

# BULLETIN: ASME VICTORIA

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Australian Society for Music Education,

Victoria Chapter Registration Number A0013254W



***Supporting the right of every person  
to access a quality music education  
– a major goal of ASME***

## Chair's message

Sue Arney

### Welcome back to a fresh new year that feels full of hope and cheer!

The ASME (Vic) Chapter Council includes representative voices from primary, secondary and tertiary music education, graduate teachers, experienced teachers, researchers and academics. Council members hear the concerns and conversations of those across the music education field and meld these with current research that is either being undertaken, written about or read. These perspectives lead to fabulous conversations at our meetings, and they were particularly valuable when the Council met in early February for our annual Planning Day. Throughout the day we discussed our priorities for ongoing projects alongside new ideas. Together, we mapped out our plan for the year in alignment with the four pillars of the ASME National Strategic Plan. Here is an overview of what lies ahead.

### Leadership and Representation

The *Networking Project* has gained momentum over recent times. We will continue to map existing music education networks and hubs as well as exploring ways for teachers to connect across Victoria. Some small pilot projects are underway with emerging networks and communities of practice to offer support and professional learning. This also includes our sustained support for *Early Career Music Teachers* through networking events throughout the year.

Our role as advocates for music education is taken seriously. Our work in supporting individual teachers in schools,



involvement in curriculum development and dissemination of advocacy material will continue.

### Research and Resources

A priority for 2024 is the strengthening of our support for creative and compositional work. This will focus both on school classrooms and the long-term project supporting young composers, leading to involvement in activities at the Biennial ASME National Conference.

Our *Capturing Voices Project* will continue to record presentations and conversations with eminent music educators within Victoria. There is already a collection on the website, and we will soon add the voice of Graham Bartle to our library. Our ASME (Vic) Bulletin and Victorian Journal of Music Education continue to be flagship publications that connect with our community.

### Professional Learning

Our 2024 professional learning program is locked in for the year with the first few events now available for viewing and registration. Details are included further in the Bulletin.

### Sustainability and Growth

With the launch of the new ASME website towards the end of 2024, our communications teams have locked in new processes and responsibilities. These will focus on the flow of communication between event information, the use of social media and the website. In each Bulletin we will feature the new items available on the website to keep our community updated.

Finally, a huge thank you to our 13 Council members who volunteer their time to undertake this work, driven by their passion for supporting music education in all its forms.

## Editorial

Ros McMillan

A new *Bulletin* initiative is the inclusion of contributions by members of the Victorian ASME Council. This issue includes an article on classroom composition by Michael Travers and another on technology in the classroom by Liam Whitbourne.

An article titled 'What Music Is' by Mandy Stefanakis provides an interesting discussion on the value of music to people in ways that may not be obvious, especially to music teachers. The article provides a powerful argument as to "what music 'is' and can do for people", a message that has been at the forefront



of Mandy's long career, both performing and teaching.

As usual, and always welcome, is Lucy Lennox's 'Letter from Ireland'. We have been following Lucy's journey for some years now, and the reports of her 'discoveries' in another country have been fascinating. She is now the manager of a private music school in Dublin, some of her students featuring on the front cover of this issue of the Bulletin.

Another new addition is an ASME (Vic) Events listing as well as details of new initiatives on the Council's website. Each future edition of the Bulletin will be updated in regard to the content of these.

We wish all members a fulfilling first school term and hope that all your musical endeavours are successful

**Cover:** A class of students in the Rock School, Dublin, Ireland. See 'Letter from Ireland', page 3. (Parental permission was obtained for the publication of this photo in the *Bulletin*.)

# Lucy Lennox's Letter from Ireland

**Lucy Lennox, former Deputy Chair of ASME Victoria, has been writing of her experiences in Ireland in each edition of the Bulletin since 2021. This is her ninth 'letter'.**

By the time this is published, I will have lived in Ireland for three years. The time has absolutely flown by in a flash of meeting new people, making new friends, varying jobs and school settings, and European travel.

