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The Editorial team encourage reader feedback. If you have any comments or experiences that relate to articles published in Sound Arts, please mail or email them to Bronwyn Pou, the MENZA Administrator at admin@menza.org.nz. These may be printed in the next edition of the magazine or published on the MENZA website.

The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the MENZA Board and the Sound Arts Editorial team.

The Editorial team request that sources are rightfully acknowledged in all MENZA publications. Where it is felt a breach of this protocol may have occurred this can be notified to the editor or directly to the writer. MENZA has an expectation of ethical practices in the matter of disclosures.

For advertising inquiries, contact the Administrator, Bronwyn Pou at admin@menza.org.nz. The magazine is typeset and printed by Printlink, 33–43 Jackson Street, Petone, Wellington.
Kia ora koutou

Since most of our members are teachers at the chalk face in our nation’s schools, I hope you have all had a relaxing holiday after a hectic second term of Music Month, Hook Line and Singalong and Big Sing amongst other events. Term 2 was a great term for MENZA and the Board appreciates everybody’s skill and effort in making May our month.

I hope you are loving the website and the work that Tim Carson in particular has done. He is full of great ideas and developing good strategies to make it helpful and relevant for members and friends. Talking of members, we are just a couple of months away from the AGM on August 30th in Auckland (Dilworth School). Aucklanders, we would love to see you there in force! Can you match the 40 or so that got along in Wellington last year. Remember, that nominations will close on August 16th. On the morning after (31st) we plan a professional learning morning. Later in the year the Auckland board members are also planning a pedagogy day, so watch the airwaves for information about these two refreshers.

A word of encouragement to our researchers too. Six kiwis presented at the ANZARME conference in Melbourne in early June. In 2014, this research sharing will be in Queenstown October 3-5th. It is the most friendly conference and research body that I have ever had anything to do with. I hope you will consider being involved.

Nga mihi nui

Errol Moore
President

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

MENZA AGM
Friday 30 August 7.30pm
Staffroom
Dilworth Junior Campus
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The Educational Uses of YouTube

By Andrew Mercer

There are more videos uploaded to YouTube in 60 days than all the programming created by the three major US TV networks in 60 years. This immense collection of video content contains a wealth of educational material. In this article I will highlight some of the techniques I employ with my students and provide some guidance on how you can get started with YouTube in your music room.

YouTube is an Internet-based video sharing service. Established in 2005, this website provides a free and intuitive way for users to upload and share video content.

The amount of video content contained on YouTube is difficult to conceptualize. According to YouTube's own statistics, there are more videos uploaded to YouTube in 60 days than all the programming created by the three major US TV networks in 60 years. "Hundreds of millions of users from around the world are uploading hundreds of thousands of videos daily—over 24 hours of video are uploaded every minute" (YouTube.com, 2013). While a great deal of this content has little educational value some users are sharing content that offer great learning opportunities. There are numerous ways to take advantage of these opportunities. I will highlight some of the techniques I employ with my students and provide some guidance on how you can get started with YouTube in your music room.

On a Saturday morning recently my 9-year old daughter came to me with some pink yarn and a couple of knitting needles. "Dad, can you show me how to knit?" she asked.

"Sure I can." I had no idea how to knit, but I knew exactly how to find out. We opened the laptop on the kitchen counter and did a quick search in YouTube for "How to knit." 15 minutes later she was three rows into a new pink scarf. You can learn just about anything on YouTube.

A keen searcher can find high quality educational videos on virtually any topic. This allows me to use YouTube everyday in my music room. Whether it is video to help explore a core curriculum outcome or supplementary material for enrichment, the availability of high quality content is slowly changing the way many of us approach learning. "I'll look that up on YouTube later," is a comment often heard from my students as we touch on a musical topic in class. Students know that they have an intuitive resource for their self-directed learning.

While YouTube's vast body of content is impressive, not all topics are covered adequately - new videos need to be created and shared. I regularly create content to share on YouTube. Whether it is instructions for class projects, daily podcasts, tutorials on specific topics, or holiday greetings, I use YouTube whenever I can. I also supplement my usual instructional methods with YouTube content to accommodate the needs of diverse learning styles.

YouTube's most important task has been to create a straightforward way for novice users to share their own videos. The first step in sharing videos on YouTube is to create a free user account. This can be done by going to www.youtube.com and clicking 'Create Account'. Follow the simple instructions and you will be registered in minutes. On the top of every YouTube page there is the 'Upload' link. After clicking this link you will be guided through a very short process to upload your video. Once your video has been uploaded you can choose if you would like to make your video private or public for all to see.

To create a good quality video you will most likely need to do a little editing. If you use an Apple computer then you can use the software iMovie to edit your movies. If you are using a Windows-based computer you can use Window Movie Maker for your editing. You can search YouTube for hundreds of excellent iMovie and Movie Maker tutorial videos. The third editing option is in YouTube itself. Recently YouTube has offered a simple web browser-based video editor as part of its website. YouTube's online video editor is just one of many features offered by YouTube to make the sharing of videos as intuitive as possible.

'Embedding' is an invaluable YouTube feature for educators. This allows me to place a YouTube video directly into my own online content (school websites, blogs, wikis, etc.). By using the embed feature my students do not have to visit www.youtube.com. This alleviates many security concerns surrounding the use of YouTube in the classroom.

Another feature that I find very useful is 'playlist'. A playlist is a user-created collection of specific videos. In my YouTube account I create a playlist on a specific topic I will be teaching. As I find YouTube videos that are relevant to that topic I add the videos to the playlist. When I am done I embed the entire playlist into my course webpage for my students to view. This is a great way to provide students with multiple videos on a specific topic.

YouTube has proven to be an invaluable resource for me as both a teacher and a learner. Having access to this vast collection of content has changed the dynamic of the learning environment for me and my students. Without YouTube I wonder what my response would been to the question, "Dad, can you show me how to knit?"

