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Volume 16
Number 2
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Art and Multimedia

Using Multimedia to Travel Through Time



Profiles in Arts and Culture

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We are especially pleased to present this December issue of *Arts and Culture in Québec Schools*. Since we wanted it to reflect an autumn season rich in artistic and cultural activities in the schools, it seemed natural to showcase the regional winners of the Essor Awards contest. We would also like to announce that the contest will be held again in the 2007-2008 school year. The rules for entering the contest will be posted on the MELS Web site in January 2008.

This issue features a summary of the arts education evaluation training sessions offered for Secondary Cycle Two, with a specific focus on the application of certification rules in the fourth year of secondary school. We are pleased to provide you with an example of a learning and evaluation situation involving abstract art that Secondary III students participated in at Marymount Academy, under the English-Montréal School Board.

This fall witnessed many activities in the area of cinema and multimedia. Stories on the Carrousel International du film de Rimouski and the multimedia project at St. Mary's School in the Riverside School Board are good examples of opportunities for students to explore their cinematic and virtual creativity.

We would like to draw your attention to two regular features. *Profiles in Arts and Culture* will give you a glimpse of the passion of Claude Desjardins, who teaches drama at École Curé-Antoine-Labelle, while *Arts in Action* describes the creation of the CD *Au temps présent* at École Fernand-Lefebvre.

We also invite you to discover a project by the Commission scolaire des Premières-Seigneuries involving a travelling collection of artworks created by its students.

Finally, we would like to remind you that in February 2008, Québec schools will be invited to take a cultural trip through time courtesy of Arts and Culture week in Québec schools. Suggestions for activities along with examples of artistic productions will be available on the MELS Web site in January 2008.

Happy Holidays!

Denis Casault and Georges Bouchard

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THE 2007 ESSOR AWARDS CONTEST

WELCOME CHANGES

Georges Bouchard

For many years, educators, artists and school personnel have been developing numerous arts and culture projects. Convinced of the importance of providing young people with cultural experiences, these individuals have worked together with enthusiasm and commitment to develop innovative projects.

To encourage the effort and initiative of these people, and to recognize the quality, innovative nature and diversity of the different projects submitted, changes have been made to the types of prizes and the value of the cash awards.

Essor Regional Prizes will now be awarded to schools on the basis of four categories: innovation, partnership, social impact and educational value. These categories serve to highlight aspects of a project that may merit special distinction.

In addition, each school awarded an Essor Regional Prize will receive a total of \$2000 in cash and a \$500 gift certificate. Prizes are now of equal value, with no distinction being made between first and second place, as was the case in previous years.

Eleven regional awards ceremonies

The regional winners for 2007 will be the first to benefit from the contest changes. During the month of October, 21 schools received an Essor Regional Prize at 11 ceremonies attended by officials and partners from the two winning schools in each region, students, the media and guests of honour. Representatives from the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS), the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (MCC) and the contest sponsors were on hand to congratulate the teachers, their partners and the students for their excellent work.

THE 21 WINNING REGIONAL PROJECTS IN THE 2007 ESSOR AWARDS CONTEST:

REGION 01 – Bas-Saint-Laurent–Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine

REGION 02 – Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean

REGION 03 – Québec–Chaudière-Appalaches

REGION 04 – Mauricie et Centre-du-Québec

REGION 05 – Estrie

REGION 06.1 – Laval–Laurentides–Lanaudière

REGION 06.2 – Montérégie

REGION 06.3 – Montréal

REGION 07 – Outaouais

REGION 08 – Abitibi-Témiscamingue et Nord-du-Québec

REGION 09 – Côte-Nord

All regional prizewinners are eligible for one of six provincial prizes. The winners of this second stage were announced at the 2007 Essor Provincial Gala, held in the Télé-Québec studios on December 8.

The contest organizing committee would like to thank the administrations and teachers of the host schools for their warm hospitality and most valuable cooperation during the organization and holding of the regional awards ceremonies.





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Francine Gagnon-Bourget

The festival

Since 1983, the Carrousel international du film de Rimouski festival has attracted numerous filmmakers and film buffs who come to share their passion for cinema. This year the festival, which ran from September 23 to 30 and was chaired by Denis J. Roy, celebrated its 25th anniversary. André Melançon, festival sponsor, presented his latest documentary: *L'âge de passion*.

