

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

REPORT BY – ALESSANDRA PRETTO - CHURCHILL
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THE PETER MITCHELL CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP – TO
OBSERVE THE COLOURSTRINGS PROGRAM IN HELSINKI,
FINLAND.

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Précis and Acknowledgments

This report details my experience from a 2002 Peter Mitchell Churchill Fellowship visit to The East Helsinki Institute, Finland observing the Colourstrings program.

Specific areas observed:

- The composition of the program:
 - The Little Rascals.
 - The Singing and Rhythm Rascals.
 - The Instrumental Rascals, ABC. Violin.
- The Colourstrings philosophy in practice.
- Ensemble training.
- Development of new repertoire.

My visit to Finland and the invaluable experiences gained would not have been achieved without:

- The financial assistance from the Peter Mitchell Trust and the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.
- The support from my violin teacher Tor Frømyhr and the Director of the Canberra School of music, Professor Nicollete Frallion. For inspiring and fostering my ideas and plans.
- Géza and Csaba Szilvay for translating and sharing all their knowledge with me and the staff and children of the East Helsinki Music Institute for inviting me into the Colourstrings family and making my stay pleasurable.

- My family Mum, Dad, Jacqueline, David and Christian for their love, support and encouragement.

Program

Helsinki 7th January – 31st February

East Helsinki Institute:

A weekly routine of observing Ensemble classes, individual lessons, Music Kindergarten and the various levels of orchestras leading to The Helsinki Strings.

Kuhmo 1st February – 3rd February

VIII Prima Nota di Kuhmo

Observed and participated in a three day Children's Music Festival in Kuhmo.

Helsinki 4th February – 11th February

East Helsinki Institute.

Introduction

Background

My reason for studying the Colourstrings program was borne out of the passion of wanting to give and to make good quality musical training accessible to generations of Australian children. After experiencing and observing several serious shortcomings in my own musical training (curricular and pedagogical) I became convinced that there must be a more holistic approach to musical learning. Knowing the excellent rapport and working relationship I held with children, I felt it was my duty and responsibility to deliver the very best quality music education to them. It was at this stage my violin teacher Tor Frømyhr brought to my attention the work of Géza and Csaba Szilvay, the Colourstrings program and The East Helsinki Music Institute. This program seemed to be the most thorough, creative and stimulating way to teach the violin. It has proven so popular that professional musicians and pedagogues from around the globe attend symposiums and teacher training courses in Colourstrings every year.

I was not entirely sure what Colourstrings had in store for me. Upon my arrival I discovered, I was not only going to view the Colourstrings in action, but that the East Helsinki Institute had amalgamated with the Roihoivouri Elementary school and a new music school had been developed was in its third year of a 6 year trial period. The primary focus of my Fellowship was to study the Colourstrings program, concentrating in the area of early string pedagogy, with particular emphasis on early childhood violin technique. Géza Szilvay became my mentor.

Colourstrings General Philosophy

The Colourstrings program, in its 30th year is, a highly creative, holistic and unique approach to string pedagogy. It is the only fully comprehensive method developed for this age group and the only program to educate and develop a child's mind, body and soul. Colourstrings style of music teaching caters for the individual child, whether they want to be a professional musician, pedagogue or serious connoisseur of music. They all receive the same quality education.

The Hungarian brothers Géza and Csaba Szilvay are strong believers in the Zoltán Kodály philosophies and principles. These are:

- every child should have the right to a good quality musical education;
- music is integral and beneficial to the early stages of a child's intellectual and social development;
- the delivery of music to a child via the mother tongue and each child's indigenous backgrounds should be fostered; and,
- music can be fun for all involved.

These Kodály principles are at the heart of the Colourstrings approach.

Colourstrings relies heavily upon a child – teacher – parent relationship. The Colourstrings delivers teaching first via the subconscious mind, then semi-conscious and lastly the conscious. Colourstrings teaching is a combination of individual lessons and ensemble classes. Realising the importance of one - on - one tuition for the purpose of working on individual needs, an aim of the Colourstrings program is to mould the child to their instrument, according to their anatomical features. The Colourstrings program is a continually evolving method, designed to appeal to young children and to fill the gaps in the material written for this age group. Initially designed for the violin and cello has subsequently been adapted to piano, guitar, double bass, viola and flute. The system develops in three stages - Little Rascals, Singing and Rhythm Rascals and Instrumental Rascals. It aims to develop the individual child emotionally, intellectually and musically.

