



Australia Council Submission to the National Review of School Music Education

FINAL 27 April 2005

Music, like all the arts, provides emotional nourishment. And while this is not a contest with the other arts, music is particularly special because it is not primarily about our physical world – having only passing reference to it – it is about another mental and emotionally felt place and experience.

And if there is one really great life lesson in music, it is the lesson of the expansive tolerance and acceptance of many ways to express oneself that is central to the experience and practice of it.

...it was in the arts that I learnt to never ever give up – to keep on trying and to come at a problem from a variety of angles until a solution is found.

The discipline acquired in learning music – study, rehearsal, focussed effort on composition, intense concentration over many hours – are the sort of life skills that travel with one forever.

Extracted from a speech by Kim Williams, Chief Executive of FOXTEL, Sofitel Wentworth Sydney 2005 Arts And Public Life Series, 13/4/2005

Education in music is most sovereign because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon them, bringing with them and imparting grace if one is rightly trained.

Plato in *Republic*, circa 360BC

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Key principle

The key principle the Australia Council proposes in the context of this National Review into School Music Education is that:

Every child has a right to have access to quality musical experiences within the school system, provided by appropriate qualified teaching staff as well as professional musicians trained in appropriate educational outcomes. Ideally these musical experiences are further enhanced through complementary musical activity, such as that provided through private teaching, the subsidised arts sector and commercial music schools.

We believe the arts sector can play a valuable role in supporting and complementing music activity within schools, and that partnerships between the education and arts sectors are vital if we are going to raise the quality of music teaching and music participation for and by children and young people. We firmly believe there is great potential for stronger partnerships between national and state and territory education and arts authorities to enhance young people's creativity and capacity to thrive in a world of rapid and constant change.

We don't believe that mandating for a set national school music curriculum is the answer. Rather, we would prefer to see a 'mandate' that enshrines the principle outlined above in the core school curriculum. Our vision is that through both school teachers and professional musicians and groups, children and young people at school will have access to quality music teaching and musical experiences as part of the core school curriculum, rather than merely as extra-curricular activities.

1.2 Imagining – the preferred future

The Australia Council's preferred future for school music education is one in which:

- Music is integral to the core school curriculum.
- All students, including those in regional and remote communities, will have access to quality music experiences at school, provided by appropriate qualified teaching staff as well as professional musicians trained in appropriate educational outcomes, through the music curriculum and through complementary musical activities presented by professional musicians and music organisations in partnership with schools.
- The music curriculum is relevant to the needs, concerns and personal experiences of students.
- High quality school music education is recognised by Governments and the community as being critical to children and young people's development in a number of ways, including:
 - developing well-rounded, aesthetically literate individuals;
 - fostering our next generation of professional musicians, who make an invaluable creative contribution to our communities and our lives;

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- developing creative thinkers who can effectively synthesise information;
 - better engaging students (and their families) in their own learning;
 - fostering cultural awareness and social cohesion;
 - enhancing skills in co-operation, group work and leadership;
 - developing audiences for the arts in Australia; and
 - assisting to enhance literacy, numeracy and other academic outcomes for some students.
- Generalist as well as specialist music teachers are highly valued for the musical expertise and creativity they bring to their role in teaching our children.
 - There are strong and valuable partnerships between the education and music sectors.

To effectively achieve this vision for the future, the Australian Government must collaborate with state and territory agencies to deliver a national integrated program of music education for all Australian children and young people.

The program would be delivered through long-term productive partnerships between musicians, music educators and community-based specialist music education programs in all Australian pre-schools, schools and other educational settings.

The program would include three critical elements:

- Regular opportunities for children, young people and their families to attend live musical performances and interact with professional musicians
- An extensive coordinated professional development program to enable:
 - generalist educators to build appreciation, expertise, confidence and efficacy in general music teaching
 - specialist music educators to continue and enhance their own professional musicianship
 - parents and carers to gain appreciation of the importance and benefits of a good quality music education
- A review and refresh of current curriculum frameworks for music education, to ensure content is relevant to the needs, concerns and personal experiences of students.

The program could be well informed by the Finnish system and the national standards for music education¹ developed by the American Music Educators National Conference (MENC) in 2004.

The Australia Council is uniquely positioned to lead national development of such a program. We would be pleased to work further with the review team, including providing further information on the program's budgetary implications should there be interest in further pursuing the proposal.

¹ The National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts, © 1994 by Music Educators National Conference (MENC)

2. Recommendations and Proposed Outcomes

The Australia Council recommends that:

- a) Music is valued and supported as an integral component of the core school curriculum.
 - Every student is exposed to a minimum of two hours of quality music experiences each week – this may include singing, basic music skill development, attending live performances, specialist instrumental instruction.
 - A review and refresh of current curriculum frameworks of music education is carried out to ensure that content is relevant to the needs, concerns and personal experiences of students.
- b) All students have access to quality music experiences at school, provided by appropriate qualified teaching staff as well as professional musicians trained in appropriate educational outcomes, both through the music curriculum and through complementary musical activities presented by professional musicians and music organisations in partnership with schools.
- c) Generalist and specialist music teachers are highly valued for the musical expertise and creativity they bring to their role in teaching our children, and are provided with the training and support required to ensure confident delivery of high quality music education.
 - Music specialist primary school teachers are provided with high quality training and ongoing professional development opportunities.
 - All pre-service teacher education courses are required to include a minimum of two hours music content per week.
 - All primary school teachers are provided with ongoing professional development that aims to:
 - enhance their appreciation and understanding of music in education; and
 - build their expertise, confidence and efficacy in teaching general music.
- d) Parents are provided with the incentive and the opportunities to support their children's engagement in music.
 - Resources are provided for every primary school to host annual, facilitated music workshops where teachers, parents and students make music together.
 - Incentives are provided to encourage parents to attend and participate in at least one quality music performance involving professional artists in each school term.
- e) Music in Australian schools is broadly defined, encompassing all genres from world and classical to contemporary and experimental music, so that the music curriculum is relevant to the needs, concerns and personal experiences of students.

- f) Greater connections are made between school-based musical activities and community or out-of-school-hours involvement in music.
- Every school will have access to organised musical activities outside of the school system, whether through privately-run operations or government-supported community music organisations.
- g) More research and analysis is conducted to gauge the impact of informal and extra curricular musical participation and appreciation on the more formal delivery of music through the curriculum and vice versa.
- DEST approaches the Cultural Ministers' Council's Statistical Working Group to commission a longitudinal study in this area.
- h) The benefits of a good quality school music education are clearly articulated.
- DEST collaborates with the state and territory education systems to ensure the benefits of good quality school music education are clearly articulated in all the curriculum documents.
- i) Ways in which the arts sector can work together with the education system to deliver high quality and relevant arts education for children are identified and supported.
- DEST collaborates with the Australia Council to publish a document showcasing effective practice in arts and education partnerships.
 - The Australian Government examines the Finnish music education system and the United States' National Music Education Standards to inform the development of the Australian system.
- j) The Australian Government acknowledges high quality school music education as critical to children and young people's development.
- The Australian Government commits to the establishment of high quality music teacher education infrastructure.
 - The Australian Government commits to the establishment and ongoing support for community music organisations around the country to provide every child and young person with reasonable and regular access to quality music programs.
- k) The Australian Government actively pursues strong collaboration and cooperation with the state and territory education and arts agencies.
- DEST and the Australia Council co-host a minimum of one meeting per year of Australian, state and territory government education and arts agencies.