Since living in this country, I always spoke about Australia as 'home' and I have realised that only recently I have started to call Ireland 'home' too. I now feel complete comfort in having two 'homes'. Even though Australia is whole oceans away, I was reminded recently about how small the world is becoming. Incredibly, when I was out at my local café for a coffee at the end of last year, the barista was from the same tiny country town in South Gippsland as I. What are the chances!

For almost two years now I have been working in an after-school music setting called *School of Rock Dublin*. *School of Rock* is performance-based, the purpose being that students learn an instrument and also join a band. My role is actually Manager with a little teaching so I get to see multiple facets of the school setting. It has been incredible to witness the power of being in an ensemble group for our students. It is engaging and motivating, and provides amazing growth socially, emotionally and as musicians. Next week we expect to hit 250 enrolments with over 60% of students playing in a band – a wonderful milestone for a two years 'young' school.

Over Christmas I was lucky enough to travel home to spend time with my family and friends in Australia. One of the highlights was a day where a friend took me to The Lume Melbourne, an immersive art exhibit that combines art work, video footage and music. The current exhibit at the time was *Connection* which told stories of our country's rich cultural history. It was breathtaking to see song-lines brought to life through a combination of First Peoples' art and music. The exhibit featured music by Archie Roach, Yothu Yindi and Gurrumul, amongst many others.

As well as managing the music school, I teach the junior small-groups called 'Rookies' (4-7 year olds). On my return from my trip home for Christmas, I brought back some Cadbury's *Furry Friends* chocolates for my students. I gave each one a chocolate which had a different Australian animal pictured on the packaging. The students' eyes were wide open in amazement while I tried to explain what a platypus was!

In January, we began our events schedule with our Adults' Program gig. Each adult takes a weekly one-to-one lesson as well as participating in a weekly two-hour band rehearsal. The group consists of ten adults ranging from 25 to 60 years old and a breadth of musical experience. After having rehearsed together for three months they are now working as a close-knit team. Their set of songs featured *Dreams* by the Cranberries, *Get Back* by the Beatles and *Lithium* by Nirvana. Funnily enough, we have the most interest in our school at the moment from adults rather than children. Perhaps it is a New Year's resolution phase, or maybe a post-Covid lockdown realisation?

A fun song to teach is the Irish folk song called *The Rattling Bog*. Rattling means 'good' or 'great' with Bog being a wetland that accumulates peat and dead plant material, which eventually is used to burn in fire places. The song is accumulative, a little like *There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* or *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. The end of each verse grows throughout the piece with a list of things found in the bog. The song typically speeds up with each verse becoming more challenging so it is impossible not to smile while singing. This could be used as a kind of warm up or even a quick activity within a lesson.

The lyrics read:

*Chorus:*

Ho, ro, the rattlin' bog,  
The bog down in the valley-o.  
Real bog, the rattlin' bog,  
The bog down in the valley-o.

*Final verse (with the finished list):*

In that egg there was a bird,  
A rare bird and a rattlin' bird,  
And the bird on the egg,  
And the egg on the bird,  
And the bird in the nest,  
And the nest on the limb,  
And the limb on the branch,  
And the branch on the tree,  
And the tree in the bog,  
And the hole in the bog,  
And the bog down in the valley-o.

**– Slan! (Farewell!)**

# Bounce, catch and roll out the music!

## Creative classroom music strategies - appropriate to all levels

### Michael Travers

One way to energise students, and activate their imaginations in a creative music class, is to hand out tennis balls and start bouncing them. The students are engaged immediately and having fun as the activities are straightforward and hard to fail. There is great potential to spark creativity using the motion of the tennis balls. It will build belief and confidence in the ability to create and be inventive while interacting with peers. From a chaotic start we can develop insights and understandings on how to create music.

