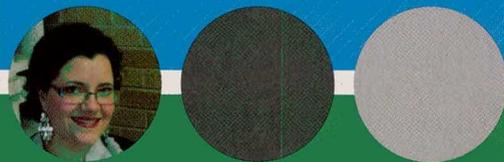


# SCHOOL LIBRARIANS AND MUSIC EDUCATORS: A CONCERT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

By Lucy Santos Green



*The Music Man* is one of my favorite movie musicals. "Professor" Harold Hill, a con man posing as a traveling band director, romances the struggling town librarian and piano teacher, Marian Paroo, as part of his plan to swindle the town of River City out of thousands of dollars meant to fund an imaginary band program. Of course all is well by the end. The imaginary band becomes a reality, the town library is saved, and Professor Hill becomes a genuine music teacher. Now imagine what those two might have accomplished in a movie sequel where they worked together to build up both the town band and library? What an amazing team those two would make! Although this movie isn't likely to be released, partnerships between school librarians and music teachers are developing every day. They are an excellent opportunity to strengthen both programs and foster meaningful student learning in the process.

## MUSIC + TECHNOLOGY = OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

Recently the National Association for Music Education recognized the vital role technology plays in the 21st century P-12 music classroom (NAFME, 2011). This growing interest on the part of K-12 music educators is an opportunity for the school librarians to build a strong, mutually beneficial interdisciplinary partnership with music teachers, working together throughout the year not only to meet student educational needs, but to promote professional development and the growth of the school library and the music education program.

Collaboration is partnering with a teacher to "teach information literacy skills in the context of content area curriculum" (Church, 2008). Although it can be difficult to engage in collaboration, we know that collaboration increases when school librarians foster interdisciplinary partnerships by "cultivating a network of willing participants . . . a better

strategy than focusing on a subject area as a strategic group" (Schultz-Jones 24).

An interdisciplinary partnership is a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship between two disciplines that addresses a common problem or meets a common set of professional and educational goals. Interdisciplinary partnerships support innovative and creative approaches to problem-solving because these partnerships bring together skills and resources that exist within the domain of different disciplines (Stumpf and Clark, 1999). By cultivating multiple perspectives, interdisciplinary partners are able to analyze issues and instructional objectives in more depth, increasing the likelihood that programs and/or solutions will be used to benefit a broader student base.

This type of partnership is not as unlikely or uncommon as it seems. Cassandra Barnett (2008), a school librarian in northwest Arkansas, describes how a change to fixed scheduling negatively impacted her ability to collaborate with classroom teachers: "While some teachers preferred to continue co-teaching with me, there were a number of teachers who welcomed the extra planning time." Barnett found herself, along with the music and art teacher, placed in a *specials* rotation with a specials common planning time. This eventually led to a partnership where each area contributed to a project which culminated in student-created alphabet books that included works of art and a music concert presented to the classroom teacher. Observing this partnership encouraged fifth grade teachers to work with the specials team on a unit covering the Industrial Revolution and folksongs of the 1800s, a project that emphasized the academic significance of the music and art curriculum.



School librarians and music educators should explore and identify areas within each profession where responsibilities and standards overlap, complement, align, or support each other. The table below charts the standards provided by AASL (2010) and the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM, 2012), and identifies key areas where school librarians and music educators can partner for student success.