Colourstrings

Three phase system: The children make a journey through music land as they would through a series of fairytale books where they are introduced to the characters and folk tunes used throughout the Colourstrings training. They begin their journey at the age of 3 – 6 months, and at the age of 5 – 6 years proceed with Instrumental Rascals Colourstrings; this depends on the individual child's developmental stage.

The Little Rascals: This phase is for young children and consists of a series of storybooks, i.e., to be read and listened to at home with their parents. The material introduces and displays the fundamental concepts of music, such as pitch, dynamics, tempo/ beat, emotions and the timbre quality of different instruments. Unfortunately, at this stage this material has not been adapted to the English language. However, it is soon to become available.

The Singing and Rhythm Rascals: This material is experienced in the Music Kindergarten or Music Playschool classes and is designed for children between the ages of 3 – 7 years. It plants the seed for future instrumental learning, sets the working environment needed for music training and is always reinforcing the Colourstrings philosophy of combining practical, musical, emotional and intellectual learning. It uses characters from children's tangible world and develops the musical ear of a child through solmization.¹ The tunes start with two - note melodies and slowly progress by adding one note at a time until they reach the range of pentatonic, minor and major scales. The material used consists of:

- 6 picture/song books that have captivating characters on glossy pages;
- 6 CD's that relate a story focused around the folk tunes used for each book; and,
- 6 work books, cleverly designed to depict the pitch and rhythm experienced in the folk tunes heard on the CD.

Featured in one of the workbooks, is the Kangaroo with a Joey in its pouch. It represents a dotted crotchet, which is a note that has a value of one and a half. Children can colour and follow characters when listening to the music and it sets the visual component to the direction of pitch and rhythm.

¹ Solmization is the term used for the systems of naming the degrees of the scale by syllables instead of letters. Most common syllables are DO, RE, MI, FA, SO, LA, TI.

The Music Kindergarten classes develop all fundamental components of music on a practical and intellectual level. By working with the sense of sound, sight and touch. Every week classes involve:

- Singing: a fun approach to developing a child's musical ear;
- Rhythm games: which develops inner rhythm, also has an added benefit of developing coordination, which is fundamental when playing an instrument.
- Theory: which initiates the intellect in music.

All lessons are pitched at the class age group. For example, for the 3-6 month age group, the classes are far more tactile and the parents' involvement is extremely crucial; they help generate the rhythm and the gross sense of pitch concepts in their child. The 5-7 year group, are far more independent. At this level they dance, sing, colour and comprehend melodies and rhythm patterns. The classes are also an opportunity for students to become familiar, with and exposed to, folk music from various cultures. This gives the child another rhythmic and melodic structure to add to their palate.



Music Kindergarten: 3 – 6 month baby's class.

I thoroughly enjoyed observing the work of Teri Kuparinen, one of the Music Kindergarten teachers. I was impressed with the energy and enthusiasm that Teri presented in her teaching and how this is reflected in the full attention and respect received from the children.

During these classes I learnt of the other material Teri drew from for her lesson plans. This included the Finnish body percussionist Elina Kivelä, who has produced a video for PE, dance and music teachers with new ideas in developing rhythm skills. I have found these exercises extremely useful for generating rhythm and coordination in students.

Kodály classes are already conducted in Australia. However, there is room for expansion and to make this training available nation wide. I believe it is important for every child in Australia to be exposed to this training. Not only is it beneficial for a child who is interested in being a musician, but also for those who are interested in other curricular activities such as sport. It helps develop coordination, which is extremely important for children interested in any of these fields.

