



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

---

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS  
Mr Michael Petterson MLA (Chair), Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA (Deputy Chair)  
Mr Mark Parton MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

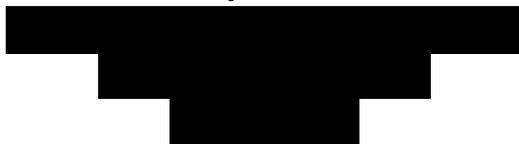
Inquiry into the cessation of the Music  
for Colleges course

**Submission Number: 04**

**Date Authorised for Publication: 28 May 2019**

## **SUBMISSION INTO THE CESSATION OF THE MUSIC FOR COLLEGES COURSE**

**Lindy Reksten**



I was employed as a cello teacher at the ANU School of Music from 1994. For the decade until January 2018, I was also the Convenor of the instrumental programs in the Open School of Music which included running the chamber music and performance aspects of the Music for Colleges Program. My area of expertise is in classical performance so I will base my submission on the classical stream. I will leave the jazz area to those with experience and expertise in that field. Both areas are equally valuable.

For decades now the Music for Colleges program run at the ANU School of Music has provided a much needed advanced music course for students in the ACT who wish to pursue music at an advanced level commensurate with their level of proficiency during years 11 & 12. By the time serious music students reach the end of year 10, they have many years of tuition behind them both on their chosen instrument and theory of music. It is at this stage that students are starting to wonder whether they will pursue music as a career. Having the option of taking an advanced music course during years 11 & 12 is very important to these students.

Unlike many other cities in Australia and overseas, Canberra doesn't have a dedicated music high school/college. The Music for Colleges program at the ANU filled this gap. Students from colleges all over the ACT were enrolled in the program. It is unrealistic to expect every college to provide such an advanced level music program. The vast majority of the college music programs cater for contemporary/pop/rock which has a wide appeal for many students.

However in all those colleges there are students who have already spent years studying their instrument and want to take music as a subject during years 11 & 12. Without the Music for Colleges program these students have the option of either not taking music as one of their subjects or enrolling in a class with students who can only play 3 chords on a guitar. No one would expect an advanced maths/science student to be satisfied with being in a general maths or science class. These students are provided with so many pathways for learning. Without the Music for Colleges program, serious music students do not have the same opportunity.

Being just one of maybe 2 or 3 students in your college who is wanting to pursue classical music at an advanced level is not going to give you the opportunities, stimulation and experience needed to help you progress at an advanced level. This is not a criticism of the college system but rather a fact. The college system can't cater for everyone so they have to choose the majority.

Studying music in isolation is very unsatisfactory and leads to a poor outcome. Students need to interact and study with a like-minded peer group who are all working at the same level in order to achieve their best. They also need to have teachers who have the experience and knowledge to deliver an advanced level program in performance/music theory/composition.

The cessation of the Music for Colleges program has had a far reaching effect on students in the ACT. They are now really disadvantaged compared to their fellow students in other cities and are therefore less able to compete for places in music schools across the country including the ANU School of Music as well as overseas

I am not suggesting that music students to be given special treatment or opportunities, only that they be given the same opportunities as serious and committed students in other subjects and the same opportunities as music students in other cities and overseas. Offering an advanced music program in one location, open to all students in the ACT system is an excellent solution. The School of Music is the ideal place to run such a program. The facilities and staff are there to provide the best possible education to the music students in the ACT.

**Delivery to the end of 2019 (when all funding will cease):**

The structure of the Music for Colleges program funded under the current arrangement (only year 12 in 2019) is:

30 mins: individual instrumental tuition

2 hours: theory/composition/musicology class

1 hour: performance practice class alternating with 1 hour aural skills class

1 hour: chamber music

Recitals: 15 minute solo recital and a chamber music recital each semester.

Assessment: regular assessment tasks in the 2 hour class and semester exams.

**Suggested new delivery model:**

The valuable parts of the program are the areas where students are interacting with one another in a class situation. Including free instrumental lessons is expensive and not necessary if the aim is to give students the opportunity to interact and study with a like-minded peer group. This is where the value lies in this program.