	School Librarian	Music Educator
<b>Advocacy</b>	Advocates for dynamic school library programs and positive learning environments that focus on student learning and achievement by collaborating and connecting with teachers, administrators, librarians, and the community. Identifies stakeholders within and outside the school community who impact the school library program. Candidates develop a plan to advocate for school library and information programs, resources and services.	Articulates logical rationales for music as a basic component of general education, and presents the goals and objectives of a music program effectively to parents, professional colleagues, and administrators.
<b>Program Planning</b>	Plans, develops, implements, and evaluates school library programs, resources, and services in support of the mission of the library program within the school according to the ethics and principles of library science, education, management, and administration.	Assesses aptitudes, experiential backgrounds, orientations of individuals and groups of students, and the nature of subject matter, and uses this information to plan educational programs to meet assessed needs. Leads performance-based instruction in a variety of settings.
<b>Cross-Curricular Collaboration</b>	Models and promotes collaborative planning, instruction in multiple literacies, and inquiry-based learning. Models, shares, and promotes effective principles of teaching and learning as collaborative partners with other educators.	Promotes an awareness that multiple disciplinary perspectives and techniques are available to consider all issues and responsibilities including, but not limited to, history, culture, moral and ethical issues, and decision-making.
<b>Creativity</b>	Models and promotes instruction in multiple literacies, and inquiry-based learning, enabling members of the learning community to become effective users and creators of ideas and information. Integrates the use of emerging technologies as a means for effective and creative teaching and to support P-12 students' conceptual understanding, critical thinking and creative processes.	Personal commitment to the art of music, to teaching music as an element of civilization, and to encouraging the artistic and intellectual development of students. Has knowledge of content, methodologies, philosophies, materials, technologies, and curriculum development in music education that promote student learning and creative expression.

**FANFARE: PARTNERING FOR ADVOCACY**

Program advocacy is ongoing, requiring the enlistment of the support of stakeholders and continuous promotion of the library media center and the music department as essential school programs. Partnering with your music teacher for advocacy is a way to reinforce your role as an instructional partner while promoting music education as a legitimate academic pursuit.

Music educators have a deep understanding of the importance of advocacy in terms of administrative support and program continuation. Music education, as a profession, was born out of advocacy. In fact, the first public school music teacher was hired on a trial basis (Mark, 2002). In contrast, the majority of school librarians come from the general classroom, having taught required subjects. The concept of advocacy and its nuances is oftentimes foreign. So take advantage of your music teacher's advocacy experience! He or she is well-versed in promoting musical endeavors and goals to non-musicians, and can help you advocate for resources and programs. Levitov (2007) warns that school librarians need to figure out how to get stakeholders to take up the cause of the school library by demonstrating how school library goals are related to the promotion of what is important to each individual. By advocating for your school's music program you demonstrate your willingness to partner with all constituents for success.

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Your music educator can suggest ways to insert music into your event, select types of music that should be played or performed, and even advise on how to arrange the environment.

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Ways the school librarian can partner with the music educator for advocacy:

- Record audio and video of performances.
- Supervise student recording of performances.
- Teach audio and video editing skills.
- Support student creation of vidcasts and podcasts.
- Promote musical performances and programs through the library website or blog.

#### **FORTE: PARTNERING FOR PROGRAM PLANNING**

Lamb (2011) suggests that school librarians consider an array of options, including the use of the library for community arts. School library programs refer to single events, such as a library family fun night or an author visit, or are ongoing, such as programs involving reading therapy dogs, community grant projects, and the circulation of e-readers. Programs for music educators often refer to performances.

Despite these contrasting definitions, interdisciplinary partnerships for program planning between music teachers and school librarians still flourish. Music teachers have organized and participated in many concerts, covering a wide range of music literature and themes, as a part of their education and experience. Your music educator can suggest ways to insert music into your event, select types of music that should be played or performed, and even advise on how to arrange the environment. Consider inviting the school's musical ensembles to perform at events that celebrate the culmination of library projects.

This ensures an audience for the event and raises awareness of the library program among the performing music students (as well as their parents). Lisa Bakanas, a high school librarian in New Jersey, partners with the school's student jazz ensemble to celebrate the yearly conclusion of the One Book One School program. As part of the annual gala, the ensemble performs while library patrons mingle. Musical selections are made with the theme of the chosen book in mind.

In turn, the music teacher benefits from the library's information literacy curriculum. Not only are there opportunities for technology integration in the form of projected backgrounds and cued Web 2.0 visual aids, but concerts set the stage for developing information literacy skills with the writing of program notes. Program notes are used to educate audience members about the music they are hearing—to help them further appreciate the performance by providing historical context (Cole, 2008). Consider guiding students through the research process necessary for developing and writing program notes.