The festival's mandate is to showcase the work of young filmmakers from Québec, the rest of Canada and abroad. As noted on the festival's Web site, these exciting, intelligent films entertain and inspire audiences young and old, and are presented in a lively, friendly atmosphere.¹ The program included animated films, fictional films and documentaries, and a certain emphasis was also placed on film criticism.

The study of cinematography is another key component of the festival's mission. The development of dynamic programs specifically geared to the school setting helps fulfill this mandate. To this end, Carrousel en tour, the Club des camérios, educational materials, film workshops, film camps and a video library all contribute to reaching the target group.

Carrousel on tour

The goal of Carrousel on tour is to allow children aged 4 to 12 and their families to discover the world of cinema. Watching children's films, meeting filmmakers and participating in other related activities introduces young people to film culture. In this way they develop critical thinking and a sense of esthetics by appreciating films of different origins.

The Club des camérios

Elementary and secondary schools teachers are invited to register their students in the Club des camérios. A number of services are offered to members: a journal, films on loan, guidance for making a film in class, an on-line discussion forum, contests and promotions.

The Club des camérios aims to help young people to:

- become familiar with the language of cinema
- discover interesting occupations related to film

- become open to the world around them by viewing films from here and elsewhere
- improve their information and communications technologies (ICT) skills

Workshops, educational materials and film camps

The festival also offers workshops, educational materials and film camps. These activities aim to introduce young people to the different stages of film production:

- scriptwriting
- preproduction
- filming (directing actors, shooting film, sound recording, lighting, etc.)
- postproduction (sound and video editing using computers and software)
- screening

The festival and the Québec Education Program

The activities organized as part of the festival correspond to the orientations and aims of the Québec Education Program. They take into account young people's interests and cultural environment and provide them with opportunities to experience diversity and enhance their general knowledge.

In this context, the creation and appreciation of films are likely to tie in with several components of the Québec Education Program. There is a direct link between film studies and:

- the broad area of learning Media Literacy
- the development of cross-curricular competencies, especially those involving ICT
- the optional training associated with multimedia and offered in theatre arts (drama, dance and music) in Secondary Cycle Two; this training targets the creation, interpretation and appreciation of artistic productions captured on film
- the development of competencies in visual arts, namely, *Creates personal images*, *Creates media images* and *Appreciates images*; the program content for these competencies specifies the skills, knowledge and cultural references associated with cinema and the language of cinema.

The Carrousel international du film de Rimouski, through its festival and educational programs, is a meaningful cultural resource that allows young people to explore and appreciate the world of film.

1. For more information, visit the festival's Web site at <http://www.carrousel.qc.ca>.





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Eve Krakow

Last year, students at St. Mary's Elementary School in Longueuil (Riverside School Board) used art and technology to travel through time. After researching inventions that have shaped society today, they shared their discoveries by putting on a multimedia performance. The project involved some 160 students, six teachers, three guest artists, and a number of parent volunteers.

François Couture and Éric Boutin, Elementary Cycle Three teachers in the school's French-immersion stream, coordinated the project. Couture, who is also an education consultant in technology for the Riverside School Board, explained that about every two years, they invite their colleagues and other classes to participate in a school-wide, cross-curricular project. Last year, the theme was travelling through time. "We come up with an artistic framework, but we leave lots of room for the students to be creative within that framework," Couture explains.

Literary contest

Couture and Boutin began by showing their students the movie "Timeline," in which a group of archaeological students travel back in time and become trapped in 14th century France. Students were then invited to participate in a contest by writing an adventure story involving time travel.

To prepare, they read adventure stories such as *The Chronicles of Narnia*. At the same time, in science and technology, students were exploring inventions that have become an essential part of society today. In their adventure story, students had to incorporate five of the inventions discussed in class. Students then judged and voted on the stories themselves, using the criteria they had established in advance. The winning entry was called "Au fil du temps," or, "Time Flies."

