

## *The Inaugural Music Council of Australia Annual Address*

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### **Why teach music in schools? Changing values since the 1850s**

Associate Professor Robin S. Stevens, *Deakin University*

In the face of an overcrowded curriculum which currently threatens the traditional status of music as a core subject, it is more than ever necessary to have convincing answers to the question 'why teach music in schools?'. Since the introduction of singing to colonial schools during the early 1850s, public and professional opinion about the value of music in schools has changed in line with what both governments and the community have expected that schooling should achieve and what society as a whole has valued. The nature of the school music curriculum has also changed and this has expanded the role that music has taken in the education of young people and therefore the scope of its potential value. During the nineteenth century, music was limited to singing. However, with the introduction of new technologies, the forms of media—beginning with the gramophone at the turn of the century and currently focussing on new information and communication technologies—have led to an expansion of both the nature and the scope of the music curriculum. In addition, new music teaching methods have also influenced music curriculum content. The rationale for teaching music in schools is addressed through a range of opinions beginning with singing being valued for its 'humanising and civilising' influence through to contemporary views about the cognitive, social, aesthetic and other developmental benefits of music education for young people. By drawing both on contemporary views as well as on past experiences and traditions, sufficiently forceful arguments can hopefully be found to counter the current threat to music as a core curriculum subject.

#### **Introduction**

One of the most pressing problems for contemporary school education is an overcrowded curriculum. The so-called 'National Curriculum' developed as a result of the Australian Education Council's Hobart meeting in 1989 and the subsequent publication of a series of 'Statements' and 'Profiles' by the Curriculum Corporation in 1994 consolidated the school curriculum into eight Key Learning Areas (Curriculum Corporation 1994a, 1994b). Since that time most states have moved away from school-based curriculum development and have embraced the National Curriculum but with adaptations to suit their own needs. In the case of Victoria there have been two iterations of the National Curriculum in the form of *Curriculum and Standards Frameworks*. In the original version, Music was one of the five arts strands specified for years P to 6 and one of the six strands for years 7 to 12 (Board of Studies 1995). With the CSF2, Music is now one of three possible arts form included under Performing Arts which, with Visual Arts, form the two strands specified for years P to 4 (Board of Studies 2000). Music is then included in its own right as one of six Arts strands for years 5 to 12. However, effectively the CSF2 represents a significant loss of ground for Music at the lower and middle primary school levels in Victoria.

Despite the consolidation of the curriculum into eight Key Learning Areas, one state is attempting to deal with the overcrowded curriculum by opting for an entirely new curriculum framework, based not on traditional curriculum areas, but on 'futures-oriented categories for organising curriculum'. The Queensland *New Basics—Curriculum Organisers* (Education Queensland 2000) has, as its principal objective, 'managing the enormous increase in information resulting from globalisation and the rapid rate of change in the economic, social and cultural dimensions of our existence'. This curriculum is being trialled in thirty-eight schools for a four-year period from 2000 and has four areas of development, which are based on four key questions:

1. Life pathways and social futures  
*Who am I and where am I going?*
2. Multiliteracies and communications media  
*How do I make sense of and communicate with the world?*
3. Active citizenship  
*What are my rights and responsibilities in communities, cultures and economies?*
4. Environments and technologies  
*How do I describe, analyse and shape the world around me?*

(Education Queensland 2000)

Although there is presumably the possibility of including some music within this context, its traditional role as a discrete area of the curriculum appears to have been entirely lost. Such a radical approach to curriculum design and development could well be the direction to be taken nationally in the future.

In order for music to survive in schools—either in the form that we presently know it or in some other form that enables it to have a significant role in the general education of young people—we must continue to ask ourselves the question ‘why teach music in schools?’. Certainly, music teachers fronting up at parent-teacher interviews need to have a clear rationale for why they teach their subject. But, as professional musicians, music educators, music education researchers or interested community members, we need to have clear answers to this question—answers that are sufficiently relevant for the twenty-first century to enable music to retain a place in the core area of the school curriculum from the beginning of primary school through to the point in secondary education where the majority of young people specialise in other discipline areas.

