lovely open sound, with a great accompaniment.

Dreams of Never Never, Stephen Leek (unison). A lively song with contrasting timing (4 and 7 beats in a bar). Students in a young inexperienced choir really enjoyed this, although it wasn't easy at first.

Buckley's Chance, Stephen Leek (two-part). Very lively; quite an aggressive song, which is not easy, and needs a very good person for the jazzy accompaniment.

Lachlan Tigers, Australian folk song, arr. Mark O'Leary. A perfect song for boys. Could be sung in unison, but has some two-part work in thirds which is quite tricky.

Shackleton, from *Turn on the Open Sea*, a song cycle Paul Jarman (Mark O'Leary). This is a most moving song for unison, two, or three parts. The students love this song so much that they hug the music and ask if they may take it home.

Señor Don Gato, trad; arr. Ray Doughty (Colla Voce). At first glance this looks simple, but it's not that easy, with metre and time changes.

Don't Let the Music Stop, Eugene Butler (Heritage Music Press). Fun, popular; for the inexperienced choir or for classroom work, teaching simple part singing.

Haba Haba (Little by Little), Jerry Estes (Shawnee Press). Beautiful, with simple part-singing.

The Lord Bless You and Keep You, John Rutter (Oxford University Press). Very moving; in two parts. For the more experienced choir.

The Old Piano Man, Robert W Thygeron (Heritage Music Press). Lovely, two-part, with a 'honky tonk' piano accompaniment. Very successful as a duet, or for junior school choir.

Top Ten Australian compositions for mixed voices

From Faye Dumont, President of ACCET and director of Melbourne Women's Choir and Melbourne Chamber Choir.

The following are my most enjoyed mixed voice Australian works:

Children of War, Dennis Vaughan. SAB, Level 1 difficulty, 3.5 mins, piano accompaniment. Powerful message of compassion and justice.

Tunggare, Stephen Leek, (Morton Music). SATB, Level 1 difficulty, a cappella, 1.5 mins. An excellent concert opener.

Hush—On the Death of a Bush Church, Iain Grandage, (Morton Music). SATB, Level 2 difficulty, a cappella, 6.5 mins. Brilliantly evokes the contrast of European and Aboriginal cultures

Irish Tune, trad; arr. Percy Grainger, (AMPD). SATTBB, Level 2 difficulty, a cappella, 6 mins. Wide-ranging parts for all singers.

Lullaby, from Requiem, Peter Sculthorpe, (AMC). SATB, a cappella, Level 2 difficulty, 6 mins. Hypnotic setting of two Aboriginal songs in ABA form.

Myths of Cloud, Wendy Morrissey. SSAATB, Level 2 difficulty, a cappella, 5 mins. Atmospheric miniature.

Waltzing Matilda, trad; arr. Eric Austin Phillips. SSAATTBB, Level 2 difficulty, a cappella, 4 mins. Clever arrangement, cheeky and effective.

As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams, Anne Boyd, (Faber). SATB x 3 = 12 parts, Level 3 difficulty, a cappella, 7 mins. Stunning work for an accomplished choir.

The Oceans Clapped Their Hands, Margaret Sutherland, (AMC). SAATBB, Level 3 difficulty, a cappella, 3 mins. Vivid Australian text, declamatory setting with ethereal end.

Who Killed Cock Robin? Martin Wesley Smith, (AMC). SSAATTBB, plus solos, level 3 difficulty, a cappella, 8 mins. Quirky, great fun with a serious environmental challenge

Students have their say about singing at school

'... opportunities need to be created for all children to enjoy music ...'—Marc

Top Ten Australian Songs for Young Choirs

From Mark O'Leary, Director, Young Voices of Melbourne

All the following are composed or arranged by Australians and crafted to be easy for primary school singers to enjoy and sing well:

Anna Elise, Richard Gill, (Alfred). Unison voices and piano. Lively and fun, with much scope for experimentation and learning.

Black Swan, Stephen Leek. Unison voices and piano.

It's Raining, Stephen Leek. Unison voices and piano. Two beautiful songs written for our youngest singers.

