

## **Music Education in Newfoundland and Labrador**

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### **Context for Music Education**

Facing the North Atlantic in the northeast corner of North America, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is the seventh largest province in Canada, with a total land area of 405,720 km<sup>2</sup>. Labrador occupies 72.5% of the land area but contains only 5.3% of the population. Newfoundland and Labrador, including its culture, settlement patterns and economy, has developed from its association with the ocean. The population is a half million with a population density of 1.43 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. The population is centred on the island's southeastern Avalon Peninsula. St. John's, the capital and largest city, has a population of 99,182. More and more people are moving from rural, outport communities to larger centres as economic conditions change.

### **History of Education**

Historically, education in Newfoundland and Labrador was denominational, under church administration but publicly funded. After extensive public consultation, the Williams Royal Commission concluded in March 1992 that the province's denominational education system

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should be fundamentally and substantially reformed. After two referendums, an amendment of Term 17 of the Terms of Union between Newfoundland and Canada, and a new Schools Act, the first non-denominational school boards were elected in 1998. The number of school districts was reduced from 32 to 10 and, as a result of this massive restructuring, several private schools were established. In 2005, the number of school districts was reduced to five: four regional districts (Labrador, Western, Nova Central, and Eastern) and one province-wide Francophone district. There are now seven private schools, five French first-language schools, two native schools, one youth centre, and the Newfoundland School for the Deaf.

Schools in the province are geographically isolated. Of the 303 schools in the province, 65% are designated as 'rural' schools and 35% are 'urban' schools ('urban' defined as cities, towns, and communities with a population of 5,000 or more). The number of schools has declined from 781 (1971) to 303 (2004). Student enrolment has declined from a peak of 162,818 (1971) to 79,439 (2004). However, the ability for further reduction in the number of schools is limited by geography and population distribution. A significant number of small and geographically isolated schools will have to be maintained. The declining student enrolment is due to several factors, the most significant being the 1992 Cod Moratorium and the ensuing out-migration. Between 1992 and 2002, the population declined by 60,000.

The median number of students per school is 226, with 25% of the schools having a total student population less than 100 and 45% of the schools having less than 200 students. The decline in student population has resulted in a parallel reduction in teacher allocations. For the

school year 2004-05, 5,634 teachers were allocated, a sharp decline from the 8,120 teachers allocated in 1987-88. Teaching units are allocated to school boards by the Department of Education. School boards then have complete autonomy and flexibility regarding assignment of teacher to schools. Music teacher are not allocated on the basis of program but are deployed from the general allocation. Teacher-librarians and guidance counsellors are the only teachers allocated on the basis of program.

### **Music Education Curriculum in the Public Schools**

The delivery of the music curriculum for K-12, authorized by the Department of Education, includes classroom, choral, instrumental, and technological. It is designed to be taught by music specialists, recognizing that non-specialist classroom teachers will deliver the program when necessary. Based on the *Foundation for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Education Curriculum*., the curriculum document is a provincial adaptation of the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum*, and provides the framework for music education and reflects current research theories and classroom practice. The document includes the Essential Graduation Learnings, General Curriculum Outcomes, and Key Stage Curriculum Outcomes for arts education in the Atlantic Provinces. The *Program of Studies* is published annually by the Department of Education and provides a brief description and overview of subject curricula at each level of study (Kindergarten, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate, Senior High). It also includes the time allotments for each discipline at each level beginning with

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Kindergarten.

From Kindergarten to Grade 3, music is mandatory with 40% of the instructional time allocated to social studies, religious, education, health, art, music, and physical education. Music in Kindergarten provides experiences which are meaningful and enjoyable to the child and are designed to help the child discover musical concepts, develop musical skills, and establish a foundation for musical learning. The primary music curriculum sequences the discovery of musical concepts and skills. Rhythm and metre, pitch/melody, harmony, form, expression (dynamics, tempo, articulation, tone colours) are explored through direct engagement and involvement in authentic musical experiences. These include *performing* (singing, playing, speaking, moving, conducting, reading, writing, constructing/diagraming), *listening* (aurally identifying, responding, discussing, analyzing, reflecting, describing), and *creating* (improvising, composing, interpreting).