It is not always realised by governments and the community at large that Australia has a long tradition of music in schools spanning one hundred and fifty years. Part of any rationale for retaining music in the core curriculum should be based not only on contemporary arguments about its immediate benefits to the individual and to society but also on the perspective provided by past experiences and traditions.

In this paper I will consider both past and present views on the value and roles of music in schools from an essentially Australian perspective—it will, by the way, also represent an overview of the historical development of school music education in Australia. I will be aiming not only to outline the range of opinions which have supported music in schools from the mid nineteenth century to the present, but to do so within the context of developments in music curriculum content and teaching methods as well as technological innovations that have influenced both the forms of music and the pedagogies and media underpinning music education.

### Vocal Music in Schools

Music was introduced as a school subject in New South Wales and Victoria during the 1850s (Stevens 1978). Despite the fact that most school teachers were unskilled in music, singing was included in the ‘course of free instruction’. However, as in New South Wales, education authorities could ‘only lament its all but universal neglect’. The problem was addressed in New South Wales by offering an annual gratuity of £5 to teachers for giving musical instruction and later, in 1863, by the appointment of a Singing Master for Sydney schools and in 1884, of a Superintendent of Music (Stevens 1978). In Victoria, the dual education boards decided on a system of visiting music teachers and appointed singing masters at salaries of up to £450 per annum at a time when class teachers were receiving between £100 and £120 (Stevens 1978). Later, given a tight financial situation, education authorities attempted to introduce fees for music lessons but these were eventually abandoned and, in 1872, music was enshrined as one of the core curriculum subjects in the new system of ‘free, compulsory and secular’ education in Victoria. Music was taught by singing masters and supervised by an Inspector of Music until the 1890s depression forced their retrenchment (Stevens 1978). Other colonies included music in their normal courses of instruction—Queensland from 1875, South Australia from 1890, and Tasmania from 1905 (Stevens 1997, p.398).

As already implied, music in primary schools during the nineteenth century was confined to ‘vocal music’ or ‘class singing’ as we now call it. Unlike the situation today, there were few if any pianos available to accompany class singing in government schools. In private schools later in the period, pianos were usually available to accompany both solo and choral singing as well as solo instrumental performances, and students learnt instruments such as the piano, violin and flute from visiting instrumental teachers. Such specialist music tuition enabled young ladies and gentlemen attending private schools to acquire musical skills ostensibly as a social accomplishment. However, in public schools, class singing was seen as being far more pragmatic in purpose.

Vocal music was one of the inherited traditions from English elementary education where it was introduced during the 1840s (Stevens 1978). Choral singing was also a popular form of recreation promoted among working class people, particularly in industrial towns, by social reformers of the period. In the two earliest colonies, New South Wales and Victoria, vocal music was introduced to the school curriculum—albeit in a nominal sense only during these early years—for what may best be described as utilitarian reasons. School songs—particularly the words of school songs—were seen as a means of inculcating children with moral, religious, patriotic, family and social values. In other words, music was introduced for its extra-musical or extrinsic value.

The social environment in which many children found themselves during the mid-nineteenth century was far from good. Aside from the fact that the Australian colonies had initially been populated by convicts and redundant paupers from Britain, the situation was aggravated following the gold strikes of the 1850s by the influx of fortune seekers from all over the world, many of whom were considered to be ‘undesirables’. According to Inspector James Bonwick of the Victorian Board of National Education, children on the goldfields during the 1850s lived in a world of ‘gambling, swearing, drunkenness and licentiousness’ (Blake 1973, p.34).

Vocal music was widely believed to have value as a humanising and civilizing influence. For example, the New South Wales School Commissioners in reporting ‘the all but universal neglect’ of music in schools in 1855 clearly took for granted its potential as a civilising and morally-improving influence:

Of the importance of Music as a branch of education and as a means of civilization, as tending to soften the manners and to prevent intemperance, it is unnecessary to speak ... the beneficial effects which a knowledge of music would confer, even in the celebration of public worship, need not be enlarged upon.