3. Introduction

Music is one of, if not the most appealing, relevant and accessible artforms for young people today. As such, it is critical that it be given appropriate emphasis and status in our curriculum frameworks and documents, and in our classrooms and other educational settings.

Music allows a unique fusion of intellectual, physical, social and emotional learning opportunities. Music teaches a curiosity and an engagement with patterning – designing patterns, interpreting them, decoding them and seeing the differences, similarities and connections between patterns. The learning processes are the same whether or not the reading of them occurs through the spectacles of their specific coda – musical, mathematical, visual, spatial, auditory and/or physical.

Truly synthesised thinking, of the kind increasingly required by the contemporary and changing world of work, occurs when we are able, after exposure to individual patterning, to recognise connections and differences in and across patterns. Currently we tend to train our educational focus in a segmented, specialised way; we work at developing certain parts of a child's capacity (for example, reading, writing, singing), but the system and the young people in it need a more integrated world view and the skills that will enable them to make the connections across maths, music, reading, writing and the rest of the learning sphere.

With up to 30% of music now being consumed online, music can also act as a valuable platform for learning through new technologies.

The phenomenal popularity of programs like *Australian Idol* and *The X Factor* are indicative of the powerful relevance of contemporary music in the lives of many young Australians. Despite the potentially 'crass' nature of such programs, their popularity implies the high relevance of contemporary music for young people ready to be constructively exploited through education systems to better engage students in their own learning and development. Music can be a highly effective learning scaffold for a diverse range of young learners, including those not otherwise engaged in traditional education and those who are considered gifted and/or talented.

When musicians and other artists enter a school, they bring their own richness of language to the young people with whom they interact. They can add inspiration and excitement to the routine of school life, and invariably leave a lasting impression on many of the students they meet.

In order to maximise the benefits of music participation for individual development, good quality musical experiences, particularly vocal experiences, must begin early in life. From singing comes musical literacy as well as the broader benefits across other areas of learning. From vocally-based learning, students can then choose to learn an instrument if desired, and educators are in a position to move forward, confidently assuming children's rudimentary musical knowledge.

4. Focus of the review

In response to the stated objectives of the review, this submission includes information about:

- recent research that demonstrates the benefits of good quality school music education (including several projects commissioned by the Australia Council);
- examples of effective practice in school music education supported by the Australia Council.

We have attempted to shape this information within the stated focus of the review.

4.1 The current quality of music education in Australian schools

While the Australia Council's role is not the provision of education, it does play a role in advocating for the importance of and place for the arts in education. We coordinate the National Education and the Arts Network (NEAN), which has been established to drive the development of a national strategy for education and the arts in Australia. Our Music Board contributed to the funding of the National Report on *Trends in School Music Education Provision in Australia*, a research project of the Music Council of Australia in collaboration with the Australian Society for Music Education and the Australian Music Association (July 2003), known as the Stevens Report after the report's principal investigator, Associate Professor Robin Stevens. We know the panel will be fully aware of the findings of this report.

Without being experts in this area, we believe that the current quality of music education in Australian schools is variable, and this is the result of the quality of teacher training as well as the status of music education in Australian schools.

The Stevens Report argues that there is an unrealistic expectation that classroom music will be taught by generalist primary school teachers, and that there is a mismatch between the extent of music curriculum studies undertaken by prospective teachers in their pre-service teacher education courses and the expectations of education authorities and/or the school in relation to classroom music teaching. The report also argues that there is a lack of teacher professional development opportunities, particularly for primary school music teachers, with many states adopting the policy of leaving the provision of in-service education to teacher professional associations. Another factor cited that impacts on the capacity of teachers to offer quality classroom music education is the decline in the availability of curriculum support staff.²

Despite the limits on the data collected as part of the Stevens Report, the report argues that there is a significant decline in the amount of music curriculum studies within generalist primary teacher education in the Australia Capital Territory, New South Wales and in South Australia. The report notes that this situation is likely to be fairly uniform across all primary teacher education courses in Australia. 'The result is that generalist primary teaching graduates, unless they have undertaken elective music

² National Report on *Trends in School Music Education Provision in Australia*, July 2003, p12 (known as the Stevens Report)

and/or music education units within their courses, are unlikely to be sufficiently competent or confident to teach music effectively to their classes.’³

One of the key issues for us in this matter is the issue of *valuing* – of valuing both music-specific teachers, and classroom teachers who can, and should, have some experience and competence in teaching music, or offering musical participatory and listening experiences. Not all teachers have the talent or expertise to be specialists in music as part of their classroom teaching, but if they themselves value what music can offer their students, and if they are valued for this knowledge and interest, then partnerships with other experts, such as professional music organisations, musicians and groups, can offer the answer to the provision of quality musical experiences within the school curriculum.

There are a number of key programs that the Australia Council has been involved with that demonstrate that quality music programs in schools are not only possible but have far-reaching benefits. These are described in Section 4.3 below.

4.2 The current status of music education in Australian schools

Outside of elite music teaching within and outside of the school system, anecdotal evidence leads us to believe that music education does not have a high status within many Australian schools. This could well be the result of an overcrowded curriculum that threatens the position of music as a core subject. It could be argued that this threat exists because of a lack of valuing of music and what it can offer to students and their development during their school years.

In his inaugural Music Council of Australia annual address (September 2002), as well as in the Stevens Report referred to above (July 2003), Professor Robin Stevens pointed out that most states have moved away from school-based curriculum development and have embraced the National Curriculum Framework with adaptations to suit their own needs. This means there is a threat to music being regarded as a core curriculum subject. Professor Stevens argues that in the face of an overcrowded curriculum that currently threatens the traditional status of music as a core subject, it is vital to have convincing answers to the question ‘why teach music in schools?’. He provides these answers in his insightful address, and his final statement argues that ‘music as a core curriculum subject is worth fighting for’.⁴

4.3 Examples of effective or best practice in both Australia and overseas

The arts sector can play a valuable role in supporting and complementing music activity within schools, and partnerships between the education and arts sectors are vital to raising the quality of music teaching and participation by children and young people.

As the Australian Government’s arts funding and advisory body, the Australia Council provides funding for a wide range of musical activities, predominantly through two of its artform boards – the Music Board and the Major Performing Arts

³ *ibid*, p13

⁴ Associate Professor Robin Stevens, *‘Why teach music in schools? Changing values since the 1850s’*, the inaugural Music Council of Australia annual address, presented in Adelaide, September 2002

Board. This includes some support for informal music education activities, for example, school concerts by various orchestras and musical groups, experiential activities offered through community music schools, young people's bands, choirs and the youth orchestra sector, specific education-focused activities by the major symphony orchestras and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and Musica Viva's extensive schools program.

