

Kia ora koutou katoa,

As we gather once again through the pages of Tune Me In, I'm reminded of this beautiful whakataukī — He muka nō te taura whiri kotahi. Each of us is a strand in the cord of MENZA, and it is by weaving our skills, experiences, and passions together that we stay strong, even in unsettled times. The past year has tested the resilience of our sector, yet it has also reminded us of the deep value of connection — between teachers, organisations, ākonga, and communities across Aotearoa.

We recently came together at Massey University for a vibrant and successful MENZA Conference, a highlight in our calendar. The energy of being kanohi ki te kanohi again was palpable — the laughter, the music, and the exchange of ideas rekindled that sense of collective purpose we value.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the keynote speakers, Peter O'Connor and Suzy Cato, whose words reminded us of the essential role of the Music and the arts in fostering imagination, empathy, and community. We also extend our sincere gratitude to our sponsors and supporters, whose aroha and generosity made the event possible and ensured that our creative mahi could flourish.

In the months since, some of our members have continued the important work of contributing to curriculum refresh discussions, navigating uncertainty with professionalism and dedication. We are still waiting to see the full picture of what the new curriculum will look like, but what remains clear is the unwavering commitment of music educators to advocate for the arts. In a time when public discourse often turns its focus toward STEM, our community continues to champion the holistic development of the learner through the creative power of music.

A special congratulations is due as we celebrate the launch of MENZA's very first podcast, created and recorded in Tāmaki Makaurau under the guidance of our magazine editor and board member, Jessica Brown. This exciting new initiative creates another platform to share stories, celebrate success, and deepen the professional conversations that enrich our practice.

Looking ahead, we are excited to begin the year with a wānanga in Ōtautahi (Christchurch), a space to connect, reflect, and learn together, and to explore the possibilities of a combined Arts conference in the near future. These opportunities remind us that when we come together — weaving our strands into one strong cord — our collective impact reaches far beyond the classroom.

With the recent release of the draft Music Curriculum, many in our community are taking time to read, reflect, and consider what this means for our teaching and for the future of music education in Aotearoa. We acknowledge that there are mixed feelings and some understandable concerns about clarity, implementation, lack of a Te Ao Māori lens and representation of our diverse practices. We acknowledge the mahi of many of our colleagues across the motu, whose expertise and dedication have contributed to the different iterations of the draft and ensured that the voices of kaiako and ākonga were put forward. MENZA encourages all members to continue engaging in this important kōrero: please take the opportunity to read the draft, share your reflections through our MENZA channels, attend hui where possible, and complete the official feedback form. Your voices, experiences, and insights are essential in shaping a curriculum that truly reflects the heart of music education in Aotearoa.

To every member and kaiako who continues to share their knowledge and heart: thank you. Your mahi sustains this woven cord we call MENZA. Together, we will continue to create, connect, and advocate for the power of music in Aotearoa. Ngā manaakitanga

Kat Daniela Chairperson