(Quoted in Stevens 1981, p.68)

In 1857, the Victorian Denominational Schools Board recognised the value of school music for children on the goldfields. In announcing the appointment of itinerant singing masters for Ballarat, Castlemaine and Sandhurst, the Board commented:

The influence of singing in harmonizing and refining the mind of the young is acknowledged to be great, and is of no small importance in a community such as this ... there is reason to expect that they [the newly-appointed singing masters] will exercise a most favourable influence, not only on the musical, but also the moral associations of these goldfields.

(Quoted in Stevens 1981, p.68)

Two years later, a shortage of funding threatened the dismissal of singing masters. Public response was one of indignation and petitions objecting to any withdrawal of musical instruction came flooding into the Denominational Schools Board. A petition received from residents of the Ballarat District is a typical example:

... the teacher of music is a most powerful ancillary to the school master and a powerful helper to the young in their intellectual and moral progress. We believe that children of the lower classes stand especially in need of the civilizing and elevating influence of music and we attribute much of the marked improvement of the last few months to this salutary influence.

(Quoted in Stevens 1981, p.68)

In New South Wales during the same year, Inspector William Wilkins put forward his scheme to encourage National School teachers in country districts to teach singing with much the same idea in mind:

I have frequently been struck when visiting country schools with the entire inability of the children, both boys and girls, to amuse themselves without engaging in rude horse play on the one hand or delicate familiarities on the other. This state of things, I believe, is conducive to neither good morals nor good manners. It has occurred to me therefore that a partial remedy may be found in the teaching of vocal music. It would exert a softening and humanizing influence on the children's minds, improve the moral tone of the school and make it popular with the parents ...

(Quoted in Stevens 1981, p.68)

The typical song of the period was intensely moralistic and didactic. We may take as an example the following song that was published in 1876 by James Fisher—an advocate of the Tonic Sol-fa teaching method and its letter notation—who was then singing master at the Fort Street Model School in Sydney:

I MUST NOT TEASE MY MOTHER  
I must not tease my mother;  
She loves me all the day;  
And she has patience with my faults  
And teaches me to pray.  
Oh, how I'll try to please her,  
She every hour shall see:  
For should she go away or die  
What would become of me.

(Fisher 1877, p.57)

This song was obviously calculated to terrify the child, to purge him spiritually, and to appeal to his own selfish interests.

Other songs of the period, both in their words and musical settings, were designed to foster patriotism and 'national spirit'. The following song, which refers to the home-coming of the New South Wales contingent of soldiers sent to the Soudan, was composed by Hugo Alpen, then singing master at the New South Wales Teacher Training College:

### WELCOME MARCH

(Verse 1) Children we of a sturdy race,  
Who battled hard and long,  
Daring the wildest dangers face,  
In rightful purpose strong:  
Greet we the men who bravely strode  
Against the foeman's hand,  
Armed with Australia's wreath of love  
To guard the dear old land ...

(Alpen n.d., pp.24-26)

The virtues of home and family life were also promoted in school songs such as this one composed by James Fisher:

### HOME

(Verse 2) Home, home, happiest of places!  
Home, home, thee I desire!  
Home, home, kind were the faces  
That I have met 'round thy fire,  
Home, home, sweet home!  
That I have met 'round thy fire.

(Fisher 1877, p.9)

It was also widely recognised that singing represented a form of healthy recreation for children. Inspector Topp of Ballarat District advocated such a use for music in his report to the Victorian Board of Education in 1870:

... in many of the country schools, I have heard very creditable singing and should like to see some inducement offered for the general cultivation of this delightful accomplishment, since it is of no small importance that boys and girls should be furnished with an innocent yet attractive amusement; and I would venture to say that we would be less troubled with the 'larrikinism' of which we hear so much, were more attention paid to the cultivating of the tastes of the children so that they might render their own homes more attractive to themselves and their acquaintances, and have less desire for that wandering about the streets which places so many temptations in their way.

