



BALWYN
HIGH SCHOOL

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14 February 2013

To: Ms Kerry Riseley, Executive Officer
Education and Training Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Ms Riseley

Please find attached Balwyn High School's submission to the Victorian Parliament Education and Training Committee's Inquiry into the extent, benefits and potential of music education in Victorian Schools.

We submit:

- The submission
- A letter of support from School Council President, Steven de Jong
- CD – images of the Balwyn High School Music Program

A hard copy of the same has been express posted today.
Please acknowledge receipt of this submission at your earliest convenience.

We cordially invite the Committee or a delegation of its members to visit Balwyn High School to see our music education program in action.

We are proud of our exemplary and extensive music program. Over our almost 60 year history it has been a cornerstone of the school's curricular and extra-curricular program; a drawing card for students and staff and the source of deep learning and great joy for many.

We trust that the committee's conclusions will find in favour of shoring up all it takes to enable all Victorian music education programs to flourish.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Harman
PRINCIPAL



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA
Education & Training Committee

BALWYN
HIGH SCHOOL

SUBMISSION

Inquiry into the extent, benefits and potential of music education in Victorian Schools

Introduction

Balwyn High School's Music Program is one of the largest and best developed in Victoria. Over 500 students participate in our renowned instrumental and choral program. The school's commitment to music as a vital part of education is second to none. The program focuses on practical skills, ensemble playing, theory, singing and aural skills, music technology, composition/arrangement, performance technique and the understanding of music styles. The school's skilled and energetic classroom music teachers deliver a stimulating and imaginative curriculum.

We have one of the most extensive classroom programs in Victoria. In the classroom program, there are 49 music classes that run each week, not including ensemble and elective theory classes. Acceleration for musically talented students commences in Year 8 and from Year 9, students with a interest in music technology and contemporary music can take music elective subjects. Students with a high skill level or those who are more interested in classical styles embark on accelerated VCE Music Performance studies.

Our ensemble program consists of 26 ensembles that rehearse each week, catering to a range of styles and abilities. A multitude of performance opportunities are available for all Junior, Intermediate and Senior ensembles including competitive and non-competitive settings in local, interstate and overseas venues. This year in March we are conducting our inaugural Music Tour of Europe. Four staff and thirty musicians and choristers will visit 4 countries over 2 weeks.

The Theatre Arts Department and the Music Department combine to stage regular musical productions, drawing talent from the whole school and providing memorable experiences for large numbers of students and appreciative audiences.

The Balwyn High School Music Education Program

Classroom Music

- All Year 7 students undertake two semesters of classroom music study – a total of 349 students across 13 classes. Students have 2 x 75 minute classroom music lessons per week for the entire school year.
- All Year 8 students undertake one semester of classroom music study – a total of 316 students across 12 classes (6 per semester). Students have 2 x 75 minute classroom music lessons per week for the semester.

Music electives are available for Year 9-12 students. In 2013, there are:

- 19 Year 9 students in the School of Rock class - 2 x 75 minute lessons per week for one semester
- 20 Year 9 students in the Music Technology and Song Writing class - 2 x 75 minute lessons per week for one semester
- 14 Year 11 students in the VCE Music Performance Units 1&2 class - 3 x 75 minute lessons per week
- 6 Year 12 students in the VCE Music Performance Units 3&4 Class - 3 x 75 minute lessons per week
- 5 Year 12 students in the Music Investigations Units 3&4 Class - 3 x 75 minute lessons per week
- 3 Year 12 students in the Music, History and Styles Units 3&4 Class - 3 x 75 minute lessons per week

All Year 7 and 8 students attend regular rehearsals in term 4 in preparation for the mass choral singing item which makes up the Presentation Night Grand Finale held in Hamer Hall at the Victorian Arts Centre. Upwards of 900 students are involved. Over recent years, Balwyn High School has gained a reputation for putting on the most spectacular and musically outstanding Presentation Night in the state.