The Instrumental Rascals ABC: The ABC material is brightly coloured and appeals to young children. It uses all characters, melodies and rhythms presented during The

Singing Rascals Series and develops a child's instrumental technique, musical ear, musical intellect and enriches the child's emotional world. It is at this stage of the program that the 'colour' theme in Colourstrings comes to life. The Colour associated with tone evolved from a scientifically proven study of the colour representation of pitch made by Géza and Csaba Szilvay's father. It was not until Géza was faced with teaching 60 Finnish children the violin without knowing a word of Finnish, that he applied the colour theory to his teaching. In application, the colour only applies to the open strings of the instrument, not each individual note.

Colour is a very attractive and important tool. The innovative use of colour enables children to have a clear picture and understanding of the broad concepts of music reading and music playing. A clear geographical map of the violin and its relationship to notated music is presented. This is achieved by giving each of the four strings their own colour. E being the highest string is coloured yellow, A - blue, D - red and the lowest string G is green. These colours are presented on a page in a quasi-traditional notated style, in the order that they would appear on a traditional music score. As the program progresses, the colour slowly evolves into traditionally notated black and white music. The colour does however reappear when delivering new material and concepts. The use of colour in the early stages of music training has such a deep and grounding effect, that Colourstrings trained children rarely have problems with note reading. This skill is needed throughout one's musical career.

The early stages of Colourstrings set up the child ergonomically to the instrument, introduce basic movements, integrating music playing and music reading. This can be tedious and laborious for children, though extremely important to have a correct set - up. To assist this process, Géza has devised a series of exercises that appeal to the child. He uses character's that are familiar such as the house, family members and animals. This strategy of making aspects visually exciting is used throughout the program when introducing something that is technically dry. Apart from making it more enjoyable for the child, the idea of using all senses when learning has a deep and long - lasting effect.

The aural component learnt via Solmization, reinforces what the child experienced in the Music Kindergarten classes and builds on this knowledge gradually during the first few years of Colourstrings Instrumental training. The children learn the system of moveable DO and do not learn absolute letter names until they have complete knowledge of the Solfa system aurally and intellectually. This lays a musical map in the child's ear of the correct intervals experienced in all scales and arpeggios and the relationships between them. This opens the door for transposing and transforming in and out of different modes and scales, which can make jazz improvisation accessible in later years. Later through the scale books and Rascals Volume Four (step by step) they begin to learn absolute pitch, until gradually absolute becomes dominant. Through this gradual process and the constant reinforcing, a Colourstrings child's intonation is set in concrete. Colourstrings trained children rarely suffer from poor intonation.

Apart from the pure visual experience and the use of Solmization, one of the most impressive areas of Colourstrings is the extensive use of harmonics.² Géza uses harmonics throughout the early stages of Colourstrings training as an important tool to help develop violin technique and to avoid certain technical problems. He has cleverly arranged the harmonics around the folk tunes introduced in the Colourstrings Music Kindergarten. He uses them extensively:

- to help position shifting;
- to create light finger movement on the fingerboard;
- to prevent a child from gripping the neck of the violin;
- to train the fingers and ears to prepare for the small finger adjustments needed when correcting intonation;
- to produce focused bow control and the correct arm weight needed to help produce sound;
- to help develop vibrato; and,
- to allow for the general freedom and movement in instrumental playing.

Another added bonus in using harmonics is that the sound produced is appealing to a child.

Pizzicato is another conventional string technique that Géza has used throughout Colourstrings to aid his teaching.³ Pizzicato is beneficial in its varied forms:

- the plucking of all left hand fingers develops dexterity in left hand fingers;
- left hand pinkie or fourth finger plucking brings the arm and hand into their correct position;
- left hand plucking up and down all strings maps and prepares the child for upward and downward movement used in position changing, (which is not obvious to a child) and this also helps create freedom and mobility when shifting; and,
- the alternation between left and hand right plucking builds coordination between the two hands and sides of the body.

The percussive nature of the plucked note is also useful for generating general rhythm in the body and in both hands.

Colourstrings includes all technical material covered by most other mature technique schools. This includes such areas as left hand finger patterns, bow techniques and vibrato,

² Harmonics are notes that are produced on the violin or any stringed instrument, that have a high flute like quality, produced by lightly touching the string at one of its harmonic nodes, the points at which harmonics are found on a stringed instrument.