(Quoted in Stevens 1981, p.69)

An example of such a song which simply allowed children to enjoy singing about such aspects of their own lives such as games, toys, outdoor adventures and other childhood pleasures—in other words, songs to promote childhood culture—is represented in another of James Fisher's songs. It describes a boy and his dog (named Tray) playing a game of 'hide and seek' with playmates—although even here there are moral overtones in the second last verse:

### HIDE AND SEEK

(Verse 3) Hush, hush, hush! They are seeking everywhere;  
And Tray will wag his wicked old tail  
And leap up in the air  
If you don't lie down like a good dumb dog  
I will shoot you I declare

(Verse 4) No, no, no!  
For you love us all, poor Tray;  
You can't understand our hiding here,  
You think it is only play.  
If ever I did harm you my dog,  
I should rue it many a day.

(Verse 5) Hide. Hide, hide!  
Creep lower, close to the ground  
Pull Tray into the hollow tree  
For there they come with a bound;  
All six at once! Ho! Ho! Ha! Ha!  
So the game's up at last; we're found.

(Fisher 1877, p.9)

One of the recurring themes in such recreational songs was that of nature and particularly the Australian bush. The following example, composed by Samuel McBurney, again has a cautionary aspect to it. The song tells of children who are attracted by the sound of the bell birds and become lost in the bush.

#### THE BELL BIRDS

- (Verse 3) Ring, Ring, Ring! It came to them clear and true,  
Calling them to the fairies' church, After the fairy bride,  
Ring, Ring, Ring! Little children knew,  
'Twas but the chime that the bell-birds ring, Out on the mountain side.
- (Chorus) Ringing sweetly, ringing softly, O'er the ranges wide,  
Ringing sweetly, ringing softly, At the even-tide.
- (Verse 4) Ring, Ring, Ring! 'Twas nearly a fatal spell,  
Did not the bell of a pack horse tell, Someone was close beside.  
Ring, Ring, Ring! Louder the trampling grew,  
Rough, kindly men took the wand'ers again, Homeward at even-tide.
- (Chorus) Ringing sweetly, ringing softly, O'er the ranges wide,  
Ringing sweetly, ringing softly, At the even-tide.
- (McBurney n.d., pp.35-36)

Although a natural outgrowth of class singing, the development of choral singing festivals enabled children to experience music as a performing art in the same way as adults did in choral societies or church choirs. End-of-year and charity concerts appear to have been fairly common in colonial schools and, in Victoria, singing demonstrations by pupils from denominational schools were presented annually in Melbourne from 1854 and in Geelong and Ballarat from 1856 and 1858 respectively (Stevens 1978). Later, annual choral festivals became a feature of school life. For example, in South Australia, 'The Thousand Voices Choir' directed by Alexander Clark was established under the auspices of the Public Schools Decoration Society in 1891 and was later incorporated as the South Australian Public (Primary) Schools Music Society (Southcott 1995). This organisation survives today and provides opportunities for children to participate in what are essentially co-curricular musical experiences (Eckermann & Donaldson 1991). Similar annual choral festivals were later established in New South Wales, Western Australia and Northern Territory.

There was also some recognition of the 'intellectual progress' attending the study of 'music by notes'—in modern-day parlance, promoting cognitive skills through a study of music theory and development of music literacy. Singing was taught by a various methods but, by the turn of the century, the most prominent of these was the Tonic Sol-fa method and notation which indirectly became the basis for the so-called Kodály method later in the twentieth century. The aim of all such singing methods was to enable children to sing at sight from music notation. Class singing continues to be one of the mainstays of the Australian school music curriculum and school song books continue to be published and to find a ready market in schools.

However, the major benefits attributed to music in Australian schools during the nineteenth century were essentially extra-musical. School singing was regarded as a means of exerting a 'humanising and civilising' influence and of promoting patriotism, home and family life, healthy recreation, childhood culture, and to a limited extent, 'intellectual progress' and, as such, may be thought of as representing as much a form of pedagogy in the service of desirable social outcomes as a school subject in its own right.

#### **Expansion of the Music Curriculum and of Attendant Values**

With new technological developments such as the gramophone being introduced to school classrooms from the early 1900s and radio programs by the Australian Broadcasting Commission being broadcast to schools from the late 1920s, listening to music or 'music appreciation' extended the role of school music to what is now referred to as aesthetic education. As several writers including Reimer (1970) and Swanwick (1979) have proposed, the focus here is on the development of aesthetic sensitivity to music through perceiving and responding to the expressive qualities of music.