Music activity is also supported in various ways through our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board and other areas of Council.

Further information about these activities, which are examples of effective practice in complementary school music education that could be adapted and applied more broadly around the country, is provided in Appendix 6.1. This section refers to the following:

- Musica Viva's in-schools program, as an example of what can be achieved through a strong partnership between the arts and education sectors;
- a number of research programs involving school-based arts programs recently commissioned by the Australia Council; and
- the music education system in Finland, which has long been heralded as an example of best practice in the provision of music education and training for young people.

4.3.1 Musica Viva

The Musica Viva In Schools program began in 1981 and now reaches over 400,000 children across Australia each year, across 1,400 primary and secondary schools. It includes chamber groups across a range of musical genres (classical, folk, world and so on) travelling to schools to present performances and workshops.

It is a holistic program involving professional development for some 15,000 teachers through the provision of high quality workshops and resource materials as well as highly interactive performances in schools by some of Australia's top musicians. The aim is that the performance is an integral component of a school's music program rather than a one-off event. Musica Viva also offers Youth Tix (reduced price for young people) to main stage performances and a series of online projects that inspire students to compose music and develop composition skills, such as:

- Hands on Hindson – focusing on the work of contemporary Australian composer Matthew Hindson;
- Baroque on – learning about Baroque music;
- The Viva Zone – pitched at young people learning about chamber music, life of a musician and how to program your own concert.

We highlight this program as an important example of a successful partnership between the subsidised music and education sectors, funded by both arts and education agencies, that offers quality musical experiences and development for young people within schools, as well as resources and professional development for teachers.

4.3.2 Australia Council commissioned research

Australians and the arts

The 2001 *Australians and the arts*⁵ report was commissioned by the Australia Council and prepared by Paul Costantoura of Saatchi and Saatchi. A key finding of this national study was that 85% of Australians agree with the statement that ‘the Arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian kid’ and 86% would feel more positive about the arts if there were ‘better education and opportunities for kids in the arts’ (p 311).

Arguably the recommendation of the Costantoura report most significant to this Review is Recommendation 64, which seeks to identify the best ways in which the arts sector can work together with the education system to deliver high quality and relevant arts education for children. This implies closer interactions and opportunities for collaboration through a range of arts/education partnerships with the aim of generating more effective education and increased opportunities for children in the arts⁶. The Australia Council welcomes the opportunity for collaborative partnerships with Australia's education and teacher education providers that may result through the findings of this Review.

Evaluation of School-Based Arts Education Programs in Australian Schools

The Australia Council, the Department of Education Science and Training and the Department of Communications, IT and the Arts jointly commissioned this research in 2002. Conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), the project examined four school-based arts programs, two of which were music programs in the Northern Territory: *Boys' Business* and the *Music in Indigenous Communities Program*.

Boys' Business

This was an experimental program based in the Northern Territory that incorporated music as its focus, as an initiative to encourage male students in the middle primary years to engage positively with education and life.

The evaluation by ACER found that music has the potential to act as a vehicle for all learning for the participants in *Boys' Business*. There was an indication that participants were better at the generic competencies that were tested (problem-solving, planning and organising, communication and working with others). There was also a sense that there was improved self-confidence and the development of skills, such as literacy and numeracy skills, which were related to the participation by these students in *Boys' Business*.

Music in Indigenous Communities Program

This is a secondary-level Indigenous instrumental music delivery program for remote community schools. The main objective of the program is to provide literacy and life-skills development through music education. The program is based on a specialised music teacher placement process, with each participating school receiving specialist music teaching on a rotational basis every ten weeks. The specialist music teachers are attached to the Northern Territory Music School.

⁵ *Australians and the arts* – P Costantoura, Saatchi & Saatchi, The Federation Press 2001

⁶ *ibid* p390-1

Evidence of improvements in students' learning and development observed as a result of this program included improvements in musical skills and knowledge, literacy and numeracy skills, associated life skills, social, and communication skills, planning and organisation skills. It was also observed that students increased their ability to work with others in a collaborative manner as well as showing an improvement in their self-confidence.

The full report is available at www.dest.gov.au/research/arts

Music for Learning for Life

One of four state/territory-based research into the impacts of arts participation on student learning and development, *Music for Learning for Life*, was conducted by Anja Tait of the Northern Territory Music School and Charles Darwin University.

The key findings of this study showed that the music education program had a significant impact on learning and life skills development for participants across a range of studies. In addition to the positive outcomes for students, the model of professional learning used in this intensive music program also transformed teaching practice for those involved. In 2004 this program was nationally acknowledged through the Minister's Awards for Excellence in improving numeracy and literacy outcomes through music.

Copies of the full reports of this and other research projects commissioned by the Council are available on request.

4.3.3 Best practice overseas: the music education system in Finland

The results of Finnish music education have recently been attracting a great deal of attention internationally. It is worth looking at the structure of the Finnish system and what we might learn from it. Please note that more details can be found in Appendix 6.3.

Arts and education structures

Cultural administration in Finland is through the Department of Culture, which is not an independent body but part of the Ministry of Education.⁷ There seems to be a real advantage in the strong links between education and culture in Finland.

Music education and funding structures

There are three areas in which Finnish children and young people are introduced to education in music and the arts:

1. general arts education, dispensed as a part of compulsory general education to all pupils. This starts from the age of 7 years.

Contemporary school music is described as multivalued, where pupils are introduced to as wide a variety of music as possible. Comprehensive school music emphasises positive attitudes, raising an interest, learning to listen, skills development, and interaction by means of music. The music curriculum also

⁷ Cultural Policy in Finland, report of the Council of Europe, 1994 p25

covers the basics of music theory, which is learnt, as far as possible, through live performance.⁸

2. 'basic education in the arts', which is the specialised education offered through special establishments to those who wish to be initiated and trained in one artform or another.

The emergence and development of some 140 music institutes (music schools, conservatories and music playschools) with upwards of 66,000 students has been possible through the financial contributions of local authorities and the Government. However, private funding in the form of term fees is still required. Of the funding of music institutes belonging to the association, government contributions cover 44%, local authorities contribute 40%, and student fees total 16%.⁹

The curriculum in basic arts education can be extensive or general. The extensive curriculum is offered at 86 music schools and 12 conservatories, involving a total of about 33,000 students; 70% of them are of comprehensive school age. The teaching is implemented through a curriculum based on guidelines approved by the National Board of Education in 1995. Institutes in other branches of the arts offer general curriculum teaching. In music, general curriculum teaching is offered at 66 civic colleges and workers' institutes and at 48 music schools, involving a total of about 10,000 students. About 43,000 children and adolescents are involved in basic arts education in the field of music.¹⁰

3. vocational training through institutes of higher education or vocational education, after compulsory schooling, which is designed to train future artists and professionals.