Useful YouTube Links:
- Jan Lisiesski Documentary
  http://tinyurl.com/2b2fetm
- Alternate Notation Technique
  http://tinyurl.com/pd2ij
- Great Lake Swimmers Guitar Lesson
  http://tinyurl.com/28o563f
- Mix Master Mike Discussing Scratching
  http://tinyurl.com/5faodo
- Knitting for Beginners
  http://tinyurl.com/23wqak2

References:

Andrew Mercer has taught music in Newfoundland, Canada since 1994. In 2004 he joined the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation where he has pioneered the practice of teaching of high-school music via the Internet. His work has been featured in Canadian Music Educator, Popular Science, Wall Street Journal, CNN, etc. He has presented his work on web-based music education at numerous conferences including the 2008 ISME Conference, MTNA National Conference and the MENC.
This article was written by Judith Bell (Chisnallwood Intermediate) and Tim Carson (Dilworth School) and is based on an article written for Random Notes 2013.

**Mtec2013** was the third biennial Music Technology in Education Conference, held in Melbourne in April 2013. The conference provided opportunity for music educators to come together, to share ideas and learn about the latest developments in technology. While most of the delegates were Australian, there was a healthy representation from throughout NZ.

### Keynote speakers

There were three fantastic keynote presentations (mtec2013.info/keynotes) delivered by Scott Watson, James Humberstone and Barbara Freedman (pictured above) all of which discussed different aspects of composition.

- **Scott Watson** ([scottwatsontmusic.com](http://scottwatsontmusic.com)) suggested asking students to share themselves by making podcasts about their favourite music, and by following that with limiting students’ choices and sharing compelling examples you can actually release their creativity. His superb resources for music classes can be found at [watsontmusic.wikispaces.com/Links](http://watsontmusic.wikispaces.com/Links).
- **Barbara Freedman** ([musicedtech.com](http://musicedtech.com)) has the rallying call ‘Teach music, the technology will follow’. Her book, “Teaching Music Through Composition: A Curriculum Using Technology” is highly recommended, published by Oxford University Press. Her talk included the amusing ‘The profession of a sound engineer’ video clip which you can view at [http://t.co/BXr0vUeDo4](http://t.co/BXr0vUeDo4).
- **James Humberstone** described project-based learning and the necessary requirement for the teacher to do the project first! He generously shares his resources at [composerhome.com](http://composerhome.com).

### Some highlights

There were an extraordinary range of workshops that explored the practical ways in which a broad range of technology can be used in a learning environment – be it primary school, secondary school, the tertiary sector or the private music studio. There were a good 105 sessions to choose from and at least 61 presenters! A list of workshops can be found at [http://mtec2013.info/conference-program/](http://mtec2013.info/conference-program/).

‘The Cloud’ was one of the constant themes of the conference and Dr James Frankel showed a range of resources that are available with Noteflight.com, Charanga (online tuition), and Soundation.com to name but a few, as well as effectively using social media such as Twitter and Facebook to facilitate and promote students’ learning. It was helpful to have experienced experts in the field of sound systems, digital mixers and practical aspects of mixing explained (eg. Kevin Huxtible and Adrian Alexander). Katie Wardrobe gave creative and helpful workshops on topics such as using QR codes creatively, making a WordPress website, ideas for using Interactive white boards and film scoring. Other sessions covered topics such as screen casting (George Hess), classroom lessons resources and tips for using software such as Sibelius, Garageband and Musition iCloud. NZ’s Emma Featherstone presented on her successful classroom JamHubs rock programme.

Music Technology in Music Education 2013 from the rock to the cloud, it was all there.

The vocal band **Suade** performed for us at the conference dinner and gave a session on live-looping the following day. They gave a great performance combining classic barber-shop quartet with loops recorded on the spot. The conference ended with a performance by the “iPad Breakfast Band” made up of delegates playing their iPads led by Antony Hubmayer.

### MUST SEE websites from the conference

- Katie Wardrobe’s site is an amazing and diverse collection of resources [pinterest.com/katiewardrobe](http://pinterest.com/katiewardrobe) If you’re after some extra excitement in classroom note reading, there’s a link here to download STAFFWARS from themusicinteractive.com. It’s free and works well on either computer or interactive whiteboard.
- **Samuel Wright** is another tech-savvy and generous music educator with many resources, links and iBooks tips that can be found at [wrightstuffmusic.com](http://wrightstuffmusic.com)
- [noteflight.com](http://noteflight.com), (online music notation software), [soundation.com](http://soundation.com) (online recording and loops), & [quavermusic.com](http://quavermusic.com) (interactive music games, discovery and creating) are also worth checking out as great tools for the music classroom. They are free (unless you want to buy extra loops in Soundation) and users create a login.

Other conference highlights and resources can be found on the Twitter feed of the MENZA website ([menza.co.nz](http://menza.co.nz))
For most, music will be part of life. For some, music will affect life, but for one, music may actually save a life.

Teach the box.
(Students need to know the box to be able to work outside of it!)

Always do the project first

I always worry when my music classes are quiet — usually means that someone is plotting my downfall!

If you don’t know technology you can always ask a 10 year old…

Even Bach taught Year 9!
(He taught 13 year olds so that’s reassurance to all those composing teachers out there…)
When I was seventeen, I started taking voice lessons. From the age of eight I had been participating in choirs but realized I needed more individualised training in order to be accepted to a music school at University. In that first year of vocal training, I learned an incredible amount. I give full credit to my voice teacher for my acceptance into Butler University’s School of Music. However, the real growth came in my first year of University after I walked in to my first voice lab.

There were six of us, five girls and one boy. Each of us had incredibly different voices. I, with my choir boy tone and lack of vibrato, the lone male with his wonderfully bright and clear tenor voice, to another girl’s gorgeous smoky, Marilyn Monroe-type quality. Differences aside, we were there to become better singers. The idea of voice lab was simple: every week we would sing our pieces for one another and the voice teacher, who also provided us with personal lessons. There was something incredible about listening to my peers – not in a formal recital or concert but witnessing the process of their learning and perfecting their pieces. We experienced each other’s doubts, insecurities and bad voice days of which there were many. Our challenges included a plethora of missed notes, cracks and breaks and then to build their ear and ability to stay in tune.

But then something magical happened! We heard each other conquer our challenges. It was bearing witness to the unmistakable real improvements in my peers’ abilities that convinced me that I could also improve and grow my voice. In voice lab, when someone finally succeded, we were all cheering like sports fans! It could have been anything: singing a long phrase in one breath, hitting that B flat, or getting your Italian pronunciation right. Having my peers support me through my learning gave me the confidence to take risks and make mistakes, which is when my voice really started to grow.