Music from Grades 4 through 6 is mandatory and is allocated 6% of instructional time. The study of the recorder, an expanded listening program, and a focus on improvisation and composition build on the musical understandings and skills developed in the K-3 curriculum. Continued exploration of the elements and expressive controls of music through a variety of musical experiences further develops reading and writing skills. Repertoire is expanded and includes songs from students' own culture and other cultures, works of recognized masters, and contemporary compositions.

Choral experiences are an integral part of the elementary music program. These are

offered in addition to the core classroom music program. Instrumental skills may be further developed through a band or string program, generally beginning in Grade 5. The decision to introduce band and/or string programs is a district and school prerogative. Band and string classes are an extension of the classroom music program and provide reinforcement and application of musical concepts.

At the intermediate level, music and art share 5% of the instructional time. There is one year of mandatory music education but many students are involved in music courses for all three years. Emphasis is placed on direct experiences with music and the integration of musical elements. Performing ensembles such as band, choir, orchestra as well as guitar, ukelele, and recorder ensembles are recognized as components of the curriculum and are considered part of the instructional program. Developing performance skills on traditional instruments such as fiddle, accordion, and tin whistle is also encouraged. The prescribed learning outcomes may be realized through a classroom program or a particular performance category.

Music education at the senior high level has been impacted by new graduation requirements: that include a mandatory fine arts category. All students will complete a minimum of two credits in either art, music or theatre arts as part of the 36 required credits for high school graduation.

Music education at this high level is provided through elective credit courses ranging from a general music course, called *Experiencing Music 2200*, to *Applied Music 2206/3206* and *Ensemble Performance 1105/2105/3105*, as prescribed by the curriculum guidelines. The

Department of Education provides the opportunity for districts to develop courses at the school level. Several music educators across the province have developed their own local music courses such as musical theatre and media and technology. As well, the Department of Education recognizes internationally-developed music education courses offered through the College Board and International Baccalaureate Program. Schools may offer Advanced Placement Music Theory as a local course for students with strong music backgrounds who desire an advanced study of music.

Of special note, a new program called *Experiencing Music* is now being offered over the web to students in 11 communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. It is offered in ten 55-minute periods over a 14-day cycle with four periods of synchronous and six periods of asynchronous interaction. Students in *Experiencing Music 2200* have access to the basic Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) equipment, as well as additional equipment which is provided to address specific needs unique to music education. Web cams are used to facilitate video conferencing for the purposes of real-time instruction and performances during synchronous classes. Applied instruments include the keyboard and tin whistle. Enrolments in music courses are listed in Table 1, with an indication of the percentage of students studying music.

### **Enrichment Programs Supporting Music Education in the Schools**

Music education programs designed to support learning in the arts and promote school

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music are critical components of music education in the province. Further information on each is available through the websites listed.

**Table 1**

*Student Enrolment in Music Courses (2004-2005)*

Grades K-6	98%	37,236
Grade 7	81%	5,135
Grade 8	67%	4,454
Grade 9	58%	4,143
Grades 10-12	18%	
Applied Music 2206		1,056
Applied Music 3206		483
Ensemble Performance 1105		725
Ensemble Performance 2105		589
Ensemble Performance 3105		388
Experiencing Music 2200		393
Experiencing Music 2200 (distance)		23
Music Theory 4227 (AP)		78
Music 3282 (IB)		11
Music Theatre 3221		70
Media Technology 3221		122

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**ArtsSmart** (<http://www.artsmartsnlac.ca>)

The Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council is the provincial partner for this innovative program. Over a nine-year period (1998-2007) \$700,000 in grants were awarded in the province. In 2005 funding from ArtsSmarts supported projects in 28 schools.

**Learning Through the Arts** (<http://www.ltta.ca/>)

Learning Through the Arts is complementary to the authorized music curriculum. Through partnerships with the corporate community, artists come directly into the classroom to work with students and teachers over an extended period of time. Learning Through the Arts is not an arts curriculum. Rather, it establishes long-term partnerships between teachers and specially trained artist-educators who serve as change agents within the schools, promoting collaboration, risk taking, and continuous learning by teachers and students alike.

