

Mediaportal Report

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▶ **A dream comes true for hands - on students**
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By: Fon Cerabona

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Peter Leonard

Canberra primary school students have attended the Kiddy Cussion concert series by Drumatics, an ANU group, to learn about percussion instruments. Public concerts will be held at the ANU Arts Centre on Friday and Saturday.

Interviewees: Gary France, ANU Head of Percussion
Duration: 1.40
Summary ID: C00026625187
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Demographics	
Male:	43319
Female:	52171
AB:	42464
GB:	53623
All People:	95498



A dream comes true for hands-on students

By Fon Cerabona

Children are accustomed to being told to quieten down.

So for a handful of lucky pupils from Farrer Primary School yesterday, the hands-on preview of the ANU School of Music DRUMatiX percussion ensemble's instruments, used for their *Kiddicussion* concerts, was something of a dream come true.

They were encouraged to bang on kettledrums, turn the handle on a wind machine, play the marimba and try other instruments before hundreds of other primary school students from Canberra schools came in for the first concert.

Kindergarten pupil Charlie Mitchell, 5, of Farrer was one of the young music-makers at the ANU Arts Centre.

He said his favourite instrument of the ones he had tried was the gong because, "It makes a big sound."

Among the pieces in the concert was *Strings Attached* by Erik Griswold, in which drumsticks were suspended from ropes, and the song *Under the Sea* from the film *The Little Mermaid*, arranged for percussion by Australian National University student Jacinta Dunlop.

Ms Dunlop, along with fellow students Christina Hopgood, Richard Spong, Veronica Washaw and Charles Martin, as well as artistic director Gary France, comprise the current membership of DRUMatiX.

France said school concerts took place every few years so each group of percussion students might integrate their pedagogical

skill with their musical educational training.

There was a second concert for older primary pupils yesterday afternoon and there will be one for secondary students today as well as public concerts tonight and tomorrow.

The public concerts feature Fredric Rzewski's *Coming Together*, inspired by a poem written by a prisoner who died in the 1971 inmate uprising at Attica Correctional Facility in New York State, and a performance by Master Drummer Tuza Afutu, of Ghana.

DRUMatiX was founded by US-born France, who is celebrating 10 years as head of the percussion program at ANU and 20 years in Australia this year.

"I came to Australia in 1987 as the inaugural lecturer in percussion at the Western Australian Conservatorium," France said, "and in 1997 I came to the ANU School of Music."

France said he was one of only six tertiary-level percussion teachers in Australia – the others are in Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth.

"We're a close-knit family... It's a small group of people able to stay cutting-edge."

Australia could "pretty much hold its own" in the field of percussion.

■ The public DRUMatiX 10th Anniversary concerts are on tonight at 7.30pm and tomorrow at 1pm at the ANU Arts Centre.

Tickets (Adult \$15/concession \$12/ ANU student \$5/Friends of the School of Music and Artsound FM members \$10) available from Canberra Ticketing on 6275 2700 or www.canberraticketing.com.au



BANG ON: Farrer Primary School students Hughie Mitchell, 7, and Joshua Vines, 7, try out some of the instruments for *Kiddicussion* at the ANU. Picture: MELISSA ADAMS