#### **FUGUE: PARTNERING FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR COLLABORATION**

When library programs work to promote cross-curricular collaboration between disciplines,

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these programs help students develop a mental picture of collaboration as a life skill and attitude that should be present in all aspects of life (Gunawardena et al., 2010). Interdisciplinary and cross-curricular units reflect the shift in education from a linear system of learning through direct instruction to a "multimodal system characterized by the special organization of different modes . . . image, music, writing, and aural language" (Lee and Breitenberg 55). Music education relies on multimodal student-centered learning (e.g., listening, reading, singing, playing, moving, and creating). While units sometimes culminate in performances or concerts, music students also complete cross-curricular projects (e.g., an American history play that uses authentic American folksongs).

Valerie Diggs (2009), a high school teacher librarian, describes a cross-curricular project that brought together honors Spanish, American history, and music education. Students investigated current U.S. immigration policy through exploration of primary documents, the sharing of personal experiences, songs, and music videos. Ultimately, combining these three disciplines allowed students to more meaningfully inquire and engage with the selected topic.

Elementary school librarians and music teachers may want to work with classroom teachers to plan a book-themed concert. Brown (2012) suggests the following ideas for putting together a musical program that highlights one book, a series, or a visiting author's work:

- Add songs to the storyline of a book and allow children to create sound effects using instruments.
- Recruit teachers, administrators, and parents to read selected stories or passages during a musical program.
- Divide a book into script lines and have students read these lines during a musical program.
- Adapt illustrations from the book as a backdrop for the performance stage.

## Video production, photostories, podcasts, and vidcasts allow students to add original musical compositions.

### FANTASIA: PARTNERING FOR CREATIVITY

Creativity is commonly associated with the music classroom. Solving a musical problem, imagining the sound and silence structures that music is made of, improvising, composing, and understanding music's relation to culture all call upon the creative abilities of K-12 students. Many of the skills nurtured in music education classrooms—singing, playing, listening, moving, reading, writing, improvising, composing, evaluating, and describing—have direct application to other disciplines. The ability to think imaginatively, to move beyond, over, and around well-beaten paths of thought, is nurtured through music education. These same skills are also key to the development of transliteracy, the ability to acquire, explore, and interact with information using multiple media formats, including print, audio, visual, and digital (Thomas et al., 2007). Lamb (2011) contends that social and participatory media enable students to represent knowledge in completely new ways. For example, video production, photostories, podcasts, and vidcasts all allow students to add original music compositions and tracks. These creative works enhance meaningful student learning, representing opportunities for students to use original music that reflects a certain time period, cultural characteristic, or evokes certain moods in the audience.

### FINALE: IDENTIFYING AN OPPORTUNITY

Interdisciplinary partnerships between K-12 music educators and school librarians benefit the entire school. Librarians, "information specialists [who] find the choicest morsels and the most nourishing dishes at the information table," have much to offer music educators in terms of technology integration, cross-curricular opportunities, and professional development support (Neuman 26). Music educators' strong backgrounds in program advocacy, program planning, and creativity are untapped resources, available for the benefit of school library programs and the school community at large. Consider growing collaboration through the development and nurturing of an interdisciplinary partnership with your music teacher—an opportunity identified.

Advocacy	Program Planning	Cross-Curricular Collaboration	Creativity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record performances.</li> <li>Supervise student recordings.</li> <li>Teach audio and video editing skills.</li> <li>Support student creation of vidcasts and podcasts.</li> <li>Promote music performances and programs through the library website or blog.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insert music into events.</li> <li>Invite school ensembles to perform.</li> <li>Create visual and tech-rich aids for concerts.</li> <li>Support student research projects for program notes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create sound effects using instruments.</li> <li>Recruit teachers, administrators, and parents to read during a music program.</li> <li>Divide a book into script lines and have students read these lines during a music program.</li> <li>Adapt illustrations from the book as a backdrop for the performance stage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add original music composed by students to video productions, digital photostories, podcasts, vidcasts, and book trailers.</li> <li>Feature students' original music work or snippets of performances on the library website/blog.</li> </ul>

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