Patterns can be a useful initial sound and movement structure, for example: "Walk four steps then bounce the ball twice". The students are 'in the moment' and working with tactile materials. Variations can then spark new ideas. We gradually add more features while still using the anchor of the tennis balls. This is helping to assist students to 'think like a composer'. Thus, the classroom process is explore, collaborate, perform, share and reflect.

Here is another idea: ask students to create a 4 beat pattern. This could be: "Bounce, catch, roll in hands, slide ball on arm". In pairs students then create variations on a 4-beat pattern such as: "Swap balls, roll in hands, tap on floor 3 times". Students can do these activities in groups of 2-4 and showcase them to the class who can then imitate them. We can then explore the sounds a ball can make – for example, bounce, tap, scrape on carpet or thump the ball on a desk or cardboard box.

Next, we can ask students to create a class challenge. The class decides, as a whole group, on the features of the challenge. This could be something such as: "Create a pattern which has three different movements of the ball and two sounds. One can be a vocal sound".

Teachers will find that students create entertaining patterns which can be celebrated, shared and copied by the class.

### Stop and talk - What are we doing?

A crucial feature of a creativity lesson is to remind students of the value and worth of what they are doing. Many seem to have a sense that if they are not at a computer or holding a pen, then they are not really learning anything. So, we are not just bouncing balls around. We are nurturing a class culture of creativity, acceptance and collaboration. We are exploring, responding, rehearsing and performing. The students are generating the music and this can evolve into them directing new challenges and projects.

Incidental musical insights will arise which can be spotlighted.

A teacher may say: "That was very clever the way you changed your volume when the next layer was added". In this case we are encouraging and guiding students on strategies for making musical sounds. After students have created a class challenge, they can then discuss the process, while, as teachers, we can refer back to the musical elements of form, texture, rhythm and so on.

It is important to keep the lesson moving with a logical focus and progression of ideas. The processes we have followed can be transferred to other found materials such as newspapers, cardboard boxes and cardboard pipes. We can also transfer rhythms and other musical elements to percussion and melodic instruments.

## Creative Journey Pathways and Opportunities

Often in creative music classes, we see students who are highly motivated and would welcome further opportunities to explore and create music. ASME (Vic) plans to develop resources, networks and projects which will support creative music in schools.

If you wish to see further resources, comment, add ideas or participate in developing and trialing pilot creative music projects, go to this link where you can share your thoughts or see the resources: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F93JxVJf0yHU5zXk2\\_WJKCgzBa\\_LFYlquZqO28Uz0LY/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F93JxVJf0yHU5zXk2_WJKCgzBa_LFYlquZqO28Uz0LY/edit)

### ASME (Vic) Chapter Council – 2023-2024

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# What music is

## Mandy Stefanakis

I had an interesting experience today. I went to support a new café/wine bar venture in my precinct, a pretty conservative suburb in many ways. I sat down, the only person there on this, their second or third day.

I placed my order and the proprietor said: "This wine might go well with that Spanish-influenced dish you've chosen. Would you like a taste?" Yes please! And then he said: "What music would you like with that?"

Dear reader, I was gobsmacked. This was the first time in my copious years on planet earth that I had ever been to an eatery and asked what music I would like to connect this multi-sensorial feast. So I said: "Anything by Pat Metheny would do the trick." And so it was. I then asked the proprietor: "What would be your choice of music?" He looked at me with the kind of stunned expression that I had just given him and said: "Well, I would choose '80s electronica, because I grew up with it and it still has a hold on me." I asked why and he said: "I can't sing, well except under the shower, and so I tend to gravitate to instrumental music, and for some reason, music that I listened to in my teenage years".

I said that this was common and mentioned the study I had done on *Composer Self*. I told him that all 15 composers I interviewed, despite their vast and eclectic music tastes, gravitated to a particular sound world in their composing, with core features of it formed (for all of them) somewhere between the ages of seven – yes seven! – and 21.