Instrumental Music

Group and individual instrumental lessons are taught by a team of outstanding teachers with years of performance and pedagogical experience on their instrument or voice. In 2013, tuition on the following instruments are offered to students at Balwyn High School:

- Bass Guitar
- Bassoon
- Cello
- Clarinet
- Double Bass
- Drum Kit and Percussion
- Euphonium
- Flute
- French Horn
- Guitar (acoustic)
- Guitar (electric)
- Oboe
- Piano (classical)
- Piano (jazz and contemporary)
- Saxophone (alto)
- Saxophone (baritone)
- Saxophone (soprano)
- Saxophone (tenor)
- Trombone
- Trumpet
- Tuba
- Viola
- Violin
- Voice (classical)
- Voice (contemporary)

Instrumental lessons are supported by enrolment in ensembles and an extensive program of in-house workshops, soirees, concerts, competitions, visiting ensembles from other schools and external master classes. Acceleration classroom programs, beginning at Year 8, cater for advanced instrumental students, as well as a tiered band and choral program, allowing students to progress through ensembles according to their ability and previous experience.

Balwyn High School is one of Victoria's highest achieving providers of VCE music studies. The school also enters many students each year for examination with the Australian Music Examinations Board.

There is a strong emphasis on traditional classical and jazz styles of music. Balwyn High School has excelled in these styles for many years, ensuring the best in contemporary music is integrated into the curriculum, both in the classroom and the instrumental music programs.

Music Ensembles

A broad ensemble program allows for extensive opportunities for talented students to participate in the co-curricular music program. The number of students involved in each ensemble is indicated below. This year we have approximately 730 ensemble positions filled. A number of enthusiastic

students elect to participate in more than one ensemble. Students rehearse regularly throughout the year.

At Balwyn High School, we foster strong community links and involve our feeder primary schools in the ensemble program, each year holding a 'Monster Band' concert, inviting Year 6 students from local schools to attend. This sparks an interest in our band program and demonstrates the skill of students. Some of the more experienced incoming Year 7 students are then invited back to attend a workshop with current students.

The ensembles (and their current enrolment) offered at Balwyn High School in 2013 include:

Senior String Orchestra – 27
Newitt String Orchestra – 46
Junior String Orchestra – 49
Beginner String Orchestra – 25
Symphonic Band – 31
Intermediate Concert Band – 43
Junior Concert Band – 48
Novice Concert Band – 60
Training Concert Band – 56
Senior Stage Band – 19
Senior Stage Band – sectionals – 19
Intermediate Stage Band – 21
Junior Stage Band – 14
Europe Touring Choir – 30
Senior Concert Choir – 20
Encore (Intermediate Choir) – 10
Resonance Contemporary Choir – 31
Junior Choir – 75
Flute Ensemble – 9
Guitar Ensemble I – 15
Guitar Ensemble II – 16
Percussion Ensemble – 8
String Quartet -4
Cello Quartet – 4
Piano Trio – 3
Rock Band – 5

A total of 70 students take music theory lessons

Grade 1 – 20

Grade 2 – 18

Grade 3 – 15

Grade 4 – 11

Grade 5 - 6

Music Teachers at Balwyn High School

The current music program is staffed by:

6 full time teachers whose roles include classroom teaching and band/ensemble direction:

- Director of Music
- Classroom, Training Band, theory
- Classroom, voice, European Tour Choir, Senior Choir, Resonance Contemporary Choir
- Classroom, cello, double bass, Senior strings, Beginner strings, Senior Concert Band
- Saxophone, clarinet, flute, piano, Stage Band Director
- Violin, Viola, Newitt Strings, Junior Strings

12 part time teachers

- 0.8 classroom, Rock Band, theory
- 0.8 classroom, Junior Choir, Encore, theory
- 0.6 piano, piano trio, theory
- 0.6 flute, flute ensemble, Junior Concert Band
- 0.6 brass, Novice Band, Intermediate Concert Band
- 0.7 classroom, voice
- 0.4 guitar, guitar ensemble
- 0.4 percussion, percussion ensemble, Training Band
- 0.4 clarinet, saxophone, Senior Symphonic Band
- 0.2 oboe, bassoon
- 0.2 trombone, low bass
- 0.2 double bass, bass guitar, double bass ensemble

Our VCE music teachers have great expertise and standing in the music education community.