The introduction of listening to the music curriculum also promoted a form of cultural education as children were encouraged to listen to classical music. For many working class children, listening to classical music was probably their first exposure to 'high culture'. Particularly during the early part of the twentieth century, music also represented a form of 'cultural reproduction' of European and particularly British associations as children were taught 'folk songs from other lands' and listened to 'gramophone programs' which included nationalistic music of such composers as Greig, Dvóřak, and Vaughan Williams as well as to the classical masterpieces of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Music also provided a means through which children could gain a knowledge of the geography and culture of other countries.

This was also the period when Dalcroze Eurhythmics—commonly referred to as ‘music and movement’—became a popular means of teaching and experiencing music in schools. The Adelaide-based music educator Heather Gell promoted the Dalcroze method before moving to Sydney where she presented weekly national broadcasts on ABC radio from 1938 until the 1950s (Stevens 1997, p.399). Music not only provided students with aesthetic experiences by responding to music through movement, but also contributed to their physical development.

One aspect of school music that clearly emerged as being extra-curricular was the formation from the 1880s of school drum and fife bands. Advances in manufacturing technology and the introduction of mass production methods enabled simple band instruments such as drums, fifes and bugles to become much more affordable. Many school communities used the proceeds from fund raising to purchase sets of these musical instruments for school band use. A good example comes from South Australia where, by 1891, almost all schools with an enrolment of between 200 and 900 pupils had a drum and fife band which accompanied marching into school and drill exercises, and played at ceremonial occasions (Southcott 1992, p.269). The main proponent of fife playing in South Australia from the 1910s was the Supervisor of Music, Frank Gratton (Southcott 1995).

Other forms of instrumental music in government schools, although forming part of the extra-curricular program mainly in secondary schools, developed with such initiatives as violin teaching in Victoria where, from 1919, Charles Manby introduced a patented violin with a hollow-stopped finger board and a colour-coded teaching method (Cameron 1969, pp.167-176). Although the Manby method met with only limited success, the Gillies Bequest of £10,000 in 1925 enabled the purchase of instruments for school bands and orchestras in Victoria and led to the formation in 1939 of a State Schools’ Orchestra Association. Such forms of music education not only enabled children to acquire musical skills—that is, to become musically literate and to learn to play an musical instrument— but also to assist their cultural development and, it was argued, to promote family life through ensemble playing. Ensemble playing also promoted social interaction and a sense of group cohesion within schools. Needless to say, instrumental music tuition in private schools, many of which had by then become church grammar schools or colleges, continued and eventually resulted in the strong tradition of school orchestras and bands that we have today in the independent school sector.

During the period of the 1920s to the 1950s, relatively inexpensive classroom instruments such as recorders and tuned and non-tuned percussion became available. Percussion band work was introduced to primary classrooms from the 1920s and classroom recorder playing became common by the 1940s. The German Orff Schulwerk method was introduced to Australia during the 1960s principally through Keith Smith in Queensland and John Morriss in Victoria and Tasmania (Stevens 1997, p.399). As Frank Higgins—who was one of the major proponents of school recorder playing in Victoria during the 1950s and 1960s—described the situation, these classroom instrumental approaches, together with class singing, music appreciation and movement to music, promoted the value of music in two areas—to society and to individual child development:

*A. Music and Society*

- Music caters for human spiritual and emotional needs—music represents a medium through which emotions, stories, religion and history can be expressed.
- Music is part of our cultural heritage—every nation and race has its own forms of music that need to be transmitted from one generation to the next in order to maintain each particular civilization.
- In the face of technological developments (which are totally dispassionate in their lack any moral or aesthetic sensitivity), music ‘humanizes’ society.
- In a time of suspicion and discord, music represents a universal system of communication which can promote international good will.
- In a period of ‘high pressure’ living, music can be a soothing influence which refreshes the mind and the emotions.

