



Walter Pitman

Author of *Learning the Arts in an Age of Uncertainty* 1998

## Forum on Arts Education Report

Over a hundred delegates attended the Alliance for Arts Education's Forum held November 28<sup>th</sup> at the Colin Jackson Theatre. The Forum gave members and others an opportunity to discuss challenges and possibilities in arts education as a follow-up to the February conference "For the Love of the Arts: Arts and Education 2002."

Speakers Mayor Glen Murray and Dr. Walter Pitman (of Ontario) opened the Forum and a membership meeting electing the first full Board closed the event. Members also changed the organization's name to The Alliance for Arts Education in Manitoba (AAEM) to distinguish it from our colleagues in the Manitoba Association of Art Education.

In what turned out to be an especially memorable address, Mayor Murray spoke with passion about the positive influence of the arts in individuals' lives and reflected on the impact of particularly books and art in liberating his own mind as a teenager. Using a discussion of bridges as an example of the revitalization of the community through art and as a symbol of being a connector of people, Murray shared the place of art in his vision of Winnipeg's development. He told the audience that the City of Winnipeg is working toward a public arts strategy that would be built into every aspect of our community.

Continuing the theme of connectedness, Walter Pitman, author of *Learning the Arts in an Age of Uncertainty*, spoke of a "cultural dynamic" in the country; "The arts," he said, "are about connectedness and there is nothing going on in Canada that's as exciting as what is happening in Winnipeg."

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Our compact disc, *For the Love of the Arts*, featuring Dr. Elliot Eisner of Stanford University and Dr. Philip Hall of the University of Manitoba, has been a great seller. Only a few copies remain available for purchase.



## Letter from the chair...

The Forum on Arts Education, our first major event since "For the Love of the Arts" conference last February, was just what we had hoped for—a chance to hear Walter Pitman, considered by many to be the godfather of arts education in the country and our mayor Glen Murray's vision of the arts in our community (and what a speech that was!), the opportunity for the community to discuss our challenges, and to elect a new board. The Interim Board, elected last May, planned and coordinated the Forum, their last undertaking and we thank them for very hard work during this productive transition time: Gary Jackson, Jill Mino, Carolyn O'Neill, Virginia Price, Deborah Schnitzer, Lynne Stefanchuk, Jey Thibedeau Silver, Joan Walters, Coralie Bryant.

A newsletter was produced, a database and accounting systems developed, incorporation achieved, and several grant proposals written. The first received was a grant from the Manitoba Foundation for the Arts to support an administrator/coordinator of projects, and Anneli Rosteski was hired in November. The Alliance also brought together several major arts organizations to write a proposal to the Winnipeg Foundation for funds to support teacher Marcelline Moody to work with teachers and students in the schools. To support collaboration among the various organizations and institutions among our membership is one of our goals and we're hopeful that this pilot, if funded, can serve as a model for professional organizations to work with schools and with each other.

Jey Thibedeau Silver heads the committee pursuing the production of a video on arts education for a target audience of parents, school boards, educators, politicians and the general public, one which contains ample footage of our young people "doing" art as well as interviews with a broad spectrum of people. It will provide information to our community about the importance of a strong arts education. Two proposals have been submitted to help finance this project and we're hoping for a fall release.

Our membership at over 200 is growing steadily, but we've been slow to bring in one of the most important groups, parents. So we're organizing a Parent's Forum this spring. If you have ideas for this, or for alerting as many parents as possible to attend, please email or call. Lastly, we're working on a Website and a speakers list – any ideas or contributions would be welcomed. And as you'd expect, money is always a problem. We have no source of income for day to day expenses, and must rely on grants to support major projects and events. If you have suggestions, please forward them to a Board member. (We're applying for Charitable Status submission as I write.) Now that our database is in working order, you can expect to hear from us regularly, particularly by email.

Coralie Bryant, Chair  
cbryant@merlin.mb.ca

## Forum on Arts Education

continued

Pitman described the institutions which have helped created a rich arts and cultural climate in this country, shared recent research results showing how involvement in the arts is linked to progress in other subject areas and in learning to work together.

He congratulated the Alliance for Arts Education in Manitoba for managing to be inclusive, involving not only educators but professional arts organizations, parents, students and artists in the advocacy for arts education. Pitman concluded by encouraging the Alliance to continue its work of "changing a value system, transforming the lives of children and parents."

Delegates broke into five groups for a lengthy discussion on the challenges at all levels of the system, to share stories about what is being, and what can be, done. The strongest theme and message to the Alliance was the need to educate the public – parents, teachers, boards, government, community – about the necessity of strengthening this part of our children's' educational experience. Several mechanisms were suggested: disseminating research, producing a video and brochures, providing a speakers list, establishing a website, organizing a parents' forum, organizing another conference, speaking to politicians.