**The Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra Goes to School** ([http://www.nso-music.com/nso\\_goes\\_to\\_school.htm](http://www.nso-music.com/nso_goes_to_school.htm))

This is an education outreach program is geared to Grade 5 and 6 students. Through a subsidized, incentive program, young people are given the opportunity to discover the magic of symphonic music, watch great artists perform, and experience a symphony orchestra at dress

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rehearsals and concerts.

### **MUN Lab Band and Orchestra Program**

As part of the Bachelor of Music Education degree program at Memorial University, Grade 5 students from several cooperating schools are given the opportunity to study an instrument for one year. This activity provides a context for undergraduate, pre-service music education students to apply principles of teaching and learning to the band and orchestral ensemble contexts.

### **Post- Secondary Music Education**

#### **College of the North Atlantic (CONA) - Bay St. George Campus**

(<http://www.cna.nl.ca/programscourses/program-details.asp?cProgCode=124>)

The Music Industry and Performance program is designed for students who wish to pursue careers as performers in the music industry. The intent of this program is to provide an opportunity for students whose interests include country, traditional, fusion, pop, rock, blues, and other genres, to refine their skills in the company of like-minded students, while gaining exposure to all aspects of the music industry.

#### **Memorial University of Newfoundland** (<http://www.mun.ca/educ/undergrad/>)

The Bachelor of Music Education degree programme is designed to prepare students with

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the necessary start-up skills for a teaching career in all facets of school music. It is designed to prepare teacher-musicians for life-long teaching and learning in the discipline. Graduates of this program are be prepared to teach music in the *primary* classroom, the *elementary* classroom and the *secondary* school classroom as well as be able to work with school performing ensembles in both the *choral* and *instrumental* areas. The B.Mus.Ed. degree is offered in both consecutive and concurrent models. Approximately 15-20 students per year are admitted into the B.Mus.Ed. degree program.

Memorial University also offers graduate study in music education within the Master of Education in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Studies. This degree programs provides opportunities for students to investigate pertinent issues in these interrelated areas from a variety of perspectives: philosophical, historical, social, cultural, cognitive, and technological. Currently, 13 students are enrolled in the Master of Education in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Studies (Music Education) program. The first three graduates convocated in May 2005.

**FESTIVAL 500 *Sharing the Voices*** (<http://www.festival500.com/institute/default.asp>)

Festival 500 and Memorial University of Newfoundland co-sponsor a Choral Institute for those interested in earning graduate credit through Memorial University. In this institute, the choral festival and *The Phenomenon of Singing Symposium* create an unparalleled resource of opportunities for graduate students and professionals.

The Summer Institute in Contemporary Music/Music Education is offered in conjunction

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with the Sound Symposium in even-numbered years. All courses are designed to utilize the exceptional resources of a major international contemporary music event to stimulate research and creation in the performing arts. For information, see <http://www.soundsymposium.com/>

### **Provincial Leadership in Music Education**

Leadership is critically important in supporting vital music education programs and at the Department of Education, there is a Fine Arts Program Development Specialist whose responsibilities include the development of curriculum documents and working with districts on the implementation of new programs. However, only two of the five provincial school districts have fine arts program specialists (Eastern and Nova Central). The same two districts have District Advisory Committees in music education.

In 1994, the Atlantic provinces invited the public to contribute, through various provincial consultative processes, to the selection of the abilities and areas of knowledge that they considered essential for students graduating from high school. Following consultation, Essential Graduation Learnings were identified for all students in the Atlantic provinces. In 2001, APEF published *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Arts Education Curriculum*. The new K-6 music curriculum in Newfoundland and Labrador is the first in our province to be based on the *Foundation for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Education Curriculum*.