³ Pizzicato is the plucking of a string with the left or right hand fingers, on a stringed instrument.

but devised for a younger audience in a unique, systematic, thorough and creative way. Every time new material is introduced it is smuggled in via the folk songs learnt in the Kindergarten classes (through the subconscious mind), then by an exercise devised by Géza and an excerpt from a traditional study (through the semi-conscious mind) and finally in a traditional piece or one that has been composed for Colourstrings by László Rossa (through the conscious mind). This approach has a very responsive outcome, such that when the children arrive to the final and even some times at the semi-conscious stage of learning a new technique; the children are intellectually aware of what they are trying to achieve and inform Géza of what they are learning before he tells them. This is an amazing process to watch and is very challenging and extremely achievable for the teacher and the student.

With the nature of Colourstrings being an evolving program, some material is in the process of development or yet to be published. I was fortunate enough to view this work and saw it put to practice. Géza and all violin pedagogues on staff at the East Helsinki Music Institute are using this material. The Yellow Pages of Violin Technique in particular caught my attention; this book covers areas that no other technique school of thought has embarked on. This is presented in the form of informing and entertaining its intended audience. A chapter on ornamentations is covered, with preparatory exercises for the variable ways they can be played. This is under a title called 'decorations', and is illustrated with a character with spiked punk hairstyle, ear and nose piercing'. He explores the time signatures such as 3/8, by having a flowerpot with three flowers in a bar. This depicts that this time signature is conducted and counted one in a bar. He further explores 3/8 when there are rests present. The flower is missing where the rest would be. This visual imagery is so effective that the children do not have a problem comprehending the material.



Violin Ensemble Class: Géza Szilvay with students.



Géza Szilvay conducting a second Violin Ensemble Class.

This is only a small proportion of what Colourstrings has to offer, but they are the unique qualities of this method. It was amazing to watch Géza at work switching from bureaucrat, director, composer, arranger, pedagogue, conductor and producer; and I am sure I have missed many of his other titles. However, above all this, the children are his number one priority. I was impressed with his dedication to giving the very best quality education to his students, to the cause of raising and improving teaching standards and ethics and for disseminating the Colourstrings teaching practices throughout the world. It was breathtaking to watch

him work and interact with the children, nurturing every process and catering to each little characters needs. The children adored him and this shone through their playing.

The East Helsinki Institute: A Time to Nurture

The East Helsinki Music Institute is where Colourstrings was born, developed, evolved and practiced. The East Helsinki Institute has a two-way function. It has collaborated with the Roihuvuori Elementary School to form an Elementary Music School, while also servicing the general music learning public.

My time at the East Helsinki Music Institute focused mainly on observing the classes of the Elementary Music School children. The children attend on a weekly basis:

- one 45 minute individual lesson;
- four 50 minute ensemble classes;
- four theory and aural classes in Solfege training; and,
- one Orchestral class.

This concentrated program has several strengths and benefits over traditional approaches. The children do not have to practice at home, although some enjoy doing so. There is no doubt with this amount of hours spent in good quality music training that, these children are on their way to becoming first class musicians. However, more importantly the children are more focused for regular school classes and can concentrate on given tasks and learn quickly. Many teachers at the Roihuvuori Elementary school comment on how easy it is to teach these children.

The most attractive component of Colourstrings philosophy is the idea of nurturing the individual child emotionally, physically and intellectually. It is impressive to watch Géza and Csaba at work with their students, nurturing and catering to every student's needs and bringing out the best in each individual child. This is reflected in the results produced, the enthusiasm for learning and the way the children adore and respect their teachers. Scenarios come to mind when thinking about this - when the 50-minute ensemble class comes to its completion, the children would sigh and beg Géza to continue and at the beginning of every lesson they would rush in start playing together before Géza would have begun the lesson. The other remarkable feature they entail is that Géza and Csaba have the strong belief that any child has the right to a good quality music education. Therefore, there is a non-discriminative process to choosing students. This was evident with one child who had a considerable coordination problem, but Géza persisted to work with this hindrance, where others would have given up. During the period that I was present at the Institute, I witnessed an enormous improvement with the child's problem and that playing the violin highlighted the problem, but it will be a useful tool to develop coordination. There is no doubt that the Szilvay brothers are dedicated pedagogues

committed to their students and to the project of developing an excellent system for other teachers to follow.