*B. Music and Child Development*

- Music contributes to a child’s moral and spiritual development
- Music contributes to a child’s perceptual development particularly in relation to hearing.
- Music contributes to a child’s physical development not only in general physical coordination but also in therapeutic sense with certain physical disorders
- Music contributes to a child’s social development, particularly in group music making situations where self-discipline, tolerance, and cooperation are developed.
- Music contributes to a child’s intellectual development through opportunities for experimentation, questioning, discovery and application and through acquiring skills in concentration, judgement and self-discipline.
- Music contributes to a child’s emotional and personal development through the self-respect gained through achievement and social recognition achieved from participation.
- Music contributes to a child’s aesthetic development through opportunities for discrimination and judgement.

(Adapted from Higgins 1964, pp.1-6)

The 1970s saw the introduction to Australia of the Hungarian Kodály method of music education as the ‘Developmental Music Program’ largely through the efforts of the New South Wales music educator, Deanna Hoermann. This approach was the impetus for one of the most important music education research projects of the time. Undertaken by Hoermann and Herbert during 1973-74, it demonstrated that children participating in the ‘Developmental Music Program’ achieved significantly higher gains in the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills in comparison with those outside the program (Hoermann & Herbert 1979). Regrettably the ‘Developmental Music Program’ was abandoned by the New South Wales Education Department after its principal supporter, the then Minister of Education, died in office (Hoermann n.d.). Subsequently, the most successful implementations of the Kodály approach were in certain independent schools and in the Queensland government school system.

The so-called ‘creative music’ approach was developed overseas by Murray Schaffer in Canada and George Self, John Paynter, Brian Dennis and others in Britain and then introduced to Australia during the late 1960s. This approach made use of non-skill-intensive forms of musical creativity and performance based on graphic notation, the use of every-day as well as traditional sound sources, and the use of conventional instruments played in unconventional ways and *musique concrète* tape recorder techniques. The Australian composer, Keith Humble, advocated the creative music approach as enabling children ‘to ‘live’ a musical experience’ rather than just acquiring performance skills and music literacy (ref). Later, the availability of analogue and digital music synthesizers expanded the possibilities for creative music in schools and more recently—during the 1980s and 1990s—computer-based music sequencer software has greatly empowered students in their creative music making activities.. Moreover the use of information and communication technologies in the form of computer software programs as a teaching medium, particularly for music theory and aural training, and of CD-ROM programs and the Internet as a music information resource has further expanded the pedagogical media available for school music education.

Under policies of increasing decentralisation, responsibility for educational decision making shifted during the 1980s from a centralised directorate to regional directorates and then, in a further devolution of power, to the school level. Although responsibility for curriculum passed to schools, state education departments produced curriculum frameworks and syllabi to assist teachers with curriculum development and implementation. In a review of primary school music curricula published by five different states between 1982 and 1988, Temmerman (1991) identified the following themes in the rationale and objective statements of these curricula:

*Rationale statements included:*

- the significance of music in everyday life
- music as an integral part of human experience in all cultures, past and present
- music as a form of self expression and communication
- music as a means of aesthetic development

*The stated objectives of music education included:*

- developing of auditory skills
- body awareness and related communication skills
- social skills and attitudes
- self-expression, often coupled with emotional development
- enjoyment of / pleasure in music
- break from formal work / form of leisure
- transferability of skills obtained in music to other arts forms and/or other subject areas
- an implied link between music and other arts subjects in developing broad educational skills such as problem-solving techniques and independent thinking and learning.

(Adapted from Temmerman 1991, p.156)

Temmerman concluded that ‘It is apparent that the five Australian primary school music education documents are principally founded on an extrinsic philosophy of music education. Justifications for music education are given on physical, social, intellectual, cultural, and emotional grounds’ (p.156).

As mentioned at the outset, the basis for music in schools at present is the National Curriculum. Although clouded by curriculum foci and learning outcome statements, the underlying rationale for the inclusion of music—and the other arts—in the school curriculum is probably best summed up in the general introduction to the Victorian 1995 *The Arts Curriculum and Standards Framework* (Board of Studies 1995).

The Arts are a fundamental means of expression and communication in all societies. Through The Arts we gain a sense of our social and individual identity. Study in The Arts gives students access to cultural diversity in their immediate community and the broader Australian and international context. They learn to recognise and value the cultural forms and traditions that constitute artistic heritage. ... In The Arts students learn ways of experiencing, developing, representing and understanding ideas, emotions, values and

cultural beliefs. They learn to take risks, be imaginative, question prevailing values, explore alternative solutions, engage in arts criticism, develop, practise and refine techniques, share opinions and extend the limits of the arts.