Although families are obviously delighted that a 30 minute free instrumental lesson is part of the program, this increases the cost of the program by a substantial amount. It is a given that a student studying at an advanced level will be having individual tuition on their instrument. It is an expense that families have carried since the day they decided to give their child music lessons. It is also worth noting that students who elect to take music at their college do not get their instrumental lessons paid for.

My suggestion would be:

2 hour class: theory/composition/musicology

1 hour performance practice class alternating on a weekly basis with a 1 hour aural skills class

1 hour chamber music

Solo performance and chamber music recital exams once a semester.

Numbers should be kept at max 20 students/year (40 total over years 11 & 12 in the classical stream) so that one manageable class for each year group can be run. These students would receive class instruction in theory, composition, musicology, aural skills and performance practice.

For chamber music (an essential part of the training of musicians) a cohort of 20 students would be divided into 6 – 7 small ensembles.

The present model offers places to students based on a performance audition and a set Australian Music Examinations Board ( AMEB) theory level. It would be worth considering offering some of the places to students whose main focus is not performance but rather composition or musicology.

I think that this model would provide all the necessary elements for a comprehensive advanced music course, offer the students an excellent education and prepare them for whatever course of study they choose.

**DEMAND:**

Each year many more students audition than there are places on offer.

**LONG TERM BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES**

Taking 2017 as a typical year:

In 2017 there were 25 students enrolled in Music for Colleges classical stream across years 11 &12.

Of those, 15 have gone on to study music at tertiary level either at the ANU School of Music, interstate or overseas. 5 of these students were given early offers at the prestigious Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University. Study places at Griffith are hotly contested from around Australia. This pattern can be seen across the years.

There are musicians in orchestras such as Sydney Symphony and the Australian Chamber orchestra who spent the important years 11 & 12 in the Music for Colleges program enabling them to gain entrance to the tertiary music institution of their choice and on to successful careers as musicians.

Of those students who choose not to pursue music as a career many remain involved in music performance in the community either as performers, teachers and educated audience members.

## **TEACHING RESOURCES**

The ANU School of Music is ideally suited to be the venue for this program with all the resources of a music school including excellent staff and facilities. Students in the Music for Colleges program are also able to interact with students in the tertiary sector and take advantage of all the opportunities for extension activities offered at the School of Music.

## **IMPACT OF THE DECISION TO CUT FUNDING TO THE PROGRAM**

In the short term students in year 11 in 2019 no longer have access to an advanced music program. The impact of this has been outlined earlier.

In the long term students in the ACT will no longer be offered the music education needed to prepare them for successful tertiary music study. Music in the ACT college system will only be offered at a more basic level aimed at students who are interested in pop/contemporary and rock. Classical and Jazz students are not now and wont be into the future catered for in the present college system.

As someone who has worked in this program for many years and has seen first- hand the hugely positive effect this program has on students I strongly recommend that a Music for Colleges program which includes the important elements I have outlined be reinstated at the ANU School of Music.



## TESTIMONIALS BY FORMER STUDENTS AND PARENTS

**To clarify:** The Music for Colleges has been known internally as Type 1, Type 2 and H Course.

"My name is [REDACTED] and I attended the Type One program in 2012 and 2013. This program was absolutely invaluable to me in my development as a student and as a musician. While I had been studying and playing music for many years, this program gave me access to teaching and learning at a much higher level than I was accustomed to. The teachers in this program, unlike many of the music teachers that I had throughout my general schooling, were current performing professionals and academics at the top of their game, which opened my eyes to a world of music-making and understanding that I had not previously been exposed to (during my time notable figures included [REDACTED] etc). While I was significantly more advanced musically than the majority of my peers in the music classes at [REDACTED] College, being in the Type One program threw me into a cohort of colleagues with equal skill and passion to myself, and really allowed me to develop in a hothouse environment with like-minded peers with serious interests of dedicating their lives to music. Through my two years in the program I developed significantly as a [REDACTED] through private one-to-one lessons and chamber music, and broadly as a musician through advanced theory and history classes.