As this is the tertiary training level, we will not focus on this area of music training as it is not relevant to this review.

What can we learn from the Finnish system?

We cannot begin to know about all the complexities of the Finnish music education system. However, from our understanding of it, we believe we can learn the following:

- the importance of music education and music classes as part of the core curriculum in primary (kindergarten to Year 6) and secondary (7-12) schools;
- the importance and value of partnerships between schools and other forms of music training and participation, such as through community music schools and arts organisations, as well as through private teachers;
- the effectiveness of Government legislation in enshrining the value of music in the arts in core education curriculum.

⁸ Pirkko Partanen , Finnish Music Education – Virtual Finland, February 2001, p7

⁹ *ibid*, p2

¹⁰ *ibid*, p2

5. Conclusion, Recommendations and Proposed Outcomes

The Australia Council is currently working to realise a long term vision of an environment where all of the arts are an integral part of the lifelong learning of every Australian. We know music and the arts play an important part in developing our sense of identity. They are central to our culture and sense of self and belonging and thus need to be nurtured and explored early in life.

In the first instance the Australia Council has elected to focus our attention on the arts experiences of school-aged children and young people. We are concentrating on the positioning, teaching, learning, engagement and presentation of the arts during the highly formative years of early childhood, primary and secondary education.

In looking at the issues involved in school music education for this review, we have developed a key principle, a preferred future, and a set of recommendations.

Key principle

The key principle we propose is that:

Every child has a right to have access to quality musical experiences within the school system, provided by appropriate qualified teaching staff as well as professional musicians trained in appropriate educational outcomes. Ideally these musical experiences are further enhanced through complementary musical activity, such as that provided through private teaching, the subsidised arts sector and commercial music schools.

Imagining - the preferred future

Our preferred future for school music education is one that enshrines this key principle and in which:

- Music is integral to the core school curriculum.
- All students, including those in regional and remote communities, will have access to quality music experiences at school, provided by appropriate qualified teaching staff as well as professional musicians trained in appropriate educational outcomes, through the music curriculum and through complementary musical activities presented by professional musicians and music organisations in partnership with schools.
- The music curriculum is relevant to the needs, concerns and personal experiences of students.
- High quality school music education is recognised by Governments and the community as being critical to children and young people's development in a number of ways, including:
 - developing well-rounded, aesthetically literate individuals;
 - fostering our next generation of professional musicians, who make an invaluable creative contribution to our communities and our lives;
 - developing creative thinkers who can effectively synthesise information;
 - better engaging students in their own learning;

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- developing audiences for the arts in Australia; and
 - assisting to enhance literacy, numeracy and other academic outcomes for some students.
 - Generalist as well as specialist music teachers are highly valued for the musical expertise and creativity they bring to their role in teaching our children.
 - There are strong and valuable partnerships between the education and music sectors.

In order to achieve such a preferred future, a whole of government approach is necessary, that is, co-operation within and across the national and state/territory arts and education systems. The Australian Government must collaborate with state and territory agencies to deliver a national integrated program of music education for all Australian children and young people.

The program would be delivered through long-term productive partnerships between musicians, music educators and community-based specialist music education programs in all Australian pre-schools, schools and other educational settings.

The program would include three critical elements:

- Regular opportunities for children, young people and their families to attend live musical performances and interact with professional musicians
- An extensive coordinated professional development program to enable:
 - generalist educators to build appreciation, expertise, confidence and efficacy in general music teaching
 - specialist music educators to continue and enhance their own professional musicianship
 - parents and carers to gain appreciation of the importance and benefits of a good quality music education
- A review and refresh of current curriculum frameworks for music education, to ensure content is relevant to the needs, concerns and personal experiences of students.

The program could be well informed by the excellent Finnish system and the U.S. national standards for arts education.

The Australia Council is uniquely positioned to lead national development of such a program. We have begun some important work in this area, including current collaboration with both the Cultural Ministers Council and the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs to pursue a joint ministerial statement on the benefits of linking education and the arts more closely.

We are committed to continuing to demonstrate leadership in developing education and the arts partnerships in Australia. We would welcome the opportunity to work further with the review team, and are able to provide further information on the program's budgetary implications should there be interest in further pursuing the proposal.

Recommendations and proposed outcomes

The Australia Council recommends that:

- a) Music is valued and supported as an integral component of the core school curriculum.
 - Every student is exposed to a minimum of two hours of quality music experiences each week – this may include singing, basic music skill development, attending live performances, specialist instrumental instruction.
 - A review and refresh of current curriculum frameworks of music education is carried out to ensure that content is relevant to the needs, concerns and personal experiences of students.
- b) All students have access to quality music experiences at school, provided by appropriate qualified teaching staff as well as professional musicians trained in appropriate educational outcomes, both through the music curriculum and through complementary musical activities presented by professional musicians and music organisations in partnership with schools.
- c) Generalist and specialist music teachers are highly valued for the musical expertise and creativity they bring to their role in teaching our children, and are provided with the training and support required to ensure confident delivery of high quality music education.
 - Music specialist primary school teachers are provided with high quality training and ongoing professional development opportunities.
 - All pre-service teacher education courses are required to include a minimum of two hours music content per week.
 - All primary school teachers are provided with ongoing professional development that aims to:
 - enhance their appreciation and understanding of music in education; and
 - build their expertise, confidence and efficacy in teaching general music.
- d) Parents are provided with the incentive and the opportunities to support their children's engagement in music.
 - Resources are provided for every primary school to host annual, facilitated music workshops where teachers, parents and students make music together.
 - Incentives are provided to encourage parents to attend and participate in at least one quality music performance involving professional artists in each school term.
- e) Music in Australian schools is broadly defined, encompassing all genres from world and classical to contemporary and experimental music, so that the music curriculum is relevant to the needs, concerns and personal experiences of students.

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- f) Greater connections are made between school-based musical activities and community or out-of-school-hours involvement in music.
- Every school will have access to organised musical activities outside of the school system, whether through privately-run operations or government-supported community music organisations.
- g) More research and analysis is conducted to gauge the impact of informal and extra curricular musical participation and appreciation on the more formal delivery of music through the curriculum and vice versa.
- DEST approaches the Cultural Ministers' Council's Statistical Working Group to commission a longitudinal study in this area.
- h) The benefits of a good quality school music education are clearly articulated.
- DEST collaborates with the state and territory education systems to ensure the benefits of good quality school music education are clearly articulated in all the curriculum documents.
- i) Ways in which the arts sector can work together with the education system to deliver high quality and relevant arts education for children are identified and supported.
- DEST collaborates with the Australia Council to publish a document showcasing effective practice in arts and education partnerships.
 - The Australian Government examines the Finnish music education system and the United States' National Music Education Standards to inform the development of the Australian system.
- j) The Australian Government acknowledges high quality school music education as critical to children and young people's development.
- k) The Australian Government commits to the establishment of high quality music teacher education infrastructure.
- l) The Australian Government commits to the establishment and ongoing support for community music organisations around the country to provide every child and young person with reasonable and regular access to quality music programs.
- m) The Australian Government actively pursues strong collaboration and cooperation with the state and territory education and arts agencies.
- DEST and the Australia Council co-host a minimum of one meeting per year of Australian, state and territory government education and arts agencies.