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Working with professional artists

The next major task was to transform this story into a multimedia play, to be presented in June. Students each chose an area: costumes, set design, technology or acting. Because, at St. Mary's, visual arts and drama are taught by the homeroom teachers, Couture guided his students throughout this process.

Christine Battuz, a children's book illustrator, was brought in to help students paint the 12 double-sided panels that would serve as the scenery. Martine Bertrand, a theatre costume designer, helped students make the costumes. Meanwhile, visual artist Joëlle Tremblay worked with the preschool and Elementary Cycle One classes to illustrate the timeline in the form of a 9.75-metre train, which was posted in the hall of the school.

"Our goal is to work in partnership with the artists, so that they are part of the process, rather than just having them come in to do a workshop," said Couture. While funding for this particular project came from the ArtsSmarts foundation, the school often relies on the *Culture in the Schools* program to bring in professional artists.

Technologies were integrated throughout the project. In researching the inventions, students used a special Web portal, set up by Couture and Boutin on the school board's Intranet, to post and share their findings. Students then drew from this information to create PowerPoint presentations—incorporating images, voice and video—to present their research to their classmates. Technology was also used to link the two classrooms: Couture and Boutin installed Webcams, allowing the two classes be in close contact with each other throughout the project.

A multimedia production

In the play, the two main characters, Pierre and Sophie, take a train to Québec City. But instead of getting off in present-day Québec City, they end up in 1945, where they meet the inventors of the first computer. Pierre and Sophie then continue travelling on this train, making stops in different periods of time and meeting different inventors.

To illustrate this time travel on stage, images and videos were projected onto a large screen above the actors. The students had to first identify important historical events, then find appropriate images, integrate sound effects, etc. "We also emphasized the importance of using material in the public domain, so as not to infringe on any copyrights."

Claymation

At the end of the play, Sophie and Pierre discuss travelling into the future, and the world they imagine is illustrated by means of a short film created using clay animation. All the students participated in making this film. They created plasticine figures over pipe-cleaner skeletons and filmed them using the programs iStopMotion and iMovie. Each frame required moving the figure a half-centimetre. "A 30-second scene would take an entire afternoon to film," said Couture. "But during that time, other teams would be working on the costumes, or the set, or rehearsing."

Using a blue screen

Perhaps the most interesting multimedia aspect of the play, however, was the use of a blue screen during the performance. This technique is commonly used in TV weather forecasts: while the presenter appears to be standing in front of a large map, in reality, in the studio, he or she is actually standing in front of a blue background. In the same way, during the play, for some scenes, the actors performed in front of a blue screen. But in the projection on the large screen above them, they appeared to be part of whatever image was being projected—for example, sitting on a train.

Toward the end of the play, the Pierre character accidentally breaks the hourglass the train conductor has given him for protection during the travel through time. As a consequence, Pierre's body slowly begins to disappear. To create this disappearing effect on stage, the actor slowly covered his body with a blue tube. Because of the use of the blue screen, in the image projected onto the large screen above

the actors, the actor appeared to...disappear! First his hands went, then his body, until just his head floated around on the screen.

Music and dance

The show also incorporated dance sequences and music created by students.

The integration of arts and technology kept students motivated from September to June. “They might not have been as interested in learning about these different inventions and periods in history if it hadn’t been in the context of this kind of collaborative project,” said Couture. “The project also enabled us to target both subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies.”

Integrating technology

While Couture is a generalist, he is a firm believer in the power of the arts to rally students and stakeholders around a project. He is also a strong proponent of integrating technology into the classroom. Four years ago, he created the project “Profs envol” to encourage teachers in the Riverside School Board to integrate technology into their classes. Each year, he supports about 15 teachers in carrying out their projects. “But within those projects, I also try and make teachers aware that if they integrate the arts, it makes for a much richer experience.”





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Marie-Josée Lépine

This fall, training sessions in the arts were held for the first time for Secondary Cycle Two personnel.

Representatives from all Québec school boards were invited to attend two days of training in Québec, Laval or Longueuil, with the goal of acquiring a better understanding of the Québec Education Program, especially with respect to evaluation.

