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SUMMER 2010 • Vol. 8, Issue 3

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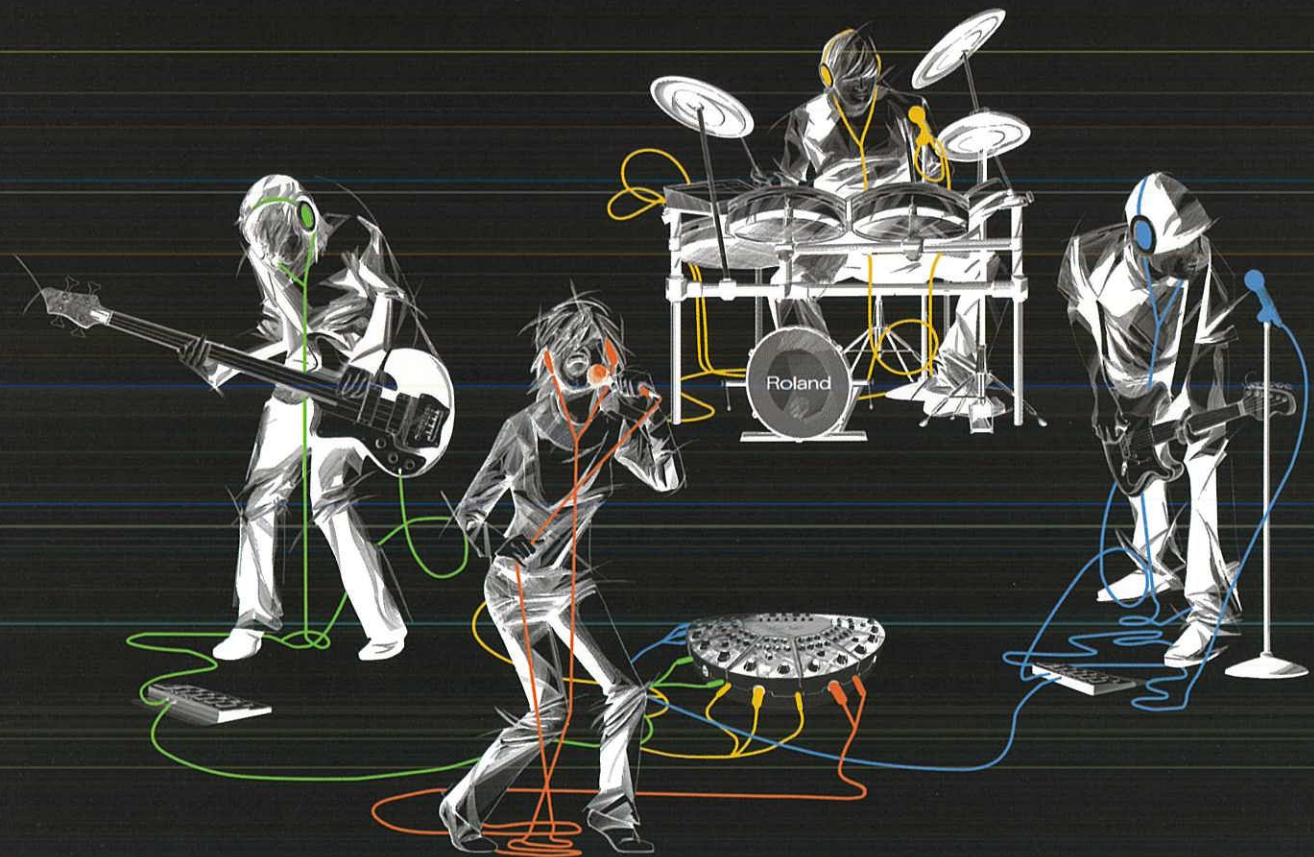
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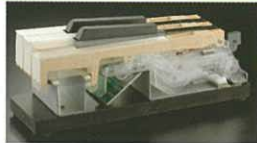
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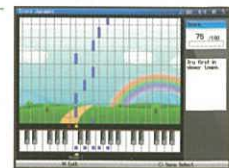
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MUSIC in ACTION

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#31



FROM THE EDITOR



On 2 September, over half-a-million students, teachers and families from 1,600 school communities joined together for the 2010 Music. Count Us In event, performing this year's theme song *Come play your part* in this nationwide celebration of the value of school music education. In this issue, Music. Play for Life's campaign manager Tina Broad reports on this wonderful event. We also have a report of an equally impressive singing event that took place more than a century ago in Sydney's Centennial Park, in which Marilyn Chaseling documents her fascinating 'voyage of discovery' about a 10,000-voice choir of public school students who performed the musical program at the Inauguration Celebrations of the Commonwealth of Australia, on 1 January 1901. Although there are clear differences in time, place and performance presentation, both events are of national significance, and further highlight the benefits of an engagement with choral music making for young people.

Continuing our focus on school singing, there are two useful Top Tips articles—from Clare Jones, on implementing a successful singing program for students with disabilities; and from Melissa Ceresoli, describing how to ensure a happy and healthy larynx for singing voices—yours as well as those of your students! Following on some themes in our last issue, Bev McAlister outlines a successful model for community and school partnerships in music. She shows that they can result in a variety of positive outcomes, including healing after bushfires, public performances involving local communities, student mentoring, and commissioning of new music for local events.

Renée Crawford describes a collaborative project in regional Victoria that involves the new interactive website, 'Ping', which aims to encourage students to 'engage, connect and play' music online; while Rebecca Harrison relates her experiences in setting up a contemporary popular music festival called My Big Gig, for school students in Western Australia.

Tom Benjamin joins us again to introduce an ultra-simple method to motivate beginning guitarists and get them off to a flying start, utilising blues styles and jazz harmony. The indefatigable Andrew Swainston again introduces us to some interesting websites, especially a new music education web portal that he has developed. There are also four reviews introducing new books and products for use in music classrooms.

This is my last issue as editor of *Music in Action*. I would like to thank the other two members of the production team, sub-editor Tony Geeves and production designer Greg Phillips, for their invaluable help and collegiality. Thanks also to the industry members of the Australian Music Association—the publishers of *Music in Action*—for their continuing support of the magazine; to Ian Harvey, AMA's Executive Officer; and to the many contributors and industry colleagues who have provided such worthwhile content for publication over the past two-and-a-half years.

I wish all readers well in their professional work as music educators and hope that *Music in Action* continues to make a worthwhile contribution to Australian music education.

Robin Stevens

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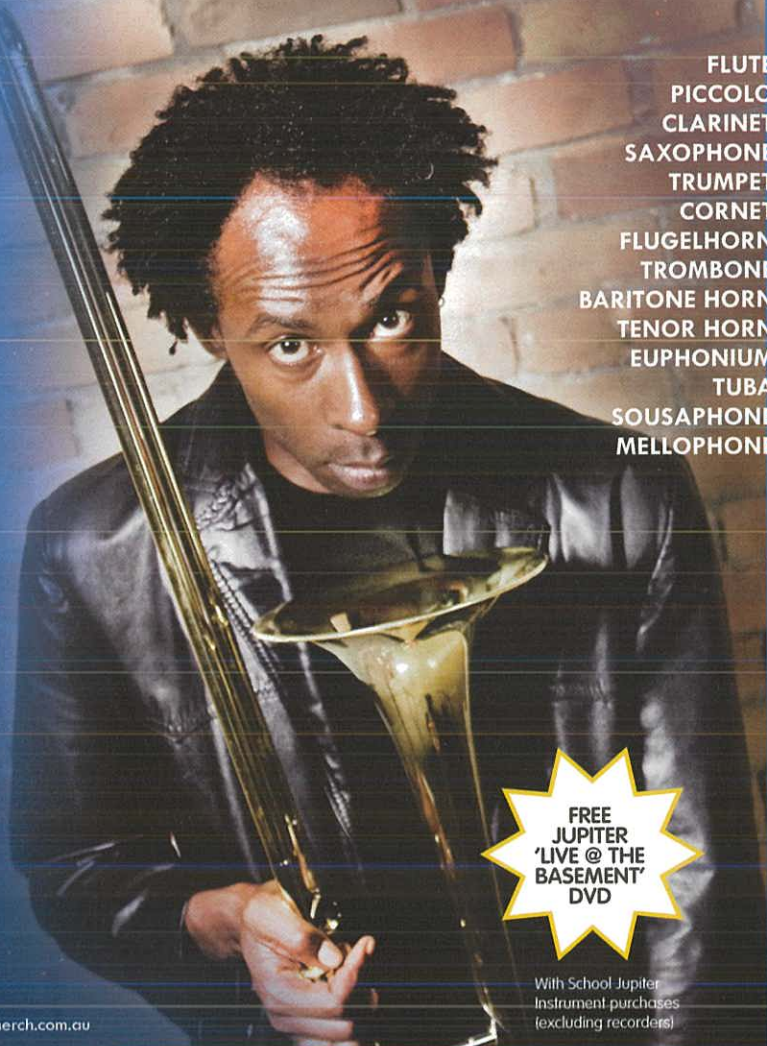
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SING UP: 'HELP KIDS FIND THEIR VOICE'

As a result of the Blair Government's Music Manifesto and continuing UK government support, a national singing program has been introduced in Britain to over 100,000 primary school students so far. It has been developed with support from Youth Music (Britain's largest children's music charity), Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO (one of the top advertising agencies in Britain), Faber Music (music publisher), The Sage Gateshead (a live music venue and centre for music education in London) and the UK Government which has provided £40M of funding.

Sing Up complements other programs emanating from the Music Manifesto: Wider Opportunities, the upper primary 'whole-of-class' instrumental program being promoted in Australia with assistance from Nick Beach¹, and Musical Futures, the lower secondary instrumental program, developed by David Price.²

Sing Up is producing some startling results with 90 per cent of state primary schools and 78,000 teachers, leaders and freelancers having registered with the program.

Over 45,587 people have taken part in Sing Up training and professional development activities and over 100,000 children have taken part in Sing Up funded programs. By the end of 2011 it is estimated that 100 per cent of schools will use the program.

At the heart of the Sing Up program is an engaging and highly useful website that includes a variety of resources including 'The Song Bank' where song lyrics, printable and interactive song sheets, audio tracks, song accompaniments and arrangements as well as informative lesson plans are available for downloading and using to implement a singing program in the classroom. It's well worth registering to access these wonderful resources.

Notes: See p.17.

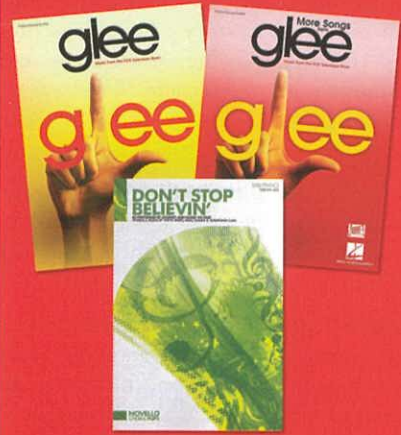
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Sing Up (including Registration):
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AMEB LAUNCHES ONLINE WRITTEN EXAMS

The Australian Music Examinations Board has now launched online written exams in most Australian states. Candidates will be able to complete written exams in Music Theory, Musicianship and Music Craft over the internet. Candidates will be able to complete their written exams at any time or place where there is a computer, an internet connection and appropriate supervision. Private teachers can ask their students to complete the exam at home or in the music studio. Students studying in a class can complete the exam individually in their own time or at the same time as the rest of their class.

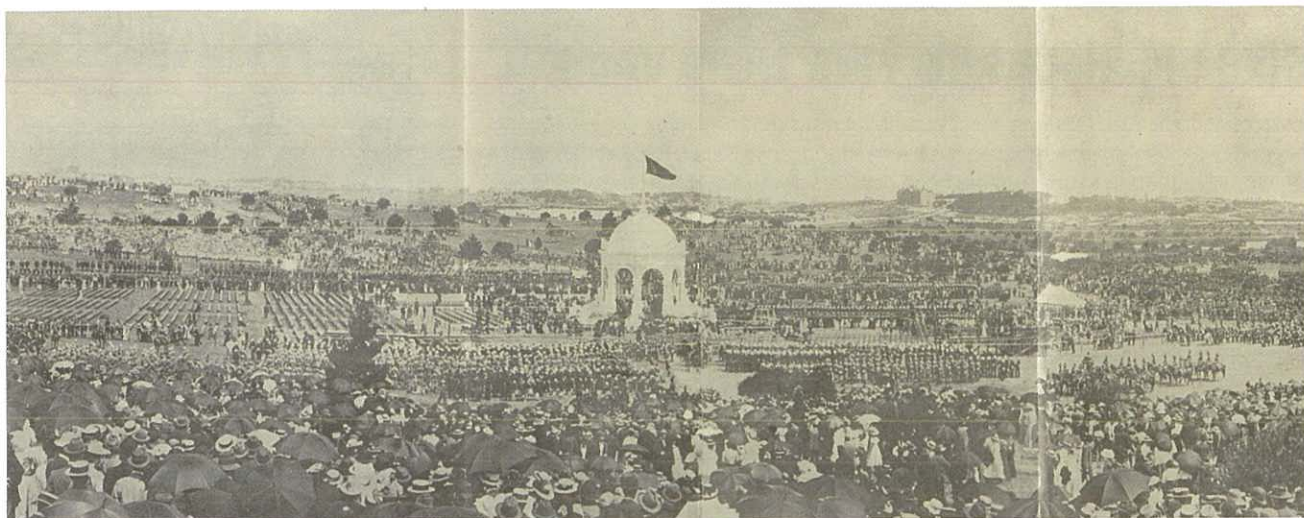
Online exams come with tutorials and practice questions, and candidates can do as many tutorials and practice questions as necessary before taking the exam. Results are available immediately—candidates can review their results against the correct answers to see where they went wrong.

Online exams will initially be available up to Grade 2 for music theory syllabuses. Higher grade examinations will be released progressively, as will exams in speech and performance theory. Online exams may not yet be available in all states—you can check the AMEB Online Examination Centre website.

E-CONTACT

AMEB Online Examination Centre: www.amebexams.edu.au/

See page 17 for more news and notes.



Courtesy of Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

LOST AND FOUND: 10,000 VOICES

An inspiring 1901 choral spectacular

Imagine organising a 10,000-voice school choir that performs successfully before an audience of 200 thousand—after only one combined rehearsal! MARILYN CHASELING describes the achievement of the 1901 Inauguration Celebrations of the Commonwealth of Australia in Sydney.¹

In 2003, when working through the time-worn pages of *The New South Wales Educational Gazette* in search of material about music in schools, one article simply leaped out at me.² It was a story of a public school children's choir that performed in Sydney at the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia. What was truly remarkable about this choir was its size—10,000 voices!³

With no photographs or illustrations to provide visual information about the choir, the anonymous author used word images so vivid that it was just like being present back then as one of the spectators at Centennial Park on 1 January 1901.

Celebrating the birth of a nation

On 1 January 1901, after years of discussion, quarrelling, politicking and preparation, the six independent British colonies of New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland finally joined together to form the Commonwealth of Australia. Elaborate celebrations were organised in each state (as the colonies were now called), with the principal event taking place in Sydney.

After a two-hour procession from the Domain through a blaze of colourful flags, bunting, festoons, picturesque arches and vast cheering crowds, a grand and solemn ceremony took place at Centennial Park. This site was considered ideal, as its rocky ledges and grassy hills formed a natural amphitheatre from which an estimated 200,000 people could look down upon the specially-erected white octagonal pavilion and the unfolding panoramic scene.