Voice lab only lasted for my first year, but the experience made a huge impression on me. So much so, that I decided to recreate it with the senior music classes at Waiheke High School. The premise is simple: each week I take the singers in a class aside for 30 minutes. The goals are to learn and practice good vocal technique, create flexibility in the voice and, most importantly, build their confidence.

Vocal technique is at the core of improving as a singer. Breathing, vowel shape, diction and range are all at the top of the list. I am a choral director by trade, so a lot of the vocal techniques I use in my choir rehearsals translate to voice lab quite well. I even have my students sing in harmony every now and then to build their ear and ability to stay in tune.

Creating flexibility in the voice is about getting my students out of their comfort zone. The voice is an instrument and, like other instruments, there is more one way to use it. If they are going to have the vocal adaptability to sing pieces in different genres, they need to be able to use their voice in different ways. Many students are afraid to try out a different tone because they don’t want to sound bad or aren’t used to how their voice sounds when using it differently. Having their peers there to listen and give immediate feedback is a great way to build their trust in their own voice as well as give them the bravery to be more flexible.

Building confidence is the most important part of my voice lab. Teenagers are stereotypically self-conscious and singing in front of an audience can be a very daunting task. It’s not just that voice lab gets them singing in front of people every week but that the people they are singing for are also singers and they understand the challenges and imperfections of the instrument. They are there to support and encourage one another and observe the improvement first hand.

Of course, like any lesson, it does not always go as expected. My hope is that as my singers start to trust each other and in turn have more trust in themselves, they will eventually be singing without inhibition. Voice lab gave me the chance to see that everyone has their own voice and that improvement doesn’t look the same for every singer. It taught me that every voice is unique. It taught me that in order to be the best singer I could be, I had to abandon my desire to sound exactly like Idina Menzel. I had to get to know my own voice. In a society where we see singers constantly competing against one another to be the best, I want to give my students a chance to do it differently.

Sarah McNabb is Head of Music at Waiheke High School. She is the founder and conductor of Waiheke High School’s choral program. Sarah has a Bachelor of Music Education in choral and general music from Butler University.
The ukulele is a happiness machine. Its unique sound is synonymous with relaxation and good times. From Portugal to Hawaii, it has spread across the world and taken firm root in New Zealand, where a new generation of schoolchildren and a growing number of adults are strumming their way to enthusiastic mastery of this versatile, popular and portable instrument.

Nothing sounds better than students singing and nothing empowers them more than singing and playing. The key is to have songs they grow to love, songs that are not hard to play and are in good keys for their voices. The ukulele is excellent for this. F is a good key to start in because it’s an easy chord (with no horrible G lurking) and it’s in range of their voices. After taking uke groups for years I’ve condensed some of the points into the following headings. There are lots of great resources available or you may have your own songs or want to play tunes from the radio or old classic hits like OVER THE RAINBOW. The only thing that matters is regular sessions, lots of fun and a not too distant goal for performance (it doesn’t matter if it’s a lunchtime concert or NZ Idol)

**PLAYING THE UKE**

1. Make sure it’s in tune - G, C, E, A.
2. Hold it close at 45 degrees to your chest.
3. Start with four down strums on F and C7 (lightly with the back of the fingers).
4. Work on getting regular timing on strums and start playing along with tunes. e.g. That’s Aotearoa.
5. Practise a range of songs and memorise the chords.
6. Try different strums – down and up, calypso (down, down, up, up, down), reggae (on the off beat) and share with other uke players.
7. Try to develop a strong singing voice to go with your playing (or play with a friend who has one).
8. Join a uke group or attend uke festivals e.g. Kati-Kati, Coromandel, Hibiscus Coast, Dunedin, Christchurch, Hawkes Bay, Central Nth Island, Rotorua or New Zealand (google them).
9. Take the uke everywhere with you (it's fun in a car, at a bach or at a party)
10. Look for new songs to play or old ones you can work out.
12. Record them and release a CD or an e-book
13. Try a different sort of uke (Tahitian 8 string, resonator, 4x2 string, drop G tuning or variation of, banjo-uke, taro-patch, electric, fluke etc…). Buy a tuner.
14. Go for a big International Festival e.g. Hawaiaan at Kapiolani Park in Honolulu.
15. Get some uke T-shirts or ukulele shirts to annoy those heavy metal freaks.
16. Start your own festival or local workshop sessions

**STARTING A GROUP**

- Ensure all ukes are perfectly tuned - G, C, E, A.
- Have a starter song (F and C7 are good chord to start with), seating and display ready (whiteboard or O.H.P.)
- Remind group how to hold and strum the uke.
- Go over the chords for the song - F and C7.
- Mention the chords are very easy, this gives everyone a chance to sing as well (vital).
- Practise the first verse several times (constant positive reinforcement).
- Shake hands out from the wrists (finger aerobics - tell them it gets easier).
- Work through the whole song (tell them how good it sounds).
- Ask them if there’s any questions or problems.
- Do the same with the next song
Mr Ukulele, Kevin Fogarty is a schoolteacher and musician who has been playing the ukulele since he was eight. In 2007 he launched the New Zealand Ukulele Festival, which has since become an annual event involving hundreds of schools and more than 2000 students. In November 2009, the festival achieved a world record when 961 pupils strummed the festival theme song "Kiwi Ukulele." He is serving as patron of the New Zealand Ukulele Trust, which stages the national ukulele festival; trains ukulele teachers; funds the provision of ukuleles to schools; hosts ukulele workshops; and runs songwriting and performing competitions. Kevin has written a range of popular ukulele resources.

Keep strumming, smiling, writing or searching for new songs. Try writing with your group (you’ll be surprised at their ideas) and use programmes like Mixcraft 6 for backing tracks.

PRACTISE!

- The sessions need to be at least weekly for a start.
- If the members can commit to a couple of practices at home it’s a real help.
- If they can have their own uke and folder it’s also a help.
- Ask them to really try to sing out as soon as possible.
- A funky name for your group (chosen by the group) gives a feeling of identity (we’re the MOOLUKEZ)
- Look for opportunities to play live as soon as possible (functions, assemblies, parties etc…).

