



News and Notes

July 2010

The purpose of Music Ed Ventures is to search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. As a guiding principle, this purpose will focus our work on:

1. Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
2. Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
3. Networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups.

Are you interested in hosting a workshop or class in your area? Send requests to the email address shown above, to be routed to the appropriate presenters/coordinators.

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From Our President Marilyn Winter, Butte, Montana

Dear Fellow Educators,

Have you ever thought about the role music plays in our lives? How it not only entertains and is an avenue for self-expression but becomes the agent for so many other wonderful things to happen...

During the first week of June, my son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren and I attended the Montana Old Time Fiddlers Summer Camp near Great Falls, Montana. Each of us took lessons on either the fiddle or the mandolin. The days were filled with lessons or practice with a bit of fishing thrown in. After dinner one of the instructors treated us to a concert AND then we moved all the chairs back for a dance. All ages from four to eighty participated in the dancing. Four year olds were guided through the steps, eighty year olds breathlessly tried to keep up. Dads waltzed with daughters and moms do-si-doed with their sons. This was a beautiful time for family bonding and recreation. Music was the catalyst for this happening and served to enrich the happening.

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*This is a great time to send
in your BACK-TO-SCHOOL ideas
for the
August and September newsletters.*

News and Notes is the monthly communication of Music Ed Ventures, Inc. (MEI). Regular features will keep members and friends up to date on coming events and the latest teaching techniques, tips and strategies. Submissions are due on the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be submitted months in advance, indicating the month in which they are to be published. The committee reserves the right to select material to be published according to length and appropriateness. Articles should be 200-325 words. Visuals should be scanned and submitted as PDF or jpeg files. Submissions may be sent to PamBridgehouse@hughes.net and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.

From Our President (continued)

Another occasion comes to mind when five-year old Kendra attended a bluegrass picnic. Kendra was determined she was going to learn to play the fiddle. With her tiny fiddle in hand she wandered around the picnic site asking various people, "Will you teach me something?" One person showed her something about playing the fiddle. She then went over and sat on a rock away from the group to practice what she had been taught. Then Kendra returned to a new player repeating, "Will you teach me something?" Off she would go to practice her new challenge. Finally she asked her dad to play the guitar while she played what she had learned. All the guitar players gathered round and played as she soloed "Boil 'em Cabbages Down". This child learned that her community cares for her and is willing to give support. Her self-esteem must have grown by leaps when she became the center of attention with many adults following her lead.

I think of fourteen year old Holly who plays the cello beautifully, having mastered the art of playing in tune from her first lesson. Although Holly is capable of playing in a youth symphony, she chooses to play only in her room enjoying the experience just for herself. I believe that Holly is getting in touch with her inner-self using music as the pathway. The same thing happens when we spend hours listening to our favorite artist or compositions. We connect with our emotions, thoughts, and beliefs.

Matthew is a 17-year old senior who is a very passionate musician. He plays in the local youth symphony, practices two or three hours a day and hopes someday to study at Julliard. Music IS his life. Music connects him with the hundreds of people in the audience, conveying his understanding and feelings. The other performers in the symphony become his best friends; he learns to follow directions, work together, and to appreciate the value of hard work.

I am reminded of an article written by Pam Bridgehouse in our first Learning EdVentures magazine of how music brought two cultures together. It might be of interest to revisit that article on our website: <http://www.musicedventures.org/articles/Six%20Bosnians.htm> It is a marvel how music can transcend the ages, bring together various cultures and facilitate so many worthwhile experiences aside from the act of making music. This happens whether it be on the concert stage, in a guest room in the Bavarian Alps, on the dance floor, in ones own privacy, or perched on a rock in the middle of Montana.

Continue to enjoy this beautiful summer!
Marilyn

It's a Miracle!

Written July 29, 1992 by Pam Bridgehouse in Scotts Mills, Oregon

Making music is a miracle. Making music with other people is a miracle multiplied.

I'm a lyric coloratura who by some twist of fate teaches 5th-8th grade band at tiny schools and loves it. Needing some freshness in my professional life, I learned to play the trombone this past summer in order to participate in the Concert and Stage Band Literature Workshop at Lewis and Clark College. As the reading sessions progressed and I was nurtured and carried along by the accomplished and experienced players around me, I was reminded of how easy it is to forget the miracle.

In the business of choosing scores, planning performances, scheduling classes, and juggling budgets, a band director/teacher might easily forget:

- The naive thrill that gushes through the young player who is "getting it right" for the first time;
- The bittersweet, frustrated satisfaction that grinds and stretches inside a young player who is bonding with the instrument, coming to an intimate knowledge of it; developing the ability to compensate for weaknesses, build on strengths, and eventually to produce what is expected of them both;
- The beginning player's gradual discovery of identity and purpose in the weaving of the music into a broad intangible sash that encircles the ensemble and binds it together.

These are the reasons for making music and for making music together. May they never become so ordinary or so distant in our own experience that the sense of the miracle is lost.

Pam Bridgehouse, Music Specialist
Scotts Mills Elementary (K-8, 150 students)
North Howell Elementary (K-8, 75 students)