The events of the day best unfold in the writer's words: 'The selection of the position for the school children in the natural amphitheatre formed by the regularly rising terraces outside the enclosed reserves on the park was in all respects creditable to the authorities. From almost every part of the grounds on that side an uninterrupted view of the whole pageant was obtainable ...'. Despite the fierce heat of an Australian January day, the occasion began early for 'hundreds of people on the ground, most of them aimlessly walking about viewing the arrangements, and only wondering where they could best realize their desires in the matter of obtaining a good view of the proceedings ... About 9 o'clock the rattle of a veritable procession of omnibuses along the road ... announced the arrival of the first detachment of school children. On they came amidst a hubbub of juvenile excitement, which found utterance in the singing of school choruses by the girls, and in the apparently quite unnecessary and indeed absolutely gratuitous cheering by the boys ...'.

When the first children arrived, the grass was still wet from overnight rain, which had now well passed. 'But with the happy adaptability of childhood [the children] at once brought themselves abreast of the circumstances. School mates in each particular education institution foregathered in little groups of special "chumship", while keeping in close general touch with the other pupils of their respective schools, and with their teachers. The latter kept a watchful eye upon the youngsters, but it was surprising to notice how easily they kept them under control. A word to the boys and a look to the girls seemed sufficient ...'.

The tedium of the long wait until the early afternoon start to the proceedings was relieved by the brass and string band of the Fourth Regiment of the new Commonwealth Forces which arrived early to entertain the growing crowd of children and spectators. But suddenly, a new appearance caught the interest of the children! It was the arrival of twelve delivery vans laden 'with all sorts of good things to eat, lollies, cakes, buns, and fruit, together with surely hundreds of huge milk cans and probably a dozen great barrels of ginger beer. ... Considering there were upwards of 10,000 children present, the promptness with which their wants were supplied was very creditable to the officers who carried out this important portion of the work of the day ...'.

For the anonymous storyteller, it was undoubtedly a treat to walk among the groups of children and to hear their excited and expectant chatter. Despite the heat of the day and the lengthy wait, there were no complaints to be heard. When at last the parade of troops began to file onto the grounds, resplendent in their uniforms and with the sun glittering on their polished swords, bayonets and helmets, the children sat down to watch. Their appreciative applause came spontaneously.

The only episode to unsettle the children was when a terrified horse bolted with its rider and galloped frantically into the procession. The children rose as one, screaming in terror for the rider and for those in the crowd that the frenzied horse might encounter. Although the procession continued as if nothing had happened, it took some time before the children settled once more to watch the proceedings.

From the high rocks north of where the children were positioned, the storyteller described the scene of children: 'The girls were as a rule dressed in snowy white, and most of them wore bright scarlet, blue or vivid green sashes. As they moved from place to place, they presented a kaleidoscopic scene likely to remain as a mental picture with the beholder for many a day. [At the] back of this ever-moving throng there were hundreds of girls seated on the grass and this mass, from the distance, standing out from the darker surroundings, ... strongly resembled a huge bed of white chrysanthemums'.

Carolling choirs

Three choirs performed at the ceremony that day. The proceedings began with the singing of *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*, then a *Te Deum* [Jackson in F] by a chorus of 400 voices from church choirs, supported by military bands. Despite the correctness of the harmonies and the richness of the brass sounds, an uncooperative breeze meant that the hymns wafted fitfully to and fro—except for the impressive fortissimo of the last line, when the words swept distinctly across the grounds. The second choir, known as 'the choir of a thousand voices', again assisted by military bands, performed Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus with a reportedly 'commanding effect'.

Notwithstanding the pomp and circumstance of the proceedings to that point, it was the colossal choir of 10,000 primary school children who 'wowed' the 200,000 strong crowd. Under the direction of Herr Hugo Alpen (Superintendent of Music, Department of Music, Department of Public Instruction of New South Wales), this massive choir burst forth in song with *Federated Australia* from Alpen's *Welcome Cantata*. This melodious piece was performed 'with great spirit and feeling—the volume of tone was at last sufficient to make itself felt across all the plain to the encircling banks around'. Despite a mistake, when the song began while the Governor-General was speaking, the voices of the children's voices were crystal clear in the sustained harmony of the song.

When the children's singing finished, a roar of approval was heard from the 50,000 spectators who were seated three-quarters of a mile (1.2 km) away on the side of the opposite hill. These people had apparently only heard murmurings of the other choirs and had barely responded, but the sound of the 10,000 children, whose singing was enhanced by sounds from the accompanying bands, 'struck home to them'.

The proceedings ended with a combined performance of the British national anthem *God Save the Queen*, by the three choirs under the baton of Mr. Alfred Hill (Australian composer, violist and music teacher), with Alpen following Hill's beat, directing the children from a second platform erected at a higher level to enable all of them to see. The children's choir then entertained the crowd with a 'precise and vigorous rendition' of *Advance Australia Fair* and *Rule Britannia*.

The search

What else could be discovered about this colossal choir and its awe-inspiring performance? My research led me firstly to an online search of library databases, including the NSW State Library's and National Library of Australia's online picture catalogues, and secondly to the index card files at Sydney's Mitchell Library. Curiously, no photographs of the choir or even any other references to it could be found online or in the card index.

This basic search then broadened to include the National Library of Australia, where I enlisted the assistance of the Pictures Reference Librarian who examined the library's picture collection of the ceremony. Close examination of one of the photographs revealed a mass of white behind the inauguration pavilion, which she thought might be the children's assembly. I had the photo enlarged, which confirmed that the white image was indeed the crowd of girls in their white dresses. The librarian also located a copy of the Inauguration Program on the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Federation website, which listed the two adult choirs and the 10,000-voice 'Public School Choir'.

The source of most of the information about the Sydney Inauguration of the Commonwealth celebrations came, as



Herr Hugo Alpen, who conducted the massed public school choir at the Inauguration Ceremony of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1 January 1901. From *The Musical Herald*, 1 December 1910.

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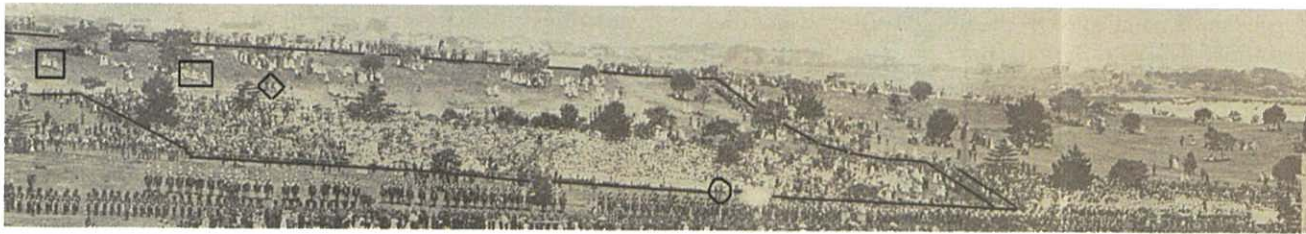
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Extent of the public school choir, outlined by the present writer.

would be expected, from the newspapers of the day. Curiously, the colossal choir barely rated a mention, other than for two articles on 2 January 1901—one in *The Daily Telegraph* and other in *The Sydney Morning Herald*⁴ (part of which was reprinted without attribution in the January 1901 edition of *The New South Wales Educational Gazette* quoted earlier). Three other newspapers afforded the choir only one sentence apiece, remarking on the magnificent volume produced when the assembled choir of 10,000 children sang the ‘Federated Australia’ chorus. Even the official film of the Sydney inauguration ceremony—Australia’s first feature-length documentary—did not specifically refer to the choir, although, on close examination, the mass of children can be located in various scenes.

More than a week after the inauguration ceremony, the Sydney weekly newspaper, *The Town and Country Journal*, published a spectacular panoramic view of Centennial Park as a folded broadsheet.⁵ The photograph was taken in the late morning from the western side of the natural amphitheatre, looking towards Randwick, as the procession began to arrive at the park. There, the thousands of children were gathered for safeguarding in a fenced enclosure. While many children watched the proceedings while lined up against the extended post-and-rail fence, other groups of children stood or sat in the shade of trees. Two boys in dark clothing walked determinedly across the slopes, while two female teachers stood together watching over the scene. To the left of the enclosure, two little girls held hands, while three others took the opportunity to play together. Based on other reports of the choir, the first trebles—girls in white dresses and hats to protect them from the fierce summer heat—are in the centre of a mass of children. The mottled white to the left are the boy altos, dressed in typical school uniforms of the day—dark trousers, hats, lighter-coloured shirts and school blazers.

To the right are the second trebles in no particular order, mainly girls, and at least one female teacher distinguishable by her height and long frock. In addition, *The Town and Country Journal* included some close-up shots of the day. One photograph, entitled ‘Scenes in the Children’s Enclosure’, fortunately has survived as the only one to show the extent of the choir on that day.

Seven weeks and one rehearsal ...

Working back through each edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* from early January 1901, the story of the choir began to unfold. With less than seven weeks before the inauguration and without the benefit of modern day communication methods, the Government-appointed Organising Committee first met to plan a week of inauguration festivities. Their meetings were reported in the *Herald*. At its 28 November meeting the Committee decided that school children should take a prominent part in the celebrations—10,000 public school children at Centennial Park, while the Roman Catholic children were to be positioned along the procession route at St Mary’s Cathedral. Each group of children would sing ‘appropriate music’.

To allay concerns that some of the anticipated 10,000 children at Centennial Park might be injured or lost in the immense crowd, or in a rush as the crowd dispersed, a strongly-fenced space was planned for them. More than 80 police

personnel were to watch over the enclosure, while 800 teachers were to act as the children’s guardians. A doctor and nurse were also to be in attendance. Plentiful supplies of drinking water and refreshments would be supplied and suitable latrines provided. Special trams would be organised to transport the children to and from the grounds.

It appears that the 10,000-voice choir had only one combined rehearsal. On 14 December 1900, the children, accompanied by their teachers, arrived by trams at Centennial Park. Then, under the direction of Herr Hugo

The Inauguration Program

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY,
JANUARY 1ST, 1901

The Commonwealth of Australia.
Ceremonies at the Swearing-in of
The Earl of Hopetoun,
First Governor-General of Australia.

PRAYERS AT NOON

PROCLAMATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SWORN-IN
FEDERAL MINISTERS SWORN-IN
ANNOUNCEMENT BY GOVERNOR-GENERAL
CHORUS, ‘TE DEUM,’

by Archbishop of Sydney’s Choir of 400 voices

CHORUS, ‘FEDERATED AUSTRALIA,’

by Public School Choir of 10,000 voices

CHORUS, ‘HALLELUJAH,’

by Choir of 1,000 Adult voices

‘GOD SAVE THE QUEEN,’

by Combined Choirs

The Inauguration Program for the Swearing-in of the first Governor-General of Australia, Sydney, January 1, 1901. Courtesy of the National Library of Australia.

Alpen, and accompanied by the Royal Artillery Band, they performed *Federated Australia* three times, to the delight of the large gathering of spectators.

FEDERATED AUSTRALIA.
(5TH NUMBER FROM CANTATA "WELCOME.")
Words by F. HUTCHINSON. Music by HUGO ALPEN.

The first page of *Federated Australia*, from Alpen's cantata *Welcome*, sung by the choir of 10,000 children at the Sydney Inauguration Ceremony of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1 January 1901. Courtesy of University of Sydney Library.

'Federated Australia'

I located the score of *Federated Australia* at the University of Sydney Library. This 72-bar, predominantly antiphonal song, is for a three-part children's choir with piano accompaniment; although for the inauguration, a military band was substituted for the piano. Alpen must have had great confidence in the singing abilities of the boys, as he entrusted them with the most challenging part of *Federated Australia*. It was their united voices that, without the benefit of an introduction, first captured the audience's attention and established the song's patriotic mood. The boys were also given responsibility for beginning the second section. When their part is the only one to be heard, it moves by small leaps with the inclusion of a difficult leap of a seventh in bar 11. When providing the harmony, the boys' part moves by step

with some chromatic passages. On four occasions, the boys were required to sub-divide into a fourth part.

When describing the performance, *The Daily Telegraph* writer wrote: 'One would hear a phrase sung by the left wing replied to by the right, or the centre, followed by two or three sections uniting in a massive phrase in harmony. All done with perfect precision, and the unanimous observance of pauses, dynamical contrasts that told of well-ingrained discipline, the two concluding "Amens" were so imposingly delivered that the hillsides rang out with applause'.

Why get so excited?

The reason why I find this 10,000 choir of school children so awe-inspiring is that it demonstrates what can be achieved when children are taught singing through what today would be called a 'sequential and developmental' music program.

At the time, NSW primary school children were taught music—that is, singing—by their classroom teachers. In the Infants Department, the focus was on developing a sense of pitch through pitch-matching activities, timing through action song and moving to the beat, and the quality of the singing voice by singing of open vowel sounds at different pitches. In the Upper Division, the tonic sol-fa method and its application to staff notation were used to teach children to sing at sight.¹ At the time Sydney schools were very musical places; there is little doubt that is the reason why a choir of 10,000 Sydney public school children could perform successfully after only one combined rehearsal!

Music was included in the school curriculum principally because of its widely recognised extra-musical benefits—that is, its ability to mould the individual's character and moral sensibilities. In essence, music was valued for its civilising, humanising and refining influence, as well as for its ability to positively affect the tone, discipline and ethos of the schools, particularly in terms of the public's perception of public schools. Music was also widely recognised as a means of developing children's concentration and intellectual abilities. Essentially, music—in the form of singing—was valued principally as a means of personal and social improvement, and less as an area of knowledge in its own right.

One modern-day counterpart to the massed choral performance that accompanied the Inauguration of the Commonwealth is probably the annual Music: Count Us In 'sing the song'. On September 3, 2010, over 500,000 students from schools around Australia joined together at 11.30 am to sing this year's song, *Come Play your part* composed by students Shekinah Moye (Toormina High School, Coffs Harbour, NSW), Taylor Pomery (Albany Senior High School, Albany, WA), and Henry Beale (Essington School, Darwin, NT) as a nation-wide 'singing spectacular'.⁶

Despite being separated in time by more than a century, both these events have much in common. They brought together young people for the profoundly satisfying participatory experience of community singing. As well as its obvious physical benefits for individuals, massed choral singing promotes feelings of emotional well-being, while encouraging

social interaction and cohesion, respect for others and bonding, and promotes that working together for a common outcome that marks us as Australians. **M in A**

Notes

1. This article is based on the writer's 2003 research— M Chaseling, 'The great public school choir of ten thousand', *Proceedings of the XXVth National Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Music Education (AARME)*, Brisbane, 2003, pp. 25–43.
2. 'Commonwealth celebrations: Great Public School Choir on January 1 (1901)'. *The New South Wales Educational Gazette*, vol. x, no. 8, pp. 174–176.
3. In Australia, a public school is a government-operated school at which tuition is provided free of charge; today usually called a state school.
4. 'Commonwealth of Australia: Inaugural ceremonies'. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 January 1901, pp. 7, 9–11.
5. Panoramic view of the Centennial Park during the ceremony of swearing in the Governor-General and the Commonwealth [Folded broadsheet], *Town and Country Journal: Supplement to the Town and Country Journal*, 12 January 1901.
6. See the article on Music. Count Us In 2010 on page 14 of this issue.

Resources

Centenary of Federation (Australian Broadcasting Corporation): <http://tinyurl.com/inaug-comm>

Hugo Alpen: <http://tinyurl.com/Hugo-Alpen>

Marilyn Chaseling
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COUNTING THE BENEFITS

Music. Count Us In, 2010

Australia's 2010 'big sing' event this year involved half a million young people in an advocacy exercise that demonstrated the popularity and power of music in schools and its connection with community. Campaign manager TINA BROAD reports on another highly successful nation-wide event.

Cricket legend Adam Gilchrist was standing on the steps of Perth Concert Hall on the morning of Thursday 2 September. His children, Annie and Harry, had joined with 800 other school students from schools in and around Perth to sing *Come Play Your Part*. 'If I could go back to my school days, music is something I'd give more attention to,' he said.