- Get them to smile at the audience and involve them e.g. sing-a-long and actions.
- Where possible include food.
- Give them a goal or two e.g. we’re playing in November at the NZ Uke Festival.
- Remember – if you make it a fun, small group activity like UKEQUEST where they practise and perform a sing-a-long song like I’M YOURS, HEY SOUL SISTER, THREE LITTLE BIRDS or PAVLOVA they’ll be back! (don’t make it hard work).
- Ask them to really try to sing out as soon as possible.
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- Remember – if you make it a fun, small group activity like UKEQUEST where they practise and perform a sing-a-long song like I’M YOURS, HEY SOUL SISTER, THREE LITTLE BIRDS or PAVLOVA they’ll be back! (don’t make it hard work).

- Keep strumming, smiling, writing or searching for new songs. Try writing with your group (you’ll be surprised at their ideas) and use programmes like Mixcraft 6 for backing tracks.
Song Writing at Tertiary Level

By Dr Graeme Downes

I’ve penned this article at the request of Errol Moore, who kindly sent some copies of Sound Arts as a guide to the type of things routinely discussed therein. By sheer coincidence I opened a sample issue to an article on song writing by Jane Egan, and an excellent article it is too (volume 7, No 2, November 2011, 28-9). Song writing at tertiary level begins with many of the same steps—what constitutes an idea for a song in the first place and what types of language do we need to use (is it poetry or everyday speech we are writing, or perhaps both?). Our first year course is a mixture of nuts and bolts basics of the sort Ms Egan writes of, but is interlaced with some more difficult questions that one would expect at tertiary level, such as, “why has popular song (songs over millennia in fact) tended to atrophy into a handful of forms? What is the relationship between form and content? We teach cult questions that one would expect at tertiary level, such as, “why and bolts basics of the sort Ms Egan writes of, but is interlaced with some more di

At second year we try to stretch students beyond their comfort zone. We call this paper Commercial Composition because we tend to get the students to respond to a series of briefs. This is to underscore that all styles tend towards limitation, that to write in style x means there are scale types/modes, chords, and indeed tempos that a writer is not at liberty to use. Cross-over pop will have different taboos to Death Metal and vice versa. Part of our role is to generally extend students’ technical knowledge of the tonal system and compositional technique generally so they can respond to the widest range of briefs put before them. It is a fact of life in the world, and especially in a country like New Zealand with its small population, that musicians generally have to maximise their revenue streams beyond song writing to make ends meet. I encourage students to fall in love with the tonal system, to know all the chords in all the keys and chromatic variants even if their personal style has no use for many of them. This is part of our graduate profile, our contract with society, that a music graduate should be able to perform a certain number of tasks within music even if their life circumstances mean they are never called on to do so.

At third year “classical” composers and “songwriters” come together for half the paper. This recognises the fact that by this time both streams should be technically competent enough to set up a dialogue and to some extent challenge one another aesthetically and also that both streams should be equipped to do certain tasks (compose film music for example). The other half of the course students split off into their specialisations. I work with the songwriters and as such have to deal with a wide range of stylistic agendas the students want to pursue. The issues at this level, whether writing a high school musical or a Death Metal concept album, tend to be around big-picture issues of plot development, characterisation and overall coherence. Of course some students opt for a more heterogeneous group of songs with no particular theme, which is fine of course. In each case though we are applying intense critical faculties built up over the first two years. There are so many ways to harm a potentially good song at every stage of its production, the writing and then the recording (we have to be constantly mindful that writing a song always presupposes a performance of it). Much of tertiary training is aimed at diagnosis. Students will often turn up to a workshop with a song they are not particularly enthused about because it they feel it is substandard. The devil is in the detail and almost any musical parameter can conspire against the creative intent. Is the song insufficient in length and gravity for its subject matter? Does it overextend itself given the simplicity of its ideas? Is there a compelling marriage between its poetic idea and musical materials? Does a protest song bring enough evidence to convict or is it merely whining about something?

The list is endless in terms of words, music and other technical issues of tempo, range, key etc. that can fail to marry up. As songwriters we are prone to the elation of completion, of achieving a song in words, music and form that is performable. Young bands starting their live performance career with original material are under pressure in fact to build a set. Imperfections can easily go unobserved in the live environment due to all the distraction of lights, movement, volume and the audience itself. Once those distractions are eliminated (on a recording) the unnoticed flaws will be revealed, or at least the ratio of timeless classics to songs mouldering in obscurity would tend to suggest. The fact of the matter is that a singer/songwriter like Elton John can fill a stadium in Dunedin singing songs that charted 40 years ago. That says a lot about his musical talent and his song craft. He and others like him represent a select minority of all those who have laboured in the Tower of Song (to borrow from Leonard Cohen). You may not like his music, or the music of many other successful artists across various styles, but as a songwriter, you ignore them at your peril. Nobody has a thorough working knowledge of all successful artists—we select those that are relevant to our endeavours of course—but our creativity is based on conscious or subconscious analysis. Being a tertiary institution we expect that analysis be a conscious activity and the song writing papers and other core theory papers are designed to give students that ability.

Song writing is a multi-discipline activity. We are thinkers (philosophy), poets (literature), composers (any music, popular or classical, is worthy of study), arrangers and producers (music technologists). As such a university, with the breadth of offerings it has in these diverse areas, is the perfect place to study it.

Dr Graeme Downes is HoD at the Department of Music at the University of Otago. He has been the singer-song writer in the rock band the Verlaines since the early 80’s. He completed his PhD on Gustav Mahler in 1993. He lectures on song writing, music theory and analysis.
Menza Professional Development Day

Trevor Morley with old technology presentation at MENZA Professional Development Day in Wellington

Teachers enjoying learning from Jane Egan at MENZA Professional Development Day in Hawkes Bay

Jamming at MENZA Professional Development Day in Wellington

MENZA Professional Development Day in Christchurch

Jane Egan at MENZA Professional Development Day in Hawkes Bay

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Playing with Singing

By Helen Willberg

Early experiences of enjoyable music-making are so important to establish confident in-tune singing. Our early childhood and junior classrooms can be ‘song-nests’ establishing singing as something we do and being musical as something we feel, with the simple expedient of singing together as often as possible. The following paragraphs come from two experienced kindergarten teachers, who have a passion for introducing music into the programme. Anne Prichard has begun teaching in a new kindergarten, and shares some of her feelings about the situation she has entered – with hints of future action to promote musical development, while Wendy Walker has been at her kindergarten for two years now.

