Raise Your Hands, and Your Spirit Higher
by Daryl Allison

We all do it. Admit it, you do too. What’s the saying? 90% of people do it, the other 10% are lying. We sing in the shower. We sing along with the radio while driving. For those who haven’t taken the plunge, some part of us secretly wishes for the courage to get up there and sing karaoke.

Try hopping on a treadmill without music. Boooring! Now put some headphones on, play some upbeat music, and run further then you thought possible. Where did the time go?

When thinking, we scratch our heads, but when we feel passionate about something we touch our hearts – where our spirits live. Music, in its purest form, is all heart and soul. We have natural rhythm built into us – our heartbeats. Soft, slow, peaceful music slows our rhythm, relaxes us. Uptempo music excites us. Our hearts dance along. Our spirit takes the queue, embracing what it hears.

When listening to the greatest works of music, whether your spirit calls to Beethoven or some of the best 70’s rock, we close our eyes, we feel it, it washes over us. We can’t remain in a down mood. We can’t help but feel inspired, invigorated.

What would movies be without music? The drama, the suspense, the crescendo, ... gone. I could do without those jarring soundtracks; but I’ll never sacrifice the many great experiences.

Try and tell me you don’t hear what I hear: Jaws – The great white, lurking somewhere in the dark waters. Terminator – The mechanical skeleton rising from molten metal, coming to replace us. Star Wars – Hope, regardless the odds.

Heck, imagine Tom Cruise’s career without some good Old Time Rock ‘n Roll. Rocky, he was all heart if not also the Eye of the Tiger.

Ever been to a birthday party where they didn’t sing? A wedding where there wasn’t music to dance to? The moments we celebrate in life, when our spirits are lifted highest, it’s music laying the red carpet. All languages. All cultures.

Turn the volume up on the inside. Take a moment to listen to your favorite song. Give your spirit something to celebrate.

Language in music and language in print have many similarities, such as the use of abstract symbols. Both oral language and written language can be obtained in the same manner. That is, by using them in a variety of holistic literacy experiences, and building on what the students already know about oral and written language (Clay, 1993).

For example, emergent readers will attempt to "read" along in a shared reading of a familiar text, just as they will join in a song along to a familiar song. (Sometimes making up the words as they go!) Just as emergent reading and writing are acquired to drawing and pretending to write, musical learning is connected to song and movement. Children instinctively listen to music and try to identify familiar melodies and rhythms, just as early readers will look for words that sound alike, have patterns, or rhyme (Jalongo & Ribblett, 1987). Song picture books such as The Ants Go Marching or The More We Get Together, support early readers in this manner. They also illustrate how the use of familiar text, predictability, and repetition can encourage children to read. Using songs put to print can expand vocabulary and knowledge of story structure, as well as build on concepts about print. The use of music for reading instruction allows children to easily recall new vocabulary, facts, numbers, and conventions of print. For example, try to remember how you learned your ABC’s or other memory skills — many people learn them musically. Meet me at the Garden Gate* can be used to teach children to skip count by two’s; it is a song that is readily learned while at the same time assimilates the mathematical concept.

Repetition in songs supports and enhances emergent literacy by offering children an opportunity to read higher-leveled text and to read with the music over and over again in a meaningful context. Print put to music also allows children to build on past experiences, which in turn invites them to participate in reading and singing at the same time. Using Over the River and Through the Woods (Child,1996) for instruction affords first grade students the familiarity necessary to read a higher leveled text based on past experiences. Furthermore, teachers using repetitive text can easily model and exaggerate the repetition, rhyme, and rhythm of story, thereby encouraging the children to join in.

A child’s initial introduction to patterned text often first occurs in songs, chants, and rhymes that are repeated over and over again throughout childhood. Once children become familiar with this patterning, they are excited and able to participate in shared reading, writing and other oral language experiences. Concepts about print become more meaningful, and conventions of print are learned in context. Additionally, substitutions in songs, chants or poems can provide for real language experience opportunities. When emergent readers see printed words in the text again and again, they come to identify those words and phrases by their similarities and configurations. Emergent readers who learn Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed (Christeloff, 1989), for instance, can quickly spot the quotations marks and capital letters in the doctor’s statement, “No more monkeys jumping on the bed!” (Jalongo & Ribblett, 1997).