When I first came to this Land, trad; arr. Julia Piggin, (Mark O' Leary Pub). Unison voices and piano. A charming arrangement of a fun song with a pioneering theme.

The Wind, Lyn Williams (Boosey and Hawkes). Unison or 2-part voices and piano. Explores irregular metre but is not difficult to learn and is effective in performance.

A Sea Change, Ian Jefferson (Warners). 2-part voices and piano. A rollicking nautical tune that is fun to sing.

Hine e Hine, Princess Te Rangi Pai (Fanny Howie; arr. and publ. Mark O'Leary). 2-part voices and piano.

Tingalayo trad; arr. and publ. Mark O'Leary. 2-part voices and piano. Arrangements of Maori and West Indian folk songs designed for easy part-singing with young choirs.

Jack Sprat, Debbie O'Shea, (Crescendo Music Education). 2-part voices and piano. The story with a bit of a twist. For performance by young singers, and enjoyable for everyone.

Kum ba Ya, trad; arr. and publ. Mark Puddy. 2-part voices and piano. Very simple and lovely arrangement of an old favourite.

Top Ten Contemporary songs for Year 9

From Sue O'Brien and Irene Bennets, teachers at SoundHouse Music School.

These songs work well with a class of students in Year 9 with little or no vocal training:

I'm a Believer (The Monkees). Boys and girls love this song as it was in the first Shrek movie.

Blame It On The Boogie (Michael Jackson). Perfect for daggy disco moves. Repeat some of the easier verses and omit others.

Gimme Some Lovin' (Spencer Davis Group). From *The Blues Brothers* movie. This crosses the generation barrier—if there

is one now. Good to use if you want to add percussion or rock instruments.

Long Way To The Top (ACDC). As well as being a classic Aussie rock song, this was featured in the film, *School of Rock*.

Superstar (Jamelia). Great for parts and simple moves. Hasn't dated.

Who Knew (Pink). Works best if you double the chorus at the end and forget about the improvised section.

Standard rock songs, such as *Twist and Shout*, *Runaround Sue*, *I Saw Her Standing There*, *Old Time Rock and Roll*. These always stand the test of time!

We Are Family (Sister Sledge). Classic 70's song that has constant appeal. A great finale/awards night/graduation item.

Breakaway (Kelly Clarkson). Girls, in particular, love this song. The lyrics are inspirational and the chorus really lifts.

Watching You (Rogue Traders). Students enjoy the tongue-twister chorus; a great song for adding a rap section written by the students.

Top Ten ideas for the middle years

From the President of Kodály Music Education Institute Australia, Darren Wicks.

Attend to your students' posture

If children are going to sing well, they must be taught that their bodies are their musical instruments. Part of learning any musical instrument involves learning how to hold the instrument. Good vocal production is utterly dependent on the singer's posture.

Teach your students to breathe well

Efficient respiration is the basis of all good singing—regardless of the setting. Students should understand that breathing for singing involves two factors (i) correct breathing motion and (ii) management of the outward breath. When children breathe deeply, the inhalation must be silent and accompanied by 360 degree expansion in the whole lower torso. Effective breath management (sometimes called support) involves control of the outward breath so that singing is supported by a steady, constantly energised breath stream.

Fit repertoire to children's vocal range

As a general guide, the range of songs for child and adolescent voices should fall within a ninth from middle-C to D one octave higher.

Choose only the best repertoire

Good repertoire choices will give your students the best chance of successful singing experiences, but selection is not an easy task, as poor material is often far more accessible and commercially successful.

Analyse the repertoire

Before teaching, analyse each song for possible vocal challenges and musical content. Make a list of regularly occurring vowel sounds, textural challenges, awkward intervals, melodic turns and harmonic patterns. Each of these can become the basis for a warm-up exercise or vocalise. This ensures that any challenges are mastered in a more controlled environment.

Limit accompaniment

Initially, song choices should include minimal accompaniment. Children will learn to sing more readily if they match voice-to-voice. Complex piano accompaniments or, even worse, CD backing tracks can inhibit the development of good intonation and tasteful singing.

