

Launch of the *Music. Play for life.* Campaign

Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, March 26, 2004

WHY, FOR GOODNESS SAKE, DOES MUSIC NEED A CAMPAIGN?

Dick Letts

Ministers Brendan Nelson and Senator Rod Kemp, distinguished guests: Welcome to the launch of the Music. Play for Life campaign.

Is there anyone in this room for whom music is not personally important? That would be surprising.

We have all heard, so many times, someone say that they cannot imagine a life without music. It's as necessary as food, or love.

I still remember the Christmas message several years ago from one of Australia's favourite clowns, Flacco. "If music be the food of love," said Flacco, "what is eating Leonard Cohen?"

Shakespeare said if music be the food of love, "Let us have excess of it." With Cohen, who was good at the poetry, music was a drip feed.

We are with Shakespeare. Let's have excess of it. We speak not of excess of music to listen to -- God knows, we have achieved that. We speak of excess of opportunity to learn and to make music.

But if you are not convinced by the poetry, consider this. According to a study by Ibis Consulting in 2001, the Australian music sector -- including education, instruments sales and so on -- had a turnover of 6 billion dollars. The Australian people would not be spending that much money on something they don't care about.

But mostly, it's to listen to music, not to make music.

Music gives a rare opportunity

We launch today -- Music. Play for Life. *Play* an instrument and, of course, sing. *Play* -- have fun. For *liveliness*, the *life force*. For your *entire life*, young and old. Play for *your* life.

Why do we do this?

I would like to remind us of the skills involved in creating and performing a piece of music.

An infant can make up a little hum, naively. You or I can hum a tune, churning it over without much thought.

But consider something more purposeful than that.

To create a new piece of music, it helps if you know in your brain and your breath and your bones a musical culture. That's where you start. Whether you are a beginner or an old hand, you have to *think* about your piece, you have to *calculate*, make *judgements*. You have to call upon your *emotions* and your *intuition*. Right brain and left. All of these parts of you come together.

The piece completed, you'll want to perform it for an audience. You'll need the *social skills* to take your performers through a demanding collaboration.

Your performers all need complex *motor skills*. At the professional level, these skills are probably more complex and certainly more diverse than those of an Olympic athlete.

Then, to deliver a convincing performance, the physical skills have to be *combined* with intellectual understanding, with emotion, with fine expressive judgements about timing and colour and balance and style.

If you are fortunate, you invoke also the *spirit*, you give people a musical experience that carries them to heights of elation -- or even to the depths of their being.

This is a very rare sort of learning -- one that integrates so many aspects of a person. It's a learning that requires much discipline.

But there's something else about it that is even more rare. There's a sort of perfection in music. It's a perfection that can easily be perceived. It can be aspired to. To put it crudely, the musical message depends on you playing exactly the right note at exactly the right moment with the right volume and colour and articulation -- and all of this fitting to the microsecond with what the other performers are playing.

In what other field do you get that sort of experience? It can colour an entire life.

Perhaps this is at the core of the beneficial effects of music instruction on academic and social skills, as revealed by so much research.

Music is incredibly rich as an object and a process of learning, and as a means to knowing who you are and what you have to say.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is why we think music is so important as to justify a major campaign -- the Music. Play for Life campaign. We want everyone to have the opportunity to *fill* themselves with the experiences and skills that music making can invoke.

Not enough of it around

We only need a campaign because there isn't enough of this opportunity to go around.

As a prelude to the campaign, the Music Council, with its partners the Australian Music Association and the Australian Society for Music Education, and funding from the Music Board of the Australia Council and the AMA, commissioned a study by Professor Robin Stevens into the provision of music education in schools. The principal finding was that key statistics are not being collected. I wonder why that is.

AMA's Ian Harvey was able to extrapolate from the report an estimate that only around 20-25% of Australian school children are offered music instruction by music specialists. The situation in the essential and formative

primary school years is bleak indeed, with the responsibility for music instruction usually assigned to classroom teachers who may have had only say 12 hours of pre-service training in music – just enough to terrify them.

Astonishing statistic

In a survey, Australian Attitudes to Music, published by the AMA in 2001, respondents were asked whether or not they agreed with this statement:

“Music education should be mandated by the states to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn music in school.”

87% of the population agreed. 50% “strongly” agreed. This is not your bell curve.

But do you know how many respondents of secondary school age agreed? 97%. 97%! Normally you only get that sort of number in Chinese elections.

Why is it that the main school systems, state or otherwise, aren’t putting 2 and 2 together and taking greater advantage of the motivational force behind these attitudes? (Do they have a maths deficiency?)

In the community, too

It’s not only about education. It’s about music making everywhere. Do you know that in Victoria, there is something called the Vocal Nosh. In communities across the state, people get together to sing and then have a meal. There are scores of Vocal Noshes happening. Vichealth, which is backing it, reckons it’s not only great for musical and community togetherness, but also individual health.

And there are the community orchestras, a cappella groups, bands, choirs, music theatre companies still together but needing support. There are the community music programs that bring meaning to special populations and indeed save lives. There is AMA’s Weekend Warriors program to reclaim ageing rockers for music. At the community level, there’s great stuff happening -- but the opportunities are way, way less than they could and should be.

Be as successful as music in Sweden

I want to throw in an argument of a different kind.

Sweden is a country of 9 million people. Its music industry has been very successful, and its royalties from music exports are about *four times* per capita those of Australia’s. It is a net music exporter. We hardly even dream of that. Australia’s music export royalties in 2001 were only one third of its imports.

In 1999, Sweden published a study of its music industry that attributed its success to four factors. Two of the four were a consequence of the instrumental and vocal instruction made very widely available through municipal music schools, attended at low cost by 370,000 Swedes. Translated to Australia, that would be about 850,000 people.