The effects of music on the emotions are commonly known. However the effects of music on the brain and thinking are demonstrable. Research has shown that during an electroencephalogram (EEG), music can change brain waves and make the brain more receptive to learning. Music connects the functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain so that they work together and make learning quick and easy. Brain function is increased when listening to music and studies have shown that music promotes more complex thinking. It can make connections between emotions, thinking and
Howard Gardner’s research on Multiple Intelligences supports this idea. He describes how people demonstrate different skills and talents while trying to learn. Therefore, classrooms must provide different approaches to meet an individual student’s areas of strength in order to be the most successful. For example, Gardner’s Musical-Rhythmic learners are sensitive to nonverbal sounds and are very much aware of tone, pitch and timbre. Using rhythm, chanting, and songs with these students can increase their attention and interest while motivating them to learn (Gardner, 1985).

Advertisers and filmmakers realize and utilize the power of music to evoke emotions and get our attention. Educators need to learn from this multi-million dollar industry and use music to our advantage to help children to learn (Davies, 2000).

Good first teaching is based on using what children already know, and the influence of music on learning is clear. Therefore it seems that teachers should be motivated to incorporate music, rhymes, chants, rhythm, and songs in the classroom. If music can set the stage for learning, increase a child’s interest, and activate a student’s thinking, what are we waiting for?

Music gives a soul to the universe,
Wings to the mind.
Flight to the imagination...
And life to everything:

—Plato

References


by Daryl Allison

You remember sitting in the car listening to the radio, making mix tapes of your favorite bands, maybe a special one for your high school sweetheart. Today’s kids aren’t any different in their love for music. More have been moved at some point in their lives by a piece of music they listened to than a game they watched.

How many families are heading out for a local, free concert in the park? How many kids can grab an instrument and go jam in the backyard with Dad?

We encourage our kids into Little League Baseball. High school football gets segments on local sports news. College football and basketball are huge industries. None of these are professions. They are all parts of our kids growth and education. Yes, being active is important in health. There are plenty of studies that show healthy competition, the discipline of sports, structure of teams, all these facets of sports benefits our children. There are an equal number of studies that show the benefits that music education has on learning as a whole. I could list plenty of those studies, but instead I’m going to share with you this quote that I love from Nina Kraus, a prominent brain researcher at Northwestern University, “Music training leads to changes throughout the auditory system that prime musicians for listening challenges beyond music processing...music training does for brain fitness what exercise does for body fitness.”

With how we push and promote our kids into sports, surely we care about their minds as much as their bodies, right? Where’s the encouragement for kids to register for their seasonal, organized jam sessions? Where’s the local media covering the local amateur bands every Friday night? Where’s the March Madness Battle of the Bands?

Did you know over one billion dollars are given out in athletic scholarships every year? The average athletic scholarship exceeds $10,000. The average music scholarship is in the neighborhood of 20% of that total, with far fewer of them awarded. College is the highest level of education. Every family wants their children to go. Our system says playing sports is the smart choice, that being an athlete makes college more likely an affordable option, yet it’s music that makes college more likely to be an option in the first place.

Tomorrow, Part 3

Muzart is very pleased to reprint Highland Elementary School’s letter of endorsement for our cause:
To Whom It May Concern,

We, the teachers, students, and staff of Highland Elementary in Glasgow, KY are proud to endorse the MuzArt World Foundation in their efforts to support keeping the arts in public education. We too believe in Gardner’s multiple intelligences and know that each one must be cultivated and made important, for they all have an important place within our world. We would like to thank Mr. Melfi, and everyone working hard on this project for their vision, their passion for the arts, and their commitment.

We have also been blessed to have Nayna Nambiar, one of the children who will bring the song “Each One, Teach One” to the world, here at Highland. When we heard Nayna sing this song, we decided to use it as our theme song for the school year here. We have begun a big push to help our students realize that even small things go a long way to make a difference in our world – and this song suits that ideal perfectly.

We are so honored to be the pilot school for this movement and we encourage all other schools in the country and world to stand alongside us as we raise awareness of the importance of the arts in public schools. With everyone’s help, “we can make a difference in this world.”

Sincerely,

Sharon Flowers ~ Principal

Amanda Taylor ~ Music Educator

Nayna Nambiar

MuzArt World Foundation™ will demonstrate how the power of a song can empower children across the globe; the understanding they can make a difference with the mainstream release of the song “Each One Teach One.”

The project will encompass the development of the song “Each One Teach One” in both audio and visual form, and be released globally into the mainstream media. The project will benefit charities all over the world that are specific to children and their well being.