Develop your ear

To work effectively with children's voices, teachers need an aural concept of how children sound when singing well. To understand children's vocal capabilities will help classroom teachers determine how little or how much to expect from them. No teacher can learn this from a book. One of the best ways to develop this sound concept is simply to listen widely to recordings of high quality children's choirs and to attend live performances where possible.

Model good singing

Our students are often exposed to poor vocal models through the media. Much contemporary music depends on studio production and does not represent a sound that children can or should reproduce in the classroom. Having acquired an aural concept of healthy singing, classroom teachers need to educate their students in this. Peer-modeling is a very effective tool to this end, as is taking students to hear performers who model appropriate singing.

Read

It is unreasonable for to expect that the physical coordination needed for efficient singing should happen automatically, particularly when teachers of other instruments would never make the same expectations of students. In the past decade, the teaching of singing has changed dramatically as information from science, medicine, speech pathology, and other disciplines now enable us to teach to the many what could once only be taught to the few. A classroom teacher's skills will be enhanced by knowledge of voice science coupled with the wisdom of great teachers from the past and present.

Sing, sing, sing!

Schools have a significant role to play in the vocal education of this country as they may be the last outpost where students are exposed to singing and encouraged in their vocal development beyond the singing of 'Happy Birthday' or the screaming of team anthems. To address this role, teachers must draw a distinction between the 'singing of songs', characteristic of many classroom music lessons, and the systematic training of singing, ensuring that each classroom lesson includes both carefully selected repertoire and some time devoted to vocal training.

Top Ten repertoire choices

This is an edited version of a repertoire list previously published by ANCA. Contributing members included Judy Fromyhr, Deborah Munro, Denise Rothall (USA), Dr Debra Shearer-Dirié, and Harley Mead.

Love Me Sweet, Carl Vine, arr. M O'Leary. Beautiful melody with finely shaped phrases, providing much scope for choirs to explore a range of tonal contrasts.

Adiemus, Karl Jenkins. Very popular, easily accessible to singers and audiences. Works well with simple piano accompaniment.

Little Firefly, Larry Schultz (Alliance Music Publishers). For two-part chorus and piano accompaniment. Vocal range works well with young voices.

Where go the boats, Graeme Morton. Unison song, moderate level.

Just One Planet, Sarah Stevens (Hal Leonard). For two-part, SAB and SATB, with piano accompaniment. A simple melody branching into parts for the chorus.

Island Paradise, Alice Olsen (Hal Leonard). Easy work at a comfortable pitch, provides a good sing.

Adventure, H. Nelson (Gordon Thompson Music). Easy, simple two-verse song that children love.

Al Shlosa D'varim, Allan E. Naplan (Boosey and Hawkes). Two-part easy song with independent tunes in each part. Kids love it.

Wind on the Hill, Victoria el Sabo (Boosey and Hawkes). Unison with piano accompaniment, requiring good breath control with a lovely recorder obbligato.

Skylark, Hoagy Carmichael, arr. MacHuff (Hal Leonard). SSA, SAB or SATB with piano accompaniment. A wonderful arrangement of a timeless classic. **MWA**

Music in Action thanks members of ANCA, KMEIA, ACCET and ANCOS, Mark O'Leary, Irene Bennets and Sue O'Brien for their contributions.



Organisations are invited to list PD events with Music in Action. Events are listed first in alpha order by organisation, then by date. Listings are compiled from information provided and may be incomplete or have changed. Please check with the organisations direct. Our disclaimer on page 4 applies.

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Solfa Saturdays

Musicianship sessions for all skill levels
First Saturday of month in School Term
Dates for the rest of 2007: 4 Aug, 1 Sep, 6 Oct, 3 Nov

Kodaly Office (at Stockdale ACS),
Huntingdale
Details: www.kodaly.org.au or
03 9535 7035

• **Friday 17 August**

Early Childhood Workshop No. 3

Resources and repertoire for children
3-5 years
Venue TBC
Details: www.kodaly.org.au or
03 9535 7035

• **Friday 24 August**

Kodaly Junior Choral Festival

A festival for primary school and young
community choirs
Caulfield Grammar, Wheelers Hill
Details: www.kodaly.org.au or
03 9535 7035