The result of this music education is firstly, that many Swedes, amateur and professional, are good musicians and there is a very high level of musical activity in Sweden. Secondly, the population has a high level of sophistication in listening to music and can focus its support on the best.

Looking at the four success factors, the main difference from Australia is in music education. Clearly the Swedes have us licked there -- **and** in the international success of their industry. Do we have something to learn from this analysis?

A grassroots campaign

Music. Play for Life does not expect to persuade governments of such things in the short term. Our strategy is to go for the grassroots.

We will build a giant national collaboration with school parents, school music teachers, music organisations, music business people, musicians and music lovers. The campaign has been designed so that it will help them achieve **their** objectives.

This is not a PR campaign. We will work directly with people who are willing to take an initiative. Every music organisation represented in this room today can get *something* for itself and its constituents from this campaign. If you haven’t signed up yet, we should talk.

Eventually it will become clear to governments that there is massive support for music and that they need have no fear in providing resources to it.

We will provide campaign resources through our website and elsewhere. The website will become an Aladdin’s cave of information and contacts. This week we have uploaded the initial version of an advocacy kit for parents and citizens. The website will have similar resources for people working in the communities. We will connect with all ages, lovers of all kinds of music.

The website will include a national guide for people looking for music teachers, or for bands, choirs, orchestras, rock groups with which to perform, or music groups to bring into your school.

This is all possible through a most unusual alliance. It is led by the Music Council, a council of 50 people representing the breadth of the music sector, along with the Australian Society for Music Education, bringing inside info about the schools sector, and the Australian Music Association, the industry body whose members have most generously made the campaign financially possible. I thank them, and our rapidly growing list of collaborators, for their involvement and assure them that this campaign will continue so long as there is need, financial resources and enthusiasm.

Thank you for your attention. Please, on leaving this theatre, join a choir, form a band.

Dick Letts is Executive Director of the Music Council of Australia

AMA'S MUSIC MAKERS: FUELLING THE FIRE

Brendan Callinan

Good morning. I'm very pleased to be here today to support Music.Play for Life at its national launch.

I have two hats. I am the president of the Australian Music Association and I also represent the Association's non-commercial arm, Music Makers.

The Australian Music Association is the peak body representing the music products industry. Our members cover wholesalers, manufacturers and retailers of musical instruments, professional audio, lighting, print music and computer music. Over the years we have tried to build bridges with others in the music community, but it's always been difficult. We've been seen as the commercial end of the industry and that's created barriers.

So we created Music Makers and clearly positioned it as our non-commercial arm. Music Makers is, we trust, a neutral space where everyone can come to focus on the one goal that we all have in common --growing the number of people playing music in Australia.

This isn't to say that our members aren't already very active in supporting music. Every year our members teach around 45,000 children to play music. In some instances, those children are taught in our members' own private schools and in other instances our members are service providers to the State or Catholic education systems. Collectively, we also invest around \$5 million in development and sponsorships through such activities as band festivals, piano competitions and others.

But we are many small companies. By establishing Music Makers we can not only combine our resources but partner with others to undertake projects that no single company or entity could tackle and thereby make more of a difference.

We see Music Makers as a broad church that embraces music and music making in all its forms, and we welcome partnering with other people and bodies to grow the number of music makers in this country.

And that is why I'm so particularly pleased to be here today. I'd like to thank the Music Council of Australia for being such warm and welcoming partners, and for their vision and support for this one important goal that we all have of creating more opportunities for Australians to be actively involved with music, and for creating Music.Play for Life. Music Makers provided the funding and we are very pleased that we were able to do that. But the Music Council of Australia has created an exciting campaign that I know will really inspire music educators and community music leaders to become advocates in their local communities.

And our support doesn't begin and end with funding. We will be using our resources to support Music.Play for Life through such activities as our two magazines, Music in Action and Australian Musician, and through encouraging our members to get the message out there.

So, I would like to thank Minister Nelson and Minister Kemp for being here today and providing your support for music in our schools, and to thank Dr Letts from the Music Council of Australia and his team for Music.Play for Life. I'm sure that in years to come we'll all look back on this moment as the day when it all began and thank our lucky stars that it did.

Thank you.

Brendan Callinan is President of the Australian Music Association.

ASME WANTS EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Neryl Jeanneret

The Australian Society for Music Education represents teachers of music across the country in many different contexts. I say "teachers of music" because not all of them are specialists but they are passionate about engaging children in music making.

ASME has a single purpose and that is to encourage and advance music education at all levels as an integral part of general education and community life. It has a number of aims but those particularly pertinent to the Play for Life campaign are to support the right of every person to a musical education (it's about everyone, not just children), to promote quality music education, and to maintain and develop the status of music.

That is not to say we don't already have high standards. There are very high quality outcomes of music programs across the country as a result of hardworking and committed music teachers and our high school graduates are comparable with those around the world, if not better in some cases. You might be interested to know that a number of these students perform extremely well on the International Baccalaureate music exams.

The trouble is that these outcomes are not consistent and access to music education is not equitable. For example, you've been listening to the fine performance from the ensemble from the Performing Arts Unit. For over forty years the Department of Education and Training has provided students with the opportunity they might not otherwise have to participate in quality ensembles... but there's only one unit and it largely services the Sydney Metropolitan area.

Everyone should have the opportunity to develop their full potential, adults and children alike, but they need access to resources.

ASME is proud to have the support of and a partnership with the Music Council of Australia and the Australia Music Association in the Music. Play for Life campaign that will raise the profile of music in the community and promote equity of access to music making for everyone.

Neryl Jeanneret is the President of ASME