



Reflections of Music Matters 2010

Submitted by Joanna Kitley

As a primary music specialist, I experienced countless memorable moments whilst attending 'Music Matters' KMEIA National Conference 2010 in Melbourne. There were too many moments of value to my teaching to fit into this newsletter article; therefore I will do my best to outline a few highlights.

The 'Australian Voices Festival', a choral concert held on the first evening of the conference featured an eclectic range of Australian choral repertoire. Young Voices of Melbourne, Exaudi, Brisbane Grammar School Chamber Choir, The Australian Voices, Birralee Blokes and Northern Spirit gave stunning performances. Being an educator at a boys school myself, and having experienced just how hard it is to get boys to love singing in choirs, I felt particularly encouraged by the performances given by the Brisbane Grammar School Chamber Choir and the Birralee Blokes. Both choirs sang with dynamic energy, clarity and conviction.

Musicianship classes with Fernando Malvar-Ruiz from the USA were another huge highlight for me in the Music Matters programme. Fernando was great fun whilst also extending our musicianship skills. He created a supportive learning environment where we felt comfortable to have a go at challenging tasks, make mistakes and laugh at ourselves. I thoroughly enjoyed Fernando's game 'Solfa Simon' and the collection of exciting repertoire that we sight-read. At the end of the final class, Fernando asked us to exit the room whilst singing a *Mozart Canon* in 6 parts from memory. He started us off in our parts and then we picked up our bags and continued to sing as we proceeded out the door and down the stairs. It was cool!

Another highlight was Géza Szilvay's



Fernando Malvar-Ruiz

presentation of his impressive *Colour Strings* method, complete with score excerpts, sound recordings and live student demonstrations. I was also very fortunate to observe Géza rehearse the Music Matters Junior String Orchestra. The musicality, focus and dedication that he achieved from such young musicians was superb. Géza's instructions were clear and precise. He constantly praised the students for their good work.

Other moments of excellence and immense value to my teaching was Maree Hennessy's session on introducing part singing to young choirs and Jenny Gillan who teamed

up with Deborah Smith to present an elective on new games and dances for upper primary/lower secondary students. (See www.dsmusic.com.au for more new games and dances.)

Finally, the most profound impression that 'Music Matters' left on me, a busy educator, was quite simple. It reminded me of the reason why I started teaching music in the first place – the joy of making music with others. I'd like to thank the KMEIA Vic committee and the administration team for all the hard work they put into making 'Music Matters' the resounding success it was.



Géza Szilvay



Harley Mead

Ouch! My Brain Hurts!

Submitted by Jenni Allen (Head of Junior School Music, Scotch College Hawthorn)

Having been a regular attendee of KMEIA conferences for almost twenty years now, when someone asked me at Music Matters if I still got anything out of such gatherings, I did not hesitate to reply, "Absolutely!" While I would like to think that I had by now built up a fairly sound pedagogy, one of the joys of my teaching is that constant exploration of how to improve the nuances of instruction. One can never become bored being a Kodály teacher!

Thus it was particularly inspiring to further explore "intellectual quality and musicianship" with Maree Hennessy in her plenary and her four Primary Methods sessions. In most of our schools, we are asked to engage in professional development regarding thinking skills and such concepts as Bloom's Taxonomy, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, the Habits of Minds, deBono's Six Thinking Hats and differentiated learning. Hennessy constantly challenged us to reflect upon metacognition and higher order thinking in our musical classrooms, even when her focus was on creativity and part work.

It was interesting to note that Davina McClure was following a similar path with her use of mind mapping in the Middle School using Venn and Lotus diagrams when teaching instruments of the orchestra. As McClure points out, "All too often, students begin their musical journey focusing on notation and letter names, while the sounds of the instrument and the aural decoding of these sounds are secondary, or not even present."

Deborah Smith's Musicianship classes were also food for thought as she not only guided us through our own rhythmic and melodic development but also reminded us of how we could apply such concepts to our own teaching.

Upon return to the hurly burly of fourth term, I have had some really interesting discussions with many of my older students not only about WHAT we have been learning but also HOW we have been learning. What is going on in our brains when we do a rhythmic dictation, for example? Which students are visual, aural or kinaesthetic learners? I will certainly be referring to these ideas in my school reports this term! And it is particularly pleasing to see that pop culture is also adopting some of



Deanna Hoermann and Marion Stafford

these notions such as in the recent ABC TV two part documentary, "The Music Instinct" and also the successful book by "The Brain that Changes Itself" by Norman Doidge. In an educational climate where NAPLAN results are paramount and the Performing Arts constantly needing to justify its place in the curriculum, it is not enough just to make beautiful music at concerts and satisfy our students' aesthetic needs. We also need to be advertising the sophisticated thinking that is going on in our Kodály classrooms: to our students, our colleagues, our Curriculum Coordinators and our school communities of parents. "No amount of energy will take the place of thought. A strenuous life with its eyes shut is a kind of wild insanity." - Henry Van Dyke

DRAFT SHAPE PAPER FOR THE ARTS RELEASED

Do you want a job in years to come?