Before entering the Type One course, I was not sure of what I wanted to do with my life after finishing school. This course gave me the push that I needed to start taking music seriously and study at a tertiary level. I am now a fully-fledged professional musician, working on contract with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and performing with a variety of other professional orchestras and ensembles around the country. I am thrilled to be making a living as a performing musician, and I absolutely credit the Type One course with inspiring me to make it possible

"As you know, [REDACTED] did the Year 11 and Year 12 H Course and the High School Chamber Music Programme for 3 years prior to that. As a result of the intensive chamber programme, she has managed to gain tremendous skill in the art of chamber playing. As she interacted with students of similar standard in her group, she was able to focus on much more advanced repertoire that she would not have been able to achieve at school. This gives her tremendous advantage for her chamber programme at university as she is much better in musical interaction with her partners. Also, as a result of the programme, she has been able to interact with light-minded and motivated students so they have been able to improve much better as a group. Additionally, she has been able to have the opportunity to be taught by tremendous teachers like yourselves and Rowan Harvey-Martin. I believe the continuation of a course similar to H course is important to attract highly reputable teachers to work as a group to help the highly motivated students. Unfortunately, no single school can attract all these students and teachers together.

The only alternative programme that is available for advanced music at high school is Sydney Conservatorium which she would have been required to travel to Sydney weekly which would be very difficult for her to cope together with her secondary and college study in ACT.

She recently mentioned to me that the H course also gave her very good advantage in her first year University programme for both History and Theory.

She learned a lot of music skill from H course through regular chamber music playing, lessons, masterclasses and concerts. She has made a lot of good friends from the programme. We, as parents, strongly believe that these experiences would not have been possible if the Advanced Music Programme is unavailable in ACT. Unfortunately, the regular school music programme does not provide this outcome as ACT is not big enough to provide a similar

programme and attract enough advance students and teachers at school. An advance Music Programme which is run by good calibre teachers are of paramount importance for any music student to pursue tertiary study without dis-advantage as most other state do provide similar programme at high school level .

We do need talented music students to provide the core of the future ACT classical music community and teacher including the future of Canberra Symphony Orchestra. Without the Advance Music Programme for high school as the foundation of their future training, the consequence is far-reaching”.

██████████

Hi Lindy,

Thank you very much for your time and effort in putting a proposal together. You are so enormously appreciated!

I cannot overestimate the impact on both of my sons lives through their participation in the H Course for both Jazz and Classical. The H Course has well and truly shaped my sons’ musical futures and set them up with a realistic understanding of what is required to excel and to understand the options available to them to pursue a portfolio career. Also, to be with like-minded peers who shared their passion for music and to have access and tuition by teachers actively involved in the Canberra region and beyond was of such enormous benefit to them both. It was also wonderful for the boys to form friendships and musical collaborations with students from other schools. ██████████ and ██████████ College musical teacher commented at the end of Year 12 on the vast improvement they had made on their instruments as a result of their participation in the course.

An enormous impact for me as a parent is that both of my sons have successfully auditioned for their chosen tertiary courses in music. ██████████ was one of two first year ██████████ students accepted to study with ██████████ at the Queensland Conservatorium for 2018 and ██████████ was accepted by ██████████ to study Jazz at Monash University in Melbourne. The opportunities these two courses have presented my sons with has been priceless. Both have also mentioned that the theoretical grounding gained in musical theory through the H Course provided them with an edge over their fellow students and has been of enormous benefit through this first year of tertiary study.

Without the H Course, it is highly unlikely that my sons would have been extended sufficiently or been prepared for the type of auditions they were required to undertake at the tertiary level. I will forever be grateful to the teachers of the ANU H Course for their passion and commitment to musical excellence and for them further instilling this into my sons and helping them to see a clear pathway to tertiary study and to see that music can indeed be a lifelong commitment whether it be through teaching or performance.

I am extremely supportive of any efforts to ensure that other young people could also have access to a high quality musical extension program. I should also say that there is no way I would have been able to afford to give both my sons the sort of extended musical education they had access to without the generous support of the ACT Government and the many contributions made by the wonderful Friends of the School of Music.

Regards

██████████

I was deeply disappointed when I heard the music H course would no longer be offered from 2019. As a parent whose child flourished doing the course, and as a community member who listened to performances by the students at the ANU and other venues (Embassies, Wesley Music Centre), I felt the decision was very short sighted and there seemed to be no community consultation.