• **Saturday 25 August**

Games Galore

A morning of musical games
Firbank Girls School, Brighton
Details: www.kodaly.org.au or
03 9535 7035

Kodaly Secondary Level 1 Course

A unique and comprehensive approach to
professional development
Twelve sessions, starting late July – register
your interest now!
Firbank Girls School, Brighton
Details: www.kodaly.org.au or
03 9535 7035

Kodaly Preschool Course

A unique and comprehensive approach to
professional development
Twelve sessions, starting late July – register
your interest now!
Firbank Girls School, Brighton
Details: www.kodaly.org.au or
03 9535 7035

QUEENSLAND

• **23–27 September**

Spring into the tropics

Venue: Fitzgerald SS, North Mackay, QLD
Details: www.kodaly.org.au

NEW SOUTH WALES

• **1–5 October**

Teacher Training, Early Childhood

Venue: Barker College, Hornsby

Orff Victoria (VOSA)

• **Friday 20 – Sunday 22 July**

Marimba Camp

A weekend of music and fun for families &
teachers
Candlebark Farm, Healesville
Details: www.vosa.org or 03 9535 7020

• **Saturday 4 August**

Folk Dance Day

With Andre van der Plas (Netherlands)
St Catherine's School, Toorak
Details: www.vosa.org or 03 9535 7020

• **Monday 13 August**

Middle Years Day

Orff material for Years 5-8
Monash Uniting Church, Clayton North
Details: www.vosa.org or 03 9535 7020

• **Sunday 9 September at Sunshine Primary School**

• **Sunday 7 October (venue TBC)**

Family Marimba Days

Two great family afternoons with Jon Madin
Details: www.vosa.org or 03 9535 7020

• **Friday 14 September, Hamilton**

Regional Music Workshops

Combining Kodaly & Orff philosophies
with practical teaching ideas
Run jointly with KMEIA Victoria
Date(to be confirmed)
Venue: Sale (details to come)
Details: www.vosa.org or 03 9535 7020

Orff NSW (OSANSW)

• **27 October**

Fabulous Finds and Funky Fings

Venue: St Catherine's Junior campus,
Waverley
9am to 4pm
Info: Jenny Birrell
E: birrellfamily@optusnet.com.au

Orff TAS (TOSA)

• **4 August**

Strategies for Improvising and Composing

Venue: Punchbowl PS

10.15 am to 4.15pm

Info: TOSA

Orff QLD (QOSA)

• **15 September**

Marimbafest

Weekend festival at Cooroy
W: www.ancos.org.au

• **13 October**

Marimba Magic, led by Jambezi

Info: Bidy Seymour
E: theseymours@optusnet.com.au

MTAQ

• **23 September**

Piano care and maintenance

Venue: Ellaways at Underwood
Info: www.mtaq.org.au

• **14 October**

Healthy playing with the Taubman approach

Prof Therese Milanovic
Info: www.mtaq.org.au

SOUNDHOUSE

Soundhouse at Debney Park, VIC

• **5 September**

Advanced Sibelius, Make your own worksheets

9.30am to 3.30pm

• **7 & 26 September**

VELS in the classroom—Animation and Claymation

9.30am to 3.30pm

• **22 October**

Digital Portfolios using Powerpoint

9.30am to 3.30pm

• **24 October**

Sonar Level 3 (Cakewalk)

9.30am to 3.30pm

Info: www.soundhouse.com.au

ADVANCE NOTICES

ANCOS National Conference

• **6–11 January 2008**

Early bird rate closes 30 September

ISME

• **July 2008**

Conference, Bologna Italy

VOSA

• **8 August 2008**

Early Childhood Performing Arts

MUSIC in ACTION invites you to

FREE

MUSIC EDUCATORS DAY AT AMAC

A professional development opportunity for music educators.
17 September 2007 at the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre

REGISTER YOUR PLACE NOW

- Gain special access to the music trade show and see over seventy stands and thousands of products—all under one roof
- Meet the product specialists, ask questions, see demos
- Be inspired by keynote sessions with James Morrison and 8 Feet There
- Receive a free sandwich lunch voucher
- Choose afternoon workshops with specialists from the SoundHouse Association, talking about all sorts of technology in the classroom
- Take in short presentations from a wide range of specialists covering useful things such as microphone techniques, podcasting and more

Here's how it goes.