The proprietor's negative experiences in piano lessons and his own perceived inability to sing or dance resonated with the experiences of many who have shared similar fates, and yet, he obviously loved music. That made me sad, as it always does.

It brought to mind a student I had once taught who had low self-esteem, enhanced by a hearing issue I did not know about, which would have profoundly affected his learning capacity. He was six. He loved singing, sang loudly and found intonation a bit of a problem without really comprehending it. But the hearing issue was picked up and resolved and, quite suddenly, this voice knew how to align with the voices around it and the boy sang in tune. No-one had ever said to him: "You can't sing." Hearing for the first time those around him singing with him obviously made him incredibly happy and a part of the group.

The thing is, music is an incredibly *personal* experience, a *defining* experience, not just for musicians, but for everyone who engages with it. And so if we disregard people's musical preferences, or think that if we are teaching music skills and

techniques but without any sense of musical meaning, if we ignore or chastise the musical world of the students we teach, we run the risk of alienating them from music. Because music is such a crucial aspect of my life I find this tragic.

Three cameos: My cello teacher can throw a Bach prelude at me and it will take me three months or more to learn. Or he can say: "What would you like to learn?" and when I say: "You know what I like", he'll suggest something I will then learn much more quickly, because there's an addictive element to making the sound combinations I love to hear. It can't always be the music to which we gravitate, because we won't grow, but we need to juggle that with the need for a continuing motivation to learn.

Second cameo: I too have a hearing problem from too many loud concerts in my youth. I got hearing devices about a year ago and they have revolutionised my musical experiences. (Although it's still hard for me to hear and communicate in a crowded room!) But last week I went to my cello lesson and my teacher said: "You're pressing the bow too hard, so you're not getting the resonance you need." "Ah yeah", I said, "I can't hear myself because I forgot my hearing aids." Many students have reasons why they are not achieving to the best of their ability. Indeed, they're often things over which they have no control, or don't even know about.

Third cameo: Tracy Chapman, whose music I grew up with, performed at the recent Grammys a song she had not performed publicly for 15 years. She sang with Luke Combs, who had introduced Chapman's song *Fast Car* to another generation of listeners – passing the baton. The Grammy attendees woke up and joined in! The internet lit up! Here was a song about hardship, optimism and hope, sung by a performer who is known for her compassion, her grace and for keeping a low profile. This performance touched people, because Chapman shared her humanity with a world which is sadly lacking in such a commodity right now. She reminded us that some people still care about others. Indeed, this is what defines Chapman's oeuvre. This is who she is.

Music is incredibly powerful. Music is also very personal. We must not lose sight of what music 'is' and can do for people as we sculpt music experiences for students in what are the musically and self-defining years of their lives.

## References

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# Music Technology in the Music Classroom

## Liam Whitburn

The use of Music Technology in our classroom program is something we as a team pride ourselves on at Blackburn High School. Here are some of our favourite programs and our thoughts on the benefits of using them in our music classrooms, especially in the junior years. The traditional whiteboard is used alongside digital notation platforms and manuscript paper to reinforce music literacy skills and aid in composition tasks.

*"I enjoy integrating technology with traditional teaching tools. I consider my use of technology conventional, as opposed to innovative, but I enjoy using each tool as required to enhance student engagement."*

– Sandra (Piano and Classroom Teacher)

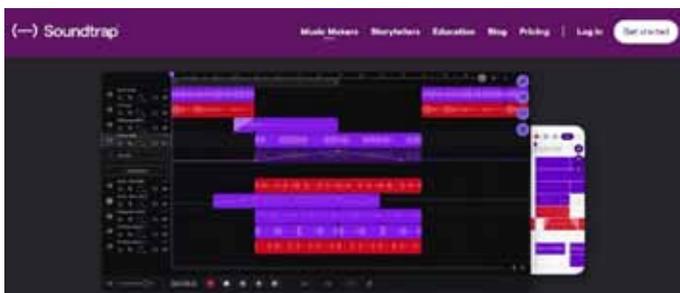
## Soundtrap: [www.soundtrap.com/musicmakers](http://www.soundtrap.com/musicmakers)

This website is great for visual representation. It is a fantastic teaching tool for students to learn about duration, macro + microstructure, texture, layering of loops, repetition, variation... the list is endless!