Gilchrist was one of thousands of Australian parents supporting their children's involvement that day. Music. Count Us In (MCUI) brought the nation together like no other program. As 1600 schools across the country gave their classrooms, sporting ovals and assembly halls over to music, or gathered at local shopping malls, beaches and nursing homes, the spotlight was well and truly on the value of music education in schools. 'I really think this is the most wonderful event for singing and for bringing the whole country together,' said Julie Withers, musical director at Salt



Ash Public School, near the Williamstown airbase at Newcastle in regional NSW.

Mel Humphrey, at Geelong's Kardinia International College, was stoked: 'What a buzz!!! Our students had the most amazing experience at Federation Square and were absolutely thrilled to perform. I just wanted to thank you for giving them this wonderful opportunity. It is certainly a day they will remember for the rest of their lives.'

Carolyn Bourke from Camboon Primary School in Western Australia, recounted: 'We have a dedicated music specialist who teaches music to all Years from One to Seven. Every class has watched the videos on the website and have been amazed at the talented high school students who wrote the songs. Some children have even been practising the songs on their computer at home! For Music Count Us In 2010 (our first time entering), we put on a concert, including performers from both our school and a local high school. We invited



local council members, the administration from our local shopping centre, and the residents from our local nursing home. What started out quite small has turned into something big.’

The activity in schools and the sheer scale of the national program helped drive wide media coverage of the issues affecting Australian music education: the disparity in its provision in government schools compared to private schools, the benefits to all students from learning music, and the call for more music resources, as plans advance for the new Australian Curriculum. Local print and broadcast reporters visited their participating schools on the day and during the event lead-up, interviewing teachers and principals about the impacts of music on student development and on school life—grassroots advocacy at its best.

Moranbah East State School music teacher, Michelle Stegman, told her local paper *The Miners Midweek* that ‘Music allows children to express their creativity and develop social skills in a supportive environment’, and kindergarten teacher at Maitland Public School in regional NSW, Kirsten Thomsen, told the *Maitland Mercury* that ‘Music is good for students and particularly those who are not so academic or have special needs, because it is good for language support.’

ABC TV’s much-watched children’s current affairs program, *BTN*, filmed *Count Us In* preparations at Haberfield Primary School in Sydney for a special segment on the importance of music education in schools and WA’s *Stateline* program did an in-depth piece on the role of music education in the curriculum. There was great support from commercial television around the country, too, including donated airtime from Channel TEN of the 30-second promotional announcement featuring *Music. Count Us In* Ambassador, John Foreman.

Raising awareness among parents, teachers and principals about the importance of music education in schools is the overriding objective of the program, as its impetus was the ‘status-building’ imperative outlined in the 2005 National Review of School Music Education. Four years on, participating schools are reporting changes in attitudes to music among parents and school administrators, with more students putting their hands up to join bands, choirs and other groups after they’ve been involved in *Music. Count Us In*. Principals now make pro-music decisions, and teachers are dusting off their instruments and starting staff bands.

Music. Count Us In gives schools with established programs an opportunity to showcase publicly what they do. It gives those schools with little or no ‘continuous, sequential, developmental’ music education (the ‘gold standard’ outlined by the National Review) an opportunity to have a go—with professional development support, free resources and a psychological boost from that feeling of national solidarity and unity that is an important part of the project.

Music. Count Us In has been supported by the Australian Government since launching in 2007. Stay tuned for *Music. Count Us In* 2011. Bigger, better, louder! **MIA**

Resources

Music. Count Us In: www.musiccountusin.org

ABC TV feature ‘Push for mandatory music in schools’: <http://tinyurl.com/StatelineWA>

THIS SPREAD Top, *MCUI* at Federation Square, Melbourne.

Left, at the Sydney Opera House.

FRONT COVER Top, At the Sydney Opera House, with student songwriters

L–R Henry Beale, Taylor Pomery and Shekinah Moye.

Bottom, at Federation Square, Melbourne.

Credits: Sydney, Joshua Morris. Melbourne, Rohan Young.

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CLASSICAL MUSIC SUMMIT

The Music Council of Australia held a Classical Music Summit in July to address the issues and possibilities associated with the live presentation of classical music.

Classical music, like all other genres of music, is presented with new challenges as well as opportunities in a world of change. Classical audiences in Australia are very healthy (there has been a 40% increase over the past six years in audience members aged over 40 years), but there has been a decline in the USA. In order to avert this potential problem in Australia, the Summit looked at these issues:

- Although classical music has a strong presence in upper echelon government and private schools, it is absent in the majority; children who are not introduced to classical music in the home are often not introduced to it at school either.
- While older audiences for live performances have grown in recent years, the participation of people in their 20s represents a slight downward trend; there may be reasons for concern about the interest of younger generations in classical music.
- Orchestras are the 'engine room' of the sector—they are the largest source of both employment and audience numbers; orchestras cannot survive without subsidy and so the role of government in providing this subsidy is important.
- There is no lack of new work being created by Australian composers and the gulf between new repertoire and the general classical audience has begun to be bridged. However, at the orchestral level, there is still a need to build the sense that classical music is 'of our time' and appeals to young people.

After a round of consultation meetings with focus groups of performers, managers, marketers, media people and music educators, a Classical Music Summit was held in Sydney on July 12. Its recommendations were discussed at the annual MCA Assembly at the end of September. Decisions of particular interest to music educators were to advocate for:

- Development of a classical music website with information on various strategies for presentation, audience building, etc.
- Funding of young people to present live performances.
- Providing support for development of a sequential, continuous, developmental and diverse music curriculum. There were no calls for a curriculum based exclusively on classical music education, but there was a consensus that classical music should be included along with other genres. A committee was formed to respond to the Australian Curriculum as the shaping papers emerge.
- Facilitating of artist and community residencies in school halls.
- Mapping music in the education sector—the Coordinator of MCA's website (musiceducation.edu.au) will investigate the type of music being taught in schools.
- Commissioning of Australian works for schools and communities (especially for wind band music).
- Creating of a 'music careers' website and including of information useful to classical musicians—work on this project has already begun.
- Establishing a national system of accreditation for studio teachers—representatives of studio music teacher associations have formed a committee to pursue this objective.

These attempts by the MCA to promote classical music in schools and the wider community are to be commended and deserve whole-hearted support from all music educators.

E-CONTACTS

Classical Music Summit—see link at: www.mca.org.au/

Notes (For News p.7.)

1. For details, see 'Whole Class Instrumental Music', *Music in Action*, vol. 7, issue 2 (Spring 2008), pp. 8–10.
2. Nick Price was recently in Australia as keynote speaker at *Music in Action's* Music Educators' Day at the Australian Music Association Convention in Melbourne. He was creator and leader of both Musical Futures and Learning Futures in the UK.



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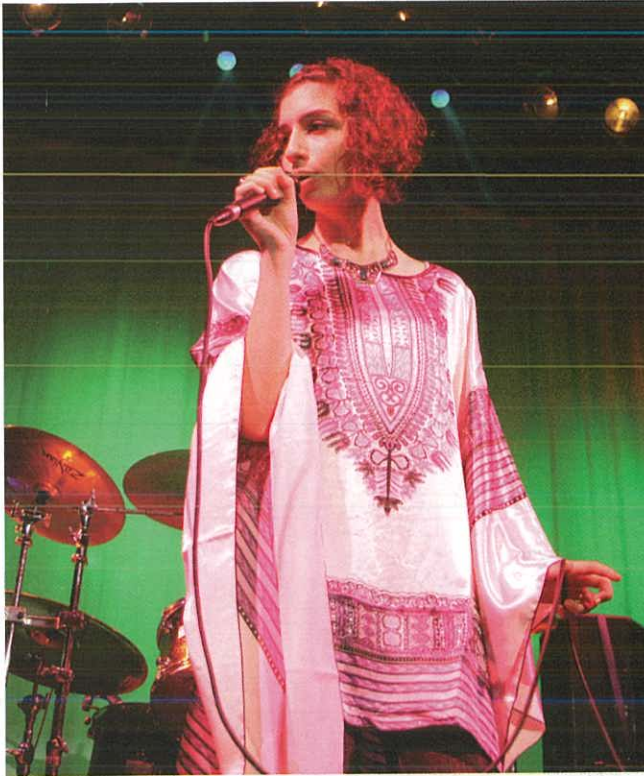


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MY BIG GIG

More than just a rock eisteddfod

When REBECCA HARRISON organised her own music festival, it tapped into what her students really wanted—and also provided a multitude of music and life experiences

When I look back now to the origins of My Big Gig, I'm a little taken aback at just how naïve I was in what I was attempting—to start a rock music festival! I had involved my students in numerous school concerts, festivals, small band tours and eisteddfods, but was disappointed that there seemed to be no real outlet for my own musical passion and that of my students—rock bands. I remember telling my department head that I was going to start up a music festival that would be solely devoted to contemporary popular music. She was a little concerned and muttered something like 'that's a lot of work'. But I was going to do it anyway.

'My Big Gig' is now a state-wide music festival for government and private secondary schools in Western Australia that is fortunate to have local and national sponsorship, including my own school, Canning Vale College. This year, forty-six schools participated. Since its founding in 2006 My Big Gig has worked with 70 different schools and 190 teachers, involving over 2,500 students with performance opportunities, and work

as part of the events team. Many schools are returning to the competition year after year, affirming the worth of the festival and its relevance to teachers and students.

Yes, it has been hard work, but My Big Gig got off the ground as 'just' a one-day music event in 2005 (called MySick Festival)—that involved rock bands from across the state. They all turned up at our venue—Canning Vale College (which is now an official supporter)—and the day was scheduled with bands performing a ten-minute set of either covers or originals. A key part of the event structure was to have a panel of music professionals to judge each performance and provide meaningful feedback. In 2005 the panel came from the band 'Gigantic' who provided feedback from a set of performance criteria and then finished off the day with their own performance, which had the student audience enthralled. All in all, everything went off smoothly—the venue was full, with 136 people attending; the band performances were entertaining and inspiring, and everyone walked away with a gift bag full of music paraphernalia. However, when primary local sponsor Kosmic Sound's manager for corporate and institutional sales came to present the prizes, he saw an opportunity for a partnership to be formed and for that one-off music event to become something far greater than I had ever imagined. With the backing of Kosmic and national sponsor Roland, a fruitful industry/education collaboration came into being, and we set about putting our plans into action.

The following year (2006), My Big Gig became a four-day event that comprised three days of heats in which 28 bands participated, finally whittled down to ten finalists, who then played a finals night at the 'Fly By Night Musicians Club' in Fremantle. The event had a cast of thousands! Student bands took to the stage performing highly sophisticated originals, while others belted out covers of well-known bands, but with their own flair and 'take'. My student event crew had spent several months preparing; their activities ranged from creating colour-coded lanyards to identify all the different performing bands, through to organising and creating tailored gift bags for the young musicians to take home. Meanwhile, teachers far and wide encouraged their students to take part, with practical advice and moral support. The distances travelled by the bands and their teachers were testament to their enthusiasm—some were a 900-kilometre round trip.

Kosmic Sounds' Kim Musa, sharing this vision of a 'larger than life' festival, took care of the marketing side of things, rallying and gaining support from enthusiastic and supportive sponsors. He also secured, and continues to add to, the incredible array of prizes—a far cry from our first steps in 2005.

Back then the prize pool had been sourced through sponsorship and in-kind contributions. Prizes give recipients a tangible reward for their efforts and encourage further participation by students and schools. Although the winning bands gain the individual performance recognition, the schools gain from the generously



supported prize pool, which is seen as the best means of supporting the schools' music programs by providing music equipment to be shared between the first, second and third place winners. Further encouragement for students comes with an Original Song Award, which provides the winner with studio recording time, and the Encouragement Award, with valuable equipment going to the band that has shown the most potential throughout the competition.

Another important outcome for students lies in the performance opportunities provided. In addition to the music equipment prize, the band awarded first place receives several more performance opportunities to add to their band's resumé through guest appearances at major festivals and venues.

Since 2006, Central Perth College of TAFE (Central) has provided a band to perform each day at the end of the heats to entertain the students while the panel of judges, all respected members of the music industry, deliberate over who will go on to the finals.

For students, My Big Gig is a culmination of months of collaboration to achieve a common goal of performing live to an audience. It requires students to work together as a team—to evaluate, re-evaluate and compromise within their group—while also giving them a sense of purpose, belonging, and productiveness.

Young people of secondary school age experience many difficulties and a multitude of social and peer pressures, especially in their choices, and in dealing with the consequences of many adolescent risk-taking behaviours, such as alcohol and drug use. At a time when it is difficult to engage youth in many schools, My Big Gig provides an outlet for students to be involved in an event that is culturally relevant to young people—that allows them to broaden their focus and participate in positive activities that are positive alternatives to alcohol and drug use. They are able to meet with other young people with similar experiences and interests, and to learn important coping skills for the future. Additionally they are provided with the opportunity to liaise directly with members of the music industry of which they aspire to be part, and are able to witness at first hand the various links and pathways to tertiary music study, through the performance of TAFE youth bands.

My Big Gig outcomes

- Provide young people with opportunities to experience the positive aspects of the music industry, and to recognise that alcohol and drug use are not the industry norm.
- Equip students with knowledge, skills and real life practical experience in contemporary music, within a festival environment.
- Provide a level playing field for all musicians, regardless of their experience and skill, with a common backline of professional standard equipment, and the choice of playing either originals or covers.
- Provide a platform for the validation of original music composed by students.
- Promote inclusivity by encouraging the participation of all schools—from those with long-established music programs to those without any, as well as by schools that are regionally or remotely located.
- Provide participants with constructive feedback from respected industry professionals, as well as ongoing support and encouragement from tutors and peers.
- Provide all those participating (schools, students, sponsors and partners) with a win/win experience that encourages ongoing involvement and support for the event.
- Focus on a school-based rather than an individual-based approach, designed to cultivate a positive team approach that is representative of an entire school. This in turn fosters a sense of pride and achievement among participants, as well as providing a supportive spectator base who are united in school spirit and keen to see their particular school do well.
- Provide students with a range of continuing performance opportunities as part of the prize pool. (The 2007 My Big Gig winners have signed a recording contract with a record label and achieved professional status.)
- Provide opportunities for sustainability and innovation for school music programs through provision of music equipment from the prize pool.
- Receive widespread media coverage for schools, through community newspapers and FM radio.

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Whether students realise it or not, when working within the competition environment there is also a quality of leadership to be gained through the processes of interaction, responsibility, and the promotion of team work.

Students are not the only ones to benefit from the festival. Sustainability for current school music programs is provided with the awarding of music equipment of varying monetary value as determined by the place of the winning bands. This equipment can further enhance positive activities already occurring in schools and inspire innovation and positive change.

Over its five-year history, the My Big Gig competition has not only been successful, but has continued to grow and gain momentum. This has been achieved through voluntary commitment, in-kind contributions and corporate sponsorship, plus self-generated funds raised from ticket sales to the competition finals. Most of the funds raised through ticket sales are needed to cover the hire cost for the venues.

Both Kim and I recognise the need for the competition to evolve and to introduce new initiatives relevant to the young people we cater for. This year My Big Gig has become an Endorsed Program of the Curriculum Council of Western Australia, with students gaining credit towards their high school graduation by participating in the competition.

For me, My Big Gig has been and continues to be an incredible journey. From the months of preparation, to the bustling week of heats and the entertaining finals, it has grown into more than I could ever imagine. I've seen incredibly talented bands, inspiring teachers, and so many industry professionals ready and willing to give their time, money and in-kind support to help foster the talent of these young musicians. It's a humbling experience, and I hope to continue to see My Big Gig attain even greater success, and to continue inspiring all those who participate in it. **MinA**

Rebecca Harrison

Rebecca has taught high school students for the past ten years, taking a contemporary popular approach to music education. She has been a member of contemporary music writing teams for the Curriculum Council, and recently developed activities for the Nick Cave Exhibition at the Perth Museum. She is a graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and the University of Western Australia.