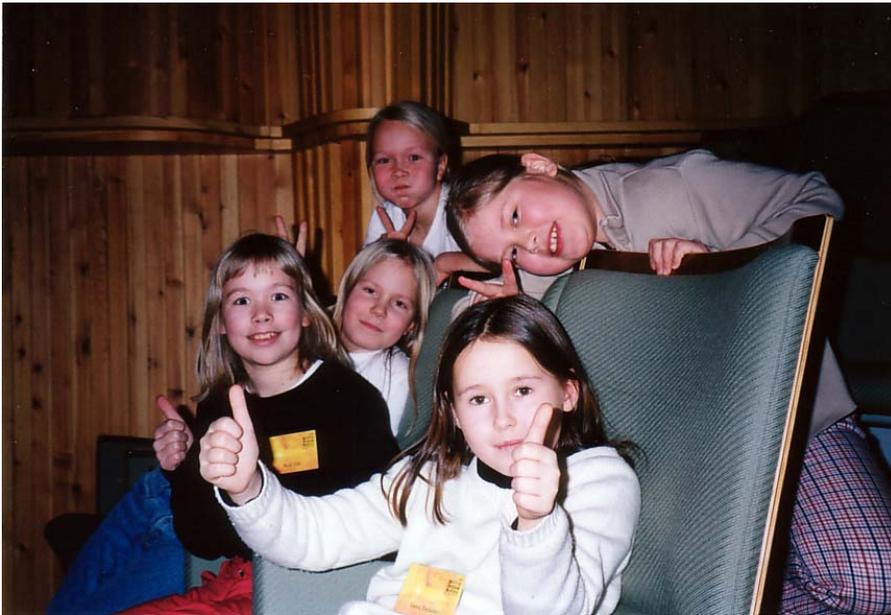
A well-orchestrated plan slowly introduces the child to the instrument and always keeps in mind nurturing the physical, emotional and intellectual world of the child. Initially, lessons are conducted on an informal basis, to introduce children gradually to the teaching environment. This is achieved via story telling and lots of visual imagery to make the child feel as comfortable and at home as possible. A Colourstrings child is never criticised and is always encouraged and congratulated on their achievements, though never babied and is corrected in the appropriate manner as their tuition progresses. This enables the student to understand what is correct and incorrect. As an added benefit, it prepares the child socially and to deal with criticism. A Colourstrings child is never negatively criticised by their teacher.

In the first 6 months of lessons, the child is continually moulded to their instrument. The teacher has constant physical contact with the child and this enables them to identify body tension as soon as it arises. For example, while working with the child's left hand, the teacher would have hold of the right hand, so they are aware of what the student is experiencing and be able to correct it and at times this is achievable to do so via the right hand. Skills to do with bow development are embedded at the sub-conscious level and always guided by the teacher. When the appropriate time arises, the child takes on the control of the bow with such confidence and make a beautiful tone is produced.

In Colourstrings, teaching musicality is the most important ingredient during the early stages of music training. It is at this time the seed is planted for the future musician. This is achieved sub-consciously via demonstration from the very first lesson, which is always presented with phrasing (even if it is only open strings that they are playing), accurate intonation, and beautiful tone quality played on the child's instrument. This creates an achievable and realistic sound for the child to aspire too. Also, the body language Géza uses when instructing them through a piece is very dynamic and seeps into their playing without them realising. Throughout a Colourstrings child's training, these aspects are continually reinforced and fostered at each developmental stage.

The East Helsinki Music Institute provides a service to the Pedagogy department of the Sibelius Academy. Once a month the pedagogy students observe Géza's teaching, interaction with the children and any new development in Colourstrings. Before conclusion, there is a discussion where questions are answered and Géza gives a detailed explanation on what was observed. Géza is not only interested in educating his own students, but servicing the broader teaching community. This is also obvious through the number of visiting teachers and pedagogues that come through the Institute on a regular basis, from around the world.