Students can collaborate on the same project, as well as work on their projects outside class time. We use this website in our Protest Song Writing Assessment task. Students can record lyrics, practise a chord progression and record and enter information on midi keyboards.

*Soundtrap* is also great for accessing loops. Students can learn melody, harmony, and bass lines of popular songs by ear. *Shape of You* has been a very popular choice amongst Year 8 students in recent years. There are great functions that allow for copying, pasting and editing loops. The interface is quite user-friendly and not too crowded, making it relatively intuitive for younger students.

Using this tool can be handy for differentiating based on ability; instrumental students can play their instrument for example, while non-instrumentalists can take a production/mixing role in group tasks. It is worth mentioning that *Soundtrap* is not free, and we pay for a school licence. However, there is a limited free version available with reduced access to some areas.



## Hooktheory Theory Tab:

[www.hooktheory.com/theorytab](http://www.hooktheory.com/theorytab)

*Hooktheory* is a fantastic database, full of thousands of songs in visual grid form. It is great for students to be able to see how melody is structured alongside a chord progression. Students can search for songs they know and listen to regularly, which is a great way to open them up to chordal exploration.

You can use the Theory Tab to practise melody writing and chords. It looks very similar to Google Chrome *Songmaker* and beats can be organised visually into their subdivisions. One of the best benefits of using this website is that students can edit and playback their work immediately.



## Noteflight: [www.noteflight.com](http://www.noteflight.com)

*Noteflight* is a useful resource for introducing students to notation software, and it is FREE. We use this primarily in year 7 and 8 Music, where students can practise skills of editing, composing and working with mp3 files and MIDI. MIDI created here can be imported into other programs, such as *Soundtrap*.



## PowerPoint:

It goes without saying really, that *PowerPoint* presentations are a pivotal resource. They can be visually engaging from a teacher's perspective, while students also enjoy creating their own assignment slides.



**Chrome Music Lab:**  
[musiclab.chromeexperiments.com](http://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com)

Incorporating *Chrome Music Lab* has been most useful in our classrooms. It is a great pictorial and visually stimulating platform for students to understand pitch organisation, intervals, triads, etc. Transferring this experience to keyboards has been particularly rewarding for students with limited previous experience – they recall the visual patterns seen on the site, such as triads, melodic contour and ostinato and they learn to adapt these concepts to a keyboard instrument or tuned percussion instruments.

The arpeggio wheel in *Chrome Music Lab* reinforces the cycle of 4ths/5ths, allowing students to move from one chord to the next, in addition to visually reinforcing relative major/minor keys. Students may enjoy listening to the juxtaposition of chords and become familiar with idiomatic chord progressions.



**Musicca:** [www.musicca.com](http://www.musicca.com)

This site is a highly useful resource, not only for theoretical definitions and knowledge, but also for using the available virtual instruments and drum machine. Students learn about notes, rhythms and chords at their own pace, if desired, as their interest and experience develop.



**Audacity:** Free download at [www.audacityteam.org/](http://www.audacityteam.org/)

*Audacity* has been extensively used to record student solo and group performances and to generate desired musical effects, and is another useful resource.



Of course this list of resources is not exhaustive. However, we thought that by sharing some our thoughts, we might encourage other teachers to consider trying other forms of technology in their classroom teaching programs.

**Early Career Music Teachers: Tips for Surviving a New School**

*Wednesday, 20 March, 5.30 – 6.30pm ONLINE  
General Admission \$40; ASME members FREE*

Tips, advice, support and discussion for early career music teachers in settling into their new school.

