



Advocating for our value

We teach music because we love music and music making, but not everyone understands its value. When it comes to advocating for what we love, the task can be daunting. We are an important part of the solution though because we are the experts with formal training. We know about the benefits.

For some in the community, learning music is just an additional expense to the family budget or a timetabling problem. Advocacy for the value of what we teach is essential.

There is a huge emphasis in western society to measure "standards". NAPLAN is but one example. **To advocate effectively for music we need to ensure that parents, classroom teachers and school leaders know that music delivers on literacy, numeracy, problem solving, historical understanding and knowledge of society. When they understand that, they all become our advocates.**

Imagine how powerful it could be for students to return to the classroom, or home to busy parents once or twice a term with messages like this:

*Dear Mr Jones,
In piano/violin/flute lessons John is engaged in literacy and numeracy learning.*

We measured pattern length, we compared patterns turned upside down (inversions). We are researching and writing a paragraph about the William Tell story, we are looking at the way music is influenced by the history of the world, we were involved in problem

solving by looking and we learned about listening to other musical voices in ensemble.
or

*Dear Mrs Smith,
Jane is preparing for a music exam with the Australian Music Examinations Board where the following skills and knowledge will be assessed against a national standard...*

I remember fondly an inspirational, local SA primary principal's defiance of his superintendent some years ago by not employing a mandated second language teacher.

He argued in writing that as most of his school cohort spoke at least three languages already, another language wasn't as important as music throughout the school. He told his system that music is a very powerful language. No-one ever challenged him and the school music program flourished.

The place of music in the lives of our students depends on all of us just being that little extra strategic.

Ian Russell, AMEB Strings Examiner and Presenter at the 2017 Information Day

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SA & NT

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AMEB subjects

Practical Music includes: Piano, Piano for Leisure, P Plate Piano, Accordion, Organ, Electronic Organ, Violin, Viola, Double Bass, Cello, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Recorder, Bassoon, Saxophone, Saxophone for Leisure, Trumpet, Tuba, Trombone, Band, Horn, Euphonium, Percussion, Harp, Classical Guitar, Singing, Singing for Leisure, Musical Theatre and Ensembles **Speech and Drama includes:** Drama & Communication, Voice & Communication and Drama & Performance **Contemporary Popular Music includes:** Keyboard, Guitar, Bass, Vocal, Drum kit **Theory includes:** Music Craft, Theory & Musicianship, Speech & Performance **And now examining Rockschoo!**





Supporting parents

Anxious parents waiting outside examining rooms is a very common occurrence, just as common as anxious teachers! Research suggests that anxious parents cause anxiety in candidates, but even more importantly, the parent-child relationship can suffer leaving the student feeling isolated and reducing their investment in achieving, so it is an issue worth addressing.

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, or nervousness about something with an uncertain outcome.

Teachers can't make the outcome certain, however they can give the parent and candidate more control during preparation. Understand the position of each parent and how much control they need to feel. If they never learnt an instrument themselves, then everything you are doing is a mystery. Define how the parent and candidate can feel that they have some control in the process and the outcome by removing unknowns and ensure that they understand:

- What elements make up an exam.
- What is the basic benchmark standard for each element and what constitutes 'outstanding'.
- How their child is measuring up.

- Sight reading and aural are the only 2 areas of the exam that have a mystery element – they are in control of everything else.

Invite parents into lessons – they can see how their child is performing, help at home, and the process will no longer be a mystery.

Most importantly, the candidate must be able to perform under pressure. Performing regularly in low pressure situations such as small studio concerts, reduces performance anxiety and:

- Desensitises the performer and parents to performing in front of an audience.
- Teaches how to prepare and wait for a performance and
- When students learn to present themselves well and keep their cool regardless of the outcome, parents

become much calmer about their child performing.

At exam time the following are helpful in reducing anxiety:

- Run practice exams.
- Have distractions available on the exam day such as magazines and fiddle toys and engage in conversation.
- Give the candidate a chance to move away from an anxious parent.
- Reinforce the concept of the exam as one learning experience and just one challenge on a long musical pathway. It is not a final life altering experience!

