

THE ARTISTS-IN-THE-SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Ray Okimoto

Artists-in-the-Schools (AITS) is an on-going program of the Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) in partnership with the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. It has been in existence since the 1969-70 school year, when the Legislature appropriated funds for the program's implementation under the title "Cultural Enrichment in Art."

Artists-in-the-Schools is the culmination of three years of development and field-testing begun in 1966 by what was then the Hawaii Curriculum Center. The Curriculum Center at that time was the joint research arm of the Department of Education and the University of Hawaii and was funded under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Its mandate was to experiment with and develop innovative educational programs. Funding and energy were mostly channeled into development of what became the Hawaii English Project. However, smaller research projects were also implemented, one of which was the Fine Arts Project. This project became the *Artists-in-the-Schools* program when adopted by the DOE in the fall of 1969.

The first objective of the Fine Arts Project was to discover how schools and community agencies could channel their efforts to provide students with a range of experiences in the arts on a statewide basis each school year. The project was designed to provide information useful in developing guidelines for scheduling, programming, financing, and evaluating program effectiveness; selecting personnel; defining and providing for logistical needs; and preparing educational materials to support such a program. During the first two years of the project, arts activities were conducted in five schools on Molokai and in three schools on Oahu. By its third year of operation the project was expanded to twenty-two schools. A range of approaches to the arts was employed to identify those techniques which best help students build an appreciation of the various art forms.

The project was summarized in a 71-page docu-

ment published in January, 1969. The summary included a proposed five-year installation plan to service all schools in the State by the end of the five-year period. Although the program was fully funded for the first-year period and formally evaluated with successful results, subsequent years saw a lessening of state funding due to the "austerity period" which gripped Hawaii's governmental services. An expansion request for \$103,000 for the 1975-77 biennium has been submitted by the DOE to the Governor and the State Legislature. As of this writing, final word regarding expansion approvals has not been announced.

The vital role of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) in the program should be noted at this point. As the official state arts agency of Hawaii, the State Foundation has been involved with the planning and operation of the *Artists-in-the-Schools* program since the early years of testing at the Curriculum Center. Its Executive Director has supported the program with encouragement, advice and additional funding. In addition, all grants from the federal *Artists-in-Schools* program (note the difference in title) of the National Endowment for the Arts are channeled through the SFCA. Different AITS activities are worked on jointly by the SFCA and the DOE in conjunction with other individuals, agencies and organizations representing various arts interests.

Artists-in-the-Schools is but one aspect of the DOE's concern for the student's total education. While there is a great need to develop cognitive skills, it is equally important that we provide for education to develop the individual who will respond with sensitivity to various aesthetic stimuli. It has become increasingly evident over the years that unless schools take on stronger responsibility in this area, we will be graduating students unable to make aesthetic choices.

The objectives of the *Artists-in-the-Schools* program are:

1. to guide students in cultivating sensitivity

to values in the environment, and particularly in works of art;

2. to provide students with opportunities to observe and interact with professional artists and performers in learning situations not usually available in the ordinary school setting;

3. to help students develop insights into the processes of art creation and knowledge, and respect for the varied cultural heritages in Hawaii through contact with representative artists from the community;

4. to provide maximum opportunities for school and community to work cooperatively in extending students' experiences in the various fine arts.

Artists-in-the-Schools, then, provides the second dimension of any good arts education program—that of experience—while the regular classroom provides the first, that of acquisition of knowledge and skills. The experience dimension establishes a vital link between the traditional instructional program and the world of artistic endeavor.

Six different art domains have been identified for the program, with a taxonomy developed for each domain. They include the art forms of Dance, Drama, Music, Visual-Tactile Arts, Literary Arts and the Environmental Arts. Performances and lecture-demonstrations in the above categories are brought into the schools without charge to the students. These *AITS* activities are designed for students in grades K-12 and are separated into two categories: first, the *visiting artist(s)* who meets with the students to acquaint them with the various arts on a one-time basis; and second, the *resident artist(s)* who actually works with the students for a more extended period in a classroom situation. The latter category, because of its costlier nature, is possible only through special funding such as federal grants. Teacher materials are sent to the schools prior to the presentations so that students will be prepared for the activity.

Personnel in the various arts who are proficient and able to communicate well with students are hired after being interviewed for suitability. These persons are first recommended by various arts councils and organizations in the community.

There are *AITS* liaisons in each of the seven Hawaii school districts. In many instances the *AITS* Coordinator is dependent on the liaisons for advice regarding the best placement of certain projects in the schools. This activity is crucial where, because of limited funding and therefore limited availability, a project is not available to all schools in the particular district. In addition, the district liaisons help with scheduling and provide feedback

to the Coordinator about the degree of success of the various activities.

Because of limited funding, *AITS* is currently focusing on presentations for elementary schools throughout the State. Additional services, as well as grants from other sources made directly to the performing groups, enabled the program to reach approximately 95% of all elementary schools and approximately 34% of all secondary schools in the State during 1973-74, even though the state General Fund budget for *AITS* school services was less than \$3,000.