The grounds, interior and the body of staff at the East Helsinki Music Institute are also conducive to a healthy teaching environment and to make an Australian visitor feel apart of the family. If one dares to take their eyes off Géza's work, they may see a squirrel curiously prancing from branch to branch. The rooms are bright, large and set up with the appropriate equipment. The cafeteria sells wholesome food, with scrumptious Finnish pastries, made on the premise. The staff work as one big extended family and absolutely love their work, boss and children. The corridors are filled with the beautiful sounds of children humming the tunes from the Colourstrings repertoire. If you are as lucky as I was, flocks of Finnish children will be at your side budding to learn an English word or two and giving hugs. What a delightful environment to learn in.



My friends at the East Helsinki Music Institute.

Cello Ensemble Class: Csaba Szilvay with students.



Ensemble Training

Ensemble training has a strong function in Colourstrings training. There is no doubt that chamber music is an integral part of music training, whether playing in a small ensemble, chamber orchestra, orchestra or as a soloist with an orchestra, these skills are important to develop. It makes sense for a child to do when studying an instrument, makes the learning process so much more enjoyable, and stops the playing from being a solo chore. At the East Helsinki Music Institute there are a series of Ensembles and Orchestras that are part of a system that prepares the children for the world renowned Helsinki Strings and eventually for a professional career.

They begin with Ensembles in their instrumental discipline; this is a strongly reinforced area. At this stage, the class is aimed at working on instrumental technique, intonating and playing with others. Doors are opened to experiencing playing with another instrumental part, by introducing them to duo and trio material for their instrument. This is gradually amalgamated with the first of the series of orchestras offered at the Institute.

During the orchestral training, the children are supervised from every angle by Géza, Csaba and the team of staff at the East Helsinki Music Institute. The teachers are watching for correct posture and making sure that every child understands what they are doing. Géza questions each section of what the other sections are playing - this is very effective in making the child use their ear while playing with others. When rehearsing sections singularly, he makes sure that all children are active, so they are never bored. They begin to become aware of different pulses played in other parts, to intonate with other sections, to phrase and make sense of the music, reinforcing the techniques learnt in the early Colourstrings training.

The production of developing orchestral players merges into areas such as orchestral etiquette - always having a pencil and an eraser to mark music, the inside player on a desk being the scribe, to look to the desk ahead for any change in markings and to be able to follow a conductor. The other dynamic quality Géza and Csaba instils in them are aesthetics of being a performer. Hence, Colourstrings children show artistic flair, stunning stage presence and confidence of any professional orchestra. This is achieved through demonstration, once again, on one of the children's instruments and generated by the body language used by Géza when conducting.

While in Helsinki, I was fortunate enough to attend a concert in which the children were performing. It was part of a concert to mark the 125th Anniversary of the Red Cross in Finland. The children played amongst a high calibre of performers, many of whom were former students of Géza and Csaba, one of which was Géza's daughter Reka Szilvay - a world-class soloist. The common trait they all showed apart from technical brilliance and musical flair, was the quality to entertain and leave a strong impression.



Red Cross 125th Anniversary concert: East Helsinki Music Institute

Orchestra with Colourstrings soloists, who have been learning for a period of 6 – 12 months.

On Saturdays, I would visit the Sibelius Academy to attend the rehearsals of the Helsinki Strings. This is a dynamic group of young artists now attending the Sibelius Academy who were all former students of the Colourstrings method. They possessed all qualities taught in Colourstrings. It was excellent to see the progression of a Colourstrings - trained musician to this level, the existing enthusiasm and love for music that they still embody. Géza and Csaba at this stage are still heavily involved in nurturing their artistic career, where they open rehearsals for discussion for musical interpretation. Helsinki Strings tour at least once a year and are exposed to recording (they record the repertoire that is taught in the Colourstrings program, plus conventional music as well as documenting the compositions of Finnish composers), and perform works by contemporary composers.