I have noted a few points below:

- The music H course provided performance opportunities that were not available in the College system. Four solo recitals over the 2 years, and four (or more) Chamber Ensemble performances, provided the opportunity to develop performance skills and also helped determine that music performance was a career to be pursued.
- Once a student reaches a higher level on their instrument (Grade 7 AMEB and above) private lessons need to be an hour in length and the contribution by the course to private tuition by a specialist on their instrument was of great financial assistance.
- Being in an environment with like minded students of similar ability provided support and encouragement to continue with music. These students are spread across Canberra, in both public colleges and private schools - there would have been no opportunity for these students to meet, to study and perform together without the H course. The opportunities through the Music Development Program are good, but the music H course took it to another level that directly contributed towards ■ achieving their AMus in ■ Performance with Distinction and a High Distinction (A+) in Grade 5 Theory.
- The knowledge gained and the performance skills learnt through the course have prepared ■ exceptionally well for their first year studying music at the university of choice for ■ performance.
- I do not believe ■ would have made the decision to pursue a degree in music performance on the ■ if they had not had the opportunity of studying Advanced Music through the H course for 2 years. Classical music at college did not encourage or inspire in the way the H course and the teachers/musicans involved in teaching the H course did.

I wish you all the best in this, and I really hope for a positive outcome so that future students will have the same opportunity ■ did.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

■

I completed the classical stream of the H-course in 2015/2016 as part of my college courses. It was my favourite class and provided me with several opportunities that my college was unable to offer. First, my H-course cohort consisted of roughly 12 people, who were dedicated to classical music. Many people at my home college took the music class just for fun, not because they saw any future with music and as a result there was a lot of wasted time and I felt I didn't learn much or gain anything from attending the college music class and therefore dropped the home music class after year 11. However, unlike the college environment, the ANU's H-course provided me with a

community of like-minded people, and a smaller peer group that allowed us to move through content much faster and get much more out of the experience. At the H-course, we covered material in a matter of weeks that the home college spent entire semesters on. The H-course content was not rushed, but due to the smaller cohort and community of people who wanted to be there and excel, we were able to learn much more (to the point where we were learning university level material).

Secondly, the H-course had a dedicated time for content learning, in addition to time for ensemble performance/practice and individual performance. Unlike the college music program, where every lesson for 3 weeks could be spent just working in groups on a single ensemble piece, we were able to cover theory based content, as well as work on practical skills. Further, because of the smaller/specialist cohort, we were motivated to practice the pieces at home rather than use the dedicated rehearsal time with the ensemble members for individual practice (which is what inevitably happened at the college music class such that your group members were always unprepared). In addition, the quality of the pieces were always much higher in the H-course and the difficulty was more complex, which meant that the pieces were more enjoyable and developed your technical ability far more than the college class ever could due to the number of people who did not take music seriously.

Finally, the H-course was taught by people who were a part of the music industry in Canberra and around Australia, and had experience in performance and teaching specifically in music. The teachers had first-hand experience of what they were teaching and were experts in their field. This meant that they could answer all questions you had about music careers in general, and that they were passionate about what they taught. This was a welcome change to the standard of teaching that was offered at the home college music program.

This program was important to me because it prepared me for what a studying music at university would entail. While I did not chose to peruse music as a career, this program allowed me to apply for part time music teaching jobs, something I don't believe I would have been able to do had access to the teachers and performance opportunities that the H-course provided.

The H-course provided me with university level skills in essay/report writing, music performance and preparation. I walked away from the course with a better understanding of what a career in music would involve, and how I can continue benefiting from music even if it is not the main focus of my life.

Thanks,

██████████

I think it is fair to say that everything about H-course cannot be offered at my current school. From the performance opportunities to the facilities to teaching staff, and most importantly the inspiration I have received from my peers who I otherwise would not have met and formed close friendships with. The academic teaching is also very important as many of the college music teachers not have the qualifications or are simply not able to teach university-level music theory, which is something I would have missed out on if it were not for this course.