Secondary Cycle Two teachers were particularly concerned about evaluation. Indeed, according to the new rules imposed by the Direction de la sanction des études, students must pass a Secondary IV arts education course to obtain their secondary school diploma (SSD). For this reason, Secondary Cycle Two teachers must prepare their students properly, by helping them develop the three competencies of the program.

Grouped by subject specialty and guided by trainers from the MELS, participating teachers became familiar with planning and evaluation tools. They planned a typical year in their program, making provision for developing the three competencies, they created learning and evaluation situations (LES) and they worked with the scales of competency levels for Secondary III.

Another series of training sessions, developed jointly by the Direction des programmes and the Direction de l'évaluation, will be offered in April 2008 in Québec City, Laval and Longueuil. These sessions will be geared specifically to education consultants assigned to arts education, designated teachers and other educators at the elementary level.





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LEARNING AND EVALUATION SITUATIONS

Students Gain an Appreciation of Abstract Art

Eve Krakow

Last year, students in Julie Greto's Secondary III visual arts class at Marymount Academy in the English-Montréal School Board came to understand and appreciate abstract art through a unique learning and evaluation situation. After meeting with artist Katrina Bedregal, they used recycled materials to create their own productions, learning that abstract art is also about communicating.

In Secondary III, most students do figurative or representational art. Greto's objective, therefore, was to help students understand and appreciate abstract art and assemblage. She began by taking them to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and giving them the exercise of finding abstract works. "But even though we'd discussed it beforehand, a lot of students had trouble identifying abstract art," said Greto. "This was a completely different direction from what they were used to."

Following the museum activity, Bedregal visited the class and talked about her work and her process.

Under the theme "Found," the goal of this first production was to make use of recycled materials. Greto had taken paper works leftover from previous years and cut them into small pieces, as well as discarded canvases from a previous student project; Bedregal brought in objects she had collected. After choosing one canvas, three objects, and five pieces of paper, students were free to create whatever they wanted. This stage of the LES culminated in a mini-exhibition, where Bedregal and the school principal, Paula Miniaci, were invited to comment on the works.

Historical timeline

In stage two of the LES, students looked at art movements from the 1850s to the present. "The objective was to determine what kinds of movements led up to the contemporary, abstract movement," Greto

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explained. While she admits that connecting past and present movements was a daunting task for students at this level, she was pleased with their work. “Students each chose a movement to research and present, and they came to understand that movement quite well.”

In stage three, students created a second assemblage, again using recycled materials. For this second production, however, while students were given free rein in their choice of materials, they had to either communicate a theme or emotion, or set up a pattern or structure, adhering to the parameters of abstract art in terms of colour, texture and form.

A means of communication

Greto says the exercise made students realize that they may have underestimated the value of abstract art. “The students saw their fellow students creating works that had real emotion to them. They discovered that abstract work really can communicate something—especially when you give a work a title. It leads to all kinds of associations.”

For example, in a piece titled *Winter*, one student began by painting his egg carton white. He then placed tiny fir cones on the “peaks” of the carton, and shredded cotton batting onto the “valleys.” The resulting effect is impressive, evoking the sensation of a glade of snow-covered cone-trees and deep, deep snow.

Students responded to each other’s works verbally and in writing. “It was interesting to see how they had pictured their own work, and then how others were responding to it,” said Greto. Students also kept daily logs and wrote reflections about their process.

Using rubrics

Throughout the LES, Greto used rubrics to assess her students. The rubric for the first production focused on composition and aesthetics, looking at how well students used the materials, whether they were able to integrate all their objects, how well they used the background canvas, etc. For the presentation on art movements, the rubric included aspects such as how well students connected the assigned movement with previous movements, and their understanding of how it fit into the social, political or economic climate of the time.

“My rubrics always include some specific criteria and some general, overall criteria,” said Greto. “They include criteria on the materials, skill use and understanding of concepts.” While she usually likes to use rubrics designed specifically for each project, her department is also currently refining a general rubric that can be used to evaluate any in-class production.

Authentic learning

From their initial museum visit and contact with a working artist, to their own research, creative exploration and production, combined with their personal reflections and responses to each other’s work, this LES provided students with an authentic, meaningful and complex learning experience, rooted in the real world. “I like to connect projects to events going on so that students understand that art isn’t just something that happens in a classroom, but that there’s art out there,” said Greto. “I also want them to realize that you don’t have to be thoroughly knowledgeable to experience and appreciate what you’re looking at.”