Anne: Playing with singing.
Lately I have been having fun with singing by encouraging children to make up their own songs. I strum along on my guitar or start a groove with an instrument …and I say to a child ‘go ahead … let’s hear your song … just make it up’ …and I encourage them with a few starter lyrics and big smiles of encouragement … and sometimes they have an ukulele and we’re away … sitting on the grass under the tree making up songs. Most kids when given ‘permission’ to do this have jumped right in. We jam their song over and over … you know how kids LOVE repetition and then I have been recording it on an iphone and replaying it straight back to them. Their face lights up and they simply LOVE hearing it played back to them. (I don’t even bother with camera videoing anymore … it’s not instant enough). The songs are really good too! Because I’m playing along with my guitar or drum I do form some of it but I am taking my cue from them. I’ve also discovered that if I play the C chord then anything they play on the ukulele sounds good. This also gives the jamming a tuneful feel. Very important! No one wants to listen to discord! And I am in the process of hiding the triangles! (It’s a new job so easy does it) I have never been to a gig where a musician is playing triangles. Horrible things! Egg shakers YES! Rakau YES! African drums using hands YES! Wooden Xylophones YES! Metal Glocks Oh NO!!! The instruments that accompany the singing jam are equally important. This mode of creating is fun and instant and ALL kids can sing and create. They sometimes just need ‘permission’ and encouragement and a little bit of crazy from their teacher. Go ahead. Be brave! They’ll love you for it.

Anne Prichard
Kindergarten Teacher
Wellington Kindergarten Association

Wendy Walker has been at her kindergarten for two years now.
Wendy: As regards to my thoughts on singing and what works well, I think kaiako need to have a repertoire of songs so that occasions throughout the day can be celebrated with a song— for example, children challenging themselves to walk along a narrow beam prompts me to sing suitable words to the tune of One Little Elephant Balancing: "eg: One clever (Rosie) balancing, step by step on the balance beam." This happens everywhere. A child looks through a coloured see-through window of a house they have made for a teddy, and the song "I look through my window." comes out of my mouth.

We had a powercut recently that lasted for several hours, so it was neat to have no stereo, and be able to sing, play instruments, and make up games on the whariki, with no thought of needing to play a CD or ipod.

Repetition is, as we know, the key to enabling the tamariki to know songs and waiata really well. We have a waiata that proceeds the karakia each day, and this is the song that we overhear the tamariki singing to themselves first. Recently tamariki have been singing a familiar song to their parents at home, and then excitedly telling us and reciting it the next day. This is then celebrated later in front of the group, as a solo if the child is confident, or with their friends if they need support.

We have found a great way to get the 4 year old boys on board is to empower them to show off in front of the group, just as you mentioned about the boys at your last workshop (a finding from research that boys benefit from opportunities to legitimately show off, release energy and win praise). The pride on their faces when they stand in front of their peers, and start the echo song, for the group to follow is wonderful. Particularly successful has been E Toru Nga Mea.

Having fathers and male role models come into the centre to sing with the group is also a great way to affirm and 'sell' singing for the tama, especially if they play an instrument too. It need only be simple tunes like ABCD and Twinkle, but the fact that it is affirmed by All Black-looking guys (like in our community) is such an affirming celebration of music and cultural ethnicity.

We have some very in-tune tamariki, who have been with us almost two years, every day, six hours a day. If they hear the same songs regularly, sung in the same key (this is where the guitar/ukulele are invaluable), they remember that key, and always sing in tune, in that key. Writing this reminds me of the need to be mindful of using the most appropriate key to model singing when working with young children. It is so disheartening to hear a kaiako start a song in a pitch way too low for young voices, and hear the tamariki literally stop in their tracks, as they have no voice to model those low chest voice tones. This is something that kaiako are reluctant to work on, as they have become used to singing low. Often they say "I can't sing high" when in fact it is like most things, it requires practice. Encouraging the tamariki to make siren sounds and experiment with high and low sounds might be helpful for kaiako too, so they can learn to be confident with their head voice, and be brave enough to raise the pitch they choose to start a song with.

I am convinced that facial expressions and eye contact between kaiako and the group really help to bring a song or finger-play alive. If you want to sell it to the group, you have to know it well, love singing it, and show this in your body language. Fun actions help hugely and help the kids to learn the song, especially for our visual and kinesthetic akonga.

Wendy Walker,
Kindergarten teacher
Hutt Kindergarten Association
Working with the Uncertain Singer

By Nikki Berry

My work over the past 17 years with people who think they can’t sing and those labelled ‘tone deaf’ has been based on a hypothesis that everyone is inherently musical, that ‘talent’ is possibly completely ruled by ‘nurture’ rather than ‘nature’. This hypothesis has driven me to find a way to assist every emerging singer to gain the skills that will allow them to sing within the boundaries of the Western European system of organised sound. I have not yet had the opportunity to meet someone with actual ‘tone deafness’, a neurological condition that affects the person’s ability to hear changes in pitch. I have worked with people with various levels of actual deafness, and these people have all made progress so far. I have worked with dozens of people who incorrectly claimed to be ‘tone deaf’.

I think having this hypothesis as my spring board has been absolutely vital to the success of the work. The idea of ‘talent’ is very firmly embedded in our society, and it is difficult to resist it. I can’t say that I always have 100% faith in every student at every moment, but I manage to hide my doubts enough that their own faith and drive has carried them through and I am sometimes still surprised by the gains that people make.

Joseph Jordania, an evolutionary ethnomusicologist originally from Georgia, and now based in Melbourne, published a fascinating book called “Why People Sing” that includes a brief description of polyphonic traditions around the world. He has identified that regions with very strong and complex polyphonic traditions are usually those with no role for ‘professional’ musicians. One example I was particularly struck by was the Baka (Pygmy) tribes of East Africa. “Polyphony is based on the principles of ostinato and contrapuntal polyphony, where each singer sings a short repetitive phrase over and over again. There are no professional musicians among the Pygmys. Instead, all of them are expected to perform traditional polyphonic songs. Their musicality and ability to sing naturally in parts is quite astounding.” (Jordania 2011, pg 21)

I believe the most important thing is to create an atmosphere of playful exploration where success is often guaranteed and it’s also safe to make mistakes or even ‘fail’. Many people feel very self conscious about their singing and are easily discouraged. Sometimes people bring strong feelings of shame and past humiliation with them that are easily triggered by the mere fact of being in a group. When they experience these similarities alongside the contradiction of a very kind environment, they can begin a spontaneous healing experience, and find themselves ‘crying’ for ‘no reason’. I always encourage this, and am explicit about the difficulties our society has with crying. Though many people are very uncomfortable with ‘crying in public’ most people will stay and allow the process if they feel sufficiently supported. People in my groups know that all laughter, tears, shaking, sweating and yawns are welcome and useful.