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PING: ENGAGE, CONNECT, PLAY!

'Ping' is an online platform that is bringing music education to remote students in regional Victoria. RENÉE CRAWFORD reports.

The many benefits of technology in music education are being recognised in a collaborative project in regional Victoria. Called 'Ping', the project combines social media, blogging and creative musical activities designed to engage Middle-years students in certain Victorian rural schools. The project includes online resources, digital learning, in-school workshops, online master classes and live concert streaming, through which a wide range of musical styles can be explored. Technology in this context not only aligns with the thinking of young people, but also provides a platform for students in remote and rural areas to engage with high quality music education and performance experiences that they would not otherwise be able to access. Fifteen or more schools will be participating in Ping during 2010 and 2011.

Evolving technologies require changes in education policy

Technology has advanced exponentially in the past few years. People of all ages around the world have embraced the Internet and other technological media that have encouraged inherently open and social participation. The current surge has come in support of a change in the way that the Internet and the Web are perceived and used. Downes confirms that this transition has been in place for several years, as he explained in 2005:

Enter Web 2.0, a vision of the Web in which information is broken up into 'microcontent' units that can be distributed over dozens of domains. The Web of documents has morphed into a Web of data. We are no longer just looking to the same old sources for information. Now we're looking to a new set of tools to aggregate and remix microcontent in new and useful ways.²

Subsequently, the term 'School 2.0' is being used to describe the shift in thinking about what schools will look like in the future.³ There appear to be three major factors at the core of this discussion:

1. New collaborative technologies including distance learning and the availability of free and open source software.
2. A changing economy from the information age to the current digital age, where employers value and require people to have a different skill set.
3. New technologies giving birth to a transparent, multidimensional and collaborative culture.

The Web has shifted from being just a medium in which information is transmitted and consumed, to become a platform where content is created, shared, remixed and repurposed. People are no longer merely using the Web for reading books, listening to the radio or watching television,

but are having conversations consisting of a visual and multimedia vocabulary. By definition, 'Web 2.0' is a term used to describe 'applications that distinguish themselves from previous generations of software by a number of principles. These new, Web 2.0, applications take full advantage of the network nature of the Web'. This change from a 'read-web' medium to a platform for 'read-write-web' fulfils Berners-Lee's original vision of the Web.⁴

The rethinking of teaching and learning pedagogies for use in all areas of education has emerged as a key issue in the twenty-first century in response to these technological changes and the needs of society.⁵ While Web 2.0, social networking and various online multimedia are widely used, they are still considered inappropriate in the education sector. Ullrich et al. make the point that '[While] research shows convincing examples of using Web 2.0 services for learning ... the relationship between Web 2.0 technology on the one hand and teaching and learning on the other hand are still rare'.⁴ This disparity occurs due to the education sector discussing such technology in terms of their school policy cyber-safety strategy, where concerns of site blocking and cyber-bullying overshadow the benefits of its use. While schools have a responsibility and fundamental duty of care to students which makes site blocking and monitoring Web content a necessary component of school policy, so too is educating and skilling our young people to contribute to, and be active participants in, society.

The information age laid the foundations for the current digital age. There is an increasing use of and reliance on digital technologies in this era, which is having a profound effect on the way that people, especially young people, access knowledge, interact, create, collaborate and essentially learn. This is demonstrated in the Ping project, which highlights the advantages of embracing new technology for learning within a safe and teacher-facilitated (monitored) environment.

Background to Ping

Ping is an online remote music education project designed to fill an important gap in the provision of music education programs in regional schools using a range of Web 2.0 technologies. Funded by the Victorian Government, the Ping project involves partnerships between The Song Room, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Victorian Opera, Country Education Project Incorporated and 3MBS-FM. Ping has three aims:

1. To provide students in rural and remote schools in south-western Victoria with access to high quality music workshops.
2. To facilitate the use of online music technology and engage students in developing online music compositions and soundscapes.

3. To build capacity within these schools to enable music education and the use of online music technology to continue beyond the completion of the workshop. Ping is a purely remote-delivery program, as the project manager Ajax McKerral explains:

While some arts organisations run great regional education programs, a regional school is never going to have the same kind of opportunities as a city school for students to visit and experience elite quality concerts, theatre and other performances. Likewise, access to elite arts education programs is also difficult. With the technology that is available right now, almost any school in Australia could give their students at least a taste of that experience.⁶

The Song Room is a not-for-profit organisation that provides free, tailored music and creative arts education programs to schools and communities having student populations disadvantaged by distance. The organisation had already identified regional and rural schools as a key area of need for provision of arts-based programs. With input from Ajax McKerral and from some of the other partner organizations, The Song Room conceived of the collaborative learning approach that characterises the Ping project. Where possible, a teaching artist from The Song Room has been placed in the remote schools to facilitate the program. Students develop music composition skills using a piece of software called *Audacity*.⁷ This fast multi-track audio editor and recorder has features that include envelope editing, mixing, built-in effects and plug-ins. Students create their own compositions and share their work on the Ping website. A key element of the project is the use of a blog allowing students and teachers to share, collaborate and comment on their compositions. As a teacher from one of the participating schools said, 'the feedback was rather amazing. It's something that as a teacher I never actively sought, until I started using Web 2.0. The kids just seem to do it naturally'.

New communication technologies provide remote access to Melbourne-based musicians as a supplement to the work achieved in class. Online video conferencing workshops are run with expert musicians from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria. The online music workshops are webcast from the studios of Melbourne radio station 3MBS-FM. Through the use of online classroom software *Elluminate*, the students are able to listen to professional musicians, then ask questions and make comments by typing into the chat window.⁸ *Elluminate* unifies technologies such as video and web conferencing, phone, instant messaging, learning management systems and social networks, to ensure that learning collaboration is fast and efficient. This new approach is called 'Unified Learning Collaboration' (ULC):

ULC addresses the changing needs of today's academic institutions and training organisations to make teaching and learning more self-enabled and interactive... This unique approach supports the creation of a comprehensive infrastructure for learning that includes people, processes, learning resources, policies, and sustainable models for continuous improvement.⁹

The impact these experiences are having on the students is invaluable, with teachers confirming immediate increased levels of student engagement and interest. Feedback from teachers so far has also indicated an overwhelming appreciation in overcoming access and equity issues pertinent for schools in remote and rural areas. As one teacher explained:

It means we can access expert speakers, the arts, cultural and musical activities that our students would not otherwise get. We live 30 mins drive from the nearest town/city where cultural events might be held and 3 hours from Melbourne. Students rarely attend any events of this nature and when they do it is at considerable cost.

As resources and expenses for technology and high quality education are main factors for schools in general as well as in these disadvantaged areas, it is important to discuss their impact on the project.

The technology side of Ping

Some of the greatest challenges facing educators are access to technological resources and the ability to use technology effectively due to limited time and opportunities for professional development. The technological applications used for the Ping project are sourced with both capacity building and user simplicity in mind. As Alex McKerral says, 'The most important thing to explain about the technology side of the Ping project is the simplicity. All the software we used was off-the-shelf and either free or already purchased by the DEECD for the use of schools'.⁶ From existing licences, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) is able to supply the *Elluminate* virtual classroom software that is used by the students for the online music workshops. As previously explained, students create their compositions using software called *Audacity*, free and open-sourced software that many schools already have installed and utilise.

A primary technological issue encountered was bandwidth—essentially the speed at which data can be transferred. Sometimes 'bandwidth' is also used to refer to the *maximum* capacity, or the fastest that a connection can move data. Ajax McKerral comments that 'The live video conferencing did stretch the bandwidth capacity of some schools, but hopefully this will become less of an issue'.⁶ Another side of this issue was that schools were charging their students for Internet usage. Due to the Ping project requiring a large amount of bandwidth per student, this resulted in some students paying extra for access to Ping, or being locked out because they had no credit left. The DEECD have since made the decision that students should not be charged for bandwidth. This was a positive outcome to enhance an effective music education project.

The future

As we all know, there is a significant disparity between what occurs in the classroom and what occurs in real-life contexts. Victorian curriculum documents and the more recent discussions surrounding the Australian [National] Curriculum have identified technology as a way of closing this gap.¹⁰ The Ping project has enabled students to build skills in using technology to support the development of

music compositions and participate in workshops. The success of the project so far is largely attributed to the platform it provides for creating, sharing, collaborating, and receiving feedback. The opportunity for students to work with elite musicians and experience high quality performances through partnerships with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Victoria Orchestra has developed students' understanding of musical expression and inspired creativity.

The benefits that Web 2.0 presents for distance learning and for schools in remote or rural areas are invaluable. Education and government authorities need to overcome the threats that accompany digital technologies by addressing them rather than dismissing them. It is reasonable to suggest that most young people already know how to bypass school cyber protection measures. Rather than blocking sites and preventing access, a need exists for educating young people in safe usage. Allowing access to the cyber world for the benefits of teaching and learning not only will demystify the unknown, but arm our young with educated choices and the ability to be knowledgeable and skilful users of new technology. Teachers, too, need to be better informed, and will be required to take a more active role in monitoring classroom cyber-use. As we rethink education in a digital age, technology and Web 2.0 possibilities should be embraced as tools of the future and the means through which to empower students, as demonstrated by the Ping Project. **M in A**

Notes

1. The Victorian Ping Pilot occurred from February 2009 to July 2009. The Victorian Ping Project was launched in January 2010, and is not associated with the Apple iTunes social network of the same name launched on 1 September 2010.
2. S Downes, 'E-learning 2.0', *eLearn magazine*, October 17, 2005. <http://www.elearnmag.org/subpage.cfm?article=29-1§ion=articles/> Accessed 20/5/10.
3. Tangient LLC hosts over 1,300,000 wikis for over 3,400,000 people and has products designed for settings from the smallest classroom to the world's largest corporations and institutions. The team at Tangient explains the use of now-common terms such as 'School 2.0', 'Web 2.0' and 'Classroom 2.0'. See Tangient LLC, 'School 2.0 Wiki', San Francisco. <http://school20.wikispaces.com/> Accessed: 20/05/10.
4. C Ullrich, et al., 'Why Web 2.0 is good for learning and for research: Principles and prototypes', *Proceedings of the 17th International Conference on World Wide Web*, Beijing, International World Wide Web Conference, pp. 705–714. T Berners-Lee, *Weaving the Web*. London: Orion Business Books, 1999.
5. R Crawford, 'Secondary school music education: A case study in adapting to ICT resource limitations', *Australian Journal of Education Technology*, Victoria, AJET Volume 25, No. 4, 2009, pp. 471–488.
6. R Crawford & A McKerral, Interview with the project manager of Ping, 21/05/10.
7. *Audacity* was created by Dominic Mazzoni and designed to support WAV, AIFF, Ogg and MP3 formats using a number of platforms such as Windows, Mac OS, Linux and BSD. See Geeknet, Inc. 'Audacity', <http://soundforge.net/projects/audacity/>
8. *Illuminate* was created by Illuminate Inc., a leading provider of innovative online learning and collaboration products that connect educators, students and business colleagues around the world.
9. J Avrhami, 'Educators, trainers can do more with less using 21st century online learning collaboration', *Illuminate News: Press release*, 2010, http://www.illuminate.com/Company/Media_Center/Press_Release/Detail/116/?id=193/ Accessed 20/5/10
10. Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) both emphasise the development of life-long learners and the importance of real-life learning contexts.

Renée Crawford

Dr Renée Crawford is a music educator who is affiliated with Monash University, and is the Research and Learning Senior Coordinator for The Song Room. Her musical interests are in composition, film music, minimalism, the analysis of contemporary Australian music and the use of digital technology in music. Renée recently completed a PhD at Monash University with research based on the philosophy of authentic learning, and using technology in music teaching and learning practices.

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Ping: www.pingmusic.com.au



THIS MUSIC PARTNERSHIP MEETS COMMUNITY NEEDS

Looking for a successful model for community music and education partnerships? BEV McALISTER describes how Victoria's 30-year-old Dandenong Ranges Music Council works, from its roles in healing after bushfires, through to public performances, student mentoring, commissioning new music—or participating in early intervention programs.

How do you convince people that music is a useful tool for healing, protesting, celebrating and educating, as well as for promoting general community health and wellbeing? The Dandenong Ranges Music Council (DRMC) is a not-for-profit community music organisation that has worked successfully for 30 years to do just that—which probably makes the point.

Active in Victoria's Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley region, about 40 km east of Melbourne's CBD, some of DRMC's projects specifically target schools, while others are designed to link the whole school with its surrounding community in a particular community-based focus, interest or event. We aim to be in tune with community opinions, issues or celebrations—even community tragedies such as 'Black Saturday'. Over the years, some powerful and highly meaningful music projects have been inspired by bushfire recovery and the need for bushfire education.

Helping communities go from burning to learning
'Ash Wednesday' of 1983 is still remembered as a terrible day for bushfires in south-eastern Australia, although it has been eclipsed by those of Victoria's 2009 'Black Saturday'. Throughout the forest communities in the Dandenong

ranges just east of Melbourne, the 1983 impact was enormous. There was loss of life in the community and among the volunteer firefighters, the villages of Upper Beaconsfield were devastated, and other centres suffered great loss of property and natural assets.

As Victoria was planning celebrations for its 150th birthday in 1984–5, the Dandenong Ranges Music Council (DRMC) obtained a grant to commission composer Robert Smallwood to write a new work, suitable for a range of musical forces from school and community music groups. Robert Smallwood engaged poet David Scolyer to attend workshops, in which people expressed what they felt about their communities and Victoria's sesquicentenary celebrations. Several themes recurred, ranging from people's enjoyment of the forests, the birds, the rain, the peace, through to the pioneer struggle—and of course the bushfires.

Robert Smallwood's work was entitled 'Elements' and its four movements described the natural elements of air, earth, fire and water. The scoring was for concert band, strings, bush band, adults' and children's voices, a children's percussion and recorder band and an adult recorder consort.¹

The first rehearsal of this 25-minute piece was one of the most powerful musical moments I have been privileged to experience. Emotions ranged from joy to relief—tears were shed as memories of the fires flooded back and for many, pent up feelings were finally released. The work was premiered in April 1985 at a bush picnic that the pioneers of 150 years before would have enjoyed. One unexpected outcome from this project was the apparent sense of healing of people's souls, particularly those from communities around the devastated town of Cockatoo. The DRMC Board at that time decided that if ever we had another bushfire that resulted in loss of life, the DRMC would host a music recovery project.