This online workshop will focus on drawing together early career music teachers – inclusive of pre-service teachers, graduate teachers and those changing direction in both primary and secondary settings – to discuss considerations in regard to managing their move to a new school.

The session will begin with presentations by experienced music teachers, with opportunities to raise questions and share suggestions. Events in the ASME (Vic) series of Early Career Network events aim to build networks and opportunities to meet other early career teachers. For registration, see overleaf.

## On the ASME website

The new ASME National website ([www.asme.edu.au](http://www.asme.edu.au)) provides significantly enhanced features for members and brings us closer together as a national community.

It is easy to access State and National news, events, information on activities and resources all in one place. As a member, you gain exclusive access to the National Resource Hub, which includes newsletters, advocacy and teaching resources, policy submissions, association reports and the *Australian Journal of Music Education*. This will continue to be expanded over time.

It has never been easier to renew your membership using a simple online form that accepts credit card, PayPal and bank transfer.

Your username to access the members area of the website is your email address used to receive ASME messages. If you have not already done so, you will need to reset your password before you can log in using this link: <https://www.asme.edu.au/wp-login.php?action=lostpassword>.

If you would like to update your email address or require assistance logging on, contact [membership@asme.edu.au](mailto:membership@asme.edu.au).

### The ASME (Vic) section of the website

Take a moment to visit the site and explore the **Victorian Chapter** page. In particular, if you navigate to the **Chapter Activities** tab, you will be able to access the Member Only resources that may be useful in preparing for 2024.

### Unpacking the VCE Music Study Design with Lynne Morton and Mark McSherry

Lynne and Mark share their approach to the VCE Music Study Design. The series of webinars unpack the Study Design in detail including a semester outline, a weekly plan, typical activities and an outline of the assessment tasks for each Outcome.

Webinar 1: Unit 1/2 + PDF of slides

Webinar 2: Activities and Assessment for Units ½ + PDF of slides

Webinar 3: Units 3/4 Contemporary Performance + PDF of slides

Webinar 4: Units 3/4 Repertoire Performance + PDF of slides



Webinar 5: Units 3/4 Music Inquiry with Mark McSherry + PDF of Analysis Resource

Webinar 6: Navigating the SACs and Rubrics of VCE Repertoire and Contemporary Music Performance +PDF of slides, sample SACs and rubrics.

### Resource Padlets

'Padlets' are online resource pages where numerous documents, links and contributions have been collected and curated.

Resources currently housed on the website include:

- Advocacy for Music Education
- Composing: Getting Started
- Indigenous Music (contemporary)
- Moving into the Profession – *Graduate Teachers Workshop*
- Professional Music Education Associations
- Setting Routines in the Music Classroom – *Graduate and Early Career Teachers' Workshop*
- Song Swap – *Great ideas for songs in the primary school*
- Song Swap: Brain Breaks – *More great ideas for songs in the primary school*
- Support for Music Programs Navigating the VGSA Time-in-Lieu Policy
- Surviving the End of the Year – *Early Career Teacher's Workshop*

Our ASME (Vic) web team is continuing to update our section of the website so watch for more additions coming soon.

– Sue Arney

### ASME (Vic) events

#### Early Career Music Teachers: Let Us Buy You a Drink!

#### Social Networking Event

Friday, 12 April, 2024

3.00 – 5.00pm

Queensberry Hotel, 593 Swanston Street, Carlton

FREE for pre-service & in-service music educators. Registration is essential (see opposite).

#### Teaching the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross-Curriculum Priority through Music – Jessie Lloyd

Monday, 29 April, 2024

5.45 – 7.15pm

In person and online

General admission \$40; ASME members and Melbourne University students and staff FREE. Registration is essential.

**For more details about each event and to register, visit the Victorian Chapter page of the ASME website and scroll to the Events section: <https://asme.edu.au/chapter/victoria/>**