Project Producers: Ken Kragen, founder and creator of We Are The World, Hands Across America, Live Aid together with Pat Melfi, Former VP MCA, Five Time Promoter of the Year, Concert Tour Management for The Eagles, Alabama, Rod Stewart, and Tom Petty & The Heart Breakers will develop, produce and market the project.

We are certain that as you ponder these initial thoughts, you will see all of the areas YOU can participate in and with your abilities and talents, make a meaningful contribution in this program with us. We all know we have to turn this train around by empowering the children of tomorrow with accurate knowledge.

We are interested in many areas that center around the re-development of “quality work ethic”, “generational mindset change leading to a greater peace in the home, school, and community”, “financial literacy” and “child empowerment” in children’s minds across the world. We are intending to do that with the development of a beautiful song that Pat Melfi and partner Ken Kragen discovered along their journey. We can pull this off with the support of community members across the world that are truly dedicated to youth. This is an incredible opportunity to pass a life changing message to children through children…a peer-to-peer passage.

Companies across the globe can be a part of that process. While we seem to be a divided world on many topics, one of those topics, is not our children. As parents, we all want one thing for our children; a real shot at their success… and that requires additional education. That being said, we have to re-direct their thought process from “entitlement” to “privilege”.

Back to a place that gets them on track, a place that gets them to understand hard work will help them achieve their dreams, a place that allows them to understand it is OK to have differences in opinion, but those differences can co-exist in peace. A hope and change they can truly believe in, and for the benefit of each child one filled with accountability.

Phase One: Develop campaign in schools across the world with a strategic plan to engrain into the minds of children, but we must take action. We must get back to the core ethics our grandparents gave us. In a turbulent world, such as the one we live in today, we have an opportunity to change the environment we live in. This is at the very core of our drive, passion and enthusiasm for the “Each One Teach One” project.

Corporate sponsor desiring to align their corporate image with youth, around the world to design, and distribute a poster campaign. In addition, to develop with our team campaigns pertaining to contests for children to submit social impact deeds, as well as enlist teachers as teachers with the goal of getting their children in their school districts to perform “Each One Teach One” with their choirs.

Let’s begin the revolution of the MuzArt World Foundation™!!!

Pat Melfi & Ken Kragen

Ken Kragen is one of the creators of ‘We Are The World’, a charity benefit project that turned ‘Certified Multiplatinum,’ in 1985 in pursuit of famine relief in Africa. The song was first recorded by The Supergroup USA, a huge list of a-list performers of the day. The song was written by the late Michael Jackson and R&B artist Lionel Richie. The song was produced by Quincy Jones, and Michael Omartian for the album carrying the same title, ‘We Are The World’. The song sold over 20 million copies.

Pat Melfi, former VP of MCA Records showed up at Kragen’s home in Beverly Hills with a dream to create an event much like that of ‘We Are The World’, for children using the song ‘Each One Teach One,’ that would be placed on the StarPointe Record Label owned by Kragen, Melfi, & Brunetti. In doing so they would be educating all humanity on the importance of music and arts education now, and for future generations to come.

Based on past performances it is very safe to say Kragen, and Melfi understand the importance of not only their involvement as humanitarians wanting to set the stage for a positive outcome but more importantly planting the seeds that will allow support on a cause of great importance to grow. An investment in our children’s future is at stake, and our world of peace at hand. Bringing the two together in hope of opening hearts filled with compassion for humanity and generating good will in mankind to want to be supportive enough to make the difference investing love, peace, and goodwill for the
MuzArt World Foundation™ champions social cause through music generating income that will be donated back into the cause. Melfi, and social cause partner Milliea Mckinney, has also partnered in Conscious Music Entertainment a talent agency that will promote conscious talent and music. To illustrate the picture of peace and education Kragen and Melfi did a worldwide talent search to find the most talented children in the country to perform ‘Each One Teach One,’ under the direction and vocal production of Chuck Butler, who as an artist, vocalist, and vocal producer and brings with him the earned respect of some of the biggest names in the music industry and an acknowledgement from the Grammys and 35 years of experience. Together, Kragen, Melfi and Butler will bring ‘Each One Teach One,’ with the five winners of that search which are as follows; Jackson Nance, Joey King, Jalon Watts, AJ Green, and Natalie.

A country leader’s job that will be said; all out of the mouths of babes…Each One Teach One.