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Tobin Music

ACCELERATING MUSIC LITERACY

News

Tobin Music Training First Hand by Morrice and Christine Wells

Christine and I had the pleasure of attending the Module 1 Tobin Training held in Saffron Walden on 4th April this year. This was not the first session we have been to, so it was an opportunity to remind ourselves of module 1 of the Associate Tobin Teachers course, and also to witness first hand the changes that have taken place in presentation over recent months. It is clear that the use of technology is going to help many more teachers deliver the system to the highest standards.



We were warmly welcomed on arrival, and made to feel very much a part of the group, who were there to gain knowledge about this aspect of the Tobin Music Training System. There is always a lovely atmosphere on the courses.

The secret to fully appreciating this model of learning is to be able to leave behind your adult view of the world and to try to put yourself back into the mindset of a child. This is easier said than done but Jules and Chris soon made us forget our learned adult perspectives and expectations, they helped us to rediscover the excitement and enthusiasm enjoyed by every child. It is a voyage of discovery, a world of magic, of colour, of sound and shapes.

Although the method was designed many years ago (when the chalkboard was the main teaching tool!) the delivery of the system is clearly moving with the times. We could see the progress that has been made by Jules and Chris Hall, both in terms of their presentation and the technology they have developed to support that presentation. The terrific PowerPoint presentation projected on a large screen incorporates high quality of sound, the instant use of colour when describing the musical notes, and even includes some film of Candida teaching the Great Stave. Being trained by Candida on film was a profound and thought provoking part of the course; all the adults in the room followed her instructions without prompting.

Jules and Chris worked so well together, a wonderful double act! There is a flow in their individual contributions, which dovetail together into a seamless whole. They present the information in an easy to understand and energising way. Their collective enthusiasm is catching and impossible to resist; there was a real sense of excitement from the trainee teachers. Well done to Jules and Chris for putting this training program together, and well done Maggie for providing another training base in Saffron Walden, Essex.

If you have not yet signed up for your training, we suggest you do so now, you will enjoy a wonderful experience and will learn many additional skills in teaching music to children, to add on to those you already possess.

A System That Works by Charlotte Helsby

Having studied music and education for 3 years at Cambridge University, completed a PGCE and now in my second year of teaching year 6 at a primary school in Sussex I have always strived to find a method of teaching music that even non-specialists would be comfortable teaching.

There are a number of methods that I have seen used in a variety of schools, which I have considered to be lacking in a variety of different elements however after going to a taster session in London to learn about the Tobin Music System, it became evident that this method was above and beyond what I had been looking for.

I have now had the opportunity to teach the system to a year group of 6 year olds and have been astounded by the progress they have made. Within a matter of weeks the improvement in the children is evident and their learning has come on in leaps and bounds. Their mathematical skills (knowing fractions linked to the note lengths) have improved beyond recognition and their confidence shines through.

I also teach music privately and the rate of pupil progress is rapid when using the Tobin Music System. After just a few weeks of Tobin lessons, even younger pupils have a better musical understanding than some pupils who have had musical tuition for a number of years. I cannot wait to implement this system throughout the rest of the school I teach in and I can only hope to see it growing as a nationally taught system over the coming years.

– Hilltop Primary School, Sussex



The Schools Music Association 71st Annual Course/Conference
is taking place in Bristol
at the Arnos Manor Hotel 23-25 October 2009

The Schools Music Association is recognised as a national voice for music in education. We provide an essential network for music teachers, which serves as a vital link between those working with young people and the policy makers at local, regional and national level.

This Annual Conference is one of the most useful and affordable events of this kind, from which delegates gain a wealth of practical input from presenters at the forefront of their specialisms. It is intended for anyone, from any sector of education - private or state, whether teaching assistant, generalist teacher or specialist, or for students intending to become teachers, covering EY - Ks4.

This year the following topics will be offered: Steel Pans, Gamelan, Conducting, Teaching the Recorder, the Tobin Method, Kodaly in the classroom, Debbie Campbell and Alison Hedger with their most recent works, and recording techniques - looping & sampling to create a ringtone, as well as a highly entertaining presentation all about acoustics.

Contact: Carole Lindsay-Douglas (Hon. SMA Conference Secretary) at carole@lindsaymusic.co.uk or by phone on 01767-316521 who will be please to email or post out an application form with more details.

www.schoolsmusic.org.uk

Psychology of the Tobin Music System - Multiple Intelligences by Joe Mathers



I am currently taking the associate training course and through these sessions I have seen how taking a different approach to musical education can have amazing outcomes. In this article I will explore the psychology of the Tobin Music system to see why it works so well. Firstly, I will look at the idea that the system breaks away from traditional education methods which have a narrow understanding of what intelligence is and hence, fail to understand how education can be optimised.

In 1983 a book was published which has led to exciting changes in how education is conceptualised in psychology. This book was 'Frames of Mind: The theory of Multiple Intelligences' written by Howard Gardner of Harvard University. This was a reaction to the education system at the time which Gardner thought was too focused on the three r's: reading writing and arithmetic. As a consequence of research into use of symbols between gifted and normal children, he proposed seven forms of intelligence: logical, linguistic, spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, intra and interpersonal. (Recently naturalist intelligence has been proposed as an eighth addition.)