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Marie-Josée Lépine

When Claude Desjardins stands in front of his class at École Curé-Antoine-Labelle, it all seems to come naturally to him. He moves and expresses himself with ease. He talks to his students about his passion for the performing arts. Before he taught drama at the secondary level, he studied acting at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Montréal and spent nearly 15 years honing his skills as a stage and screen actor.

A passion he shares and preserves...

Desjardins, who has been a teacher for 11 years, guides his students through the basics of the dramatic arts: acting, improvisation, rehearsing, the creative process... Above all, he strives to instill in them respect for this artform and for the artists who practise it.

Every year for the past 11 years, Desjardins has had his students put on ambitious, challenging plays. In 2005-2006, he and his Secondary V drama students did a production based on Euripides' *The Women of Troy* and on articles about the Iraq war. Last year, he staged the play *Littoral*, by Wajdi Mouawad. The scripts for these plays had to be reworked so that they could be presented by 30 students within a one-hour time frame.

To carry out projects like these, Desjardins calls on his students' creativity. Each student has to take ownership of the play by suggesting cuts to the script or ideas for how it should be staged. The final play performed in front of parents and the entire school is the result of a true collaborative effort.

Desjardins is very exacting in his own work and expects his students to be disciplined and to work hard. It all pays off when they see the fruits of their labour. And they have good reason to be proud! The quality of the direction and acting in the play *Littoral* was recognized at the 9th Rencontre Théâtre Ados festival, where the group won three of the four prizes awarded.

"What motivates me as a teacher," says Desjardins "is instilling a work ethic in students. It's meant to be

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enjoyable, for sure, but it's about finding enjoyment in the work. That's what takes effort."

These productions demand a lot of involvement on the part of the teacher. "You have to rein in your passion so that you don't run out of steam, the same way a marathon runner has to pace himself," he confided.



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THE ART COLLECTION

OF THE COMMISSION SCOLAIRE DES PREMIÈRES-SEIGNEURIES

Sébastien Boulanger

For nearly 20 years, the Commission scolaire des Premières-Seigneuries, in the Québec City region, has had a travelling collection of artworks by secondary school students. To this day, the school board remains very active in promoting the arts and culture in its schools.

Established in 1989 by the Commission scolaire de Charlesbourg, the collection today numbers close to 380 works, which are available on loan or for exhibition, in the schools of the territory or the offices of the school board and the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec.

An exhaustive catalogue has been prepared in print and electronic versions.¹ The catalogue is organized by acquisition date. There is a photograph of each piece as well as an information sheet giving the name of the young artist, his or her school and cycle, the technique and materials used, the dimensions of the work and the year it was produced. The catalogue is available to teachers through their school library.

An ongoing process of creation and acquisition

Every year the collection grows thanks to an appeal made by visual arts teachers to the school board's Secondary Cycle One and Cycle Two students. Under the guidance of subject specialists, students are encouraged to produce two- or three-dimensional works (e.g. sculptures, engravings, drawings, paintings and collages) based on different themes and using materials that they have chosen.

A jury, made up of teachers, school administrators and students, meets in the spring to select the works that will be added to the collection. Of the dozens of works examined, one or two are chosen in each school based on the following criteria: originality, authenticity, and technical and aesthetic quality.

The selected works are unveiled to the public at the *Expo-Art* vernissage, held in May at one of the schools in the board. The artists whose work has been chosen by the jury are paid a symbolic amount for

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their piece. In 2007, some 20 new artworks have been added to the collection in this way.

A professional conservation and loan system

The new acquisitions are professionally framed, as required, and given a bar code. They are grouped by format in a storage facility at the school board. Finally, they are entered in the print and electronic catalogues so that they can go out on loan. Records management software is used to catalogue the artworks in the collection and to keep track of their whereabouts.

Loans are free of charge upon request for a one-year period, with priority being given to visual arts teachers. A loan may be extended if no other requests have been made for a given work. Vivienne Larouche, who manages the collection at the school board, notes that with 80% of the works in the collection currently in circulation, demand is high.

