

2024

MANAGER'S REPORT



Primary Schools Music Festival

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STARS
IN THE ARENA

Introduction

The Mission

As custodians of an iconic South Australian tradition, our **mission** is to engage our students in **artistic excellence**, **cultural diversity** and **social inclusion** through performance in Music and the Arts.

The Vision

Our **vision** is to strengthen state-wide participation in the Primary Schools Music Festival by **capturing a greater number of schools**, **engaging more students**, **increasing the number of teachers involved** and **further develop their skill level**.

What we've accomplished so far

2024 was another successful year for the Primary Schools Music Festival (PSMF)! Our repertoire selection committee selected a vibrant and age-appropriate repertoire, ensuring a lifelong experience for all. The talented PSMF Team crafted a visually stunning performance, bringing joy and inspiration to everyone involved. The presence of the Governor General added a prestigious touch, culminating the concert series in a truly memorable way.

Our program aligns beautifully with the DfE Strategy's four areas of impact:

- **wellbeing** - by fostering a love for music and performance, we enhance the emotional and social wellbeing of our students
- **equity and excellence** - we provide equal opportunities for all students to participate and excel
- **belonging and safety** - the festival creates a sense of community and belonging
- **cognitive engagement** - through music, students develop critical thinking, creativity, and cognitive skills

Quote

Emma Bell - Kingscote Campus, Kangaroo Island Community Education

"One student in particular stood out to me, and I'm sure there are many stories like this all across the state – Jasper has autism and ADHD and the regular classroom environment can be tricky for him. But in choir...he's in his happy place. Sometimes it's the only lesson he comes to school for. I couldn't believe his laser-focus on stage during the rehearsal and the concert, and it made my heart SO FULL watching him in his absolute element, grooving along (and you have significantly improved his mum's wellbeing as a result!).

Combine that with all the little beaming faces sparkling on stage and you have the magic that you and your amazing team create every year! I loved being backstage and one of the surprise highlights was helping to walk the Rhythmic Rumlbers to their starting spot – what a cool little group of kids. They were so nervous because they'd missed their cue during the rehearsal and we chatted and giggled and I told them I'd started a song in the wrong key once, but you learn from your mistakes...and away they went and made me cry within the first five seconds of that spectacular opening sequence! We love all the creative ways you include as many kids as possible in every aspect of the concerts.

We can't thank you enough – you tick all the boxes - wellbeing (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment x a million), learner agency, improving literacy, and above all, a sense of belonging for the kids and adults".

Programs and Services

School Category Affiliations 2024

School Category Affiliations 2024		
Category	Adelaide Affiliates	Regional Affiliates
1	3	5
2	16	6
3	15	7
4	19	12
5	23	21
6	48	10
7	39	5
Independent schools		18

Adelaide Affiliates	2023	2024	Regional Affiliates	2023	2024
Cat 1	4	3	Cat 1	4	5
Cat 2	17	16	Cat 2	9	6
Cat 3	14	15	Cat 3	4	7
Cat 4	21	19	Cat 4	15	12
Cat 5	27	23	Cat 5	21	21
Cat 6	53	48	Cat 6	6	10
Cat 7	39	39	Cat 7	2	5
	175	163	Uncategorised	21	18
				82	84

Program impacts: Covid and the restrictions/implications associated; year 7 transition to high school; skills shortage.

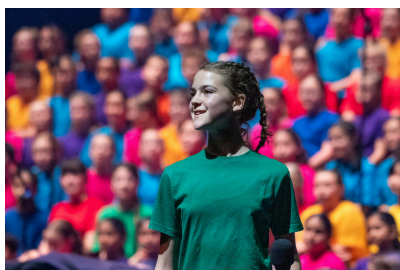
Future challenges: How do we promote the PSMF to schools? To inform schools that the program exists and that even if a school does not have a choir teacher / musical person, we can find an HPI for them.

Feedback from several teachers indicates that scheduling choir during lunchtime or at the end of a Friday afternoon is becoming problematic. Additionally, the cost of participating in choir has exceeded \$100 per child. While in other schools students are only paying for the Student Learning Materials.

Moving forward: It is crucial to maintain the high quality of the PSMF program, ensuring equitable access and inclusion. The need for continuous data collection (qualitative and quantitative) to assess the effectiveness of the program and guide future improvements.