The need for new arts curricula, for additional budgets for teachers and supplies, and more and effective professional development for teachers were frequently mentioned. Strategies at the board and school level were also shared, with Arts Smarts and the Learning Through the Arts programs described and school arts councils, magnet schools, artists in residence programs, division arts consultants, a centre for cultural literacy (university), corporate sponsorships, use of parent-artists in the schools, election of pro-arts trustees, festivals to celebrate what kids can do, Artist in the Schools Programs, timetables and allotments for the arts, just a few of the subjects which came up for discussion.

For membership information contact:

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or contact Anneli Rosteski  
204-793-7994 or annelir@mts.net

## Meet the Board of Directors

**Coralie Bryant, Chair:** A retired school superintendent currently teaching part time at the University of Manitoba, Coralie represents the Manitoba Arts Council on this board.

**Jey Thibedeau Silver, Vice-Chair:** Education Director at Prairie Theatre Exchange and president of the Manitoba Drama Educators' Association, Jey is currently completing her M. Ed. on Early and Middle years Drama.

**Russell Greene, Treasurer:** Trained as an architect, Russell spent his professional life in business. He's a parent of six, grandfather of six, a conductor, organist and composer.

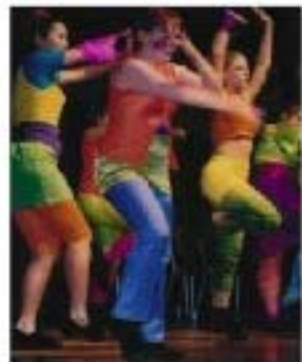
**Linda Archer** is current president of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, Linda who also serves as a trustee in St. James Assiniboia School Division.

**Gordon Campbell,** Vice-principal of Ecole Dieppe School (K-6 French Immersion) who has received awards for excellence in teaching from the University of Manitoba and the Government of Canada, and conducts workshops in the visual arts for schools locally and nationally.

**Phillip Duncan,** serving his fourth year as Theatre School Director at Manitoba's Theatre for Young People, has directed with MTYP's Young Company and helped found the Fringe production company The Conspiracy Network.

**Lita Fontaine** is from the Dakota/Ojibway Nations and a member of the Long Plan Band near Portage La Prairie. A visual artist in mixed media, photo-based installations and painting, Lita is currently artist-in-residence in Seven Oaks School Division.

**Margo Wilson Kehler** is drama teacher at Vincent Massey High School in Pembina Trails SD whose passion is Improv. She and her students have trained at Second City in Toronto and the Improv Olympic in Chicago.



Westwood Dancers

**Christina Kowalec** is Head of the Arts Department at Balmoral Hall and Vice President of the Manitoba Association for Art Education. As an Art Consultant, she designs new programming for the International Baccalaureate Junior School Units of Inquiry.

**Karen Lamb** teaches band at River West Park School, choral at Oak Park High School, and works as Curriculum Support Teacher for Fine Arts for the Pembina Trails School Division.

**Jill Mino** teaches Dance and Music Theatre at Westwood Collegiate in St. James Assiniboine School Division and for twenty-one years has instructed modern, ballet and movement improv at the school of Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers.

**Graham Bruce** is currently Director of Curriculum for the Louis Riel School Division. Prior to this, he was a school principal and maintains active involvement in music as a conductor, clinician, and adjudicator, and conducts the Rupertsland Brass Band.

**Dr. Francine Morin** as Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, has received many awards for her work with the music community and is currently President of the Manitoba Choral Association and archivist for the Manitoba Music Educators Association.

## An Invitation from Manitoba Education & Youth:

In a curriculum update, Manitoba Education and Youth announced the initiation of a review process for arts curriculum in the province of Manitoba. To begin this process, a steering committee has been struck representing art, music, drama and dance educators. The committee would like to extend an invitation for you or your group to participate in the dialogue by considering the following question:

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR ARTS EDUCATION IN MANITOBA?

Please think about your "vision", jot down your ideas, organize a discussion in your organization or in your school, or chat about it with colleagues, students, parents or members of your community. If you would like to provide feedback to the committee please e-mail [cbryant@merlin.mb.ca](mailto:cbryant@merlin.mb.ca). We hope to continue this discussion as the review progresses. Watch for future communication from the committee.

## Upcoming Events in Arts Education

- **Seven Oaks School Division: *Creating Possibilities* – Arts Conference**  
February 11, 2003 - Ecole Riverbend, contact:
- **Pembina Trails School Division: *Building Community: Allons-Y-Ensemble***  
February 10, 2003 - Linden Meadows School, contact: Gordon Campbell at 889-1034
- **Western Canadian Association for Student Teaching Conference 2003**  
*Celebrating Diversity - Inner City Teacher Education*  
February 19-22, 2003 - University of Winnipeg, contact:
- **Manitoba Orff Chapter Workshop: *Early Notation: Marcelline Moody***  
February 22, 2003, 9:00 to 12:30, contact: Brenda Chorney at 204-482-4521
- ***Evolving Cultures & Involving Cultures***  
*The role of the arts in promoting multicultural education*  
May 8 - 9, 2003 - Sponsored by MAME and the St. Norbert Arts Centre 269-0564