The traditional 'black and white' education system (with which we can associate a traditional music education) strongly focuses on methods which appeal to only two forms of intelligence: the logical and linguistic. Gardner sees everyone as having a unique distribution of intelligence between these seven categories. To focus on only two of these is to the detriment of the learners; this is evident when you consider students learning through the Tobin Music System excel far beyond their peers using traditional methods. This is because the system engages all seven intelligences and so appeals to everyone rather than only those with logical-mathematical and linguistic dominance.

The benefit of multiple intelligences is that there become seven different paths to learning and teaching. Say a child cannot understand something presented in a numerical way (explaining rhythm as a mathematic formula). If this same idea is presented in a different way, say pictorially (rhythm cards), the child may easily grasp what was previously much more complex. This would be because the child's intelligence was more spatial than logically oriented.

When children learn about the cycle of fifths they travel around the scale (represented by classmates wearing coloured ribbons and playing hand chimes) to find the next scale and work out which note has to be raised. In this simple but effective activity they are using, spatial intelligence, logical intelligence, linguistic intelligence. When they manipulate rhythm cards to make their own rhythms they are using kinaesthetic intelligence, logical intelligence, spatial intelligence. When we sing and play together we are nourishing our musical and interpersonal intelligence. When the children compose they use intrapersonal intelligence to express their feelings and emotions.

Logical and Linguistic intelligence (traditionally measured by IQ tests) only represents a fraction of what human intelligence is capable of. People who are particularly strong with these two intelligences are sometimes referred to as 'left brained' this is due to the functions being performed in the left hemisphere of the brain along with mathematical reasoning and writing. It is easy to see the traditional approach to education as overly left brained and it is no coincidence that many of the great thinkers of the early nineties were schooled outside of the state education system.

The right hemisphere of the brain is thought to be responsible for the visual, auditory, spatial and creative processing in the brain. The pop-psychology books of Educational Psychologist Tony Buzan (e.g. 'Make the Most of Your Mind' and 'Use Your Head') highlight the gains that can be made by combining the two hemispheres using techniques such as mind mapping and visualisations to vastly increase memory and understanding. The system has been designed to appeal strongly to the right brain by its inclusion of colour, humour, shape manipulation, movement and story telling.

I have explored the idea that human intelligence is a diverse concept with multiple forms of expression. Although the exact distribution of the seven (or eight) forms of intelligence in the different hemispheres of the brain is not and may never be fully understood it is clear that using one in isolation from the other is highly detrimental. This is best shown when we see how fast things can be learned when the two hemispheres – and as a consequence all the forms of intelligence – are functioning together, as happens in the Tobin System.

Outstanding Pupil

Olivia Allen from Tamworth was mentioned briefly in the April newsletter and we are pleased to report on her exam success. She passed her grade 1 ABRSM piano exam with a very high distinction mark of 142. Olivia had only been playing for 10 months before taking the exam, aged 8 and is a totally Tobin taught musician.

The comments from the examiner reflect her remarkable achievement:
'Many congratulations on this high distinction – very fine piano playing here'

Paul Allen, Olivia's Dad is very happy with her achievements:
'I tell Olivia that learning an instrument is a marathon, not a sprint – but her progress has been rapid! I am so pleased that Olivia took two terms of the Saturday morning Tobin classes before beginning the piano because this is where she developed musicianship skills that make learning an instrument easier. Within 10 weeks she had worked through Wizard's Way Piano Book 1 – it all made sense to her because she was musically literate. I would recommend the system to all parents'

Olivia's teacher, Julie Hall had this to say:
'I am delighted with Olivia's progress, not only were her pieces technically assured and musical – her supporting scales, sight reading and aural tests were given full marks. There is no doubt that the system has successfully developed these essential musicianship skills and thanks to the positive support and encouragement from her Dad I can see a bright future for this confident, young musician'.

And the young pianist? Well the smile says it all! Well done Olivia.



TOBIN TEACHER TRAINING

Associate Tobin Teacher training courses are available in Saffron Walden as well as Tamworth. Please book as soon as possible to ensure a place.

Tamworth, Staffordshire

To book contact Julie Hall tel: 01827 282949

Email: JulesDuceHall@aol.com

MODULE 3	Sunday	3rd May	Full Day	£80
MODULE 4	Sunday	7th June	Full Day	£80
MODULE 5	Sunday	21st June	Full Day	£80
ASSOCIATE EXAM	Saturday	4th July	1.00pm	£30

Saffron Walden, Essex

To book contact Maggi Griffiths tel: 01799 500899

Email: maggigriffiths@hotmail.com

MODULE 3	Sunday	10th May	Full Day	£80
MODULE 4	Sunday	14th June	Full Day	£80
MODULE 5	Sunday	28th June	Full Day	£80
ASSOCIATE EXAM	Sunday	5th July	1.00pm	£30

NEWS CONTRIBUTIONS

We would love to hear about your news and any outstanding pupils. Please send all contributions, of no more than 200 words, to newsletter@tobinmusic.co.uk

TOBIN MUSIC
The Old Malthouse
Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth,
Hertfordshire, CM21 9AX
Tel: 01279 726625
www.tobinmusic.co.uk