Factors affecting the quality of music education at Balwyn High School

- Due to Balwyn High School's established, quality Music program (both classroom and instrumental) we attract many potentially high achieving music students, whose aims are often to study Music at a Tertiary level
- Balwyn High School also attracts quality and dedicated music staff who commit to the successful running of the program. This includes regular evening concerts & out of school time rehearsals.
- Our dedicated music centre facility provides suitable space for music teaching and rehearsals
- At Year 8, we offer accelerated Music classes which enable 6 out of the 12 classes to progress at a higher level in classroom music
- We provide compulsory classroom music at years 7 & 8
- We offer 20 ensembles designed to cater for beginners to the most advanced music student
- All instrumental students are involved in one or more ensembles
- All ensembles have the opportunity to perform both within the school, and the wider community including touring opportunities.
- We offer Grade 1 to Grade 5 AMEB Theory classes
- Instrumental students are encouraged to sit external exams with the AMEB

Barriers to providing music education

- Lack of funding limits purchasing of instruments, facilities to run effective classes (both classroom and instrumental) and limits the number of places offered for popular instruments such as piano, percussion and guitar.
- Qualified teaching staff for instrumental areas.

Facilities and support available for music education at Balwyn High School

- A music centre and theatre
- Dedicated music wing including break out practice rooms for orchestras, small and large ensembles and instrumental music lessons
- 1 x full time Director of Music
- 2 Assistant Directors of Music/Choral and Instrumental program
- An instrumental music co-ordinator
- 1 x full time dedicated Music Secretary (ES Support)
- An instrument hire program
- A significant number of staff that represents a wide spread of specific expertise
- Peer mentoring – staff and students
- Many performance opportunities
- An active Parents and Friends of Music Committee
- Enormous support of the parent and wider community – evidenced by facilitation of their child's music education and attendance at performances.

The current extent of professional development opportunities for teachers related to music education

Balwyn High School encourages and promotes professional development for classroom teachers and instrumental staff. We have access to the latest, most modern and practical support for staff. Music faculty staff actively pursue these learning opportunities to ensure best practice within their learning environments.

Our proactive approach to professional development meant we were one of the first schools prepared to take on the new VCE study design for Music Investigation.

We form Professional Learning Teams each year to investigate the evidence base for continual student outcome improvements.

In 2012 the specific issues we explored related to:

- Investigating Teamboard technology through the Year 7 Kodaly program. To ensure students are equipped to use music technology resources to improve their skills in composition areas.
- Evaluating existing ICT resources & integrating SharePoint into VCE music to improve student results & study skills

Our staff also completed the following Professional Development:

- VCE examiners conferences
- Music Investigation/new course development
- Music and Pedagogy within the Year7/8 curriculum
- Band and String Reading days
- Kodaly for classroom and instrumental teachers
- Use of wix.com@Year7, 8

Participation in external music programs:

Music Competitions - Results 2012

Melbourne Bands and String Festival

Junior Stage Band - Gold

Junior Strings - Gold

Newitt Strings - Gold

Junior Concert Band - Silver

Intermediate Stage Band - Bronze

Senior Stage Band - Bronze

Ballarat Royal South Street Competition

Senior Concert Choir - 3rd

Gamblers (Gambier Choir) -3rd

Newitt Strings -3rd

Senior Strings -1st

Invitation Performances and Workshops 2012

AAMI Park -Heart vs. Gold Coast United Match Melbourne: Selected members of Junior, Intermediate, Senior Choirs and Resonance