In 1997 the township of Ferny Creek was struck by a bushfire, resulting in the loss of three lives and 40 homes. As resolved earlier, the DRMC took action to create a project that would help begin the process of bushfire recovery in the community. The resulting 'Spirit of the Mountain' project brought award-winning composers, presenters and educators Susie Davies and Phill Splitter into partnership with teachers and students of Ferny Creek Primary School, and local community members. They used music, visual arts, writing and spoken word to inspire the music and the text for 'Island in the Sky', to create a memorable song that was then performed by the children at a large community concert. This song continues to be widely performed and has been published.²

After the 'Spirit of the Mountain' project, Ferny Creek Primary School's music teacher Karen Noonan, who just happened to be a member of the Sassafras/Ferny Creek fire brigade, pointed out that the firefighters—the 'fireys'—were frustrated by community complacency about being prepared for bushfire. The Shire of Yarra Ranges responded to a 2005 DRMC submission with funding to support songwriting workshops for the community and brigade members on fire practice nights. Songwriter John Shortis workshopped the idea with the brigade members to find out what their message to the community would be. The result was John's composition *We're Not Heroes—Song of The Fireys*. This was recorded with Ferny Creek Primary School choir and the Dandenong Ranges 'Sing Australia Choir', both of which were rehearsed and conducted by Karen

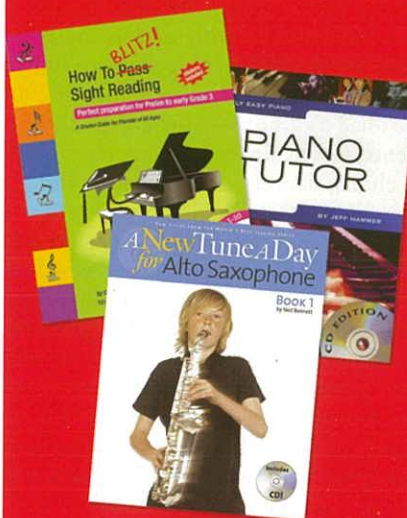
Dandenong Ranges Music Council

'To create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to listen, learn, perform and participate in music making'—with this mission, DRMC has not only existed for over thirty years, but is continuing to flourish. This is due mainly to the dedication of committed volunteers, with support from the Australia Council, Arts Victoria and the Yarra Ranges Council. The organisation now also has part-time professional administrators who work closely with the DRMC board, community music and schools. This team implements the annual program and develops new initiatives in partnership with volunteers and paid professional artists and music educators. Activities are community driven, as a direct response to school and community needs. There is never a shortage of musical dreams ready to be realised!

Financial partnerships that fund the work of DRMC are diverse and often develop unexpectedly. Sometimes they are with arts funding bodies, sometimes with philanthropic trusts, and sometimes with generous individuals who care about young people and their musical development. The DRMC has enjoyed the support of a remarkable range of partners who over the years have stepped up in the interest of music making and music education.

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Noonan. An audio CD with backing track was produced and 500 copies distributed through the community, to assist with learning the song.³

We're Not Heroes became the first of many songs written for and in collaboration with schools and community music groups, which then developed into a full-scale music theatre production. The final performance in 2005, called 'The Fire Cycle', had a cast of 400 including school teachers and students, police, fire brigade members, Parks Victoria rangers, local choirs, dancers, acro-balancers and circus performers.

Devastation came to Victoria yet again in February 2009 with the Black Saturday bushfires, which resulted in Australia's highest-ever loss of life and injury from bushfires. Of huge concern in the community was the effect on schoolchildren who had lost family members or friends, homes, possessions and pets. A grant from the Music Board of the Australia Council enabled DRMC to bring conductor Richard Gill to work with ten schools, presenting composition workshops to choirs on the theme of bushfire recovery. Each school performed their new song and participated in the massed choir, singing a joyful optimistic repertoire to a proud and supportive audience, so that everyone benefited.

Another DRMC bushfire recovery project involved the 'Resound' partnership with the Music Council of Australia. We sought musical instruments donated from around Australia to replace those lost in the fires. This was a great challenge, but over 200 instruments—keyboards, wind, brass, percussion and stringed—and boxes of sheet music were collected, matched with survivors, schools and community music groups, then delivered by trained community volunteers.

A further outcome from the 2009 project with Richard Gill was a partnership between the DRMC, the Victorian Opera, and the Australian National Academy of Music. The Australia Council supported visits of emerging artists from these performing arts organisations, with Richard, to six local

schools to raise the profile of opera, classical music and instrumental music in schools.⁴

The power of partnerships

Reflecting on other partnerships involving the DRMC, I recall with great pleasure 'Jazz Discovery' in 1998 with the outstanding jazz musicians, composers and music educators Don Burrows and Kevin Hunt, which enabled 180 high school instrumental music students to discover jazz. The following year Don selected forty promising students to participate in a performance and improvisation workshop series called 'Jazz Horizons'. Don and Kevin continued to mentor these students, many of whom went on to tertiary music studies and now work professionally as performers and music teachers. The Australia Council supported Don and Kevin as professional artists to visit the Dandenong Ranges for 'Jazz Horizons', which included students from Healesville, Upwey, Lilydale and Monbulk High Schools.

Another DRMC partnership to enhance school-based music making was the 'Ballad of Birdland' in 2000, for which songwriter John Shortis composed songs with schools and the community in a battle to save a beautiful valley in the hills from development. This became a full-scale music theatre production featuring several schools, community music and environmental groups, and the 'Platypus Song' and dance has become a favourite, with schools including it in cultural displays when on overseas tours.

A memorable project in 2005 that promoted cross-curriculum learning was 'Composer Connecting Communities', with composer Calvin Bowman. Working with the Upwey High School concert band, Calvin composed 'Prelude for Band', and also researched Australian poetry for suitable text to set to music for children to learning in classroom music setting. We suggested the poet C. J. Dennis, who was a regular visitor and resident at Sunnyside in Kallista, whose poetry reflected the ethos of the community in the ranges and inspired teachers to include this project across general classroom learnings. The result was a suite of seven songs that have wide appeal among all



audiences. Bessie and the Bunyip remains a favourite.⁵

In 2010 during Education Week, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development gave DRMC the opportunity to host Vox Congo, a band of eight professional musicians who are refugees from the Congo, to work with Upwey High and Upwey Primary School students with dance, song and drumming. Selected students met with the band members and learned about their culture and the life experiences of refugees.

DRMC is also involved with the Robert Exiner Recorder Celebration, receiving financial support from Jess Exiner. This event is designed to raise the profile of the recorder as a serious and highly expressive instrument. Each year we bring a recorder consort from the University of Melbourne together with a specialist classroom / instrumental teacher to work with the teachers and children in local schools. Each school participates in the massed recorder finale. Another worthwhile partnership has been formed between DRMC and Ranges Community Health that aims to use music as an early intervention program for vulnerable families, building on the existing 'Sing and Grow' programs.

We all know of the research that confirms enhanced learning by children who participate in music. We also know how hard it is to sustain school music programs, which is why the DRMC has been a long-time advocate of partnerships with schools to promote, enrich and support music making in all its diversity. We know from experience that parental interest in music can influence policy as they lobby school councils to support music programs; and we know that both music teachers and generalist teachers appreciate our efforts to support them and their schools in all ways. It would be fair to say that the DRMC has been an innovator in community and school music partnerships. We have a Community Music Centre on the grounds of Upwey High School and believe passionately in sharing of our resources, knowledge and experience for the benefit of children and community music. I always remember a quote from Yehudi Menuhin that underpins our partnerships with schools—'A community's music is only as good as its music education.' **M in A**

Notes

1. The score and parts for Robert Smallwood's 'Elements' can be hired from the Australian Music Centre, Sydney: <http://tinyurl.com/smallwood-score/>
2. This song, written and arranged by Susie Davies-Splitter & Phil Splitter, is in 'The power of you' choral pack, Two Up Music, East Bentleigh, Vic., available from Welcome to Music: <http://www.welcometomusic.net/>
3. Download an audio recording of 'We're Not Heroes—Song of the Fireys' from: <http://www.drmc.org.au/documents.html> (under 'Archived Documents')
4. For a description of this project see 'Opera is for everyone' by Melissa Harris, *Music in Action*, vol. 8, issue 2, Spring 2010, pp. 12–13.
5. For a description of this project see 'Bessie Met a Bunyip' by Ann Blore, *Music in Action*, vol. 5, issue 3, Summer 2007, pp. 24–27.

Bev McAlister OAM

In 1976 Bev and husband Murray took their whole family to Eureka, Montana USA, on a teaching exchange. This Rocky Mountain community had an excellent school and community music program where music making and performance were integral to community life and events. On her return to Australia, Bev recognised a lack of music in the schools and the community of the Dandenong Ranges and, although not a teacher herself, was instrumental in establishing the Dandenong Ranges Music Council. She now is a senior advisor for DRMC.

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TOP LOCAL WEBSITES PLUG US IN

Music education has a great demand for the sharing of knowledge and resources. The World Wide Web might easily have been created to satisfy it, bringing together sound, vision, documents and communication. Now ANDREW SWAINSTON introduces a new local Web portal—and more!

The World Wide Web is growing almost exponentially, and in the process is transforming many things, including music education practice. Students are increasingly accessing the Web and utilising digital technologies for a variety of music applications. As educators we need to not only keep abreast of these developments, but also have the vision to recognise possible future trends and directions.

From its inception by Dr Tim Berners-Lee and colleagues at CERN in 1990, the World Wide Web has been inspired by and infused with the ethos of open access and the sharing of knowledge. The roots of these ideals may be traced back to the 1960s counterculture of San Francisco, which strongly embraced new technology. Perhaps this explains why so many people are willing to share much of their work and ideas freely over the Internet. My hat certainly goes off to them!

A huge challenge for school educators in this 'brave new world' is the task of navigating the enormous mass of content online. This can be an impossible task, given our workloads and time constraints. Even with the best search engine, finding the good stuff takes a great deal of time and the process remains somewhat hit-and-miss, often relying on good fortune as much as anything else. Wouldn't it be good if there were an easier way—a short cut—whereby some of the hard work could be done before we even get started? Help may be at hand!

Music Education Web Portal

<http://tinyurl.com/musedport/>

In June this year the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education, in conjunction with ASME Victoria, launched a new Music Education Web Portal. (I now declare my involvement, as the major participant in the development of this resource). The idea was to create a comprehensive portal that would link to very many of the best quality sites and resources available on the Web for music educators and their students. It was recognised that this initiative would be consistent with a recommendation of the Australian National Review of School Music Education. As Net News has demonstrated (or I hope so), there are many excellent websites related to music education that can inform and facilitate a wide range of both formal and informal activities for musical learning and music making for groups and individuals. The aim for the new portal is to be inclusive of a diverse range of interests, styles and cultures.

The resources range from lesson plans, to PowerPoint presentations, to sheet music, and other classroom resources for school music teachers. The website is linked to include amateur and community music sites, interactive music ICT (including experimental and contemporary

multimedia video), online instrumental tuition materials and so on. There are links to literally hundreds of sites.

The site is organised as a number of different pages, each of which groups websites according to different criteria. For example, there are pages devoted to classroom resources, musical styles and genres, instrumental music, and music education organisations. There is a degree of overlap in content across the different pages, as this was the only appropriate way to position some high-quality sites with multiple facets.

This new Music Education Web portal is intended mainly for practicing teachers and their students, although academics, professional musicians and many others are likely to find much to interest them. The 'Multimedia, Creativity, Digital Art and Social Networking' page should be of interest to drama, visual arts and media teachers.

This is and will remain a work in progress, because the Web never stands still. So keep returning and you'll find new things. I hope it will become a valued and well-visited site.

OTHER WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Music Teachers Oz

www.musicteachersoz.org/

This project aims to 'decrease isolation between academics, teachers and pre-service teachers', and offers a wide range of features situated in 'rooms'.

Ensemble

www.ensemble.org.au/

This website focuses on recognising the efforts of students, parents, teachers and principals who are getting on with learning and teaching music in our schools, acknowledging their challenges and celebrating their successes, and supporting them to continue to develop music education in Australia.

sMAG

<http://tinyurl.com/smag-action/>

The School Music Action Group (sMAG) was formed immediately following the Victorian Music Workshop in April 2007. This blog site brings together representatives of the key music education community including teachers and principals, as well as representatives from the tertiary music and education sectors, music/arts bodies, and the music industry.

The Virtual Revolution

<http://tinyurl.com/bbc-revolution/>

This fascinating BBC documentary explores the development of the World Wide Web, which makes all this possible! **M in A**

Sonar Home Studio 7 Digital audio workstation

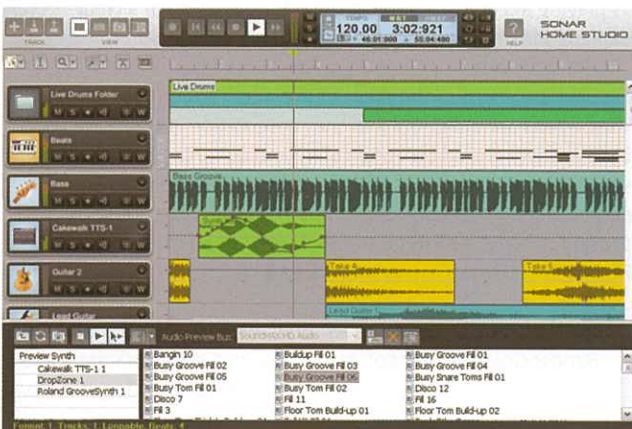
Distributed by Intellware Australia. Reviewed by Adrian Alexander

I have long believed that technology should support students in acquiring a wide variety of skills and approaches for creating music, by providing a platform that allows them to integrate their instrumental, theoretical and aural skills into the production of a satisfying recorded outcome. With the advent of Web platforms that allow students to easily publish their work, this has never been more relevant.

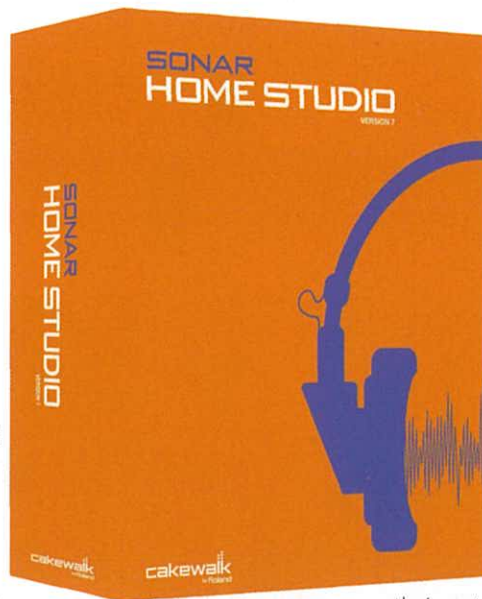
With the release of its latest digital audio workstation (DAW) Sonar Home Studio 7, Cakewalk provide a comprehensive set of tools in a simplified environment that provides a springboard for fostering such creativity.

Home Studio 7 integrates four essential creative elements of production seamlessly.

First, it is a powerful MIDI sequencer that allows students to layer multi-track recordings from a MIDI keyboard or other MIDI controller such as a digital drum kit. This approach, whilst allowing for kinesthetic input, has often required often relatively sophisticated and expensive hardware synthesisers or sound modules to achieve high quality sounds, or required a compromise in sound quality when using the 128 General MIDI sounds found on board most computer sound cards. Sonar HS 7 solves all that by providing a high quality and expressive set of second generation General MIDI 2 sounds with the inclusion of its Roland-powered Cakewalk TTS-1 software synthesiser.



Second, Home Studio provides Studio Instruments Drums, a virtual drumkit with a simple and elegant user interface (complete with virtual carpet under the kit!), allowing students to build rhythmic parts in a range of styles and genres. There is also a drag-and-drop Sampler, a Dropzone for integrating and remixing existing audio, and an analogue synth for those interested in



creating and modifying warm sounds of their own. Instrument Tracks allow all of these sound sources to be added to a composition in a one-step process, simplifying their use.

Third, Home Studio 7 integrates Audio Loops, such as those used by popular programs such as Acid and GarageBand. These are very popular with students and music producers alike in creating many current music styles. Sonar allows the insertion of 'pitch markers', automatically transposing the loops to fit within song chord structures, in addition to having them follow the song tempo.

Fourth, Sonar HS7 is a great environment for multitrack audio recording. This allows instrumental and vocal students to record

their parts live. Any audio interface can be used to achieve high quality recordings, and with many MIDI controller keyboards now having this capability, audio recording is very accessible. For those wishing to do live multitrack recordings of ensembles, Cakewalk have included the capability in Sonar HS 7 to record more than two audio tracks at a time, by adding a multichannel audio interface.

