

With A Song In My Heart

“Singing helps to improve speech and language skills: vocalization, verbalization, articulation, language expression and reception, rhythm and breath control.

Playing instruments improves gross and fine motor skills: coordination, balance, dexterity, range of motion, strength, as well as social skills: participation, self-esteem, cooperation. Rhythmic movement facilitates gross motor skills: mobility, agility, balance, coordination, as well as respiration patterns and muscular relaxation.

Improvising offers a creative and nonverbal means of expressing feelings. Through vocal, instrumental and movement improvisation, one has the opportunity to make choices and deal with structure in a creative way.

Composing develops cooperation, learning, and sharing of ideas and experiences, and increases social skills.

Active listening provides a stimulating way to develop cognitive skills such as attention, memory, and auditory perception skills”.

The experience of music is holistic, simultaneously involving body, mind and spirit. Music’s importance does not diminish as your child moves through adolescence to adulthood. Judging by the continuous cutbacks to music education throughout the province, music is not deemed important. Does music need to be seen as lucrative before it is valued? What this says about our cultural and educational values is another subject altogether.

In the Victoria School District there is great concern about the Dogwood Completion statistics. There is a serious student drop-out rate from

Victoria’s High Schools. One of the reasons given is that students don’t feel connected. As there is nothing to match music for uniting and motivating people, building relationships and moulding communities, I ask the question: Could the erosion of music and performing arts from our curriculum be one of the main contributors to the high drop out rate within our high schools? “High school students involved in music have better attendance records, stay in school longer and do better academically.”⁴ Let’s make the sound of music a daily part of our lives, both at school and at home.

⁴Canadian Living – A Song In My Heart by Eleanor Ward, October 1999.