It is only by introducing the young to great literature, drama and music, and to the excitement of great science that we open them to the possibilities that lie within the human spirit - enable them to see visions and dream dreams.

Eric Anderson

6. Appendices

6.1 Australia Council-supported music education programs

As the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body, the Australia Council provides funding for a wide range of musical activities, predominantly through two of its artform boards - the Music Board and the Major Performing Arts Board. This includes some support for informal music education activities, for example, school concerts by various orchestras and musical groups, experiential activities offered through community music schools, young people's bands, choirs and the youth orchestra sector, specific education-focused activities by the major symphony orchestras and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and Musica Viva's extensive schools program.

Music activity is also supported in various ways through our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Arts Board and other areas of Council.

Further information about these activities, which offer examples of effective practice in school music education that could be adapted and applied more broadly around the country, is provided below.

6.1.1 Major Performing Arts Board (MPAB)

The companies funded by the MPAB present an extensive range of education programs including schools performances, specialist workshops, mentor programs and awards. Many of the programs link in with relevant school syllabus and are presented by specialists in the artform or professional educators. In addition to these programs, many of the MPAB companies undertake significant touring to provide national access to children based in metropolitan and regional areas.

Opera Companies

(i) Opera Australia

- OzOpera Schools Company performs to around 80,000 children in Victoria and New South Wales each year – 2 productions in 2005
- Tours to metropolitan and regional schools providing specially designed opera concerts for children.

(ii) Opera Queensland

- Develops new opera works for children. Examples include: *The Song Bird* in 2004 and *The Secret Garden*, which has toured extensively throughout Australia.
- Secondary School Residency Programs (*Moving Opera*) in regional QLD and metropolitan Brisbane – week-long intensive workshop at school with director, music director and singer culminating in performance for peers and teachers.
- *Towards La Boheme* – secondary school program.
- School bookings to main stage performances.

(iii) West Australian Opera

- Schools bookings to main stage performances and pre-performance opening night talks.
- Opera in Education Workshops – production workshop in conjunction with Black Swan Theatre Company

(iv) State Opera of South Australia

- Schools Company re-established in 2003 – 2 programs in 2004, not yet updated for 2005

Chamber Orchestras / Chamber Music Organisations**(i) Australian Chamber Orchestra**

- Primary schools program for years 3 to 6 consisting of interactive concerts and preparatory teachers' kits
- Secondary schools program which provides heavily subsidised tickets to high school students along with detailed notes and CDs
- A series of regional tour schools' concerts
- Schools workshops with students working towards producing a fully realised piece of music for performance by the ACO
- Special open rehearsals for children with special needs
- Young artists development program – opportunities for promising tertiary students to be mentored by ACO principals and international soloist

(ii) Musica Viva Australia

- Musica Viva in Schools Education program reaches over 400,000 children across Australia each year.
- Chamber groups across a range of musical genres (classical, folk, world and so on) travel to schools to present performances and workshops
- Youth Tix to main stage performances
- Professional Development programs for teachers
- Online projects:
 - Hands on Hindson – contemporary composer
 - Baroque on – learning about Baroque music
 - Viva Zone – learning about chamber music, life of a musician and how to program your own concert

Pit Orchestras**(i) Orchestra Victoria**

- Schools and community performances
- *mOve!* Program – mentoring program for regional students to work with OV musicians, culminating in performance

Symphony Orchestras**(i) Sydney Symphony Orchestra**

- Delivers educational programs to around 50,000 children each year
- Schools concerts for all levels - presented by Sydney Sinfonia (mentoring orchestra for young musicians)
- Meet the Music concert series (concert with Sydney Symphony Orchestra) with Meet the Composer talks
- Professional Development seminars for teachers
- Playerlink workshops – tutorials and rehearsals with musicians for regional students

(ii) Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

- Schools and children's concerts
- Meet the Orchestra
- Meet the Orchestra in regional Victoria
- MSO Outreach program
- Encounter website – interactive learning
- Open Rehearsals
- Education Passports and Passports Plus
- Work experience

(iii) Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

- Kindergarten Kapers
- Primary Proms
- Outreach program for primary schools and kindergartens
- Big Rehearsal Project – mentor opportunity for secondary school students to rehearse and perform with the orchestra
- Open Rehearsals
- Online learning tools - *Explore*: online learning about the structure of an orchestra and the various instruments; *In the Chair*: software available to Schools allowing students to play an individual part with the orchestra

(iv) Queensland Orchestra

- Concerts for children and schools
- Workshops – classical music and Indigenous music with didgeridu player William Barton and composer-in-residence Matthew Hindson
- Young Instrumentalist Competition – mentor opportunity
- Open Rehearsals

(v) Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

- Schools and school holiday concerts in Hobart and regional TAS
- Open Rehearsals
- Master classes

(vi) West Australian Symphony Orchestra

- Schools and children's concerts
- Open Rehearsals
- Online learning program
- *Four Fabulous Fridays* – attend 4 evening performances, hang out in Green Room and have a pizza before attending pre-performance talk and concert

6.1.2 Music Board

Engagement with young people

The Music Board of the Australia Council supports young people via a range of funding programs and initiatives, both directly as young musicians and indirectly through funded organisations..

Below are some key organisations supported by the Music Board for activities that are designed for or engage with young people. Programs such as those facilitated by these organisations have extensive benefits for their young participants. The programs either complement music activity in schools, or fill a gap left by the lack of appropriate musical education and training within the public school system.

Dandenong Ranges Music Council Inc. (Vic) – The community music program focuses on providing a range of high quality musical experiences for the Yarra Ranges region and performance opportunities for local and guest professional musicians.

Eltham East Primary School Choir (Vic) – this school choir has received numerous grants to commission new Australian works, mainly from the composer Stephen Leek. The compositional process sometimes includes the composer workshopping the work with the young choristers.

Sydney Children’s Choir (NSW) – this choir and its affiliated national Gondwana Voices have a commitment to quality performances and Australian repertoire. Their activities include recording, touring within Australia and internationally, and they have an educational focus with theory and sight-singing classes. SCC also introduced a regular instrumental ensemble for the more advanced instrumentalists.

The Australian Voices (Qld) – this group performs a large proportion of Australian music by established and younger emerging composers, and the activities include touring, workshopping for students, and a young composers ‘school and young composers’ award.

Australian Children’s Music Foundation (NSW/National) – this organisation is committed to encouraging and supporting young people to participate in music, thereby enriching their lives. One of its programs is the Music for Disadvantaged Youths Program, which introduces music to juveniles in detention centres and youth centres.