Sonar HS 7 provides an improved range of tools to edit and mix the final product. Equalisation is now provided on each audio track via the very intuitive and visual Sonitus EQ plugin. Other effects, including compression and reverb, are also part of the basic HS 7 package.

The new 'dashboard' graphic user interface considerably simplifies the layout. However I would have preferred direct control over the metronome to be included here. Basic scoring capability is provided, and a video track adds to the flexibility, with potential for cross-curricular applications.

On the installation CD Cakewalk provide video-based resources to assist in learning Sonar HS7, plus an extensive help file. I would advise teachers to set up templates for classroom projects to maximise students' creative time. The export and publish features simplify outputting student work to a variety of audio and video formats. Overall, Sonar Home Studio 7 provides a highly integrated music technology platform, allowing for diverse skills and approaches, at a very accessible price. **M in A**

Thanks to our reviewer Adrian Alexander, Manager of Digital Content & Multimedia Learning, at the Digital Learning Hub, The Arts Centre, Melbourne.

P Plate Piano: Books 1–3 Edited by Elissa Milne

Published by the Australian Music Examinations Board. Reviewed by Helen Boér

These three books in the AMEB's new *P Plate Piano* series are aimed at young beginner pianists.

Elissa Milne, the series consultant editor, says the books are intended to complement traditional tutor or method books and to prepare students for AMEB exams, by helping to develop the musical and technical skills required to sit for the Preliminary grade examination. Students may also present for a pre-Preliminary AMEB examination using these materials.

The illustrations are delightful and the accompanying text is generally informative, appropriately worded for young people, and interesting. The information included might be about instruments such as the didgeridoo, or about a style of music, such as the blues. The presentation is visually interesting and up-to-date. Some novel activities are included, such as writing variations to a simple tune, although I am not sure that the fledgling pianists who comprise the target market would actually have the skills to undertake them—but with some assistance, why not? If the student is engaged, something vital has been achieved.

The three books of the series comprise about 54 pieces that offer students a moderate advancement in standard as they proceed through this level. Techniques covered include: using a metronome, playing in contrary motion, melody in alternating hands, glissando (although when the text says 'it might hurt', I wonder at the wisdom of including this effect); varying touches and rhythms, notes that explore the extreme ends of the keyboard, duet arrangements, and changing time signatures, to name a few. Some excellent finger-exercise pieces are included in the material, which includes original works, traditional tunes and delightful pieces by some lesser-known composers.

Given that most tutor and method books already cover the technical and musical skills covered, the obvious question is, what advantages does this series offer? It may be difficult to justify the expense of yet another set of books that function in parallel to those already being used at this early stage of learning. There are some well-phrased explanations of techniques and some useful practice tips, but with respect to the provision of musical and technical skills, I do not discern any great difference between this series and previously published tutors and method books. So it comes down to offering two things: that which appeals to and inspires students, and the opportunity to experience a pre-Preliminary grade AMEB examination.



Appealing to the student is everything—if the student is not inspired, he or she will not want to practice. The presentation of these books is certainly very appealing. Some of the pieces are lovely and others are just plain good fun. Nevertheless, one or two left me baffled as to why they were included—the piece *O* only gives further reason to avoid practice!! OK, this is just my opinion, and of course there will always be pieces in any collection that don't appeal to everyone. There are some imaginative ideas for activities that could well tickle the fancy of the young pianist, such as playing a piece in a different key, but inclusion of a clear explanation of how to do this would have been helpful.

In summary, many of the pieces have much to commend them, the illustrations are delightful and the presentation is very appealing. I believe there would be opportunity and advantage in including some, but not all, of the pieces in the learning process. And of course, if a teacher considers it appropriate for a student to present for an AMEB-type assessment or presentation prior to Preliminary, this is the way to go. **M in A**

Thanks to our reviewer, Helen Boér, who teaches piano at Carey Baptist Grammar School, Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School and in private practice in Victoria.

Roland CD2i CD/SD recorder

Distributed by Roland Corporation Australia. Reviewed by Jim Hayden

The Roland CD2i is a stand-alone digital recorder that allows the user to record directly to CD or SD card. The unit is of compact, sleek desktop-style design with clearly labelled controls, LED display screen, speakers and microphones. A quick flick through the user manual and a closer inspection reveals that there is much more to it than a simple digital recorder.

For live recording, one can use either the stereo built-in condenser mics or external mics. The quality of the built-in mics is very good with no trace of hum or background noise, and their placement in the housing achieves a realistic stereo image when recording small ensembles. The external mic lines also work very well, and feature manual or auto level control and phantom power. I tested the unit using both internal and external mics in a range of classroom situations, and was pleased with the overall results. In addition, the phono line-in connection allows for the recording of digital pianos, or audio feed from any playback device such as computer, MP3 player, cassette or record player. Input signals are monitored via the LED screen with a peak indicator present on both the mic and line level controls.

The CD2i is much more than a digital recorder. Roland has added features that make this the perfect practice companion for musicians—beginner through to professional. The unit has a built-in tuner and metronome, to get your performance off to a good start. Once you've recorded your music, either live or directly from a CD via the CD slot, your file is stored internally on the SD card. This is where the fun starts!

The CD2i excels in its ability to manipulate your stored music by real time processing at the touch of a button. The following variables are possible:

- Change the key of your music within a range of -6 to +5 semitones
- Change the tempo of your music within a range of 50% (half speed) to 125% (1.25x normal speed)
- Create markers and loop sections to facilitate practice of difficult passages
- Adjust playback pitch
- Add reverb and EQ your performance
- Create Karaoke versions of existing CD tracks, achieved through some nifty phase cancellation that effectively hides the original vocal.
- Dub a second audio track to your original recording.

When you are happy with your work—remembering that you might have come away with a version of your song in a new key



and tempo—your modified version can be saved to SD card and then transferred to CD to be taken home for practice purposes, giving great possibilities to a music teacher. Being able to record accompaniments or use existing accompaniment CDs and tailor them to suit individual needs, is a great facility. This might include the need to find the right key for a singer, experiment with tempos, or to trial backing tracks only available from transposing instruments.

The unit is very user-friendly and simple to use. The front panel offers up an 'Easy Guide' button, a clever feature by Roland whereby several operation modes are set up with instructions appearing in the display screen.

The CD2i runs on AC power or AA batteries, making it completely portable. In addition there is a remote control for situations where you might be playing in the ensemble, as well as operating the record button.

Summing up, the CD2i is typical of what Roland does well. It is well thought through and totally functional, with no needless frills or extras. Reading the manual in depth reveals more advanced editing and production features, but in the real world of music education, you need something that is quick and simple to operate yet still produces a high quality result. I think the Roland CD2i is a valuable tool for all musicians but especially music educators. Now, when was I supposed to give it back? **MIA**

Thanks to our reviewer Jim Hayden, Student Leadership Coordinator, music teacher and VET Entertainment teacher at Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, NSW.

Music Room: Book 6, Upper Primary

The Interactive Music Room: Book 1, Beginner Primary

by Fairbairn, Leehy, O'Mara and Burgemeister

Published by Bushfire Press. Reviewed by Stephen Hutton

These new teaching resources from the ever-busy team at Bushfire Press, released earlier this year, are much anticipated by teachers already using previously published parts of the program.

Music Room: Book 6

This is the second-last in a series representing a complete music program for primary schools. *MR Book 1* came out in 2005 and *MR Book 7* is due in 2011. When complete, the program will provide a comprehensive and detailed music course for children throughout their primary school years. Each level provides a whole year's music lessons including easy-to-follow lesson plans, CDs of all music used, charts in both hard copy and on CD-ROM, and a DVD.

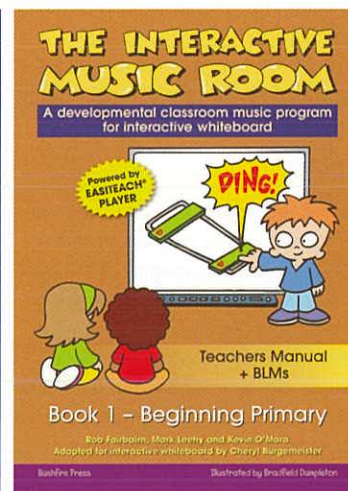
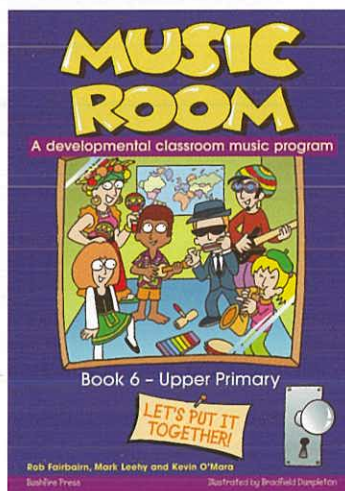
MR Book 6 consists of eight modules. The focus is on popular styles that may not be familiar to students—Reggae Rhythm, Celtic Heartbeat, Pacific Harmonies, Latin Groove, Blues Changes, Jazz Colours, Gospel Voices—and Musikwizz, a quiz-based review of the year.

Each lesson in the teacher's manual is laid out in full colour as a series of activities. The instructions are clear and concise, with coloured headings and graphic symbols designed to make it quick and easy for a teacher to review and prepare. This is a great boon for music teachers who are often flat out with a host of extra-curricular tasks in addition to their classroom teaching.

A typical lesson starts with a video presentation demonstrating the instruments of the relevant musical style. Then a song in that style is sung, followed by a closer look at an important musical element such as a rhythmic ostinato. Students are then asked to make a creative response, such as develop a rhythmic accompaniment, or write new words to part of the song. The lesson ends with a chance to reflect on some of the key musical elements covered during the lesson.

A strength of this program is that even a non-specialist teacher may implement it. However, the more musical skills a teacher has, obviously the better off they will be. In *MR Book 6*, this is especially true as there are chord progressions and complex rhythms introduced.

As always with Bushfire Press, the composing, performing and recording of the music included in its publications are of high quality. This quality of the music lies at the heart of the program's effectiveness and, in my experience, children love to sing these songs. Bushfire Press has deliberately chosen to use only traditional and original music. While this is understandable,



children may benefit from being exposed to a greater range of music, especially from the main exponents of each genre. My students responded very positively to the first reggae lesson, which includes the song *Three Little Words*. This clearly refers to Bob Marley's *Three Little Birds*. Playing Bob Marley's original and having a brief discussion about him before launching into the *Music Room* unit would have added to the lesson, I felt.

Music Room is a well-researched and thoroughly tested program but of course any given activity may work well in one situation but not in another. Even with a well-laid-out program such as this, teachers need to be aware of the uniqueness of their classroom and adapt the program accordingly. *Music Room: Book 6* is a great program. It is creative, covers a range of genres and introduces a variety of musical concepts. I believe it would be very engaging and enjoyable for senior primary students.

The Interactive Music Room: Book 1

Cheryl Burgemeister, a music teacher from South Australia, has collaborated with Bushfire Press to develop this interactive whiteboard (IWB) version of *Music Room: Book 1*. They intend to publish IWB versions of all the *Music Room* levels over the coming years. The first in the series is for students in their first year of primary school, and contains four units covering the basic musical elements of beat, pitch, dynamics and tempo, and look at different ways in which music is used.

With schools rapidly adopting IWBs in the classroom, Bushfire Press is to be commended for this is an innovative step in the development of music curriculum programs. *The Interactive Music Room: Book 1* includes a teacher's manual in print and digital formats, an instructional DVD, and all necessary software.

The program can be displayed on any IWB, being built on Easiteach interactive software. The Easiteach and *Interactive Music Room* software are part of the package, and very easy to use. Also included are all lessons, lyrics, audio files, interactive activities, PDFs of the black line masters, and teacher's notes.

The content in the interactive version of *MR Book 1* is the same as the original, with the adaptation of activities to incorporate the interactive element. Each activity is displayed on a screen that has an audio box for playing music with the usual play, pause, stop and rewind buttons. If there is a song, the lyrics will be displayed and there will also be images related to the interactive element.

The interactive activities include: touching figures to make them dance, 'playing' pictures of instruments, moving characters and graphics around the screen in response to a song or story, choosing where to place pictures in response to the music heard, selecting the correct picture to reveal the hidden word, or drawing your own pictures.

The benefits of using the print version of *Music Room*, apply equally to *The Interactive Music Room: Book 1*, with the great benefit of all of the resources being available by a tap on the IWB screen. Also, given that children learn in different ways, having visual support for aurally-based activities can enhance student learning. Similarly, the interactive element enhances the overall classroom experience. When I taught the first lesson with my junior classes, the children were very keen to use the interactive

elements. It helped them to engage with what was happening. Even though only one student at a time could touch the IWB screen, there were a number of opportunities throughout the lesson for this sort of interaction, which enabled many students to have a turn.

The major part of each lesson is dependent on using the IWB. This could be a distraction when wanting students to focus on their own or other student's music-making. There may need to be time in a lesson away from the IWB. That reservation aside, *The Interactive Music Room: Book 1* is dynamic and easy to use, and an exciting step forward in using technology in the music classroom. Students could find their music lessons a lot more fun, as well as receiving a balanced, structured and creative music education.

If children were to progress through their primary school education learning music using the *Music Room* program, I believe they would be receiving a high quality music education.

M in A

Thanks to our reviewer, Stephen Hutton, music teacher at Holy Child Primary School, Dallas, Melbourne.

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A NEW 'INSTANT PLAY' APPROACH TO MUSIC LEARNING

Although possibly a controversial approach for guitar purists, TOM BENJAMIN's ultra-simple guitar method taps into blues styles and jazz harmony to offer an instant starter for aspiring guitarists.

Changing times call for new approaches

Despite its once promising possibilities, technology has not yet closed the immense gap between those whose main involvement in music has been as passive recipients of pop culture, and the elite few who have gained the notational literacy and music performance skills needed for playing orchestral and other instruments.¹

Attempts to harness the do-it-yourself intermediaries of karaoke-style singing at social events, playing the skiffle (wash board) to accompany a folk music group, or performing in boy/girl bands² have limited potential—there is simply no logical progression from such DIY activities to playing a cello in an orchestra, or an electric bass in a garage band.

However the approach to teaching, learning and performing on guitar that I am promoting is an attempt to bridge some of the gaps at the introductory stages of learning a musical instrument so as to establish a sufficiently high level of motivation for continuing with the instrument. If tackled seriously, this approach ought to be able to take, say a guitar learner, from a total lack of skill, to playing a large repertoire of pop songs by ear in record time. Once student motivation is in place, more traditional guitar teaching methods can be introduced. The principles I'll outline may even have application to learning other instruments. Originally conceived as a practical way for casual adult guitar players to quickly be able to play by ear in order to accompany singing, it also serves as a base-level method of introducing novice learners to music in general.

What makes for good learning?

A common aspect of traditional approaches to music education—such as the Orff and Kodály methods—is a reduction of cognitive and physical load to manageable amounts of program content in order to promote developmental learning. Fear of failure is often an inhibiting factor in the learning process; this can be minimised by reducing the range of notes—both rhythmic and melodic—being introduced to students. (Kodály practitioners undoubtedly adopt this precept as much for this reason as for the logical and sequential introduction of the rhythmic and melodic vocabulary). Another means of supporting the learning process is to include learners in a group learning situation, where peer support can be a crucial factor in achieving the desired learning outcomes. Moreover, research in the area of behavioural psychology has shown that intermittent reinforcement³ and minimal extrinsic reward⁴ give maximum engagement.

For those wishing to acquire basic guitar skills, all of this translates into a form of musical accompaniment that can be

put together by teachers or students, will follow a fairly predictable and easy-to-perform musical pattern, and will replace the artificial praise often given to mediocre attempts to contribute to an ensemble, with the learner's instrument actually making an objectively positive contribution to the ensemble's sound. This is difficult in practice because young people's music is often banal, art music is art precisely because of its novelty and complexity, and most of the smaller and cheaper instruments tend to 'screech', and therefore clash with the accompaniment.