Yvette Baer, AMEB Examiner and 2017 Information Day Presenter



Speech and drama

AMEB Speech and Drama offers students syllabi in Theory, Voice and Communication, Drama and Performance (for individuals) and Drama and Communication (for ensembles) all of which can aid other areas of study. But for the first time teacher, where do you start?

Through my eighteen years of teaching, I have often found that getting to know the students' abilities and interests is always a good start. Once you have established a good rapport with the students, you should be able to help them create their own program. Finding material that students are interested in will enable them to become better connected emotionally and intellectually and give them a sense of ownership of their work. Students in turn become more enthusiastic, committed and disciplined in your lessons and in preparation for the goal of the exams.

Students and teachers can speak with fellow Speech and Drama teachers, search the internet, purchase books online, download film scripts, visit the library or use the suggested material lists in the AMEB syllabus for inspiration.

In choosing the right exam ask yourself;

1. Is the child more academic?
Answer: *Speech and Performance Theory*
2. Is the child better at public speaking?
Does the child love literature?
Answer: *Voice and Communication*
3. Is the child interested in solo performance in Drama?
Answer: *Drama and Performance*
4. Does the group demonstrate skills in a variety of areas?
Answer: *Drama and Communication*

After exams students generally find they have improved self-confidence and have greater skills in communication and performance. They are also left with a great sense of achievement.

Peta Shannon, AMEB Speech and Drama Examiner





Federal activity

It's a busy time at Federal Office with a number of new projects starting and some ongoing projects coming to fruition. We look forward to the release of a new Oboe syllabus along with Grade books and a Technical work book in November this year.

We also look forward to the release of a new series of Piano for Leisure books (Series 4) in November 2017. The Consultant for these books is well known piano teacher and blogger, Tim Topham. Tim brings a fresh approach that will provide an exciting new series with some great new material from Preliminary to Grade 8.

One major project we are working on in 2017 is the development of a new platform for our online theory exams. Online theory exams have been delivered since 2010 and AMEB is at the very forefront of this internationally. As time passes technology changes and we are aware that the platform we use is becoming less functional in the current technology environment. Changing this platform is a huge IT project for AMEB and we appreciate you bearing with us as we work through this year and look forward to a new software

implementation from 1 January 2018.

Recorded accompaniments (Preliminary to Grade 3) for Cello, Clarinet and Saxophone are all due for release soon. The AMEB MyTempo app is undergoing a major upgrade that will improve the functionality of the app and address issues that have been raised by users.

AMEB is proud to be sponsoring the biennial Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference to be held in Adelaide in 2017. As part of that sponsorship AMEB is giving away two conference passes via our Facebook page – one drawn on 12 May 2017 and one drawn on 26 May 2017. It's free to enter – just go here: <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMusicExaminationsBoard>

Every day brings us one day closer to our 100th anniversary as a national organisation

and we look forward to a number of exciting events as part of that milestone including the release of a book written by Rita Crews celebrating the first 100 years of AMEB.

**Bernard Depasquale, General Manager
AMEB Federal Office**

Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference

10-14 July 2017 (See attached)

New Prizes:

AMEB Composition Prize

AMEB Student Accompanist Prize

See pages 17 and 18 of the

2017 Teachers' Handbook (SA & NT)



Acting through song workshop with Dr Zachary Dunbar



On February 18th a group of Music Theatre enthusiasts (teachers, students and friends) spent a wonderful day with Dr. Zachary Dunbar from the Victorian College of the Arts, and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music where he is Senior Lecturer in Theatre.

The new Music Theatre Syllabus calls for singing teachers to go beyond vocal technique, and add dramatic understanding to help their students 'bring the song to life'. It seems we are often guilty of spending 50% of our time worrying about what is ahead, 25% judging if what we just did was right or not, and only 25% to the important part of being in the moment.

Drama is the on-going conflict between objective and obstacle. Actors, or in our case, singers make the mistake of showing the obstacle rather than their fight against it, e.g. the character is sad/angry, therefore I show sadness or anger. A better way is to define the objective. For example, in Hodel's 'Far from the Home I Love' (Fiddler on the Roof) the obstacle is Tevye's insistence on tradition, and her objective is to get her father's blessing.

