

Hearts in Harmony 10.10.10 - community music day report – by Susie Davies-Splitter

ACU (The Australian Catholic University Melbourne) School of Education presented the first of a series of community music events entitled 'Hearts in Harmony' on a balmy Sunday 10.10.10.

This day was open to all ages, backgrounds and abilities and no musical experience was required. At 8am, about 15 wonderful student volunteers plus 3 teachers met me in Central Hall for a debrief and then all hands were on deck for an hour before the crowds arrived. Volunteers helped to set up the catering for morning tea, unload the copious instruments needed for the sessions, set up the registration area and chairs in the rooms and meet and greet the participants. My assistant organizer, Jason Triggs (B.Ed primary/early childhood) ACU student, did a splendid job of making the volunteer and presenter name tags, all signage, liaison with the security and comparing the lunchtime concert as well as attending a number of meetings with me. A huge vote of thanks go to Jason and all the volunteers. The day was successful because of their hard work and cheery demeanor.

The All In session began with Phil and I leading some singing and dancing activities to get everyone in the mood. This followed by a session with Jon Madin, Geelong's local teacher/composer/instrument inventor where participants played some of his wonderful and wacky instruments such as marimbas, echo cellos, shaker rings and musical bikes. At the same time, Steve Durbin led a drum circle. It was so refreshing to see 3 year olds play alongside older children and adults and all feel part of the experience. Babette, adult participant said "What a joyful community and all ages and ability event. And to have an 11 year old next to me teaching me the marimba – was delightful! I realised that I wasn't playing CABBAGE properly – she gently pointed out that I must stay on the B longer!"

Morning tea was a great hit with people queueing up for their drinks and nibbles and then onto another session with Steve Durbin again or Mike Jackson and son Thom learning how to play the ukulele. Mike, a seasoned children's entertainer and Thom, a fabulous musician brought around 70 ukuleles for people to play and play they did. Tunes from 'Kookaburra sits on the old gum tree' to 'Achy Breaky Heart' and "Lion sleeps tonight". Mike has devised a coloured dot system so we know where to put our fingers for the various chords. It's a very simple and effective method of playing the uke!

The lunchtime concert featured a 10 year old girl Talitha, who elegantly sang and danced for us, the ACU community choir involving the audience in singing and dancing, the Ashwood Special School choir who sang a rendition of 'Lean on Me' and finally Mike Jackson and his son Thom.

In the afternoon, Audrey Fine shared some of her wonderful folk dance repertoire with us and Jon Madin presented an instrument making session.

Rosemary Fernando, ACU staff comments “Thanks so much for a very inspiring and uplifting day yesterday. My daughter and her friend had such a great time they were buzzing for quite a while after the event! It was gorgeous to see such a variety of ages and backgrounds connecting together through music.” Jason Triggs, ACU student writes “What a wonderful day, I feel so blessed to have been part of it. Great feedback from everyone. Thank you”

A huge vote of thanks go to the ACU School of Education for hosting the day and our sponsors Allans/Billy Hyde and Mini Maestros.

The goal was to:

- Bring people together from a range of backgrounds and abilities and create happy and healthy communities through music.
- Give ACU students, practicing teachers and arts practitioners an opportunity to see how music and the creative arts can be successfully shared and implemented at a community level
- Motivate and inspire student and practicing teachers to implement similar programs within their school communities

The future plans are to have at least 2 of these events in 2011 and create sustainable and affordable opportunities (free of charge for all) for pre-service teachers, general community and Atherton Gardens community to come together and make a difference through music.

**“Let’s all join hands as one, no matter who we are.
Together we make a difference, each a shining star
All of us are equal and this we must believe
Together we can fly, with our hearts in harmony”**

(words from ‘Hearts in Harmony’ song by Davies-Splitter and Splitter)