This program is not only a critical cultural centre for classical music in the ACT but also forms as a launching pad for young musicians into where they wish to pursue in the future. Personally, the program has grown me personally, socially and musically. I cannot picture what this year would be like without having participated in the program, and cannot possibly express the role it has played in developing my musicality, but also how helpful it has been being surrounded by like-minded people who have the same goals and which to pursue similar futures.

Through this program (after one year), I have gained theory skills and a large group of friends; a support network I know I can rely on. My musically and performance skills have significantly increased as I have received the opportunities to perform on a regular basis. I have made countless connections in the Canberra and wider music industry. And most importantly I have been given a clear picture as to what it will look like to pursue music at a tertiary level and how much fun it can be.

Kind Regards,

H-Course is unique in that it allows me to learn content appropriate to my level with like-minded peers, instead of continually revising content that I learned while prepubescent (as at my college). It gives me the chance to play in ensembles with peers of similar level to me, also giving me access to multiple performance opportunities per year that would otherwise be inaccessible to anyone not participating in H-Course (e.g. at the High Court, Hungarian Embassy, even fortnightly performance class), and perhaps most importantly, it enables me access to professional musicians and professors and artists who I would never be able to learn from otherwise.

H-Course has been fundamental in allowing me to pursue an advanced musical education whilst still being able to undertake a traditional college education with 'traditional subjects', e.g. chemistry, maths, physics etc. It has given me the opportunity to connect with like-minded peers who are

H-Course has lead me to realise what 'music' means to me and what I want it to mean to me; it has fostered my love and interest for music in a way that no traditional school-based music education could ever do, and has pushed me to work hard in music just as I do in any other subject, as instead of just cruising along as in any other music education experience I have had, it has challenged me at my skill level.

H-Course is a one-of-a-kind program that fulfills a niche that no other school-based program could ever hope to fill.

Much appreciated Lindy!

Dear Lindy

The H course program has changed my daughter's life and career trajectory. It has enabled her to gain a high standard of musical education that is not possible in government schools due (amongst other reasons) to the low numbers of students who wish to specialise in classical music. [REDACTED] was a student at [REDACTED] and now [REDACTED] College. It is clear that in the ACT children who are very musical and attend government schools, do not have the same opportunities as children in private schools. That is, there are limited resources in government schools and therefore emerging musical talent cannot be nurtured, despite the best intentions and hard work of teachers. The H course however has indeed nurtured [REDACTED] interest and talent, particularly as she is a classical music student. In addition the H course has connected [REDACTED] to a community of musicians, both at her peer level but also at an academic level. Because of H course she is now planning to audition to study full-time music at university. Having grown up in a family with limited musical knowledge and experience, it is only through H course that [REDACTED] musical passions and talents have grown.

Without H course I am certain [REDACTED] would not have the confidence to even imagine a career as a professional classical musician. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity that has been provided to her and feel very much for the students who will be missing out. Please let me know if I can do anything to assist with the lobbying about the course.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

The H-Course program gave me a chance to progress to a university level as a musician well before beginning University. The course was able to extend every aspect of my musicianship especially in the realms of performance and theory. The H-Course went far beyond the content taught in college and I would have felt far more unprepared if I had started university without having completed the H-Course.

This program was important to me because it massively improved my musicianship. The program put me in touch with top quality teachers both for theory and for my instrument. The program also allowed me to meet a group of incredibly talented musicians of the same age as me, giving me the opportunity to play in ensembles with them.

I gained many connections to staff at ANU and also to fellow musicians. My skills as a musician were greatly developed and I came into university feeling prepared and confident.

Cheers,

[REDACTED]

Hi Lindy,

Thank you so much for spending your time fighting for H course, along with the other teachers involved, it is such a monumental part of music development in Canberra.

H-course currently offers me an opportunity to study classical music that [REDACTED] college doesn't and couldn't possibly provide. Having spoken with our principal [REDACTED], my understanding is that [REDACTED] college does not have the numbers to form a classical class following this decision to cut H course. [REDACTED] college only has one full time music teacher, who, while an amazing jazz teacher, does not have the skill set or knowledge to teach classical music to a higher level audience. While students could definitely continue to learn theory from a theory tutor regardless of whether H-course existed or not, it would not be to the same level with teachers and students who are so passionate about and experienced in their subjects. Without H-course, I would not have met people that I consider to be some of my closest friends, particularly the other [REDACTED] who I have been inspired by. These are people that we will one day see doing amazing things across the world. Additionally, the performance opportunities presented by the ANU open school cannot be easily replicated by home colleges, particularly those who don't support classical music (which on the Northside is all public colleges).