Notably, the Department of Education has also established provincial curriculum/advisory committees to develop curriculum documents. These working groups are designed to include

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geographical representation, a balance of urban and rural music educators, a district program specialist (music education) and representation from Memorial University's Faculty of Education.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Music Special Interest Council (previously known as the Music Council of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association) is one of 20 special-interest councils of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. It was formed in 1960 and affiliated with the Canadian Music Educators Association (CMEA) in 1975. Its purpose is to keep teachers informed of curriculum changes, to assist in the professional development of its members and to share innovative approaches to teaching. The council offers professional support to its members by making curriculum resources, tutorials, teaching references, lesson links and discussion forums available to its members.

### **Community Support for Music Education**

In addition to the leadership support provided within various educational institutions for school music programs, there are several additional agencies whose primary aim is to support music education both in the schools and community. They are listed below.

#### **The Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council (<http://www.nlac.nf.ca/>)**

This is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to foster the arts of the province by operating financial assistance programs; providing services and resources; and by working with

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government and the community for development in the arts. The Council receives an annual grant, appropriated by the Legislature, to finance assistance to the arts, office administration, and communication. In addition, the Council seeks support and sponsorship for its assistance programs from public and private donations.

**The Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra (NSO)** (<http://www.nso-music.com/>)

The NSO is an orchestra of 50-70 players based in St. John's at the Arts and Culture Centre. The NSO organization encompasses the following divisions: Newfoundland Symphony Youth Orchestra (1983), Atlantic String Quartet (1987), NSO Sinfonia (1988), NSO Philharmonic Choir (1988), and NSO Light Orchestra (1998).

**Shallaway** (<http://www.shallaway.ca>)

Newfoundland and Labrador Youth in Chorus (previously Newfoundland Symphony Youth Choir) is a community-based cultural organization that comprises 220 young artists between the ages of 8 and 18 from the urban and rural environs of St. John's. At the heart of the Shallaway vision is the valuing, promoting and transmitting of Newfoundland and Labrador's distinctive and rich culture. Of special significance in terms of leadership in music education is Shallaway's Scholarship and Mentorship Program which provides scholarships and mentored leadership and collaborative experience to seven university students and seven secondary students annually.

**Eastern Division of the Newfoundland and Labrador Music Special Interest Council**

(<http://www.virtualteachercentre.ca/sic/music/index.html>)

For over 30 years, the Eastern Division of the Newfoundland and Labrador Music Special Interest Council has sponsored the *Christmas Suite* at the Arts and Culture Centre in St. John's. Young musicians from 30-40 schools perform as soloists, small ensembles, choirs, bands, and orchestras during the four evening concerts. The number of students involved often exceeds 2,000. The *Christmas Suite* provides an opportunity for musical groups to perform publicly outside their school concert.

**Choral Connections** (<http://www.esdnl.ca/>)

An initiative of the Eastern School District, *Choral Connections* is a district-wide choral festival that occurs annually in the spring. Elementary and intermediate choirs come together for a morning or afternoon to perform for and with each other, workshop with a guest conductor, and enjoy performances by students from Memorial's School of Music.

**Rotary Music Festival** (<http://www.rotarymusicfestival.org/>)

The Rotary Music Festival is an annual, non-competitive event run by a team of dedicated music educators and community supporters. This not-for-profit endeavour plays a pivotal role in the development and enhancement of music education in the province of Newfoundland and

Labrador. The fact that Rotary Music Festival is non-competitive allows for a major emphasis on

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providing a high-quality educational experience for all participating groups.

### **The Newfoundland Federation of Music Festivals**

(<http://www.kiwanismusicfestivalsj.org/main.html>)

The Newfoundland Federation of Music Festivals holds annual festivals (competitive and non-competitive) in communities throughout the province. Currently there are seven provincial festivals affiliated with the Canadian Federation of Music Festivals.

### **The Labrador Creative Arts Festival** (<http://www.mun.ca/labradorinstitute/lcaf.php>)

The Labrador Creative Arts Festival, founded in 1975, is a celebration of the arts created by and for Labradorians. This Festival upholds two main principles:

1. there is an expressed need for young people resident in Labrador, be they Innu, Inuit, Metis or resident, to know their past and their role in the developing Labrador community, in order to aid them in becoming active in the preservation of their heritage, as well as to become arbiters of their future.

2. to provide individuals with an opportunity to come together and share their creative experiences because of the geographic and social diversity within Labrador, and thus become aware of the varied and composite life styles in Labrador.

