

Making Musical Encounters Count:

TEACHING MUSIC MUSICALLY

"PEOPLE BECOME MUSICALLY ENGAGED WHEN THEY REGARD THE ACTIVITY AS MEANINGFUL, AS AUTHENTIC"

Swanwick, 2012, p. 35

Let's pause for a moment and think. Have you noticed the way you respond to music you hear/listen to every day?

Perhaps we engage in 'musicking' (Small, 1998), tapping the pulse and dancing alongside a lion dance performance. Perhaps we engage in 'purposive listening' (Green, 2002; cited in Green, 2008, p.6), as we try to finger segments of a riff/tune as it plays on our iPod, hoping to remember enough of it so as to play it when we next get to our instrument. Or perhaps we hum, on and off, a tune on the radio, 'without any aim other than enjoyment or entertainment' (ibid). Or perhaps, we had an earworm visit one day, and it made its presence felt throughout that day! Such, perhaps, characterize some of our encounters with music.

Musical encounters, as we would have noted from the examples above, are holistic. They are experiential. They are authentic. They are almost 'interactive' - they 'behaved' as if we have a relationship with it. And like building a relationship with another human, a relationship with music warrant repeated encounters. As musicians, we revisit (the same) musics again and again; and each time, enriched with further insights. As music teachers, we are at the privileged position to bring about such encounters with musics for our students, so that, years later, when music classrooms are a long past history for them, they will still revisit the musics, drawn by the depth of the relationship established.

So the fundamental question to ask when we conduct our music lessons is: **'what should students' attention be drawn to when they are engaged in music?' Is it the music elements? Is it the music concepts?**

Emeritus Prof Swanwick, in a meeting with STAR, suggested that while music elements and concepts constitute the core curricular materials in our music classrooms, only focusing on them, however, would be missing the point of music education, simply because these elements are not the reason why music is created! Music is fundamentally an expressive vehicle. **The learning of music elements and concepts become meaningful and authentic when framed within a musical experience, a musical encounter.** The richness of musical experience would thus feed the levels of musical understanding that our students learn.

How then, do we make our students' musical encounters count? Emeritus Prof Swanwick suggested that music elements and concepts be balanced with musical encounters/experiences that teachers should lead students to experience. A way to do that would be to engage students in **active music making**, which is fundamental to creating a relationship with music. And by doing that, we would have introduced music, just like a friend, to our students. This, hopefully, would bring us closer towards teaching music, *musically!*

THOUGHTS ON THE ARTS

Never before had we given more space and time to come together as a professional fraternity to reflect and develop effective teaching methods, to bring life in our arts classrooms. STAR Post takes you through the vignettes of the work at the Academy, that which brings meaning to the many music classroom routines we set into motion. But take a step backwards, a moment... Go and get yourself into your music making again! Reconnect and make music so that inner self creates with a true voice. Get out of your comfort zone and try another pathway to thinking how you make music. The very design of that music lesson, for those precious few minutes make an impact on the child's first understanding of music.

What is your legacy as a music educator? Why do you shape the sounds the way you are doing now, that your students are creating in music lessons every period of the week?

Music touches the child's inner being in ways of knowing and understanding that are deeper and more profound. There is room for us as an arts fraternity to join our ideas for music making and design that learning environment to make impact and influence. What are then your notions of music making? Try again to reframe. It's time. It's not difficult. Perhaps then it is very much up to our individual choice to make that design to change patterns, ways of seeing and learning. So decide. Make a choice to be that music educator in the classroom you can create as a legacy. It is a teachers' gift of music. It lasts for a lifetime.

Rebecca Chew

Academy Principal, Singapore Teachers' Academy for the aRTs

REFERENCE

- Green, L. (2002). *How Popular Musicians Learn*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate.
Small, C. (1998). *Musicking: The Meaning of Performing and Listening*. Hanover, New England: Wesleyan University Press.
Swanwick, K. (2012). *Teaching Music Musically*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.

WHAT'S ON AT STAR



An International Panel for Music was in Singapore from 28 January 2013 to 1 February 2013 for the first phase of the two-year PAM research project, which aims to study the impact of PE, Art and Music pedagogies in nurturing 21st century competencies and student outcomes.

The school visits to various General Music classrooms culminated in the International Panellists, Principals and teachers of participating schools coming together for initial conversations on pedagogies to enhance the holistic education of our students.

WHAT'S ON AT STAR

"Each student brings a realm of musical understanding into our educational institutions. We do not introduce them to music, they are already acquainted with it..."

Swanwick, 2012, p.47



Our Teacher-Researchers embarked on their Arts Pedagogical Research Fund (APRF) projects by exploring the various aspects of research under the guidance of Research Consultant Ms Poh Chwee Sian.

WHAT'S ON AT STAR



The journey of our Music STAR Champions (Secondary) began with generative conversations on the vision for student-centred music learning and teaching music musically. There was also much music making led by master musician Paul Griffiths from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London.

WHAT'S ON AT STAR



One aim of the music teacher is to bring music from the background into the foreground of awareness.