Some people have not yet developed an understanding or internalisation of many concepts we who have been raised ‘musical’ take for granted. Children will let you know that they don’t understand a concept, but many adults will pretend that they understand when they don’t. (Often they aren’t even conscious of this pretence. It’s become such a survival habit).

I am explicit about the environment I wish to set. The leader has a huge impact on setting the tone for a group. I define the desired atmosphere and the competent singers generally enjoy helping those who struggle. I have singers now who have become the leaders of their sections, who originally had great difficulties with pitch and rhythm. It is important to realise that roles in a choir are fluid. Uncertain singers will and can learn all the skills they need to be fully functioning members of the choir. This development work won’t all happen in choir. The singers I speak of who started with major difficulties and have become very strong singers have attended musicianship classes, had singing lessons, attended vocal development courses and participated in lots of choir singing.

There is something to be said for sometimes ignoring a problem and waiting for it to go away. Personally, I think it’s important to give people accurate feedback if they are not singing in tune, but I would NEVER ask a singer to leave the choir until they are pitching accurately. Occasionally an uncertain singer will have a habit of singing very loud, (using a speech quality tone) and singing so loud that they can’t hear the correct note being sung around them. I will ask those singers to stop singing and listen and then try again. I will talk to people afterwards about this habit. Those singers often benefit from singing falsetto. I will often ask those singers to practice hearing the note in their heads before they sing. Even hearing a whole phrase, pretending to sing the first time and joining in the second time. Developing this aural awareness is an important skill for all of us.

Working with ‘uncertain’ singers can be frustrating. It’s important to ‘debrief’ sometimes away from the choir so that ones frustration doesn’t show.

Here’s a list of reminders, concepts and hopefully useful tips for working with uncertain singers.

- Pitch: Fundamental frequency, timbre and tone. Important to identify and explore these concepts.
- Unison: Singers need to feel the vibration of singing a unison or octave, full of even harmonics and feel the difference when close (minor second and less) harmonics create very strong ‘beat frequencies’ and an abundance of odd harmonics.
- Sirening: Singers need to learn to siren to correct note.
- Register: Most singers tend to copy ‘effort’ rather than actual frequency.
- Women Leading Men: sing an octave higher. Get another man to sing the note for the uncertain singer to siren up to.
- Limited range. Many uncertain singers are locked in speech quality. It can be helpful to get singers singing in falsetto to get used to widening their range.
- Need exercises that free the upper voice. Wheel! Copy cat noises. Speaking high and low. Animal noises. Use different consonants to begin sound. Find optimal...
Nikki Berry is passionate about world music, community building and holistic education. She believes that anyone can sing and has championed many a singer on their journey to ‘reclaim their voice’.

vowels for producing easy sounds. Falsetto useful for people locked in speech quality. Get familiar with the larynx.

- Locate vocal folds. Feel larynx travel up and down. Be aware that lyrics will often put people back into their ‘default setting’.

- Every uncertain singer has an optimum range where they can most easily accurately pitch. Useful to start from there. Good to provide opportunities to sing songs that are easily pitched. Limited range songs, for instance, Infinite Sun, We all come from the Goddess.

(Sorry, we didn’t get time to do these.)

- Over effort: some people need to sing quieter.

- Under effort: some people need to anchor. Running can be helpful. Learning to Belt gives singers more options, lots more volume. First need to learn about twang. (Nya Nya – strong vibrant sound)

- Hear it first, then sing. Some people haven’t yet learnt to listen and then sing. They are singing too loud to hear the notes being sung around them. Get them to stop and listen. Get them to pretend to sing and then join in.

- Create opportunities where no one can fail. Right brain call and response. Exercises when any harmony is acceptable. Exercises where people get to make up their own tunes. Walking and toning, finding group with same note.

- Create opportunities for many people to ‘fail’. Rhythm games, coordination games.

Be explicit. Tell people the appropriate response to have to ‘failure’ is to laugh and keep trying. Adults (and older children) have often not had much space to make mistakes.

- Given a safe environment, children will progress very rapidly. Assessment for children should always be informal and hidden within group activities. (Toning walk past me for instance) Or set it up to work with a child on his or her own for short periods. Need to create an environment that is different enough to not constantly remind them of the past difficulties. Fun, spontaneous, creative, cooperative.

- Say it for what it is – and remind about what it isn’t. “I said the note was incorrect, not that you are a horrible person.” (With plenty of humour) I remind people they are safe in similar ways. “Wow, look, we’ve all sung solo and nobody died!” Can’t be sarcastic though. Tone is everything! Love love and more love!

- Reassurance is important. People need to be reminded that they can learn this. Society reinforces the myth that singing is something people are born doing.

- Touch, location of guiding voice. (I can sing in someone’s ear and they ‘come right’ but that doesn’t necessarily work when other choir members try to help. Need to be very assertive in a kind, loving way.)

- Visual cues. Some people find graphic representations very helpful. Need to be mindful of how this also ‘triggers’ past learning though. Can be too Left Brain. Kodaly system useful for this.

- Arranging group from lowest to highest notes as a game without talking.

- I use a range of tools – chime bars, my shruuti box, also often work with another musician who provides accompaniment to aid improvisation.

- Natural Minor mode is useful for beginner singers to improvise on

- Some uncertain singers sing along perfectly a fifth above desired note.

References/Bibliography


Frankie Armstrong – Wonderful voice leader and initiator of the Natural Voice Practitioners Network in the U.K. www.naturalvoice.net

Orff-Schulwerk – A philosophical and pedagogical approach to music education that will provide lots of resources for people to learn to effectively work with groups in a creative way.

Re-Evaluation Co Counselling - A worldwide organisation with a theory and practise of human behaviour that has assisted my insight into how to effectively support people through their emotional journey to become confident singers. See www.rc.org for more information.