8.30 to 9 am We get underway with coffee and registration in the foyer of the Convention Centre

9 am to 10 am Session 1
Mike Tyler of Education Queensland opens Music Educators Day

Keynote address: James Morrison

Composition and arranging in the digital environment

James talks about the challenges and dilemmas that come when working with school ensembles. There will also be an open Q & A, giving you the opportunity to raise other topics for discussion with James.

One of Australia's foremost musicians, James Morrison has forged an enviable reputation as a performer both here and overseas. In addition to his performance career, he has taken a strong and increasingly active role as an advocate for music education, speaking at important education events around the country and supporting young musicians in innumerable ways. Be inspired by James' ideas and suggestions.

10.15 to 10.45 am Morning tea

10.45 am to 12.15 pm Session 2: 8 Feet There

Voices and imagination: creative engagement with the voice

We pick up one of the major recommendations of the National Review of School Music Education – involving our students in vocal programs. The session will stimulate with ideas and examples and involve us in activities we can use in the classroom and take into the wider school community.

Innovative a cappella group 8 Feet There wowed the audience at a recent Brisbane River Festival. The group is involved in performance and teaching, with a strong commitment to the creative opportunities of the voice, in schools and beyond. This is a practical session focusing on creative use of the voice in the classroom so bring along your voice!

Half hour presentations by SoundHouse

12.30 pm to 1.00 pm

Music Technology in the classroom – Engage and Learn

In a world where students are immersed in music and multimedia

technologies, integrating music production into the music classroom is a powerful and logical next step. This session will explore the creative potential of incorporating both midi and audio production into the classroom. It will explore the range of student outcomes achievable with limited school budgets, and link these to other elements of the music program, as well as providing suggestions for assessment.

Presented by Adrian Alexander, Manager of the Alfred Brash SoundHouse in Melbourne, a highly experienced teacher, PD presenter and professional musician.

1.00 pm to 1.30 pm

Digital Story-telling

Digital stories present achievable opportunities for creating lively and active learning environments where technology blends with traditional learning techniques. See how digital story telling can achieve literacy and numeracy outcomes using engaging media production activities, emphasising personal connections between content and students.

Experienced technology educator Peter Mahony, Manager of the Powerhouse SoundHouse Sydney presents this session with colleague Mike Jones, a specialist in video education.

1.30 pm to 2.00 pm

Students as Producers

So often we see students as consumers of technology. Here we turn the tables as students take centre stage using sound and video education tools. Authentic tasks involving the broader community engage students in meaningful outcomes. Senior educators and Debney Park SoundHouse PD presenters, Ken Owen and Colin Read will outline the pedagogy and processes involved.

But wait, there's more!

Through the afternoon, as you take in the opportunity to visit the trade show stands – over seventy stands and literally millions of products – there will be short presentations specially for music educators from a number of specialists. More details to come!

TO REGISTER AND RECEIVE FREE LUNCH VOUCHER, FILL OUT COUPON TODAY

REGISTER NOW!

MUSIC EDUCATORS DAY AT AMAC

17 September 2007 Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre

Return this coupon to: *Music in Action Music Educators Day*
MBE 148/45 Glenferrie Rd MALVERN VIC 3144 Or Fax: 03 9507 2316

Yes, I will be attending Music Educators' Day at AMAC

Name

School

Address

Phone Fax Email

(If you are registering for more than one person, list additional names below)

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Your School. More Music.**

**Join Australia's biggest simultaneous
school music event to promote
the value of music education**



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Register Now. It's Free!**



'Music. Count Us In' is managed by 'Music. Play for Life', the Music Council of Australia's grassroots campaign to get more Australians making music: in schools, communities, everywhere. The campaign is run in partnership with the Australian Music Association and the Australian Society for Music Education.

This project is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training under the Quality Outcomes Programme.



**Australian Government
Department of Education,
Science and Training**