During the current school year, the *Artists-in-the-Schools* program is being concentrated on the island of Hawaii (the "Big Island") as part of a comprehensive effort to provide arts experiences in depth in one district rather than dissipating the program over a wider area. To this end, both federal and state funds are being utilized to a major degree on the Big Island to provide the kind of school services envisioned at the time of the program's adoption. Four components of the federal *Artists-in-Schools* program are being held exclusively on Hawaii, while a fifth, the *Poets-in-the-Schools* Program, is being made available there, but concentrated to a greater degree on Oahu. This is because of requirements to provide employment to the poets, most of whom reside on Oahu, who were trained under the Manpower Training Project. The four components being concentrated on the Big Island include:

Dancers in the Schools, recently completed at Hilo Union Elementary School. An entire dance company was located at the school where classes, lecture-demonstrations, teacher workshops and performances were held in conjunction with various school and community organizations. The dance company was followed by a movement teacher who worked intensively for four weeks to reinforce the activities of the dance company.

Artist-in-Residence. Ten artists who work in different media are presently located in various schools throughout the Island. They provide lecture-demonstrations, workshops and classes for both schools and community.

Theater-in-the-Schools. A consultant is presently working with two local theater groups—the Hilo Community Players and the Kona Coast Players—to bring theater experiences to students.

Filmmaking Workshops. Workshops of varying length are being held throughout the Island, focusing on the techniques involved in filmmaking as well as developing appreciation of film as an art form.

In a periodical devoted to music, the question naturally arises: "Where is music in the federal *Artists-in-Schools* program?" The answer is that music is still an experimental component of the program and not available for application by the states. There is strong pressure from the *Artists-in-Schools* Advisory Panel, of which the DOE's *AITS* Coordinator is a member, to develop and open up this component for general application. The National Endowment for the Arts, of course, is strongly in support of music, with a huge part of its total budget pledged to subsidize symphony orchestras throughout the nation.

Music presentations and other programs involving music, such as dance performances, are included in the touring programs provided by the schools. Some recent activities include:

- A complete production of Stravinsky's *Tale of a Soldier*, narrated by Glenn Cannon and conducted by Honolulu Symphony conductor Robert LaMarchina, with three dancers representing the soldier, the devil and the princess. It was choreographed by the noted dancer, Carl Wolz, and the music was performed by many first-chair members of the Honolulu Symphony.

- Vocal music performances which included a mini-version of Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffman* and an introductory program to opera narrated and performed under the direction of the well-known singer, Elizabeth Cole.

- A program of slack key and steel guitar music which explained the history behind these uniquely Hawaiian musical traditions.

- Programs of ancient Hawaiian music and dance performed by noted authorities such as Iolani Luahine and Hoakalei Kamau'u.

- Performances of ballet and modern dance with different themes explaining the basic elements of dance.

- Programs of music and dance from the Philippines which explained the varied influences of other cultures upon the arts of the Filipino.

In addition, the DOE's Program Specialist in Music and the *AITS* Coordinator work closely in scheduling the ensemble concerts of the Honolulu Symphony and the concerts of the Hawaii Youth Symphony, two organizations whose state funds are channeled through the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

Plans for the future are, of course, dependent on the outcome of the budget expansion review by the Governor and the Legislature. The present situation, in which the majority of fine arts presenta-

tions are provided for by outside funding and services, understandably makes systematic planning difficult. With assured, adequate funding as a base for planning, the program could more easily reach its original goal of providing experiences in all of the arts for students.

The *AITS* program has submitted an expansion request for the fiscal year 1975-76 in the amount of \$50,000. This amount, in conjunction with other funding sources, will enable the approximately 168 public schools in Hawaii which have elementary students to offer each year approximately two presentations representing two of the six fine arts domains mentioned earlier. If the minimum coverage can be implemented, theoretically, in three years of an elementary student's time in school, he will have experienced all of the six fine arts, to be reinforced then by another three-year cycle by the time the student graduates from elementary school. The request for the fiscal year 1976-77 is for \$53,000, to cover approximately the same number of schools for the second year of the three-year cycle as delineated.

The program needs to provide more systematic opportunities for students and teachers to observe and interact with artists representing all of the fine arts. A once-a-year exposure has value, as attested to by the hundreds of letters received each year, but reinforcement through more and varied experiences in the arts is necessary for students to develop sensitivity and insight into the creative processes. Because there are no DOE program specialists in drama and dance, nor a defined curriculum in these areas, the *AITS* program often provides the only opportunity for students to be exposed to and participate in drama and dance activities. Through additional assured funding from the State, the program could provide presentations which cover the gamut of the arts on a more frequent basis than once a year. The total scope of the program is limited only by its budget.

Dr. Ray Okimoto was born and raised in Honolulu and is a graduate of the University of Hawaii, and George Peabody College where he received his Ed.D. in Music Education. He is organist-choir director for Harris United Methodist Church, a position he has held almost continuously since high school, and is also currently the Hawaii Department of Education's Coordinator for the Artists-in-the-Schools program.