Bondi Pavilion Community Cultural Centre’s Youth Wave program (NSW) – this program is in the area of contemporary rock/popular music and offers young people workshops and seminars in making music, getting your music heard, and information about careers in the industry. It culminates in a showcase concert and the production of a CD.

West Australian Youth Jazz Orchestra (WA) – WAYJO exists to encourage, develop and educate young musicians in the pursuit of excellence in orchestral jazz and improvised music, and to extend the art and appreciation of improvised music within the wider community. WAYJO performs in Perth and regional WA, and commissions new works.

Orange Regional Conservatorium (NSW) – this centre offers music development programs for young people and the community in the form of workshops, performances, tuition, and rehearsal. In addition to its educational programs, the Conservatorium has been supported for its activities such as music appreciation concerts and workshops for regional audiences and musicians.

Music for Everyone (ACT) – a community arts organisation that aims to enrich musical life in the ACT by providing opportunities for people in the community of all ages and backgrounds to participate in quality music-making. It does this through a wide range of tutorial, workshop and performance programs.

Sydney Youth Jazz Ensemble (NSW) – SYJE provides young people with high quality education and training programs under the direction of professional, high calibre jazz musicians and teachers.

Riverina Summer School for Strings Inc (NSW) – now in its 18th year, the school enables young string players and guitarists to have the benefit of intensive instruction and the opportunity to mix and play together in a variety of styles including orchestra, chamber music and jazz.

Carclew Youth Arts Centre Inc. (SA) – 'Off the Couch' is a program of support for young musicians to develop and perform their own original contemporary music. Including regular gigs, the program leads into the Fuse Festival, with performance opportunities for the best of the 'Off the Couch' program groups and artists.

Other areas of Music Board support: Youth Orchestras Australia network

A sub-sector of the small to medium music sector, the peak youth orchestras play an invaluable role in education and training in music in Australia. These orchestras are:

- Queensland Youth Orchestras
- Canberra Youth Music
- Melbourne Youth Music
- Sydney Youth Orchestra Association
- Adelaide Youth Orchestra
- Western Australian Youth Orchestra
- Darwin Youth Orchestra
- Tasmanian Youth Orchestra

The **Youth Orchestras Australia** network, a body of the peak State and Territory-based youth orchestras and the Australian Youth Orchestra, was formed in 1999. Its vision is to create and develop the next generation of musicians and audience who contribute to a vibrant orchestral community in Australia.

In August 2003 Youth Orchestras Australia presented a report to the Music Board of the Australia Council that provided a snapshot of the peak youth orchestras in Australia today. The report shows that the growth and development of the youth orchestra sector over the last fifty years has had a significant impact on Australia's music and cultural environment. Many of today's professional musicians, composers,

and artists have been involved in youth orchestra programs, with such experiences often playing an integral role in their future career choices and development.

In 2003, the sector as a whole (excluding Australian Youth Orchestra) involved a turnover of over \$2.8 million per annum, providing programs for 2344 students and resulting in 290 concerts.

In addition, Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) has a turnover of approximately \$2-3 million per annum, and runs a range of programs that involve approximately 350 students nationally.

The report argued that the work of the peak youth orchestra sector '*brings orchestral and ensemble training that is vital to the future of Australia's music industry. Such activity also provides substantial and complementary benefits to the secondary school sector and tertiary institutions, and acts as a feeder into Australian Youth Orchestra programs. Ultimately this work significantly supports the professional music scene in Australia and internationally.*' (page 7)

The Music Board currently supports the Youth Orchestras Australia network with an annual grant of \$154,000.

6.2 Research

There is an enormous and ever-expanding body of evidence for the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of a good quality arts education. There is no doubt that participating in music and the arts from the earliest stages of life has a positive effect on human development.

As stated previously these benefits are many and varied, covering such things as better communication skills, aesthetic appreciation, and increases in self-esteem and confidence. Extensive research demonstrates that arts experiences during the school years can enhance the psychological, spiritual, physical, emotional and social development of the whole person. It is widely accepted that young people engaging in arts activities have the potential to be more creative, confident, critical thinking, communicative and imaginative beings. Reports of major longitudinal studies such as the U.S. *Champions of Change*¹¹ and *Critical Links*¹² examine these impacts further.

Several Australian research projects (including a number funded by the Australia Council over the last five years) are also contributing to the global body of knowledge about the benefits of learning in and through the arts. This section of this submission provides more details on three of the Australia Council funded projects that are most relevant to the review.

6.2.1 Australians and the arts¹³

¹¹ *Champions of Change – the impact of arts on learning* Ed. E Fiske, Arts Education Partnership & President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities 1999

¹² *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* Ed. Richard J Deasy, Arts Education Partnership 2002

¹³ *Australians and the Arts* – P Costantoura, Saatchi & Saatchi, The Federation Press 2001

The first of these is the 2001 *Australians and the arts* report commissioned by the Australia Council and prepared by Paul Costantoura of Saatchi and Saatchi. A key finding of this national study was that 85% of Australians agree with the statement that "the Arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian kid" and 86% would feel more positive about the arts if there were "better education and opportunities for kids in the arts." (p 311)

In keeping with this, a number of the report's recommendations focus attention on the links between education and the arts. Recommendations 25 and 26 are specifically intended to encourage young people to participate in the arts, making relevant opportunities available to them as they are growing up and recognising that there is a high correlation between their level of arts involvement when they are growing up and the value they place on the arts in later life¹⁴.

In considering these recommendations, it is important to note the centrality of family to arts experiences for young people. Parental involvement is the strongest single factor to encouraging positive attitudes to the arts and this is also borne out by current international research. This points Council in the direction of providing parents with the incentive and the opportunities to support their children's engagement in the arts.

This means that in effect, definitions of the arts are also most likely to be circumscribed by parents and there may well be a case for broadening the definitions. In the case of music in schools, it is highly recommended that contemporary music and new and experimental forms of sound art are included in this definition when developing content for curriculum delivery.

In resonance with recent American findings which point to the overwhelming success of after school arts projects, it is clear that there needs to be much greater connection between school-based art activities and community or out-of-school-hours arts involvement.

Success in involvement in the arts needs to be measured outside as well as inside the formal education system. Many school-aged young people listen to and play music recreationally and vocationally outside of school. More research and analysis is needed to consider the impact of this informal and extra curricular musical participation and appreciation on the more formal delivery of music through the curriculum and vice versa.

The Australia Council has identified a need to show how arts education can deliver real benefits to individuals and to the nation as a whole. The benefits of a good quality school music education need to be clearly articulated and measurable, possibly through longitudinal research undertaken over at least a decade.

Australia is home to a thriving music sector, which has an important role to play in delivering effective arts education. Musicians, composers and others in the music industry can play a significant role in the direct delivery of music teaching and also as role models for students in schools and also other educational settings¹⁵.

¹⁴ *ibid* p103

¹⁵ *ibid* p311

The phenomenal popularity of media fodder like *Australian Idol* and *X Factor* are indications of the powerful relevance of music in the lives of many young Australians. Despite the potentially 'crass' nature of such programs, the inference is that the high relevance of contemporary music for young people can be constructively exploited by our education system as a means to better engage students in their own learning and development.