(Board of Studies 1995, p.9)

British writers, Aelwyn Pugh and Lesley Pugh, pose the question ‘Why should we teach music?’ in the opening chapter of their recent book *Music in the Early Years* (1998). They divide the arguments in support of music into two main categories:

*A. The Utilitarian (Extrinsic) Value of Music*

- Music as a vehicle for the transmission of culture—for example, teaching songs to each new generation perpetuates the cultural heritage of a society
- Music’s contribution to social development—for example, enabling young people to relate to their peers in performing ensembles
- Music as a form of enjoyment or source of pleasure
- Music as education for leisure
- Music’s contribution to the preparation of individuals for adult working lives—i.e. music can have vocational outcomes
- Music’s contribution to individuals’ general scholastic development—i.e. music can stimulate intellectual development, train the mind in abstract thinking, develop speech, provides readiness for other forms of literacy, etc.
- Music’s contribution to children’s physical development
- Music’s contribution to moral and spiritual development

*B. The Intrinsic Value of Music*

- Music as an element in being human—i.e. a basic human need
- Music as a language—i.e. a means of non-verbal communication
- Music as the expression of emotion.

(Adapted from Pugh & Pugh 1998)

Most music education philosophers draw a distinction between the intrinsic value of music—that is, ‘music for its own sake’—and the extrinsic or utilitarian value of music— that is, ‘music for the sake of human needs’ (Stevens & Stevens 1996). As we have seen, the school music curriculum has, over the past one hundred and fifty years, extended its scope from class singing to a variety of musical experiences. But rather than definite changes in the perceived value of music in schools, there has been more of an accumulation of the benefits that have been ascribed to music. The expansion of musical experiences and therefore of curriculum content is due largely to technological innovations which have resulted in the availability of progressively more sophisticated mechanical, electronic and digital sound reproduction devices, musical instruments, compositional tools and educational media. The values ascribed to school music are still predominantly extrinsic but the expanded music curriculum content has resulted in significantly broader roles for music in general education.

### Conclusion

To return to the issue of the overcrowded curriculum—Lierse, in an aptly titled paper ‘Music in schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: An endangered species?’ (1997), expressed her concerns about music in Victorian secondary schools during the mid 1990s. Two of her findings were:

- 48% of secondary schools have cut or reduced their classroom music programs because of the crowded curriculum resulting from the new CSF, government curriculum priorities particularly towards LOTE and physical education / sport, and staffing cuts.
- An increasing number of schools are moving the emphasis on music education from the classroom to the extra-curriculum area to avoid pressure on the overcrowded curriculum.

From my own knowledge of the situation in Victoria, it seems that many primary schools are now opting to involve their students in an annual school musical production at the expense of regular classroom music lessons.

Given the now widely experienced phenomenon of the overcrowded curriculum, a clear understanding by all stakeholders of the rationale—both past and present—for the inclusion of music in general education is essential if music is to retain a meaningful role in the education of all of our young people. With the wide range of activities and experiences encompassed by the contemporary school music curriculum, the value of music in the general curriculum is surely as significant for the development of both the individual and society as a whole today as was in the 1850s. In the face of what I would suggest are increasingly apparent threats to its traditional role and place in education, I believe that music as a core curriculum subject is worth fighting for.

## About the Author

Robin Stevens is Associate Professor of Music Education at Deakin University and has undertaken research into the history of school music education in Australia, Britain, South Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. He has published widely in research and scholarly journals and has written and edited books on technology applications in music education.

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## Contact Details

Assoc. Prof. Robin S. Stevens  
Associate Professor of Music Education  
School of Social and Cultural Studies in Education  
Faculty of Education  
Deakin University—Melbourne Campus  
221 Burwood Highway, Burwood, VIC. 3125  
Phone: 03 9244 6754  
Fax: 03 9244 6752  
Email: rstevens@deakin.edu.au

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