TOP ACTS, Melbourne Recital Centre: Year 11 student

Eastern Metropolitan Regional Concert BMW Edge: Senior String Orchestra

Generations in Jazz 2012: Vocal Group - 6th

Choral Workshop/ Performance at BMW Edge Federation Square: Senior Concert Choir

National Gallery of Victoria, Great Hall - Napoleon Exhibition: Senior String Orchestra

Musical Society of Victoria's annual chamber music competition: Senior Piano Trio third place: Year 12 students

Intergenerational Concert at Melbourne University, Swinburne Campus: Newitt Strings

Gala Concert at Robert Blackwood Hall, Monash University: Junior Stage Band

Australian Chamber Orchestra Workshop: Year 12 student
Schools Spectacular 2012 orchestra member: Year 9 student

The extent and success of our student involvement in invitational performances and their success in competitions is testament to the quality of the music education program at Balwyn High School, its staff and students.

The current extent and quality of music education in Victorian Schools

Music education is organically linked between instrumental and classroom music i.e. they are interdependent. Skills learned in the classroom are used in instrumental and vice versa. Such as: Aural, Listening, Kodaly, Rhythmic Interactions, Singing, understanding nuance in musical styles.

There is a symbiotic relationship in that ensembles are consistently interacting with each other i.e. string orchestra accompanying choir, Presentation night etc.

Ensembles represent progressive education in that students' progress through various levels (Training Concert Band → Novice Concert Band → Junior Concert Band → Intermediate Concert Band → Symphonic Band). This ensures students are intrinsically motivated to improve their personal skill levels and that a range of musical abilities is catered for.

The Kodaly Program allows us to educate the whole person, providing lifelong skills through music education. This system educates students through a process similar to language learning. Students first speak then understand and apply language. Students learn to think logically, sequentially and piece together the puzzle to make their way to an end result. This approach allows students to develop resilience, empathy and an ability to be intrinsically motivated to achieve success whether within learning in general, a specific instrument or the music classroom.

The benefits of music education in Victorian Schools

Music is part of the fabric of Balwyn High School and has been across our 59 year history. Our school motto of 'A Community Growing Together Through Learning' is clearly reflected in the Music Program.

We welcome students from all cultural, musical backgrounds and interests to take part and share their musical journey with us. The Music Program offers an extensive range of opportunities to each student which allows them to participate and develop their full potential.

Music education in Victorian schools

- enhances students lifelong learning enjoying a love of music
- creates opportunity for students to excel, achieve and fosters academic development
- helps students develop teamwork, leadership and problem solving skills, cooperation, persistence and commitment
- provides a strong link and stepping stone to tertiary and professional music fields. Without effective school music programs the flow on will affect our entire community.
- involves community relationship between students, parents and families, staff and the wider community. This is more difficult to achieve in mathematics, English and other academic subjects.
- fosters an understanding of aesthetics and a deeper understanding of emotion and ability to express these emotions
- broadens students' intellectual horizons, artistic endeavour and career options
- gives students additional means and ability to express themselves
- creates a more 'complete' human being by enriching their understanding and ability to have broader emotional responses to life and human experiences

Current funding arrangements for music education in Victorian Schools

Current funding for our music program falls well short of our needs.

The DEECD provides the annual sum of \$341,780.89 for our music program. To run our extensive, exemplar program we rely on substantial additional locally raised funds. The annual Music staff salary total for 2013 is \$846,103 plus 9% superannuation = \$922,252. The additional cost to the school this year is therefore in excess of half a million dollars at \$580,471.11.

The leadership team of the school has made a long term sacrificial commitment to making up this annual funding shortfall. It is the clearest possible indication of the priority music is given within the school and our local community.

The single most effective impact the Education & Training Committee could have as a result of this inquiry is to advise that funding for Victorian Music Education programs is significantly increased.