The Festival is not the embodiment of an arts curriculum. However, it becomes an integral part of many different subjects such as a language arts program through composition,

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discussion and debate; and part of a social studies/history program through study of demography, research and analysis of historical phenomena. In effect, the Arts Festival is an extension of the total curriculum, where the goal is to utilize the skills and learning styles offered through the arts and to apply them in other subject areas to develop a sense of students' own identity.

### **FESTIVAL 500 Sharing the Voices** (<http://www.festival500.com/>)

FESTIVAL 500 Sharing the Voices is a celebrated international non-competitive festival of choral music that takes place in St. Johns every two years. This heralded eight-day choral festival and three-day academic symposium, *The Phenomenon of Singing International Symposium*, bring together singers, conductors, and scholars from cultures worldwide. Regional festivals are held in Labrador and Western Newfoundland.

### **Looking To the Future**

*Cultural Connections*, a provincial arts and cultural strategy for K-12 education, aims to increase the presence of cultural content in the school curriculum and foster links between artists and students in the school environment. The government has allocated approximately \$10 million (over 3 years) toward research studies, resources, curriculum, professional developments, conferences, linkages with community artists and production of music/art.....and beyond.

Through this integrated strategy, it is expected that:

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- Newfoundland and Labrador history and culture will be affirmed as a key feature of the K-12 curriculum
- Students will develop a critical awareness of the role of the arts in creating and reflecting our heritage
- Students, and those who witness their expression of the arts, will also come to respect the contributions of individuals and cultural groups to the arts, in local and provincial contexts, and will recognize the value of the arts as a record of our human experience
- Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, especially our younger population, will grow in their understanding and appreciation of our unique culture

This government initiative stems from the March 15, 2005 Throne Speech by Premier Danny Williams. Here are selected excerpts from that Throne Speech in which our Premier focused on cultural, economic development, and social issues:

We must nurture and sustain our hope and pride so that it propels our people to a brighter future... Music, drama, writing, film, and visual arts, along with other forms of expression, allow us to capture and communicate our culture. In its Blueprint for the Future, My Government stated that, “in its first mandate, government will increase the presence of cultural content in the school curriculum and foster links between artists and students in the school environment.

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Through the implementation of a sustained, integrated, and coherent strategy, Newfoundland and Labrador history and culture will be affirmed as a key feature of the K-12 curriculum, and students will develop a critical awareness of the role of the arts in creating and reflecting our heritage. Students, and those who witness their expression of the arts, will also come to respect the contributions of individuals and cultural groups to the arts in both local and provincial contexts and will recognize the value of the arts as a record of our unique experience.

To promote the arts generally, My Government will introduce a comprehensive fine arts and culture strategy within the education system that includes expanding the curriculum for the arts, music, theatre arts, fine arts, and social studies; supporting professional development; promoting our culture through the acquisition of works by local authors, artists, and performers; and investing in the acquisition and repair of musical equipment.

To promote collaboration with our artists, My Government will work with the province's writers and artists to develop a new Artists in Schools Program to connect musical, dramatic, and visual artists with students in classrooms, enabling them to benefit directly from the inspiration and mentorship that our cultural muses can provide. There will also be arts institutes where students can benefit from hands-on mentoring, and fine arts conferences to

facilitate teachers' professional growth.

To ensure our plan is comprehensive and effective, My Government will convene a roundtable discussion with the arts and heritage communities on the proposed details and, together, we will embark on a partnership of strengthening our cultural identity, building a creative province, and seizing the economic opportunities for generations to come.

To nurture our cultural strengths, My Government will bring forward a Strategic Cultural Plan this year to promote our heritage, celebrate our identity, and champion creativity.

### **Conclusion**

At the time of writing this paper, we have just heard the announcement of an additional \$17.6 million to be spent on cultural development over the next three years. This funding will support the continued success and growth of professional artists and cultural industries with the adoption of the province's first strategic cultural plan, *Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture*. Recommendations have been made to further strengthen, enhance, and support our arts and cultural sector. We look to the future with renewed energy and spirit!

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