Arguably the recommendation of the Costantoura report most significant to this Review is Recommendation 64, which seeks to identify the best ways in which the arts sector can work together with the education system to deliver high quality and relevant arts education for children. This implies closer interactions and opportunities for collaboration through a range of arts/education partnerships with the aim of generating more effective education and increased opportunities for children in the arts¹⁶. The Australia Council welcomes the opportunity for collaborative partnerships with Australia's education and teacher education providers that may result through the findings of this Review.

6.2.2 Evaluation of School-Based Arts Education Programs in Australian Schools

The Australia Council, the Department of Education Science and Training and the Department of Communications, IT and the Arts jointly commissioned this research. Conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), the project examined four school-based arts programs, two of which were music programs in the Northern Territory: *Boys' Business* and the *Music in Indigenous Communities Program*.

Both programs were developed in acknowledgement of the fact that arts and culture, and particularly music, are a highly effective means of engaging Indigenous communities.

Boys' Business

The report describes the *Boys' Business* program thus:

'an experimental programme based in the Northern Territory that incorporates music as a focus. It was an initiative to encourage male students in the middle primary years, in the first instance, to engage positively with education and life. The programme is based on several physiological and psychological premises regarding boys. The first relates to differences between boys and girls regarding left and right brain learning patterns. These differences indicate that there are issues relating to learning areas such as language acquisition that ought to be addressed in the middle schooling years as boys reach and pass through puberty. A second is the commonly held belief that girls (and women) can multi-task more competently than boys (and men). To a considerable extent, the programme is driven by these premises.'

During the evaluation of the program, ACER found that music has the potential to act as a vehicle for all learning for the participants in *Boys' Business*. There was an

¹⁶ *ibid* p390-1

indication that *Boys' Business* participants are better at the generic competencies that were tested (problem solving, planning and organising, communication and working with others). In particular, discussion in interviews and observation of sessions indicated the use of planning, communication and working with others.

The report also states that the following skills and attitudes of students appeared to be related to their participation in Boys' Business:

- improved self-confidence;
- students 'feel good' about being at school;
- development of literacy and numeracy skills (such as reluctant learners learning to read song sheets);
- development of metacognitive skills such as reflection.

The attributes of the program that appeared to assist students' learning were identified as:

- having a positive role model ('Dr Bob');
- participating in an environment that was non threatening and where all students' views were respected, where tolerance and self control were fostered;
- less constraint than in a conventional classroom;
- students engaged in an activity with a purpose that is authentic.

Music in Indigenous Communities Program

The report describes this program thus:

'as a secondary level Indigenous instrumental music delivery programme for remote community schools. The current model of the programme has involved 5 years of development. The main objective of the programme is to provide literacy and life-skills development through music education. The programme is based on a specialist music teacher placement process, with each participating school receiving specialist music teaching on a rotational basis each ten weeks. Specialist music teachers are attached to the Northern Territory Music School and implement a weekly or project style teaching programme along with the school's professional team.'

In examining this program, ACER found that many parents in the school communities involved do not value a Western kind of education and therefore do not provide support or encouragement for their children's learning at school. Significantly, the Yolngu group in the Indigenous community approved of the alternative approach used in the Indigenous Music Education Program. The program was seen to build on a natural ability of many of the young Indigenous participants. Working within an arts context was acceptable to the Yolngu group – this context includes both the content and the processes followed.

Evidence of improvements in student's learning and development observed as a result of this program included:

- musical skills and knowledge – such as performance on instruments and vocal performance and the ability to control volume and vary tempo, knowledge of

chords and technical knowledge regarding care of instruments and setting up sound systems;

- literacy and numeracy skills;
- development of associated life skills;
- students experience enjoyment of learning and can associate school attendance with positive experiences;
- ability to work with others in a collaborative manner and development of other social and communication skills;
- ability to plan and organise; and
- development of self-confidence.

The attributes of the program that contributed to the positive outcomes described above include:

- provision of positive role models for students;
- all students' views being valued and respected;
- positive behaviour is commended, without forcing students to join in activities;
- strong focus on authentic activities – many of the lessons observed were rehearsals for public performances.

The report also notes that the music program was becoming integrated with other learning activities at the education centre.

6.2.3 Education and the Arts Partnership Initiative (EAPI)

The Australia Council ran the Education and the Arts Partnerships Initiative (EAPI) during the period 2002-04. The initiative made funds available for state/territory-based research into the impacts of arts participation on student learning and development.

Four projects were conducted in Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory. One of these four concentrated on music education - *Music for Learning for Life*, conducted by Anja Tait of the Northern Territory Music School and Charles Darwin University.

Music for Learning for Life

The project was originally titled *Music and Literacy for Life*, however it became clear in the early stages of the project that music and related arts learnings could contribute to outcomes across the curriculum. The project sought to determine whether music skills development, embedded in daily learning across the curriculum in urban upper primary classrooms, provides educational outcomes for Indigenous ESL learners with low literacy and low numeracy levels. It ultimately resulted in a report entitled *Pedagogy of Trust – improving education outcomes through partnerships*.

The program engaged students in two schools in and around Darwin, applying music pedagogy to teaching and learning across the curriculum. A team teaching approach was taken, including a music educator, teachers and musicians. The project evaluated the impact of the music program on:

-
- student attendance;
 - participation in classroom-based learning opportunities;
 - oracy and literacy levels for Standard Australian English;
 - numeracy levels; and
 - arts knowledge and skills development.

The project also evaluated the impact of in-school mentoring and team-teaching in the arts (in this case music) as a transformative model of on-the-job professional learning.

Some key findings of the study are:

- (a) students involved in the music programs became highly visible and engaged in the school community.
- (b) Target students' mean reading age improved and students became confident to take more learning related risks, e.g. attempted more items in state-wide benchmark testing for literacy (MAP tests), compared with the number of test items they had attempted two years prior.
- (c) Students generally achieved statistically significant higher maths ages in Term 4 compared with Term 1, 2003. A highlight was that an Indigenous student demonstrated the greatest improvement in maths age of 4 years 8 months, adjusted for the passing of time (nine months).
- (d) Participating teachers reported that an arts-infused approach to teaching and learning acknowledged and valued the music and related arts skills, knowledge, understandings and interests that students and adults contribute to the school learning community.
- (e) Students acquired an understanding of the elements of music by engaging in rich learning tasks that had relevance to their lives beyond the school gate. Particularly potent was the use of contemporary song materials.

In addition to these positive outcomes for students, the model of professional learning used in this intensive music program also transformed teaching practice for those involved in a number of ways: quality of student-teacher relationships, confidence and competencies in music pedagogy, and a sense of efficacy.

Both schools have now included music for learning in their Literacy and Numeracy Plan as an approach that works. An arts-infused teaching-learning approach was developed, trialled and rigorously evaluated in each school, with a focus on explicit literacy and numeracy teaching using arts-based texts, materials and pedagogy.