How do we collaborate with schools to inform and encourage them about the significance of our program, ensuring that fees remain minimal and do not include costs that the schools have agreed to cover upon affiliation, such as TRT costs?

Student Participation



Challenges for the program: Covid and the restrictions associated; year 7 transition to high school (pool of students was years 5-7 prior to the transition and now it is only years 5 and 6); schools scheduling choir during break time; staff shortages (including PSMF team) and the volunteer pool is shrinking.

2024 gave students extra performance / participation opportunities: 225 students for Auslan signing; 39 students (consisting of 35 boys) as Rhythmic Rumlbers.

Adelaide Schools	Adelaide (students)	Ticket sales	Theatre	No# Shows	Year	Regional (students)	Regional Schools
163	5541	13,019	AFC	11	2024	1918	84
175	5635	12,321	AFC	10	2023	1849	82
180	5455	10,770	AFC	9	2022	1844	78
193	6736	11,323	AEC	4	2021	1816	81
200	7001	5,244	Movie	34 showings	2020	2242	91
198	7313	12,412	AFC	12	2019	2031	83

School visits by PSMF



Our directors & managers spend many hours on the road, providing affiliated schools the opportunity to get to know both staff and students; to model choir teaching techniques; to assess choirs; to hold workshops; conduct Combined Choir Rehearsals, run auditions, and rehearsals plus so much more.

- Regional visits and assessments - 22 (these are held on weekends)
- Combined Choir Rehearsals (CCR) - a 90-minute rehearsal for neighbouring schools - 63
- Choir assessments (metro) - this provides information on stage placement of choirs for the Adelaide concert series - 146
- Various locations - 445 vocal soloists auditioned (66 required)
- Various locations - 31 choreography leaders auditioned (22 required)
- Various locations - 126 Guest Artist auditioned (44 required)
- Various locations - Orchestra, Troupe, Rhythmic Rumlbers, and Host auditions.

Staffing and Governance

The PSMF has a close relationship with Dr. Anita Collins of Bigger Better Brains. Anita is internationally recognized for her unique work in translating the scientific research of neuroscientists and psychologists to the everyday parent, teacher and student. We invited her to write an introduction to the 2025 Songbook explaining why singing in a choir is important to students' learning.



Dr. Anita Collins

Educator, researcher and writer in brain development and music learning.



Singing is wonderful for your brain and body! It activates various parts of your brain, improving your cognitive functions—that means it helps with things like memory and attention. Singing releases endorphins, which are chemicals in your brain that make you feel happy and reduce stress. It's also great for your emotional intelligence, helping you understand and manage your feelings better. Moreover, singing can enhance your reading comprehension by helping you better understand the flow and expression of language, which is essential when you're reading and interpreting text.

In music and choir rehearsals, you're doing more than just practicing songs; these are special times where you grow and learn a lot. While you're often focusing on getting the notes right and making your singing better, there's more going on than you might notice. When you hit a wrong note, it's not just a simple mistake—it's actually a chance for your brain to learn something new. These moments help you and your friends understand each other better and work together as a team. Understanding these situations shows how singing together can really help everyone become stronger, both as individuals and as a group.

Physically, singing is a workout for your lungs and helps develop stronger respiratory muscles, which means you can breathe easier and deeper. It even boosts your immune system by increasing antibodies; these are like tiny defenders in your body that fight off germs. So, singing isn't just fun, it makes you happier and helps you perform better at school!

Our Team

[Congratulations to:](#)

- Robyn Filmer reappointed as Director of Music (reclassified to Leader Band 2)
- Cathy Lange reappointed as Assistant Director of Music (reclassified to Leader Band 1)

- Caroline Pomeroy reappointed as Adelaide Accompanist
- Michael McConnochie reappointed as Orchestra Manager
- Maria Stone reappointed as Troupe Manager
- Anne O'Dea reappointed as Production Manager
- Heather McDonald appointed as Host Manager

Thank you to:

- Chan Welfare for her time on the Board
- Kendall Carter who was with the Music Society for 3 years. Wishing her all the best in her new position
- All our volunteers, the quiet workforce that we would be lost without
- The SAPPMS Board for their support and guidance
- Kendall Hurst for her time as the Choir Teacher / HPI Rep on the Board. Kendall has held many roles within the PSMF and her continuous efforts to represent all is appreciated
- Chad Lofts, IT guru on the PSMF Team, creates wonderful vision for students and teachers that go on the website and app, visuals for conferences and concerts and keeps the office ticking along
- Kristin Hayward, the happy and helpful voice at the end of the phone, MailChimp, schedules and the list goes on
- The PSMF Team, for their passion, their creativity, their 'can do anything' attitude

