



THE UNIVERSITY  
of ADELAIDE

# Australian Music Examinations Board South Australia and Northern Territory

## On top note

### Index

Advocating for the arts	1
Establishing strong foundations in piano lessons	2
General knowledge – Useful in so many ways	2
Music Theatre – A syllabus at last!	3
Rockscool comes to AMEB	3
2016 AMEB calendar	4



### 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 & Ensembles  
**Speech and Drama includes:** Drama & Communication, Voice & Communication and Drama & Performance  
**Contemporary Popular Music includes:** Keyboard, Guitar, Bass, Vocal, Drum kit  
**Theory of music includes:** Music Craft, Theory, Musicianship and Speech & Performance

**Volume 15, Issue 2, October 2015**  
Official Newsletter of the Australian Music Examinations Board SA & NT

**Postal address:** The University of Adelaide, SA 5005

**Location:** 1st Floor  
Hartley Building,  
Kintore Ave,  
The University of Adelaide

**Telephone:** 08 8313 8088

**Fax:** 08 8313 8089

**Email:** ameb@adelaide.edu.au

## Advocating for the arts

In the 15th season of the iconic animated sitcom *The Simpsons*, there's an episode in which the headmaster of Springfield Elementary School – Principal Skinner – addresses his teaching staff informing them that, due to cutbacks, he needs to carefully restructure the school budget. Taking this complex and onerous task back to his office, he pulls out a list of school subjects and simply crosses music and art off the list before glibly declaring his job done.

We've all seen the same unimaginative and easy solution applied at every level of bureaucracy for the last 30 years as the calls for a more 'real', vocationally relevant, curriculum become more assertive. Our children are falling behind, we hear, on some narrow system of job appropriate measurements. The obvious answer is, of course, increased emphasis on STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and mathematics – inevitably at the cost of supposedly 'soft', 'indulgent' subjects like music and art.

Lest you think I'm exaggerating this mindset, just a few weeks ago, the Japanese Education Minister Hakuban Shimomura issued a formal directive to all Japanese tertiary institutions that they should (as quoted) 'take active steps to abolish arts and humanities programs...to serve areas that better meet society's needs'.

To a certain extent, we musicians have ourselves to blame for the precarious state of music within school curricula and the broader education debate. For too long we've relied on vague assertions of the intrinsic goodness of music education and worthy, somewhat pious, notions of music's innate cultural value. Frankly, in the push for return on educational investment – that is, vocational relevance – those old arguments carry little weight.

Yet all this comes at a time when the broader cognitive and educational benefits of musical training have never been more clearly or convincingly asserted. I've lost count of

the number of surveys and experiments I've read about that prove the enduring benefits of musical experience in terms of cognitive development and improved learning outcomes. Forget the so-called 'Mozart Effect', we are talking here of the solid, verifiable benefits in brain development and overall wellbeing – for young and old – that come from actively engaging with music. These are the facts that should form the basis from which we advocate for music's funding and place in the curriculum.

Training students for a professional career in music shouldn't be our primary consideration when teaching music; nor is it necessarily about creating a more educated and adventurous audience for music (although that'd be fine); in some ways music isn't even about its actual sound. **No, music – as Philip Ball asserts – is something humans do: the activity of making music is fundamental to our very being and enhances mental, physical and emotional development.** This music-making doesn't have to be good, it doesn't have to be particularly musical, it's simply that everyone – especially our children – should have the opportunity to regularly participate actively in music.

The AMEB has played – and continues to play – a fundamental role in encouraging young Australians along the path to thoughtful, disciplined and enjoyable music making and all the individual and community benefits that flow from that engagement.

**Professor Graeme Koehne AO**  
Director, Elder Conservatorium

(This is an edited version of a speech given at the official opening of the Twentieth Conference of the Australian Society for Music Education in Adelaide, October 2015.)