Links with the wider community

At Balwyn High School the Yamaha Music School has been conducting classes for students from Years 2 -6 since 2008. This community link has enabled the wider school community to forge links with Balwyn High School and has provided invaluable musical opportunities for staff and primary students. Classes are in operation each weekday and across the weekend involving over 100 students and 10 staff. The Yamaha Music School is continually growing and expanding and further classes will be allocated over the next year.

The Camberwell Gang Show utilises our music facilities to provide extensive resources for their community. This community link has been operational for 4 years and has allowed the Gang Show to work collaboratively with our school to enrich their program.

Conclusion

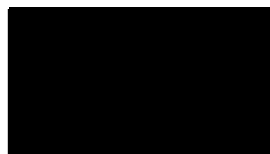
Music is a universal language. It transcends spoken language, ethnic boundaries and cultural differences; it touches people at the emotional centre of their lives and helps create a culture of respect and appreciation.

Music is central to the emotional, intellectual, physical and social growth and well-being of students. Exposure to auditory, rhythmic and aesthetic learning improves a child's sensibility and helps develop cognitive, creative and concentration skills.

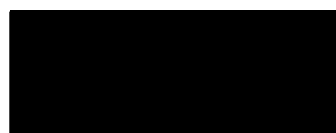
The success of our music program, and indeed any music program in the state, relies on the right policy, staffing, support, facilities and funding. The enormous benefits students (both past and present), and our immediate and extended community gain from the vitality and excellence that our music program exemplifies is testament to its incalculable value.

We would urge the Education and Training Committee to use the influence of this inquiry to ensure that Victorian Music programs are supported in not just maintaining its current standing but to expand and flourish for the benefit of all Victorians.

"Music is a form of intelligence-not just a manifestation of it." Howard Gardner



Deborah Harman
PRINCIPAL



Bernadette Clayton
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

School Council President
Balwyn High School
Buchanan Ave
North Balwyn 3104

10 February 2013

Parliament of Victoria
Education and Training Committee

Re: Is music education in Victoria hitting the right note?

Balwyn High School's reputation for its outstanding standards in both academia and music are a result of commitment and dedication of the music staff, students and their parents, volunteer committees and the strong endorsement from School Council and the Principal team. The school's extensive program includes a large range of orchestras, ensembles and bands of all abilities. All of those involved in the music program know only too well, the benefits of a strong co-curricular program and in particular through music education.

The Balwyn High School Council continues to fully support the school's strategic direction with music as a core focus of the co-curricular program and aims to continue to enhance the standards of the music program through directing community raised funds towards infrastructure and facilities, supporting music sub-committees and establishing levels of parent contributions for music lessons. With a large percentage of Balwyn High School students involved in the music program, there are numerous opportunities for the students to perform and demonstrate their skills to their parents and the community at large. In attending and performing at these events, all those involved experience a sense pride in being part of the school, specifically as the high music standards set a healthy competitive environment that encourages students to excel, achieve higher standards, and in the case of music, work hard to be selected for the more senior bands and ensembles.

School Council, parents and staff are only too aware of the benefits that the music program directly provides our students. Some of these include: The discipline and commitment students demonstrate in being part of a music group; improved confidence through opportunities to perform; learning to support and commit additional effort to be part of a successful team; the direction and commitment for students who may otherwise struggle during the early years of secondary education by providing incentives to be at school and in many cases, allowing them to excel at doing something they enjoy; improved concentration and standards in their academic studies; and the list goes on.

It is not possible to put a value on these benefits and subsequently School Council's recommendation to the committee is that the Victorian Government must continue to provide the commitment and funding to retain these highly important school based music programs. The levels of support should therefore be maintained so parents can provide music tuition for their children, ensuring that they do not miss out on the wonderful opportunities that these music programs provide.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Steven de Jong.

Steven de Jong
School Council President