

MUSIC EDUCATION ENQUIRY SUBMISSION 31ST JANUARY 2013

We've all heard about the student who only stayed at school because of their involvement with the instrumental music program.

But did you hear about the student who couldn't tell anyone, but her instrumental teacher, about the sexual abuse she endured from a family member?

Or the student whose self-confidence improved so much from learning the electric guitar that he was no longer afraid of the bullies in the yard at lunchtime?

Or the student who only felt like he belonged when he was singing in a choir rehearsal?

Or the girl who would escape the horrors of a dysfunctional home life by sitting by herself, outside under a tree, to practice the clarinet?

The deaf girl who learnt to play trumpet?

The one legged drummer?

The girl who didn't even know she had an exceptional talent until an instrumental teacher identified it in her?

The ESL student who faded into the background during classroom discussions because she couldn't speak English well, but who was recruited to first flute in concert band when it was discovered she could read music?

The student who practiced the bass until his fingers bled so that he wouldn't let the band down before a gig?

The year 7 flute ensemble that busked for hours so that one of their members would have the money to attend music camp?

The islander boys who wouldn't focus, behave well or submit written work in school but would attend all day music rehearsals on student-free days.

This is just one teacher's story. My story. There are hundreds of instrumental teachers just like me with thousands of stories just like mine.

We know we are making a difference in the lives of our students.

We know we make a difference every day.

We know how important our job is and how privileged we are to work in such small groups and build such close relationships.

We know it because we hear it - from the parents and from the students themselves.

Sometimes the feedback is immediate. Sometimes we hear it many, many years later.

We hear about how instrumental music at school helped them learn, gave them an inclusive environment to be themselves, to shine, to fit in, to stand out. And in some cases, how instrumental music literally saved their lives.

Instrumental music is so much more than just teaching music.

Tricia Sargant
Instrumental Teacher