Musical premises

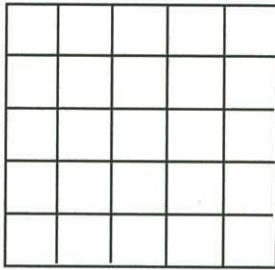
The novel solution proposed in my play-by-ear method is to re-write the music to suit the ergonomics rather than adapt the player to the music. Methods such as the Orff approach do this by restricting choice in introductory exercises—for example, by removing the fourth and seventh note keys on a diatonic xylophone so that pitch is limited to a pentatonic idiom. Blues music (12-bar blues) owes some popularity to reduced cognitive load with its easily-learned progression that allows the learner to anticipate likely chord changes and thus jam by ear to an unfamiliar blues tune.

My approach extends this system by re-writing chords. It 'reverse-engineers' from the 'simplest-to-finger' variants of guitar chords, however discordant, and derives the formal name of the resulting chord. That 'ersatz'⁵ or pseudo-chord is then substituted in the accompaniment for its full-chord counterpart—that is, a C–F–G song might become Cmaj7–F2–G6 in my system. Full C–F–G chords span three frets whereas my two-finger two-fret guitar chords produce somewhat harsh Cmaj7–F2–G6. But if students are playing the accompaniment to a song with a Cmaj7–F2–G6 computer-generated backing track—that can easily be produced in a program such as *Band-in-a-Box* or *Jammer*—then my two-finger chords find a home.

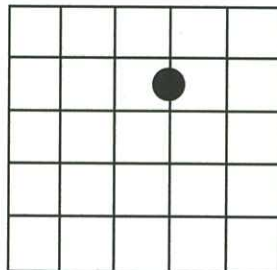
To keep down cognitive and physical load, my system is entirely chord-based. Melodic sequences are left to the singer or instrumental soloist. Standard guitar tuning is used so there are no re-tunes, melodies or muffled strings to remember, no barres, no finger stretches beyond two frets, and no frets beyond the sixth. This severely limits the selection of chords, but need only produce two keys to give a singer four choices—that is, two keys that can be pitched up or down an octave as needed.

The system is further simplified by starting with sets that use one 'up-down' finger movement. The first exercise uses a single finger lifted on and off the fretboard in the same place to produce two chords (Fig. 1).

Fig 1: The easy G chord should have no finger on it. It is an up-and-down movement of the D only with the G being produced open. This is a key point.



Open: 'easy G chord'
(used as Chord A11/G)



D
(chord D2 or Dadd9 6th)

Fig 2: Songs that can be played with as few as two chords and one finger

Major: G and D

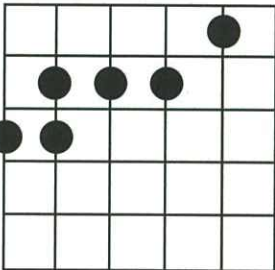
- Buffalo Gals
- Little Liza Jane
- Ezekial saw de Wheel
- Skip To My Lou
- Pollywolly Doodle

Major: D and Em

- Shady Grove
- Joshua F't the Battle of Jericho
- The Drunken Sailor
- Wade In the Water
- 900 Miles

Fig 3: One-finger chord positions and corresponding ersatz chords. In other words, a player pressing a single finger to the top right position would be producing a D11 chord. Pressing the far left position would result in G6/9 etc. Taken together, this particular sequence can be used to play many songs in the Key of G.

Positions for single finger



Chords

D11
Em7 A7sus D2
G6/9 Cmaj7

Fig 4: Two- and three-finger ersatz chord shapes. Adding the six basic shapes gives a cornucopia of popular music. These can be moved around the frets to create a range of ersatz chords.

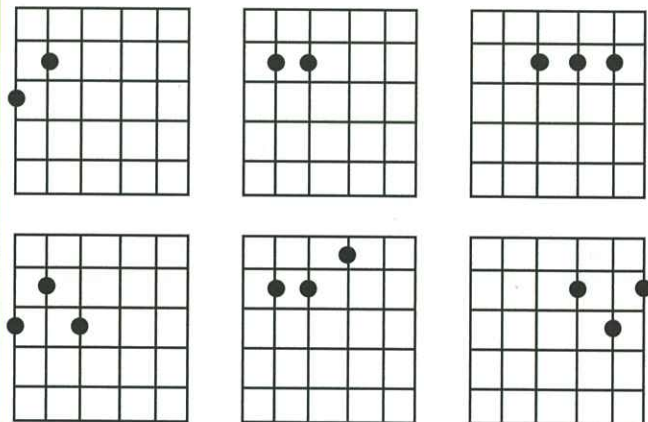


Fig 5: Suggested chord substitutions in software to match guitar.

Complexity:	1-finger	2-fingers	3-fingers
Keys:	G or D	C, D or G	C, D, E, G or A
Guitar chords	Substitutions		
C	Cmaj9	Cmaj7	C6 or C2
D	D2	D2	D
E	Em7	E7 or E11	E
F	Fmaj7b5	Fmaj7b5	Fmaj9 or Fmaj13
G	G69/E ¹	G6	G
A	A7sus	A2	A
B	Bm11	B7 or Bm7	B11
Em	Em7	Em	Em
Bm	Bm11	Bm11	Bm11
B♭	Bbb5 ²	Bbmaj7	Bbmaj7
Am	A7sus	Asus	Am

1. Refers to the open strings, which can act as a variant of either G, D or A chord.

2. If entering this chord into the software program Band-in-a-Box (or equivalent), it would need to be input as 'bb5b'.

Shifting the finger produces a change from a pseudo-G chord⁶ to a pseudo-D chord.⁷ By themselves these chords are a bit atonal and the strum is subtle and uninspiring as five of the strings do not change. But the compromise is that when played along with a backing track that substitutes, these A11/G and D2 chords in place of full G and D result in the guitar sounding 'correct', especially if you are selective in the strings that are actually sounded. After all, our goal is to make the beginner sound good, not so much the accompanist, and once the beginner is sufficiently motivated, the harder work of learning guitar from a more established method can start.

The note that changes need not be the chord's root.⁸ There are many ways to play a given chord and the song can be made quite complex and interesting because the accompaniment (whether human or computer-generated) is not limited to the same octaves as the guitar. Thus the same set of notes can move around to become bass or leads, limited only by the imagination of the arranger of a computer-generated backing track. Indeed, the full chord may need to be inserted periodically merely to remind the listener of the actual key buried in the jazz arrangement. Many famous songs can be played with two chords (Fig. 2).

Applying the new approach

An easy way to re-arrange a song is to use a music software program such as *Band-in-a-Box* or *Jammer* and use 'Search and replace'. The traditional chords (usually just the tonic, subdominant and dominant) can be substituted for my pseudo-chords and vice-versa. This is a learning exercise in its own right, as it introduces the student to the need to choose chord variants to suit the instruments, the song and the listeners. For example, to refresh the listener, I might put the full chord at the beginning of a verse and might later depart from an ersatz chord by using a suspended chord that evokes an emotion.

For many students, the place to start will be with the basic one-finger chord positions and corresponding ersatz chords (Fig 3); however, some learners could progress straight to 2–3 finger chords (Fig 4) and to songs with three or more chords. This major step immediately launches them into the ocean of popular music and its jazz harmonies! Most pop songs can easily be re-written to these ersatz chords. They certainly sound a bit 'jazzed' but are still recognisable.

Teachers wishing to adapt the approach to their own choice of music can refer to the chord table (Fig 5) with recommended transpositions. The columns specify the applications for the approach—that is, they range from one-finger/two-chord introductory level to three-finger/multi-chord progressions, such as in blues or Tin Pan Alley styles. The rows specify the main chords in the system and the intersection of row/column indicates the substitution needed to re-write the music to fit the chord produced by the guitar. For example, according to the chart, a three-fingered funk song in key of C would change most of the G chords to G13. The one-fingered sequence in key of G changes all A (A, A7, Am etc.) chords to A7sus, and so on. When the learner progresses to three-fingered shapes, many of the full chords such as A or E can be played, whereas the more difficult F chord might still require a substitution such as Fmaj9 or Fmaj13.

The actual chord shapes are depicted in the chord table (Fig. 3) and in the website tutorials (see Resources). The website versions include videos and animations which can be updated. This is a Creative Commons resource, so teachers and learners may (and are) encouraged to download and modify freely for whatever commercial or non-commercial purpose they wish. Dozens of backing tracks for some of the more commonly well-known songs are also posted in MIDI format as part of the resource. A large body of backings is essential so that an online learner can try different styles and not get bored. Teachers can use the table of chord transitions (Fig. 5) to create their own backing tracks. I welcome user-generated (non-copyright) examples, as those are the best way to build a critical mass of users.

How does this approach fit in with existing music education practice?

Although developed for guitar, the principles may be applied to almost any instrument, and even to singing. For example, a violin can be tuned so that drone strings fit with chords to a song. This reduces cognitive load so the student can concentrate on one active string, confident the others will not cause discords. A casual user might merely want to try playing a violin by ear as a variety lead instrument in an ensemble—for example, as in bluegrass when alternating with harmonica, mandolin and banjo. Normally a violin or any high-pitched instrument 'screeches' above the ensemble. With ersatz chords and a group balanced with an electronic mixing desk, it might well contribute rather than detract.

More importantly, the fear of sounding bad is minimised. This was the principle I developed in a series of papers I wrote during the 1980s that focused on games for the severely-handicapped. Picture two people facing each other in locked-down wheelchairs trying to play volleyball; if one misses a shot, an able-bodied helper has to retrieve the ball. Hang the ball from the ceiling with elastic and the embarrassment at missing a return shot is minimised. My guitar approach is just an extension of the overall scaffolding approach I've taken to game design.

Fear of failure is deadly for most musical production. Fearful singers may sing their notes flat for lack of pressure or sharp through anxiety. The same may apply to string and wind instruments as in jerky violin-bowing, 'duck-calls' on a clarinet or 'whistle-squeak' on a recorder.

Putting up 'scaffolding' for music learning

The ultimate test of any 'scaffold' is whether the construction it was supporting holds its weight when withdrawn. Digital technology with ever-larger MIDI sampled sound sources allows us to create ever-more impressive backing tracks. These can even become interactive with players in the same way as a music teacher with access to a piano had been through the twentieth century. Nothing has changed the role of teachers in helping the student sound good, while gradually reducing the level of support.

What has changed is the acceptance of different types and style of music within education and the focus on the learning style of the individual student. Lucy Green noted that for decades 'we introduced pupils to the music that they themselves had declared was most unfamiliar and most

disliked—Western classical music'.⁹ Contemporary popular music and various forms of ethnic music are gradually taking their place in a musical diet once based solely on classical art music. Harmonicas are vying with recorders, and digital keyboards are certainly competing with acoustic pianos. Music teachers are acknowledging and actively researching the informal ways in which extra-curricular music groups are learning from each other. I hope my approach can help make all of this easier and more flexible, and I hope that users will ultimately share their tunes, podcasts and videos through the World Wide Web. **MⁱⁿA**

Notes

1. The many challenges being faced by music teachers, including the need to promote practical music making as much as aesthetic understanding, were summarised in Pascoe, R, et al., *National Review of School Music Education: Augmenting the Diminished*. Canberra: Australian Government, 2005.
2. 'Boy/girl bands' are pop groups who sing and dance to synthesised music but who do not play instruments.
3. See the research literature arising from the work of B F Skinner.
4. See the research literature on cognitive dissonance, balance, reactance and related theories.
5. The German word 'ersatz' literally translated means a substitute or replacement.
6. Creative options for the open string chord can be entered to software like Band in a Box as A11/G or G69/E, etc depending on how you intend it be perceived in the context of the song.
7. The note chosen is actually A. The D note on 3rd fret does not produce much audible chord change.
8. For example the A note, part of the D chord, was chosen in place of a 3rd fret D note. Either of these notes could be used to represent the chord entered in software as D2.

9. See L Green, *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy*, London: Ashgate Publishing, 2008.

Resources

The method as applied to guitars and instruments: www.oz-rock.com/

The method as applied to singing: www.kara-oke.com/

Tom's homepage: www.tom.com.au/

Music resources produced by the Centre for Learning Innovation are available through <http://www.tale.edu.au/> from outside the Department log in as 'Parents & community' and look up 'music' resources.

Tom Benjamin

Dr Tom Benjamin is a senior researcher at the Centre for Learning Innovation, NSW Department of Education and Training, whose background is as a psychologist and educator. Tom was an amateur rock and roll singer in Detroit before coming to work in Australia as a psychologist. He has long been a fan of Orff Schulwerk and the music therapy movement.

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TAKING CARE OF ALL YOUR VOICES!

Singing teacher MELINDA CERESOLI explains how to ensure a happy and healthy larynx for your singing voice—and for those of your students.

Some common problem scenarios

Cathy, the choral director, often sings over the choir to encourage her students to project their voices and to help with individual parts. Forty-five minutes of this often leaves her with a raw feeling in her throat. Peter, a primary music teacher, often talks loudly over his class of enthusiastic young recorder players and percussionists. By the end of the day, Peter's voice feels and sounds rather raspy. Sally, the voice teacher, has her days packed with student lessons as well as rehearsals after school. By the end of most days, her voice is tired and her throat sore. Her own singing has become more effortful. Does this sound familiar?

The human voice is quite resilient but also has limitations. It's not uncommon for classroom music teachers to teach all day, hold rehearsals during lunchtimes and a rehearsal for the musical production after school. That all makes for a very long and tiring day of voice use. This kind of voice use can lead to real problems.

Speech language pathologists have placed school teachers in the high-risk category of professions that suffer voice problems. Voice Care Australia has reported that up to 20% of teachers experience voice problems each year, due to excessive vocal load or 'phonotrauma'. Music teachers and primary school teachers are particularly at risk.

The voice is our primary form of communication. Think back to a time at school when suffering from a cold or laryngitis, that you really struggled to teach your classes without using your voice. But it's not just excessive voice use that can lead to vocal problems; external issues can have an effect too.

Some common symptoms and possible causes

A sore throat once in a while doesn't mean that you have vocal problems. Look at the symptoms in Table 1. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms on a regular or ongoing basis, you will need to reflect upon on your vocal habits. Table 2 will help you try to determine whether the cause stems from voice use or from lifestyle issues, or both. See 'Who should you see for voice help?' below.

Vocal health tips

Here are some practical tips to help you maximise your vocal health.

Your 'Voice-to-Rest Ratio'

To ensure a healthy voice, rest is absolutely necessary. Rest means absolute silence. When a voice starts to sound hoarse, it means that the vocal folds (or vocal cords) are swollen, due most commonly to vocal overloading. It's important to minimise speaking or singing when the voice is hoarse or sore, so find times when you can be silent.

Medication

Some medication affects the throat by causing swelling, coughing, dryness and even increased risk of vocal fold haemorrhage. Information on the side effects of many medications is available online or in the printed material that accompanies the medication. There may be suitable alternative medications that do not affect the voice. The National Centre for Voice and Speech in Salt Lake City has a great website that includes a list of 200 of the most commonly prescribed medications and the effects on voice and speech (see Resources).

Reflux

This occurs when stomach acids travel up the oesophagus (food pipe) and cause heartburn. Laryngopharyngeal Reflux (LPR) occurs when the acid travels onwards and into the throat, causing irritation and swelling around the vocal folds. This makes the voice hoarse and sometimes sore. If you often wake up with a hoarse voice and find yourself regularly clearing your throat, you might have LPR. Don't be alarmed! It can usually be treated by a change of diet, lifestyle changes or medication.