Nikki Berry is passionate about world music, community building and holistic education. She believes that anyone can sing and has championed many a singer on their journey to ‘reclaim their voice’.
Cultivating Language through Song

By Robyn Trinick

As numeracy and language literacies continue to dominate primary school programmes, the value of regular classroom singing may well be overlooked. Song is considered to be a fundamental form of expression that is as natural as speaking, a claim that is well supported by literature in the field. While the enjoyment factor and musical value of singing are well recognised, there are many other benefits that may be overlooked. This article explores some ideas and literature about the potential of song to provide a meaningful and engaging context for language learning.

Introduction

Music in education serves many purposes - first and foremost for its own sake, but also as a springboard for other learning, or as an integral part of the daily learning environment. These functions are complementary, and by acknowledging each of them, the benefits may become clearer.

The relationship between music and language has stimulated considerable interest and debate from a wide range of educators and scientists. Music’s contribution to children’s learning and language development has been recognised by music and speech language therapists, and by teachers of second languages, for many years. The considerable success of this work is well researched (Bolton, 2008), and could lead other educators to consider whether increased exposure to music on a regular basis could play an equally important role in the fostering of language learning for all children.

Both music and language involve the processing of complex and meaningful sound sequences, naturally inviting comparison (Patel, 2008). While research indicates that there are natural connections between music and language, care should be taken to avoid superficiality by failing to acknowledge the integrity of each of the respective fields. When music and language work together well, a new collaborative learning environment is generated, that may be considered much more than a sum of its parts.

The value of song for language learning

The “pervasive and profound” relationship between music and language is particularly evident in song (Stansell, 2005, p. 2). Regular singing has the potential to transform classrooms into positive learning environments, and to provide bases for the language development of children. The late Hirini Melbourne saw children as “ideal carriers of the seeds of language” and he believed that the seeds could best be cultivated through song (Ministry of Education, 2004, p.13).

A song is a poem or a story set to music, with the added bonus of tune and rhythm. While this may be obvious to many, there appears to be a reluctance to incorporate singing into the language programme in many primary classrooms. This is unfortunate, when song could be viewed as ‘value added language’ or, as Kenney (2004) suggests, “language intensified” (p. 57).

Developing language skills through song

There is a wealth of literature that explores music’s contribution to specific aspects of language learning, particularly in the areas of speaking, listening, reading and vocabulary development. In the following section, some key points relating to these areas of language learning are identified.

Words may be articulated through speech or through song. Everyday speech can be musical in character, and toddlers and babies do not distinguish between the two, as they explore vocal sounds and experiment with their voices. Children are able to develop fluency and expressiveness in speech far easier through song than through speech (Macias, 2008). There is also growing interest in the therapeutic effects of singing on speech. For example, some stroke victims who are unable to speak can sing word-perfectly (Sacks, 2007), and some people who have speech impediments are able to sing words confidently and fluently. This has been attributed to the natural rhythms of speech, regulated breathing and vocal intensity and control (Lems, 2001; O’Herron, 2006).

All music experiences involve listening, an important consideration for teachers in an educational world where the over-use of visual images has created a dependence on pictures and symbols (Ohman-Rodriguez, 2004). Music provides an ideal context for developing active listening skills, where children interpret what they hear in a familiar medium, visualising ideas and making personal responses. These connections are attributed to heightened listening skills, enabling the discerning listener to recall and to listen in new ways to new sounds, giving them a wide range of pitches, volumes and subtleties to draw upon when working with language (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Through song, children hear the natural rhythms and stresses of spoken languages, in a repetitive and appealing context.

Song also provides an ideal context for the development of phonological awareness and understanding of text, two key aspects of reading. Phonological awareness is to do with the sound of language – rhythm, pitch, inflection, tone colour and tempo, features that also relate to musical sounds (Pitcairn, 2006). Song also offers children opportunities to decode and interpret the words, just as they do in reading, but in a context that is “much more than a boring set of words” (Lowe, 2002, p. 22).

Children are exposed to a rich range of vocabulary through song, in familiar and engaging contexts. Marshall (1999) even claims that song lyrics are unrivalled in terms of vocabulary exposure, when compared to other written texts. Songs have features that support language acquisition such as short high frequency words, use of personal pronouns, conversational language, appropriate pace and repetition. Young children’s books and readers are often designed around musical features such as rhythm, rhyme, repetition and refrain.

Conclusion

Teachers should not have to rationalise the inclusion of singing in the classroom - the sheer joy of singing should be justification enough. The appeal of song, which may be associated with high frequency and familiar words and emotional content, strongly suggests that it would be beneficial to build on children’s music interests while enhancing language development. However, it seems that ‘fun factor’ associated with singing, which often occurs in a relaxed environment, creates a degree of circumspection about its value.
Despite the ever-increasing body of literature supporting the value of song as a language-learning tool, research seemingly has little impact on classroom practice. Further literature and research, while valuable for those who are interested, is unlikely to change the mind-set of teachers who lack confidence with singing, or who simply don’t perceive that there is any value to be gained from it. Reasons for not singing, although often well-founded, become excuses, and it is the children who are missing out on song, considered to be “the most powerful, personal, pleasurable, and above all, permanent tool in our pedagogical arsenal to establish an educational concept” (Balkin, 2009, p. 1).

References


Robyn Trinick (PGDipEd; L TCL; AdvDipTchg) has worked in the field of tertiary music education for over twenty years. During this period, she has been involved with a of research projects including the recently completed evaluation of the Sistema Aotearoa programme. She continues to have considerable contact with schools and community members, particularly through the Auckland Primary Principals Association music festivals. Robyn is particularly interested in exploring connections between music and language, in both primary and early childhood context.
The Singing Games

By Mary Cornish

In which I wax lyrical about a stellar performance at the Big Sing and fantasize about the possibility of a singing culture embedded in every school across the nation...

My favourite winter event on the school music calendar has to be the Big Sing Gala Concert. The sight of 500 multicultural teenagers high on singing is a wonderful thing. Up here in Auckland the bones of our beloved Town Hall rattle and shake in the throws of their feverous adolescent rendering of God Defend New Zealand. The odd Mexican wave ripples through the bleaches as they wait on high alert for the show to begin.

