Building a strong music community

‘It takes a village to raise a child’ is an African proverb that has become well known over the past few years. It could well be modified to: ‘It takes a whole music community to raise a musician.’

Government and private educators, associations and organizations, teachers and assessors, all contribute to support emerging and established musicians and the broader musical community. In a society where the Arts are not always valued as highly as they deserve to be, it is imperative that our music community works together to nurture our music students. A well-rounded music education needs tuition, experience and role models. Teachers and policy makers are at the forefront of influence. At assessment level, examiners and adjudicators can give feedback in such a way that students are encouraged to higher levels. Our concert and festival organizations need to provide engaging concerts which can showcase music role models and develop a musically literate society. Critics too have a responsibility to reflect our community’s appreciation of composers and music that has stood the test of time. International musicians, guests to our state, should be inspired to return.

South Australia has been a pioneering state in the Arts. However, we can’t only rely on history; we need to continue to develop the highest possible cultural level and diversity.

One pioneer has been the AMEB. The South Australian branch celebrates its 125th anniversary this year, placing it at the earliest years of an Australian Music Examinations system. It supports music education in a myriad of ways and strives to maintain relevance through various syllabi, publications and on-line exams. The AMEB has an Advisory Board that includes representation from many other music education associations and drawing on the experiences of the broader music community.

Congratulations AMEB on your 125th anniversary and on your valuable contribution to our musical community.

Debra Andreacchio, Piano Teacher, AMEB Examiner, President, The Music Teachers’ Association of South Australia Inc.

AMEB Grade 7 Scholarship

A quick glance at the ‘Assumed Knowledge’ for the Elder Conservatorium’s undergraduate programs, shows that almost all nominate AMEB Grade 7 practical and Grade 5 theory or equivalent for entry.

To achieve that level is a significant success, but to complete it with an outstanding result is very rare and those who do are invited to apply for the AMEB’s Grade Seven Scholarship.

The scholarship has been available for a number of years. It acknowledges the achievement and encourages candidates to continue with their music at a time when competing priorities can be persuasive.

Pictured above: One of the finalists, David Goodwin being congratulated by Carl Crossin, Director of the Elder Conservatorium.

Clarinet students doubling on saxophones

It is becoming quite common in many school bands for clarinet students to take advantage of the extra performance opportunities available due to the upsurge in popularity of the standard ‘big band’ jazz ensembles.

Sometimes these new saxophone players may have a saxophone tone that is thin or ‘pinched’ in the middle to high register, and inclined to be quite sharp in pitch. The player may also have difficulty in producing the lower register of the instrument, tending to produce the notes sounding an octave higher.

The student blowing into the saxophone mouthpiece as if it were a clarinet mouthpiece can cause these problems. The following exercise using just the saxophone mouthpiece will help overcome the previously mentioned faults in the saxophone sound.

A clarinet mouthpiece only, when blown at an ff volume should produce approximately a concert pitch (piano pitch) of C on the second ledger line above the treble staff.

An alto saxophone mouthpiece when blown at an ff volume should produce a concert pitch A on the first ledger line above the treble staff. I find initially most clarinet players will produce a B or even a C instead. A short practice session each day learning to relax the throat to produce an A concert will help develop a ‘muscle memory’ that will result in a better saxophone tone and more satisfactory intonation.

For those clarinet players who may be starting on the tenor saxophone, the mouthpiece alone should produce a concert G on the top space of the treble clef.

On the baritone saxophone, just the mouthpiece alone should produce a D concert on the fourth line of the treble clef.

David Brookes,
AMEB Clarinet and Saxophone Examiner

In 2011 the following students accepted the invitation to audition for the scholarship:

David Adcock (Teacher Karl Schenscher)
Conor Barkway (Teacher Urszula Gruszewski)
Gavin Carnac (Teacher Mary Snowball)
David Goodwin (Teacher Anthony Lillywhite)
Christopher Hughes (Teacher Elizabeth Berry)
Jordan Khan (Teacher Lynne Reynolds)
Sarah Lim (Teacher Elizabeth Berry)
Thu Hien Nguyen (Teacher Paula Sweet)
Vidya Somasundarum (Teacher Lillian Fung)
Tiensia Tran (Teacher Bogdan Kazimierczak)
Viena Tran (Teacher Ashleigh Tobin OAM)
Amelia Worrell (Teacher Koula Raptis)

The winner of the AMEB 7th Grade Scholarship for 2011 was Connor Barkway (pictured left).

Congratulations go to Connor for his win and to all for having achieved outstanding results.