Do you want your children to have a quality Music Education?

If so then PLEASE read and respond!!!!"

The draft shape paper for the arts is now available for national public consultation until 17 December 2010. Feedback will be used to further revise the draft shape paper, which will then be published as *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts*. This paper will guide the writing of the final K-12 arts curriculum.

A survey has been developed to assist in providing feedback during the national public consultation process which will run till 17 December 2010.

To download the draft shape paper and complete the survey visit

www.acara.edu.au/acara_update_08102010.html



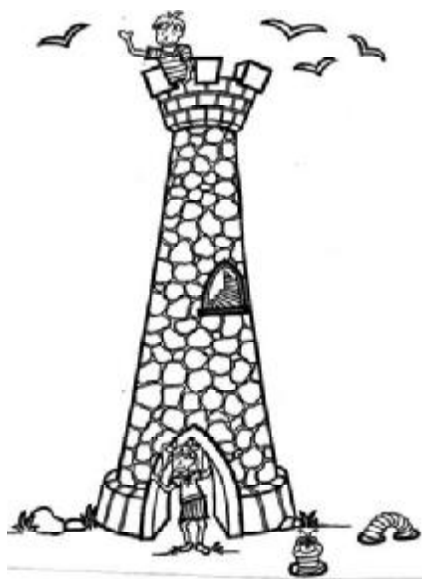
Music Matters 2010

Submitted by Leonie Riordan

One of the electives offered at the KMEIA National Conference, *Music Matters*, was a very informative and creative session entitled “From Singing to Stave...Pitch From the Beginning.” Ruth Friend, a passionate and experienced Kodály teacher based in Melbourne, presented this elective. Discussed below are just a few examples from Ruth’s presentation.

Ooo...ooo...ooo...ooo, we sang as Ruth’s ghost puppet flew through the air – up and down and around. This delightful activity encourages students to explore high and low sounds by following the movements of the puppet and later on, it can further develop their head voices while singing the call and response song: *There Was an Old Woman* (see music above).

Up High, Down Low, Up High, Down Low, Now I’m in the middle and I’m going..... Up went the pop-up puppet which invited us to sing the high note. This type of activity allows the students to visually see high and low and to sing accordingly to the action of the puppet. An extension of this activity is to allow the students to be the



There Was an Old Woman



Teacher sings each line and the children respond with: ‘Oo oo oo oo’ sung as *m r d l*, with a ghostly high pitch tone.

There was an old woman all skin and bones
She lived down by the old church yard
One night she thought she’d take a walk
She walked down by the old grave yard
She saw some bones a-laying around
She went to the shed to get a broom
She opened the door and ‘BOO!’ (Shout)

Response: Oo-oo-oo-oo

pop-up puppet as they sing the song and perform the movements.

Ruth’s colourful High/Low Tower Picture further demonstrated the high/low concept. Whilst singing *Up High Down Low* students are encouraged to listen to the teacher’s voice and aurally discriminate as to whether the sound is high or low by pointing appropriately on the tower or showing with their bodies (see picture below).

The next stage of Ruth’s presentation was how to move from singing to the stave. At this stage in our students’ development, the progression from singing to stave is often rushed and not treated with the care it deserves. The approach demonstrated by Ruth is considerate and detailed.

Buzz...Buzz..Buzz... went the bee puppet as it followed the curved line (colourful wool) on the giant floor stave (the music house). Students explore high and low sounds by following the bee puppet over the staff whilst understanding that some notes are high in the music house and some notes are low.

‘*The Music House is where all our musical sounds live*’ says Ruth. As we count all the

lines and spaces, it becomes apparent that students would thoroughly enjoy walking, skipping and jumping all of this giant music stave. We use very large black discs as notes and place them from E-F’ in a staircase fashion on the stave. From this, steps are discussed and then all the black discs sitting on the lines are removed to show ‘skips’. This is repeated by removing the discs sitting on the spaces to show ‘skips’ from line to line.

Left foot, space 1 – Right elbow, line 2.... Twister was a creative use of the giant floor stave and the students’ energy. A rather inspired conference participant was given the task of directing other participants into various shapes on the giant floor stave by instructing them where to place their hands, feet, elbows and heads. In the classroom, it is advisable to have students not participating in the Twister busily engaged in placing counters on their own individual music houses.

Ruth concluded her very engaging presentation with further activities that could be completed on either the giant floor stave or individual music houses. (Giant staff available from www.takenotemusic.com.au.)