Women's business

Many females experience slight vocal change just prior to (or during) menstruation. Some women might notice that their voice becomes hoarse or fatigues easily. Temporary vocal fold swelling due to hormones is best treated with careful voice use and rest.

Smoking

There is no shortage of information on the harmful affects of smoking which can irritate the membranes of the nose, mouth and throat.

Hydration

The 'eight glasses a day' rule is not only good for general health but also important for efficient vocal fold function. Studies have shown that dry vocal folds, such as nodules, are more prone to injuries. Sorry, but some singers say 'sing wet, pee pale'. Drinks containing caffeine are diuretics and will cause the body to expel fluid, so, eight cups of tea won't do!

Dryness

Air conditioners, heaters and dry climates are not great for voices. If you work or live in a particularly dry environment, consider using a humidifier—and don't forget to drink!

Lack of sleep

When someone lacks sleep, you can often detect it in their voice. A tired voice often presents itself as a hoarse sound with increased 'vocal fry'—which is that scratching sound often heard at the bottom of the vocal range.

<i>Table 1: Symptoms</i>	Y	N
Loss of voice		
Loss of vocal quality (change in timbre)		
Significant loss of volume		
Reduced range (particularly higher notes)		
Huskiness/hoarseness		
Vocal fatigue		
Effortful speech or singing (more so than usual)		
Sore or aching throat		
Increased coughing and/or throat clearing		
Waking up with a sore throat or hoarse voice		

If you regularly experience any of the symptoms listed above, try to determine whether the cause stems from voice use or from lifestyle issues, or both. Check yourself using Table 2.

<i>Table 2: Possible causes or triggers</i>	Y	N
Do you speak for long periods throughout the day, with little vocal rest?		
Are you frequently raising your voice to address large groups?		
Do you sing a lot during the day?		
Do you smoke (or have smoked)?		
Are you on any medication for conditions such as asthma, allergies or anxiety / depression?		
Do you suffer from high levels of stress, anxiety or depression?		
Do you experience physical tension in the neck or jaw, or other postural issues?		
Do you drink less than 1.5 litre of water each day?		
Do you often lack sleep?		
Do you live or work near chemicals, fumes or dust?		

If you answered 'yes' to one of the above, you might have found the potential cause of your vocal irritation. If you answered 'yes' to more than one, it might be harder to pinpoint the exact cause, and it may pay to consult a specialist.

Stress and other worries

Teaching can be a stressful and tiring job. Stress and anxiety can cause muscle tension, particularly around the neck where our larynx is housed! High levels of stress have also been linked to reflux. Take a few deep breaths, meditate or exercise and don't forget to chill out!

Who should you see for voice help?

If you are experiencing ongoing symptoms—that is, for two or more weeks—then it's best to get assessed by a specialist, not just a GP. Ask your GP for a referral to see a voice specialist ENT (laryngologist). Many states have voice clinics with diagnostic equipment, which is needed for being able to accurately diagnose vocal disorders. Once diagnosed, you might be referred to a speech pathologist for a treatment of vocal exercises to assist you in using your voice more efficiently.

A vocal checklist

- Ensure some voice rest during the day
- Drink lots of water
- Get good sleep
- Ensure that you sing/talk with good posture to encourage good 'support'
- Always warm-up before singing
- Steam tired or sore throats—that is, place your head over a bowl of steaming hot water. Only use hot tap water, not boiling water from the kettle. Don't add anything to the water such as oils, as they can have a drying effect. Inhale the steam or about 10 minutes. This is the best way to get direct moisture to the vocal folds.
- Take some lessons in speech production or singing.
- If after making some positive changes to your voice-use and lifestyle, your voice does not improve, seek specialist (ENT) help if your vocal problem persists for more than a couple of weeks.

Don't neglect vocal problems

If you are experiencing a vocal problem, don't ignore it! It might be that you simply need to cut back a

little on your voice use or make a few lifestyle changes. However the problem could require medical attention. Common vocal disorders include reflux, nodules, polyps, vocal fold haemorrhage, and muscle and tension dysphonia. If a vocal disorder is neglected, it can become a permanent problem. **MⁱⁿA**

Resources

National Centre for Voice and Speech (USA):

<http://www.tinyurl.com/med-effects>

Melinda Ceresoli

A contemporary singing specialist and voice consultant, Melinda teaches voice at Carey Baptist Grammar, Melbourne Girls Grammar, The University of Melbourne and her private studio. She has undertaken postgraduate research into the developing adolescent female voice at the University of Melbourne and has recently returned from studying at the National Centre for Voice and Speech in Utah, where she completed a course in 'Vocology'—the science and practice of voice habilitation.

E-CONTACTS

Melinda Ceresoli:
<melmusic@me.com>

Vocal dryness—the voice's enemy!

Sound is produced by the vocal folds coming together (colliding) and vibrating. Your vocal folds vibrate 260 per second on the note middle C. That's thousands of vocal fold 'collisions'. Women's vocal folds work harder, as they speak and sing at a higher pitch than men and therefore experience more vibrations per second.

When our body is lacking water, or is dehydrated, the mucous membranes on the vocal folds lack the necessary level of lubricant to work efficiently. A lack of water will not only impede vocal fold function, due to friction, but will also thicken mucus, which will cause people to clear their throats more frequently—not good for the voice!

You might think it inconvenient to be making more frequent trips to the bathroom from increased water consumption, but consider this: if you drink coffee or tea, the diuretic affect will have you skipping to the loo more often than if you drink water.

Now—where's that water bottle?

'I'M A BELIEVER' ... in the power of singing

Special education teacher CLARE JONES has ten top tips for implementing a successful singing program for students with disabilities.

The Monkees' classic 'I'm a Believer' has become something of a theme song for The Crescent School. When our school choir performs this song for an audience, their incredible energy and enthusiasm has the audience clapping, tapping, and often singing along with them!

Located in the City of Goulburn in central New South Wales, The Crescent School is a School for Specific Purpose (SSP) that serves the educational needs of students with intellectual and/or physical disabilities in the Goulburn area. The majority of students who attend the school have multiple disabilities that range from physical and sensory disabilities, to autism, to ADHD and/or mental health disorders. Fifty students attend the school, ranging from Kindergarten to Year 12, and we have a total of sixteen full- and part-time staff. The school is part of the New South Wales Department of School Education and Training and has served the needs of the local community for over 42 years

All of our students participate in the singing program. For the students of The Crescent School, singing is not about learning to read music, or even learning to sing in tune. It is about developing their confidence and self-esteem, building friendships with their peers, cementing social skills, and sometimes just a chance to escape the pain they feel in their bodies every day. Their singing has had an enormous impact on their families and the wider community, whose eyes have been opened to the potential of these individuals.

Here are my top ten tips that I have found helpful in implementing a singing program for students with disabilities.

- Don't get bogged down in teaching music theory, music notation or other technical aspects. Just get students to sing for the fun of it! Inevitably, they will absorb musical concepts such as beat, rhythm, tempo and dynamics along the way.
- Choose songs that will ensure success. Look for a simple AABA structure (verse, verse, chorus, verse) and some repetition in the words. Songs with 'la la la' or 'doo be doo' lyrics are suitable for students who have trouble enunciating words.
- Begin with songs the students are familiar with. Popular movies are a good place to start. 'I'm a Believer' is well known to upper primary and senior students from the movie *Shrek*, and is familiar to a lot of our audiences too.

But six year olds may be more familiar with The Wiggles than *Shrek*. Talk to parents about what is popular at home and bring these into the classroom.

- Make an audio recording of the song available for students to listen to. At The Crescent School, students often listen to music in the classroom and in the playground at lunchtime. The more familiar they are with the rhythm and the melodic line, the easier it will be to sing.
- Add some variety to your choir performances with selected soloists and small groups. Some students may become very anxious if placed in the spotlight, so confidence and willingness are more important than a tuneful singer.
- Begin each class with a greeting song. I sing a greeting to each student using their name, and invite them to respond with their own 'hello'. This has proved a very powerful tool in encouraging students to sing. Some students who were initially very uncomfortable about making any response, are now able to make eye contact and sing 'hello' confidently.
- Adapt the words to songs to include your students' names. They will love to have their own personal theme song. We have used 'Good Times' (Jimmy Barnes and INXS) for our senior students, and 'I am a Fine Musician' for our juniors.
- Add a microphone to your tool kit and you will discover a superstar in every student. One of our students who sat silently through every session suddenly sang when the microphone was handed to him, and didn't want to stop! He could express himself in a way that he never had before, and received wonderful recognition from the group that boosted his self esteem tremendously.
- Engage your students—move around the group, make eye contact, and smile! Encourage their natural movement to the music.
- Encourage EVERYONE to participate. Students who can't sing will add their own special energy to a performance through vocal sounds and movement, and will get a huge buzz from being immersed in the sound surrounding them.

Most importantly, be a BELIEVER! You can teach your students to sing, even if you have no musical training yourself. You don't need expensive resources. Your instruments (singing voices) have already been provided. Have confidence in your students' abilities and the audiences will be tapping their feet in no time. **MWA**

E-CONTACT

Clare Jones: <darren1@ipstarmail.com.au>

NEW RELEASES

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www.ampd.com.au

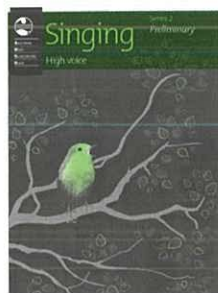
ALL MUSIC PUBLISHING:



Piano for Leisure Series 3
Grade Books & Handbooks/Audio CD Recordings

During 2009, the Federal Board of the AMEB revised its Piano for Leisure syllabus. The result is the 2010 Piano for Leisure syllabus, available for examination from 2011 together with the new series of Grade Books. These Grade Books are

available from Preliminary Grade to Grade 7 and as part of its commitment to excellence in piano pedagogy, the AMEB is proud to announce the publication of the Handbooks and Recordings to support the Grade Books.



Singing Series 2
Grade Books

Each of the Grade Books, from Preliminary Grade to Grade 4, is available in two versions—either for High Voice or for Medium/Low Voice. Each book is enhanced by performance notes included before each piece. IPA phonetic transcriptions of the German and

Italian texts are also included from Second Grade onwards. All technical work requirements for Level 1 are contained in the Grade Books whereas technical work for Level 2 examinations is in a separate publication, *Singing Technical Work: Level 2 (2010)*. The Series is also supported by *Singing Sight Reading (2010)*, a structured course in the development of sight reading skills with a comprehensive range of graded exercises.

FROM REED MUSIC
www.reedmusic.com



A Score of Ideas—Ros McMillan

Ros McMillan's new book contains 20 ideas that introduce students to musical improvisation. Written to fill a gap in the market for beginning improvisers, the book will suit everyone, from those learning an instrument for the first time to advanced

players. It can be used as a companion book to supplement instrumental tutor and band books. Each idea includes a practical performance activity, designed to help students experience the creative ideas being explored. Ros has had many decades as a teacher and improvising musician. A Score of Ideas provides a well-planned, achievable resource for students practising alone as well as teachers who want to assist their students to enhance their technique, expressiveness and aural skills.

FROM THE WRITING MUSICIAN
www.thewritingmusician.com

Contemporary Music Course
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The Writing Musician is an interactive internet music course and resource for music teachers. All that is needed is a computer online, a musical keyboard and a printer. Access to the whole course for a year is by subscription and each school needs just one registration. The 120 one to five minute lessons can be streamed easily, even by slower internet connections. Beginners and advanced students can enter and exit the course wherever they need. Now people anywhere can study an inexpensive quality music course privately or while being supervised by a teacher.

FROM JANDS
www1.jands.com.au



PRX600 Series Portable Powered Loudspeakers

JBL Professional has introduced its highly evolved PRX600 Series active portable loudspeakers. The new PRX600 Series offers unparalleled power, rugged durability and incredible versatility for any small to mid-sized live sound environment. The PRX600 Series comprises four full-range cabinets and

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FROM ROLAND

www.rolandcorp.com.au



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www.ancos.org.au

Follow the links to your state for membership, courses, conferences and workshops.

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8 - 13 January 2012, Wesley College, Perth

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The Victorian Orff Schulwerk Association

www.vosa.org

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- Level 1 & 2 Courses 11-16 April 2011 in Glen Iris
- Living Music & Dance 27-28 May 2011 in Preston
- 15th Early Childhood Conference of Performing Arts (ECCPA) 20-21 August 2011 in Kew

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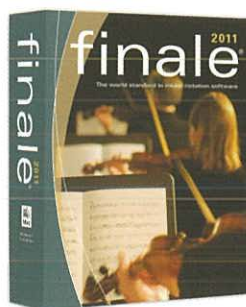
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Organisations are invited to list PD events with Music in Action. Events are listed first in alpha order by organisation, then by date. Listings are compiled from information provided and may be incomplete or have changed. Please check with the organisations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

ABODA—Australian Band and Orchestra Directors Association (VICTORIA)

• 9–15 January 2011

Summer Conducting School
Ivanhoe Grammer School
Details: <http://vic.aboda.org.au>
E: conductingschool.vic@aboda.org.au

KODÁLY

VIC (KMEIA)

• 6–7 May 2011

Autumn Seminar
Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre,
Cnr Bell St & St Georges Rd,
Preston
Details: www.kodaly.org.au
T: 03 9535 7035

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• April 1

Sound Safari at Carlton

WA

• April 16

Song Safari at Perth

• May 7

Song Safari at Perth

Details:
<http://musicaviva.com.au/education>
E: mvisinfo@mva.org.au
T: 1300 663 608

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION CONFERENCE—Mtec2011

• 11–13 April 2011

MLC School, Burwood, NSW
Details: www.mtec2011.com
T: 03 9535 7020

ORFF

VIC.–VOSA

• 11–16 April 2011

Level 1 & Level 2 Courses
Burwood Uniting Church,
1 Hyslop Street, Glen Iris

• 27–28 May 2011

Living Music and Dance

Genazzano FCJ College,
Cotham Road, Kew
Details: www.vosa.org
T: 03 9535 7020

Western Australia—WAOSA

• 8–13 January 2012

Orff National Conference
‘Voices of the Swan’

Wesley College,
40 Coode Street, South Perth
Details: waosa.org.au/voices
T: 03 9535 7000

SOUNDHOUSE

VIC.

SoundHouse@Debnay Park
Secondary College

• 3 February 2011

Sibelius 110

169 Mt Alexander Rd,
Flemington, Victoria
Details: www.soundhouse.com.au
E: am@soundhouse.com.au
T: 03 9376 6833

VICTORIAN MUSIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

• 17–20 September 2011

‘Bach to the Future’ Summer Conference

Melbourne High School
South Yarra, VIC.
Details: www.vmta.org.au

E: vmta@ozemail.com.au
T: 03 9415 1314

ADVANCE NOTICES

18th ASME National Conference
2011

• 2–5 July 2011

Making Sound Waves—Diversity, Unity, Equity
Broadbeach, Gold Coast,
Queensland

Details:
www.asme.edu.au/conferences
htm
E: andrew.reid@qsa.qld.edu.au

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Andrea Marks, Kingston, TAS

The winners will be advised by mail.

Our thanks go to Alfred Music Publishing, Sydney, for their generous donation of the prizes, and to our new subscribers for helping to keep Music in Action going.

HOW TO GUARANTEE A QUALITY BREAK

We hear that a favourite time for our readers are those breaks with a 'cuppa' and a few minutes to pick up Music in Action. Refreshment, a little re-charge of the enthusiasm, encouragement—even inspiration, we're told. The break to avoid, of course, is when the latest issue of MiA hasn't arrived. It can happen. Free bulk distribution to schools has to be limited to contain costs, and is now random. ONLY YOUR PERSONAL SUBSCRIPTION will ensure that this valuable resource continues to arrive on your desk. Make sure that the work of fellow music educators will sustain and inspire your own creativity.

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