Welcome to:

- Regina Rose working in the office (3 days per week)
- EnvyUs the graphic designers, creating a beautiful program for the concert series

Highlights 2024

2024 had many highlights, each with its own impact on the program. A few of which are listed below:

- **Concert series** - from the opening with the surdo drums of the 'Rhythmic Rumlbers' to the final curtain down with all the mirror balls, audiences were entertained. The **Journey to Performance** was an informative addition to the program, giving the audiences a 'behind the scenes' look at how the program comes together from start to concert.



Finale – Thank You for the Music

- Teacher's Conferences - an energetic and vibrant way to begin the year (and Term 2). Hearing the songs come to life, guest presenters, with lots of learning and laughing
- The SAPPs Choir - another very successful year representing the Department and the Music Society
- The wonderful and supportive volunteers our 'quiet achievers'. It is with their help that workshops, auditions, rehearsals and concerts are successful, it is with their help that our troupe's costumes are so stunning
- Scholarships assisting families in taking part in the PSMF
- Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia surprise attendance at our final concert. Her Excellency stayed on after the concert, going on stage to have photos taken with the choir, orchestra, troupe, hosts and staff, then to answer questions



Her excellency Ms Sam Mostyn, Governor-General Australia

Financial Performance

Ticket and merchandise sales

Tickets have remained at \$48.00 since 2021. This price point seems to work with our audiences, not too expensive. Financially this may not be viable for 2025.

Year	Ticket sales	Theatre	Number of concerts
2024	13,019	Adelaide Festival Theatre	11
2023	12,321	Adelaide Festival Theatre	10
2022	10,770	Adelaide Festival Theatre	9
2021	12,412	Adelaide Entertainment Centre	4

Merchandise items include concert programs, mascots, shoelaces, pencils, backpacks, etc. Sales are showing to be a good source of income for both Adelaide and the Regionals. In 2024 the merchandise income was almost \$40,000. Southern Metro made just under \$2,500 profit for their festival. The Riverland will be taking this offer up in 2025.

Fundraising and Sponsorship

2024 marks the beginning of income through fundraising and sponsorship:

- \$8,700 was raised in sponsorship to advertise in the concert program, on our socials and website
- \$1,690 was raised through the Australian Cultural Fund and Ticketek (tax deductible)
- \$2,000 from the Jane Lyall Scholarship was received and distributed to Berri PS, Riverdale PS and Kangaroo Island Community Education (KICE)
- \$500 from the Suzanne Scholarship, established to improve regional and remote access to and participation in Orchestra. This year an Orchestra family received \$500 in a fuel voucher to ensure the student attended rehearsals and workshops.

Maximizing Donations

Funders, sponsors and private donors are valuable to our program and will make it possible for the PSMF to grow, to keep costs at minimum for students and families, and to provide exciting learning opportunities for students in public schools in South Australia into the future.

I believe a Development and Marketing Officer would play a crucial role by focusing on growth and outreach. A specialist is essential for:

- **Brand Awareness:** increasing visibility and awareness
- **Strategic Planning:** aligning marketing strategies with our goals

- **Fundraising and Revenue Generation:** pursuing funding and revenue opportunities
- **Community Engagement:** building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders
- **Market Research:** conducting research to understand needs
- **Communication:** managing consistent messaging across all platforms
- **Innovation and Development:** identifying new opportunities

Overall, I believe a Marketing and Development Officer is essential for driving growth, enhancing reputation, and ensuring the PSMF success in a competitive environment.

2025 Plans

As I write this report, the planning for the 2025 Songbook and concert series at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre are well underway.

- The repertoire selection committee, when choosing songs for 2025, were very conscious of the venue and chose songs accordingly
- Nextstage has been working on the set design, first drafts have been seen. The set will look very different from our 2021 design

Looking beyond 2025 the future for the PSMF is bright, I am filled with optimism for what lies ahead, from new initiatives to the continued growth.



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

Reach Out

Contact details:

Email: office.psmf925@schools.sa.edu.au

Address: 28 Hay Street, Klemzig South Australia 5087

Phone: 8261 5438

Website: www.festivalofmusic.org.au