

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

1 April 2016

Marietjie Hesse

I want to extend a hearty welcome to everybody on behalf of the organisers and a special word of welcome to the directors, honourable members of the council and guest speakers. May you all be blessed and filled with love and light.

The members of Exco and Standing Committee went to Mount Festiva lodge during the winter on a quest to find a suitable conference centre for this conference. We had a wonderful lunch served by Ronel Davey and a tour around the buildings and beautiful grounds guided by the owner Eddie Davey. Unfortunately there was no grand piano and the place was rather far out of town, otherwise it would have been the perfect venue.

We were very fortunate that UNISA offered us the use of their conference centre for free and therefore we are very grateful to them to be able to use this splendid venue with all the facilities included.

We are also indebted to Mr John Roos who gave us the use of his lovely cozy concert room the Tauromenium and patio for our bursary concert and finger buffet.

I am very happy to say at this point in time that the SASMT is still going strong. Quite a number of new music teachers joined the SASMT during the last year. We are also very pleased that the rewriting of the Constitution and House rules were completed and published on the web. Some people made huge contributions in revising the old documents like Prof Marinus Wiechers, Dr Rosalie Conrad and the Durban centre, Marié Gaerdes and Elma Britz with input from EXCO and the Standing Committee.

I wanted to give the members of the Society a chance to take part in the decision making process of the Society. I launched two surveys. The first survey involved our ISME membership. I asked our members their opinion on our ISME membership. Personally I could not see any point in being a member of this institution. Private music teachers receive no lectures, magazines, newsletters or any other communications from them nor do we have a link to their website to source any of the materials for ourselves. Institutions like Universities are the only people that benefit from an ISME membership. 57% of the members who answered the questionnaire who generally take an active part in the Society agreed that it was not viable to belong to ISME. With or without ISME membership, the internet prevents any isolation from the rest of the world in regard to music education.

The second survey addressed the type of lectures the members of the SASMT would prefer at the conference and specific people they wanted to listen to as speakers. I managed to fulfill most requests.

I am proud to present this conference under the title "Holistic Music Teaching".

When I studied in Europe I attended two six week courses at the Eduard van Beinum Stichting in The Netherlands. The course in 1968 dealt with the Classical Period and the course in 1969 the Romantic period. Historically correct playing was the in thing at the time.

What was wonderful about those courses was that we attended lectures on the artworks of the period, prose, poetry, plays, puppetry, ballet, architecture, the economic situation, the political situation, religion and especially the music. We had master classes and concerts by famous musicians. We played concerts ourselves wearing period costumes and ate food customary for that time. This gave me the idea for our present conference.

I chose this theme because we as music teachers have such a wonderful one on one opportunity to influence learners in not only becoming excellent musicians, but also in becoming loving, caring and creative human beings. It is thus of paramount importance that as many children as possible should receive music education. By reaching critical mass we can counter a great amount of negativity in the world. By the example we set and the way we treat our pupils we can create a better world. People are imitators.

My idea of holistic teaching is to develop all aspects of the pupil using music. To teach the music effectively taking into account the aspects of human brain processing and personality traits.

Secondly it also involves incorporating all the elements that has to be taught comprehensively while teaching music. For instance when teaching sight reading it involves the teaching of theory, development of the aural abilities, rhythm and note reading all at the same time.

The goal then is to create a happy, motivated and interested child, or adult learner for that matter, who loves to make music. Our focus shouldn't be solely on creating pupils that excel in music performance, but also in creating a whole and balanced person for whom music is an integral part of their lives.

I started to study Psychology in 1990 because I wanted to find out why one has to practice so much and so carefully. The answer was that the brain had to process a great amount of information while learning and practising music. By actually making and studying music many brain paths are formed that do not form when engaging in any other activity. These paths can ultimately be used for any other activity as well. It is therefor appropriate to inform the pupils and parents about all the benefits derived from learning and playing music. For instance, by studying music the child is turned into a self-disciplined and responsible person etc.

It is important that the teacher knows how to handle a pupil's personality type as well as the manner in which the pupil processes information. The learning materials need to be tailor-made to suit that specific pupil's physical and musical ability. It is also important that learners love what they play, so pieces need to be chosen in accord with their preferences. It is a good idea for teachers to compose specific material for every individual beginner (We should be creative like Domenico Scarlatti who composed more than 360 progressive pieces specially for the Spanish princess

whom he taught). Composing exercises and pieces for your pupils ensure that they progress according to their own learning speed and ability.

Beginners should also learn to make up their own pieces from the very start. Theory lessons must be integrated with sight reading and aural training. Aural training should commence well in advance of the seventh year of age. In Europe no child is allowed to start playing an instrument before completing a solfège course or a similar aural training program.

Lessons should be fun and learners should be taught how to practice. Varied practising methods makes homework interesting and more structured lessons should be fun and learners taught how to practice. Varied practising methods make homework interesting and more structured. As I said previously, the music and practice methods should suit the personality of the pupil.

In 2003 I stumbled upon the perfect tool to analyse a child's preferences and personality quickly and accurately. The tool is called the "Human Pin Code". Douglas Forbes, the creator of the Human Pin Code Formulae used the octa- theorem of Pythagoras to construct the system. He is a physicist and writer and researched the system for twenty five years. He only published his book "The Human Pin Code" when he was sure that the results rendered at least 95% correctness.

I use the pin code to determine how to handle a specific pupil and to choose the repertoire that the learner would enjoy most, I calculate the synergy between the pin codes of the pupil and the composer to see if they are compatible.

I think in this light you will appreciate the lectures that you are going to hear today and I do hope that this conference will bring you all kinds of insights and knowledge that will help to enhance your music teaching.