Repertoire

The other fantastic point about the birth of Colourstrings is the development of a completely new body of repertoire for this age group. The music and pedagogical world can be thankful to the collaboration of old school friends Géza and Csaba Szilvay and László Rossa, for designing a high sophisticated standard of repertoire. László Rossa lives in Hungary and once a year travels to the East Helsinki Institute with his manuscripts and works with the Szilvay's in composing material for the Colourstrings method and children's orchestra. The material is to suit a particular technique and is always leading to a major work from the string repertoire. For example, Volume 6 of the Violin Rascals, piece number 11 prepares the child for later use of chordal passages in J.S Bach's Partitas and Sonatas for solo violin.

László Rossa is aware that Chamber music is an essential element of Colourstrings training and has composed good quality and tasteful orchestral pieces for this age group and 120 violin duos that each has a different ethnic and music stylistic flavour. These duos are highly entertaining and can be used for adult teaching and "gig" music. It is evident that children love these works, they play with such musical sensitivity and if Géza has left the manuscripts in his studio, they make him run upstairs to fetch them.

VIII Prima Nota di Kuhmo Children's Festival

Kuhmo is approximately 100 kilometres south of Lapland and is the home for many of Finland's cultural events, of which Prima Nota di Kuhmo is one. Visiting Kuhmo is one of the highlights of my Fellowship. This is when I experienced the stunning lighting of the North of Finland, the beautiful ice and snow scenes only imagined and seen on a postcard. Another experience on my Northern trip was a trip to a log cabin with our hosts in Kuhmo, where I experienced a late night Finnish sauna and took a traditional dip in an ice-hole, in one of the many lakes of Finland. Some may say I am crazy, but I could not go all that way and not have an invigorating experience like that.

The other beautiful scene was when I walked into the Kuhmo 'talo' (hall) and saw the mass of children seated on the stage. Over 150 children and 90 teenagers from around Finland and a few from Germany formed two orchestras in Kuhmo to enjoy a weekend of music making and produce a grand finale concert. The weekend gives the opportunity to children who come from small towns to experience playing in an orchestra and to raise the general 'tone' of string playing in Finland. The teachers who accompany their students, see what the children from the city are achieving and gives them a chance to view the teaching wonders of Géza and Csaba Szilvay.



VIII Prima Nota di Kuhmo: Childrens Orchestra, Géza Szilvay conducting

The children had 6 hours of tutorials and rehearsals, where they were supervised by one of many teachers present. During the rehearsals Géza would work with the back desks of sections in quartet sized arrangements. This helps the children hear themselves play, play in time (the back desks of sections can play late because of viewing distance of the conductor and it is important that children are aware of this fact), intonate with other players and to help create the environment that each and every individual child is contributing to the sound the orchestra produces. The result for the final performance was amazing - the body of sound was in time, in tune and very entertaining.

Similar festivals exist in Australia, but not for the younger age groups and not to this extent and calibre. This gave me many ideas for working with children's ensembles.

Conclusion

Now the baton has been handed to me and is my turn to help develop the Australian leg of the Colourstrings course. It was obvious to me, this philosophy and style of teaching was present in my thoughts and work. My Fellowship in Finland augmented my passion and gave me the tools to really embellish on the practises in Australia.

It is my endeavour to disseminate the information and make Colourstrings teaching and material readily available and affordable for Australians. I attend to do so by:

- giving speeches;
- workshops;
- presenting articles in Australian music Journals;
- urge colleagues to attend Colourstrings teaching training courses;
- generally putting this knowledge to use in the organizations that I already work in; and,
- research, adopt and adapt folk tunes for Australian students, to assist the 'mother tongue' process. This area will make it quite interesting for an Australian child, considering the multi cultural society we live in.

Upon my return I have:

- given a speech on Colourstrings, at an AUSTA (Australian String Teachers Association) meeting in Canberra, 7th May 2002;
- given many teachers advise on adapting Colourstrings ideas to the material they currently use; and,
- use the Colourstrings material and teaching philosophies in my work.

A hurdle I have to jump is to change and challenge the systems that currently and generally exist in most music practices and schools. Lesson preparation is an area that instrumental teachers/pedagogues need to improve. This enables the teacher to give a clear technical path for each student. Children should be receiving longer individual lessons and at least a chance to play in one ensemble a week; giving the teacher contact with their students at least twice a week. This relies heavily on the commitment of parents and an institution to sponsor this notion. It is not just a question of educating children, but the broader community.

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