What action can she take? The character can react to the obstacle from moment to moment using active verbs. She can tease,

charm, challenge or reject. The tactic will change depending on whether she is getting closer to, or further away from, her objective.

This was a very hands-on workshop, so we paired off and teased, charmed and challenged each other to a variety of songs. Our favourite was Marilyn Monroe's 'Happy Birthday, Mr President!'

Other techniques included literally 'pointing' to emphasise the important words, having a 'place' for each occurrence, and building the character by answering 70 questions. It can be surprising how your answers affect your stance, movement, accent etc.

Some of the challenges were a little confronting, but I for one was glad to learn more techniques to help our students achieve their dreams. Thank you Zachary.

**Norma Knight, AMEB Examiner in
Singing and Musical Theatre**

2016 Showcase performers



Isobel Abell
Grade 8 Clarinet
Teacher: Mary Waterhouse



Adden Chin
Grade 6 Violin
Teacher: Bogdan Kazimierczak



Jessica Cao
Grade 8 Piano
Teacher: Pamela Buccini



Teresa Kennedy
Grade 4 Piano
Teacher: Diana Weekes



Kate Richards
Grade 4 Piano
Teacher: Alison Stillwell



Clara Oster
Grade 5 Singing for Leisure
Teacher: Belinda Wundersitz



Kirrily Snape
Grade 5 Saxophone
Teacher: Steve Eads



Karen Yee
Grade 8 Rockscool Piano
Teacher: Karen Yee



Jacob Wilson
Grade 7 Piano for Leisure
Teacher: Pamela Buccini



Nikki Bedworth
Grade 5 Classical Guitar
Teacher: Angus Christie



Blaise Ballard
Grade 6 Piano for Leisure
Teacher: Meredith Green



Daisy Elliott
Grade 8 Violin
Teacher: Lachlan Bramble



Cameron Oosterbaan
Grade 8 Piano for Leisure
Teacher: Rosemary Robinson



Lucinda Machin
Grade 8 Cello
Teacher: Ruth Saffir



Shiha Ryu
Grade 7 Piano
Teacher: Jinju Nam



Olivia Warren
Grade 4 Flute
Teacher: Joanne Jeffery



Joaquin Velasco
Grade 5 Violin
Teacher: Wendy Heiligenberg



Joseph Yuan
AMusA Piano
Teacher: Debra Andreacchio



Accompanist Prize

An exciting new incentive offered by the AMEB to enthusiastic piano exam candidates!

Aside from sharing their obvious love of music with interested students, teachers spend much time and energy helping them to achieve success in exams. We find that those candidates who reach the upper levels, often then drop off either through the pressures of school studies or beginning to ask *why* – *where will this piano practice take them – what will it do for them – is it worth taking further?*

Very few will have the drive/passion/strength/steal/determination to pursue a solo career.

The AMEB's **Student Accompanist Prize** encourages candidates to collaborate, to enjoy the longer-term preparation of an exam program with a peer, rather than with a professional accompanist engaged frequently quite late in the process. Studying the music together would stimulate greater awareness of musical ensemble in both players and predictably make the exam experience more of an adventure than a trial!

A word from a teacher can make all the difference, alerting students to the benefits of making music with others, encouraging them to venture into ensemble playing, paving the way for a possible career path!

In an article for the MTA's newsletter, *The Music Stand*, Stefan Ammer (former Head of Keyboard, Elder Conservatorium) wrote "Pianists are lonely animals and playing with other musicians is a necessity for balancing a musician's life style."

Frances Wood wrote "...not every pianist will go on to be a concert pianist but there's always a place in society for a sensitive and musical accompanist!"

Piano Teachers are urged to encourage their students to apply for the award. Details appear on page 18 of the current Teachers' Handbook.

After all, all instrumentalists, singers/choirs/theatre groups/dancers need a pianist – how would they manage learning/rehearsing/performing without one?!?!?

Monika Laczofy, AMEB State and Federal Examiner, 2017 Information Day Presenter, President, Accompanist Guild of SA