The choirs offer abundant encouragement to their rivals yet they are clearly ambitious for their own success. A huge range of music is presented and the students deliver it all with conviction - some more successfully than others but they are there - engaging in music, having a go. As a regular backstage herder of bodies I have been privileged to witness the wonderful camaraderie between students, conductors and accompanists as they all psyche themselves up for their moment on stage.

There was an abundance of fine singing this year, but it was Dilworth College that made the biggest impact on me. These young men performed with dignity, humility and sensitivity. There was no awkwardness in their movements or strain in their voices. The singing wasn’t a showcase of cleverness. It was one of those rare and unforgettable moments of live performance that made a deep and lasting connection. Unsurprisingly they took out the “Performance Prize” which is given to the choir that “delights, impresses and captivates the audience”.

I have been thinking about the forces that could possibly have contributed to their success. You don’t arrive at this within a few months of rehearsals. Whilst the choir had the benefit of a skilled choral director with whom they had an obvious rapport, the best resources don’t necessarily translate to a performance of such integrity.

I subsequently discovered that four boys from Dilworth made it into the very competitive National Secondary Schools Choir – an unusually high representation from a single school. The majority of these boys would have been singing since they attended the Dilworth’s contributing school from Year 7 where singing is embedded in school life, seamlessly transitioning to the senior school where this is also the case. I suspect Dilworth boys don’t stop singing. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if more of our teenagers felt as comfortable to be able to collectively express emotion, connect and create beauty through song? As guardians of music education we could play our part by championing school singing at all levels.

Imagine if every school student in NZ had a positive experience of singing on a weekly basis (or more?) for the thirteen years they attend school! At secondary level, too often singing becomes relegated to the choir who get rolled out on demand to imprint those important school milestones with music and the chance is lost for the rest of the students to collectively experience the mood enhancing endorphins singing produces and actively participate in the proceedings. School singing is not dependent on a well-resourced music department or specialist teachers. A school-wide commitment to singing would ensure the next generation would head into adulthood with a catalogue of songs to give them confidence to sing at the inevitable times of collective grief and celebration that lie ahead because this is what the human spirit is compelled to do. When the Same-Sex Marriage Bill was passed our parliament made international headlines with a spontaneous rendition of Pokarekare Ana.

I am not advocating a dreary plod through the school hymn or revisiting the back catalogue of Broadcast to Schools. Whole school singing needs to be dynamic and not something that students and staff come to dread! A range of ripper songs to serve different purposes, a confident leader (it could be a talented pupil, prefects or another staff member with the chops), a strong live or recorded accompaniment to get the vibe going quickly, the right key and lyrics worth singing would be the basics to get right. Casual reminders about posture and breathing and getting them to sing softly occasionally would be good too.
So fellow guardians of music education, let's not let a school gathering go by without sneaking in a song or two. After all, it only takes three minutes and three minutes singing will be a lot more beneficial to your school than listening to you or someone else on the staff prattle on about … well anything really.

The 7 Weekly Habits of Highly Effective School Singing

1. Choose the right songs and teach the catchy repetitive chorus first so gratification is quick. Plan a repertoire that includes a waiata, a Pasifika song, an African song (cool rhythms) and an epic/uplifting song that can raise the rafters other than the school song. They will get pretty sick of the school song by the time they get to Year 13 and lets face it, school songs are not known for their catchy melodies and killer lyrics. Your epic song needs gravitas. It doesn't have to be classical but it won't hurt them to learn a classical song and they will like it if it is good because good tunes are perennial. A contemplative ballad is useful for certain occasions (e.g. the Cohen/Buckley Hallelujah – I know, done to death but it seems to appeal to the teen psyche…). A ripping partner song allows them to experience the satisfaction of singing in three or four parts instantly, an iconic NZ pop song will win approval from parents and a “Top 40” hit will engage even the most cynical student. Ask students for song ideas – there will be songs you haven't heard of because you probably have your dial on the concert programme – but be open to their suggestions.

2. Use confidant student/staff accompanists where possible but there is no shame in using a quality backing track pumped through the hall sound system.

3. Be very picky about choosing a song in the right key especially at younger levels. It is great we can go to I tunes and get karaoke backing tracks now but the keys are often not suitable. Get the key right and the song sings itself. More often than not the karaoke versions are too low especially for young treble voices. Make sure you find the time to censor for inappropriate lyrics all the way through the song – don’t just skim the first verse and chorus. The bridge might have a nasty surprise that you don’t want to notice for the first time when it is being projected on the big screen in the hall. Trust me, I’ve been there.

4. If using a recorded vocal model to teach the song, make sure the sound is one you are happy for them to replicate and in the register you want the students to sing in. If treble voices hear a male voice singing a melody in a tenor register they will copy it. Beware of a vocal model taking the chest voice precariously high. It can cause damage and sound terrible. Not many people can do this well and it requires careful handling.

5. Have someone with confidence lead the singing session. Confident leading is far more important that having the best voice on the block. Your first priority is to get the buy in - this is not your elite choir - it is singing for the masses!

6. Expect that the staff to sing too. They probably won't but it won't hurt to try and get the message across that singing has to be a whole school commitment if it is to become embedded in your school's culture.

7. Encourage good posture and breathing and raised soft palates. Casually remind them about straight backs, core muscles, chests open, weight balanced evenly. If they hear it enough it will eventually sink in and good posture and breathing will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Mary Cornish teaches music at Bayfield School and St Mary’s College. She is a choral director for Auckland’s APPA Music Festival and has presented workshops for MENZA, ONZA and the NZCF. Mary has worked professionally as a singer and producer in between teaching music at all levels. She is the chair of the New Zealand Ukulele Trust, a charity dedicated to ensuring all NZ children get the chance to learn an instrument.
Hook, Line and Sing-A-Long at East Tamaki

Hook, Line and Sing-A-Long at St Mary's

Hook, Line and Sing-A-Long at Chisnallwood Intermediate

Hook, Line and Sing-A-Long at East Tamaki
St Pius Girls at Music Month launch 1 May

Maria Winder leads Paradise at East Tamaki

Waimarie Smith launches her song in Central Auckland

Hook, Line and Sing-A-Long – Tonga at Taita College

Stitch of New Zealand Music Month 1 May

Hook, Line and Sing-A-Long – Tonga at Taita College
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