Swanwick, 2012, p.39



The Music STAR Champions (Primary) of the North and South cluster schools spent two days together on 25 and 26 February 2013, making music and continuing their conversations on student-centred music learning. The Music STAR Champions (Primary) of the East and West cluster schools will be meeting on 4 and 5 March 2013. Look out for their photos in the next issue of STAR Post!



P R O G R A M M E S

MILESTONE PROGRAMMES

TITLE OF PROGRAMMES	DETAILS	PARTICIPANTS
Orff Workshop * Application has closed	11 to 15 Mar 2013 at STAR Blk K	CS1, 2 and 3 Music Primary teachers
STAR Senior Teacher Milestone Programme (Module 1)	13 to 15 Mar 2013 at STAR Blk A	Only for nominated participants
Dalcroze Workshop * Registration details will be sent out	1 to 5 Apr 2013	CS1, 2 and 3 Music Primary teachers
BT Support Programme Session 3 (2012 Graduands)	12 Apr 2013 at STAR Blk K	By invitation only
Kodaly Workshop * Registration details will be sent out	June (to be confirmed)	CS1, 2 and 3 Music Primary teachers

UPSKILLING PROGRAMMES

TITLE OF PROGRAMMES	DETAILS	PARTICIPANTS
Music Teacher Practitioner Programme (MTPP) – 4th Intake	Ongoing at STAR Blk K	Primary teachers (by school nomination)
Audition for Music Teacher Practitioner Programme (MTPP) – 5th Intake	To be confirmed	Primary teachers (by school nomination)
Audition for Advanced Diploma	21 and 22 Mar 2013 at the National Institute of Education	Primary teachers (by school nomination)

PEDAGOGY IMPLEMENTATION

TITLE OF PROGRAMMES	DETAILS	PARTICIPANTS
STAR Champions (Primary) Workshop	4 to 5 Mar 2013 (East clusters & West clusters)	STAR Champions (Pri)

SUPPORTING PROGRAMMES

TITLE OF PROGRAMMES	DETAILS	PARTICIPANTS
The “What, Why and How” of Setting Exam Questions for Prescribed Setwork (Beethoven)	4 Mar 2013 (Mon) 3:00pm to 6:00pm at STAR Blk K Level 1	For O Level Music and MEP teachers
The “What, Why and How” of Setting Exam Questions for Prescribed Source Material (Chinese Sizhu)	12 Mar 2013 (Tue) 3:00pm to 6:00pm at STAR Blk K Level 1	For O Level Music and MEP teachers
Topics in Twentieth-Century Music Analysis: Motivic Analysis and Form Analysis in Stravinskyan Scholarship	Mar to Apr 2013 at St Joseph’s Institution (Independent)	For O Level and A Level Music and MEP teachers

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (COP)

NAME OF COP	DETAILS	CONTACT
Teachers’ Choir	Every Tuesday 4:00 to 6:00pm from March to May, Blk K Level 3 Recital Room	Please contact Ms Tan for details: Tan_Bee_Ngoh@moe.gov.sg
Javanese Gamelan	Every Thursday 4:00 to 6:00pm from April to May, Blk K Level 2 Gamelan Room; Only 15 places available	Please contact Ms Tan for details: Tan_Bee_Ngoh@moe.gov.sg

SPECIAL PROJECTS

The theme for **AEC-APSMER** is *Arts Education and the Community*. Conference presentations are on 17 to 18 Jul 2013.

The conference will see at least 200 Art, Music, Dance and Drama local and overseas educators share their knowledge and pedagogical expertise. It will also be a platform for arts educators to network and connect with the arts community.

Registration begins on 1 March 2013 and acceptance is on a first-come-first-serve basis. MOE teachers are fully subsidised and may register at <http://arts2013.sg/conference-registration-for-moe-teachers.html>. Independent school staff may visit the website www.arts2013.sg for registration and payment details.

WHAT'S ON AT THE ARTS SCENE?

Mosaic Music Festival

A celebration of music from around the world, Mosaic Music Festival 2013 includes Singapore debuts as well as all-time favourites from previous festivals.

8 Mar 2013 to 17 Mar 2013,
Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

The Singapore Repertory Theatre's The Little Company presents Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Music and lyrics have been specially written by the award-winning West-End musical theatre song writing duo of George Stiles and Anthony Drewe.

8 Mar 2013 to 21 Apr 2013,
DBS Arts Centre – Home of SRT

SSO Chamber Series: Fantasy for a Nobleman

A rare treat to hear chamber music from composers like Bizet, Rodrigo, Chabrier and Falla. Darrell Ang leads in this chamber concert featuring guest flautist Andrea Griminelli.

Sunday 17 Mar 2013, 4.00pm,
School of the Arts Concert Hall

SYCO & SCO Annual Concert: Dauntless Spirit 2013

Catch the Singapore Youth Chinese Orchestra and the Singapore Chinese Orchestra in their annual concert, featuring works such as movements from Liu Xi Jin's Mohe Tribe Suite.

Saturday 30 Mar 2013, 8.00pm,
SCO Concert Hall

TO SUBSCRIBE TO STAR-POST (MUSIC), PLEASE CONTACT STAR (MUSIC) TEAM:

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