The art collection serves both to reaffirm the school board's cultural and artistic mission and to give exposure to promising young artists each year. The diverse forms of artistic expression represented and the quality of the works enrich the collection immeasurably. By permitting the public circulation of student works, this unique project provides the students whose pieces have been selected to experience the complete process of creation and dissemination in visual arts. There is also the possibility that a number of these creations will be reproduced as a line of greeting cards or other products associated with the school board.

1. The electronic catalogue of artworks can be consulted on the school board's Web site:
<http://www.csdps.qc.ca/csdps.asp?no=958>.

Personnel of the Commission scolaire des Premières-Seigneuries and the Fédération des commissions scolaires may request a loan by calling: 418-666-4666, ext. 6000.



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Students at École Fernand-Lefebvre Produce a CD A Multidisciplinary Project With Recording Artist Normand Perron

Sébastien Boulanger

During the 2006-2007 school year, a group of 50 Secondary V students at École secondaire Fernand-Lefebvre, under the Commission scolaire de Sorel-Tracy, helped produce a compact disc entitled *Au temps présent*. Supervised for the second year in a row by recording artist [Normand Perron](#), this unique literary and musical adventure was initiated by French teacher Manon Caron. The school board, school administration, a commercial art teacher and two other French teachers also participated in the project, which received support from the *Culture in the Schools* program.

After a positive first experience in 2005-2006 spearheaded by French teacher Hélène Braconnier, École Fernand-Lefebvre undertook a second musical production project last year.

The activity took shape as part of a Secondary V course on French song, and provided an opportunity for students to put their literary and music composition skills to the test along with their talents in singing and graphic design. Once again, recording artist Normand Perron was asked to compose the music and supervise the students in writing lyrics for the songs.

After studying different poems, the students were invited to meet with Perron in the classroom. He began by telling the students about the key elements of a song (original music, evocative themes) before moving on to the structure of the lyrics: the verse (establishing the situation), the chorus (conclusion,

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moral, reflection), the title, lyrical hooks, phonetic qualities (soft and hard rhymes) and the development (crescendo, storyline, finale).

Perron then presented two pieces of music that he had composed for the project, putting special emphasis on the melody and musical mood. Armed with their new knowledge of song structure and composition methods, the students worked individually or in groups to come up with a subject, develop a storyline, and then write lyrics based on the two pieces of music.

Under Perron's direction, the students then finetuned the lyrics, varying their choice of words, the way the words fit together and their "colour" by drawing on synonyms, rhymes, antonyms, metaphors, sounds, and the senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste), etc.

After considering all the manuscripts, the two most original, best-crafted texts were chosen to go with Perron's two musical creations. Nine other outstanding texts were then selected and set to music by the students.

An audition was held to pick musicians and singers to perform the songs. The orchestration, arranging, recording and final mixing were carried out at the school under Perron's watchful eye and using his mobile studio.

Next, students in the commercial art class submitted artwork for the cover. The best, most original submissions were chosen and then the CD and cover art were finally sent off for pressing and printing, the final steps in this remarkable group effort.

The album, *Au temps présent*, which deals with the themes of peace, tolerance, love and friendship, is full of catchy tunes covering a broad range of styles including jazz, reggae, rap, rock, French pop of the 1960s and celtic airs. The students showed their sensitivity and versatility in all 11 songs on the album, through the relevance of the lyrics, the assurance with which they sang and the numerous instruments used (guitar, percussion, bass, piano, violin).

Most of the 50 or so students who took part in making the CD appeared on stage during the school's year-end show, marking the culmination of many weeks of hard work on a multidisciplinary project. The album *Au temps présent* was officially launched on June 12, 2007, at École Fernand-Lefebvre, before going on sale for \$10. The profits from the sale of the 100 copies produced went directly to the school.

MP3 preview

- (2) Vers l'Ouest (format MP3, 4,2 Mo)
- (5) Jamais je ne t'oublierai (format MP3, 3,3 Mo)
- (11) Amour virtuel (format MP3, 3,8 Mo)