H-course is important to me because it made me realise that no matter what everyone is telling me, I am capable of deciding my future... and that doesn't have to be in science and it doesn't have to be in Canberra. A year ago, I had decided that I wasn't good enough. Over the past six months I have thought long and hard about why I came to that decision... and it came down to a single word. Support. Not only did I lack the encouragement from people around me (and the harsh yet constructive performance class criticism), I simply didn't have the technique to advance any further into larger-scale pieces. Without H-course I wouldn't have switched to [REDACTED] as my teacher, which I can't even begin to think about in terms of how much I would be at a deficit... and I wouldn't have met some of my best friends, inspirations, and mentors. These are people who are absolutely pivotal to showing me that my 'young' age isn't a limit and even just encouraging me to explore technique and style. However, I think the biggest improvement I would've lost is my theory. Don't get me wrong, I still do terribly on my theory exams, but at the start of this year I couldn't even tell you what a cadence was... let alone how inversions work... not even the history of my own instrument, which sounds ridiculous, but it is the truth.

My journey started at ANU almost a decade ago. My primary school best friend and I were sitting in Llewelyn hall, I don't really remember anything but seeing this beautiful lady playing the [REDACTED] right up the back of the stage. A few years later (I think summer of 2012) I did a fortnight of [REDACTED] at the young performers society with [REDACTED]. Since then I have had several teachers, all who were students (or teachers) at ANU. I have seen countless performances, played countless performance and auditions, and met so many beautiful people who I hold close to my heart all under the roof of the school of music. When I saw the cuts I was furious. It's offensive. I had just begun to write a mock entry essay for Juilliard (just for fun because Trump lives over there and I'd rather Morrison if I have to choose)... this is an essay I now read every week to remind myself of how lucky I am to have H-course... because it changed my life. No longer am I going to follow in the path of my families science footsteps, I want to show future generations what everyone at H-course has shown me; music has the power to instrument change. If you said to me a year ago that I would consider

popping onto the Juilliard website even just to browse the repertoire for auditions, I wouldn't believe you. I had so little faith because I listened to my family, friends, and teachers. However, everything has changed. I now plan to move to either Sydney or Brisbane for university, and I am looking into courses and masterclasses in France and the Netherlands. I believe that I want to be somewhere where I am supported by the government, not discriminated against... another thing H-course has given me; the confidence to stand up for myself.

Best wishes,



Type 1 played an absolutely vital role in my music education, and essentially shaped my decision in studying music at a tertiary level. It provided high-level education that could be found nowhere else in the ACT high schools - particularly at my own high school where the music program was very much contemporary, global-music focused.

All components of the Type 1 program assisted tremendously in my musical journey, as it trained me in the most important foundations and skills required for a classical musician. The music theory classes prepared me for my tertiary level studies; the performance seminars were a rare opportunity to present our music before our peers in a friendly, constructive environment; and the chamber music program played a vital part in well-rounded music-making. The contents offered in all of these classes are not offered anywhere else in the ACT high schools, and I could not imagine how much I would be lacking as a musician, were it not for the knowledge and experience I gained from Type 1.

Most importantly, Type 1 kindled a passion for music. Because of its well-rounded structure, the program offered a comprehensive insight into a life in music, and it stirred up great interest in myself as well as many friends who are now also pursuing music. The lifelong friendships this program created are more valuable than any knowledge one can learn even in a tertiary institution. Being part of a group who shared the same interest and love for music, and who built each other up, was an experience like nothing else.

In summary, Type 1 made up the highlight of my year 11/12 life - and in fact will always be a highlight to remember in my entire life. It is the most inspiring program one could ever take part in, and I would not be where I am today without it.

Thank you so much for doing this. I can't imagine ACT without this program.

Best wishes,

