

Local musician partners with national education group

Published Tuesday, May 11, 2010 2:15 PM



By [Jim Tatum](#)

Summerville Journal Scene ®

Eddie Bush uses music to help students reach their potential.

Eddie Bush is taking the music back to school.

The accomplished singer/songwriter/guitarist has done many things through his career, as a writer, a composer, a performer, a teacher.

He has performed in places most people only dream of with artists we see in record stores and on television. He has recorded a large body of work and most recently was signed to a major record label, Decca.

Yet through all that, he has always made the time to share his knowledge as a teacher and he admits that the teaching aspect is probably the most rewarding aspect of it all.

With that in mind, he is taking the whole package a step farther.

Bush recently partnered with Edison Learning, a company that specializes in working with schools and school districts to help enhance and improve their students' educational experiences. This takes shape in a variety of ways, from course offerings to staff enhancements, and Edison is working with schools and systems literally throughout the world, Bush said.

Bush got involved recently when Jeff Wahl, a Charleston man involved with Edison and familiar with Bush asked him to come play for an event held in Charleston. Bush apparently made a deep impression; he was asked to write a song for the students of Edison learning.

The result was something called "The Power of You," which has become Edison's theme song, essentially.

"I wrote it with their core principles in mind – the values Edison strives to instill in its students," he said. "So far, it has been completely embraced."



From that first event, Bush was asked to work with Edison Learning to establish a songwriting curriculum. Right now, he is conducting these programs in person but hopes to develop an online curriculum as well.

In the process was to put together a tour of schools affiliated with Edison Learning across the country for Bush to visit. The idea was not only to expose children to styles of music and artists with whom they might not be familiar but also to encourage their own creativity and sense of self-expression.

So far, so good. In fact, so far, so great, Bush said. He has conducted several programs in schools across the country, most recently in three schools in Peoria, Illinois, and will continue for some time, he said. Each experience is different, but each yields wonderful rewards, he said.

Most recently, he conducted a music enrichment program for the Harriet Tubman School in New York City. Harriet Tubman is located in a poor section of the Bronx; 60 percent of its students live in a home situation in which at least one parent is incarcerated. One would think that such conditions would not be terribly conducive to learning and one would be wrong, Bush noted.

“Those kids were great – they really got into it,” he said. “They had so many questions – thoughtful, intelligent, probing questions. They got into artists they had never heard before. They had such positive energy.”

“That was one of the best experiences of my life,” he added.

Bush’s approach is fairly simple – he teaches them the basics of making melody, then encourages them to write down their feelings and try to incorporate it into the melody they create. The results, he says, are nothing short of astounding.

“It’s amazing what kids write,” Bush reflected. “A lot of times people just don’t give them credit. Yet I’ve watched them come up with some truly brilliant stuff.”

“You know, music is a language, and to help a child learn to speak it is incredibly rewarding. Kids have such amazing energy and music is such a positive place to invest that energy,” he added.

Another reason for undertaking this project, in addition to everything else he does – performing, writing, recording, teaching – is the fact that in tough economic times, arts programs are usually the first to face budget cuts. This is a situation that Bush finds not only unfair to children but detrimental to their whole education experience.

“I have a very serious commitment to these guys,” he said. “The ability of self expression is a beautiful thing to share with someone.”