Effective partnerships were built between stakeholders in the school community, including Indigenous staff, teachers, school leaders, and students. The process had begun and potential was demonstrated for a similar approach to engage families in their children's learning.

In 2004 this program was nationally acknowledged through the Minister's Awards for Excellence in improving numeracy and literacy outcomes.

Copies of the full reports of all research projects described in this section are available on request.

6.3 Music education in Finland

When we can see a country of some 5.2 million people that, in its capital city alone, is home to five symphony orchestras, and where nationwide, there are 21 more, as well as 12 regional opera companies, and where at least eight world-class conductors were raised and trained there, and where more than 30 full-time classical composers live and work there, we have to ask the question ‘how could this be?’. The country in question is Finland, and the answer to the question seems to be ‘outstanding music education is the primary reason’.¹⁷

The results of Finnish music education have recently been attracting a great deal of attention internationally. It is worth looking at its structure, and what we might learn from it.

Arts and education structures

Cultural administration in Finland is through the Department of Culture, which is not an independent body but part of the Ministry of Education, together with four other departments (Higher Education and Research, International Affairs, Education, and Youth and Sport). The Ministry of Education has two Ministers, one in charge of education and research, and the other in charge of culture, youth and sport. While there is debate whether the cultural administration, from its position within the Ministry of Education, has the means and the credibility needed to play its part as the leader in the development and implementation of cultural policy, there seems to be a real advantage in the strong links between education and culture in Finland.¹⁸

Music education and funding structures

There are three areas in which Finnish children and young people are introduced to education in music and the arts:

- (1) general arts education, dispensed as a part of compulsory general education to all pupils. This starts from the age of 7 years.

According to Pirkko Partanen in his article on Finnish Music Education on the website Virtual Finland (February 2001), in terms of music in the comprehensive curriculum, the Act on Comprehensive Education came into force on August 1, 1970. The keyword for the music curriculum is ‘variety’. The designers of the comprehensive school program drew attention to the importance of art education for a pupil’s personal development. In her article in the Music Teachers’ Yearbook of 1972, Counsellor Marja Linnankivi from the (then) National Board of General Education emphasised that music education should not merely steer pupils to assume other people’s views. She stated that personal practice and creative expression would develop a positive attitude and an interest in music that will last for life.¹⁹

¹⁷ Article by Kristin Tillotson under the title ‘*Music education permeates Finnish society*’, Star Tribune, 25 April 2004

¹⁸ Cultural Policy in Finland, report of the Council of Europe, 1994 pp25-26

¹⁹ Pirkko Partanen, Finnish Music Education – Virtual Finland, February 2001, p.6

Contemporary school music is described as multivalued, where pupils are introduced to as wide a variety of music as possible. The aims defined for the comprehensive school emphasise positive attitudes, raising an interest, learning to listen, skills development, and interaction by means of music. One of the cross-curricula subjects, both in the comprehensive and upper secondary school, is education for international understanding. It is suggested that music is valuable in learning about, understanding and accepting other cultures through singing, playing and dancing in the styles of different countries. The music curriculum also covers the basics of music theory, which is learnt, as far as possible, through live performance.²⁰

- (2) 'basic education in the arts', which is the specialised education offered through special establishments to those who wish to be initiated and trained in one artform or another. In 1992, music and other fields of the arts began to be covered by legislation under the Act on Basic Arts Education. The purpose of this legislation was to ensure an opportunity for goal-oriented progressive teaching in all fields of the arts.²¹ This specialised education in the arts is offered through a variety of organisations, many of which belong to the network of adult education centres, also called civic colleges or civic institutes. The quality of the teaching program is guaranteed, since it is guided by the Board of Education, which draws up a national curriculum. Financial aid to these establishments is provided from the State and the municipalities. The type of state aid granted is fixed by law.²²

In music, there are some 95 music institutes (music schools and conservatories) belonging to the Association of Finnish Music Schools, with a total of over 60,000 students (in comparison, in the 1950s there were only a handful of music institutes in Finland). There are a further 40-50 music schools that do not belong to any association; they have an estimated total of 6,000 students. Included in these figures are music playschools, which involve 20,000 children under school age.

The emergence and development of music institutes has been possible through the financial contributions of local authorities and the Government. However, private funding in the form of term fees is still required. Of the funding of music institutes belonging to the association, government contributions cover 44%, local authorities contribute 40%, and student fees total 16%.²³

The curriculum in basic arts education can be extensive or general. The extensive curriculum is offered at 86 music schools and 12 conservatories, involving a total of about 33,000 students; 70% of them are of comprehensive school age. As noted above, the teaching is implemented through a curriculum based on guidelines approved by the National Board of Education in 1995. Institutes in other branches of the arts offer general curriculum teaching. In music, general curriculum teaching is offered at 66 civic colleges

²⁰ *ibid*, p7

²¹ *ibid*, p2

²² Cultural Policy in Finland, report of the Council of Europe, 1994 pp106-107;

²³ Pirkko Partanen, Finnish Music Education – Virtual Finland, February 2001, p2

and workers' institutes and at 48 music schools, involving a total of about 10,000 students. About 43,000 children and adolescents are involved in basic arts education in the field of music.²⁴

- (3) vocational training through institutes of higher education or vocational education, after compulsory schooling, which is designed to train future artists and professionals.²⁵ The 12 conservatories award the basic qualification in music over 3 years; other professional training has been taken over by multi-disciplinary polytechnics. The Sibelius Academy is the only university-level music institute in Finland, which is maintained by the Finnish Government.²⁶

As this is the tertiary training level, we will not focus on this area of music training as it is not relevant for the purpose of this review.

Challenges

Interestingly, despite the seeming success of the music education system in Finland across its three areas of approach, not everyone is happy with the result. A Ministry of Education working group on music education in 2002 concluded that there were too many musicians being trained. We assume that the report of this working group refers to the music training institutions for professional musicians, rather than the institutions offering 'basic' or specialised music education, as it advises that since 1995, the number of institutions offering music education has more than doubled, from 12 to 26, and that both the number of institutions and students need to be restricted. The report expresses concern that although most musicians are seldom completely unemployed, they are often only partly employed, and because of the excessive education, the employment situation is expected to deteriorate.²⁷

What can we learn from the Finnish system?

We cannot begin to know about all the complexities of the Finnish music education system. However, from our understanding of it, we believe we can learn the following:

- the importance of music education and music classes as part of the core curriculum in primary (kindergarten to Year 6) and secondary (7-12) schools;
- the importance and value of partnerships between schools and other forms of music training and participation, such as through community music schools and arts organisations, as well as through private teachers;
- the effectiveness of Government legislation in enshrining the value of music in the arts in core education curriculum.

²⁴ *ibid*, p2

²⁵ Cultural Policy in Finland, Cultural Policy in Finland, report of the Council of Europe, 1994 p108

²⁶ Pirkko Partanen, Finnish Music Education – Virtual Finland, February 2001, p2-3

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