



MUSIC EDUCATION: TIME FOR ACTION

Renewing the Agenda for Music Education in Aotearoa New Zealand

National Forum, Wellington,
18 March 2006

FORUM REPORT

The 2006 National Forum on Music Education in New Zealand, organised by METANZ, was attended by representatives from many music education sectors, music organisations and other providers of music education to the community. What follows is a summary of the key points made in the various discussion groups.

METANZ WILL USE THESE STATEMENTS AS PART OF ITS ADVOCACY WORK. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DO THE SAME.

What does music education provide for people?

Because music engages the emotions as well as the intellect, music education differs from most other educational disciplines and curriculum areas: it develops the whole person.

Research shows that music education improves intellectual capacity, and can enhance literacy and numeracy skills. Music-making enhances personal confidence and emotional and social development, which are particularly important for young people in educational settings.

Because music-making is a creative act it develops creative skills and the ability to be innovative. These are important for capacity-building.

Making the music of ones own culture fosters a sense of cultural identity. Making the music of other cultures increases understanding and tolerance. Music-making is an important factor for social inclusion.

What is needed for effective music education?

The maximum benefits from music education will come when music education is compulsory for all from early childhood to year 10.

High quality music education is centred on creativity. It includes cultural diversity, apt musical literacies and technology.

Effective music education can only happen if teachers are well-trained. Teacher-training for music must have depth and focus and include skill-development, and this takes time to be done properly. Generalist teachers at the primary level must have more adequate preparation for music, and need the backup of specialist music teachers or advisers.

Expert teachers of instrumental/vocal music with high skills must continue to be available to support school music learning, through the Out-of-Hours and Itinerant Teachers of Music programmes.

What needs to be done?

Teacher-training must have a bigger investment of time to ensure teachers have the skills to be able to deliver high-quality music education.

Generalist primary music teachers must be given more support, either through the provision of specialist music teachers or a major expansion of music advisers able to give ongoing regular professional support.

More effective ways must be found in the education system to identify and nurture musically talented young people.

School music educators should, with support from their schools, work closely with local communities especially where the community includes a diversity of cultures.

Music should not be thought of as a separate, isolated activity. It relates to so many aspects of everyday life that every effort should be made in music education to make connections with other media and curriculum subjects, to the creative industries, and to the everyday world that students live in.

**What should METANZ do to advocate for better music education?
(METANZ will prioritize these in its strategic plan)**

Work to inform government and other influential policy-makers of the importance of music education to the development of individuals, of the economy, and of social well-being in New Zealand.

Work for the setting up of a National Review of Music Education, along the lines of the one recently completed in Australia.

Work to see music occupying a central place in the curriculum because of its critical role in developing creativity and innovation.

Work to ensure effectively trained and musically skilled teachers are available at all levels of education, including specialist music support at primary level and securely-funded instrumental teachers.

Work in support of community involvement and cultural diversity in music education.

Work to see more music in early childhood education.

Work to improve resourcing for music education.

Continue to build alliances, connections and synergies across all areas and providers that deliver music education.

Encourage successful music professionals to participate in music education at all levels.

METANZ is a Trust set up to promote music education in Aotearoa New Zealand. It may be contacted at PO Box 124-173, Manners Street, Wellington, New Zealand. See also www.metanz.co.nz