

## Tunings MEI

In February of 2009, I was in San Antonio presenting three sessions for the Texas Music Educators Association conference. While there, I decided to attend a general session. General sessions in Texas are attended by thousands of people, and this one was no exception. One of the draws was the featured speaker, Daniel Pink. Pink was asked to speak on the topic of his book, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*.

My initial concern was that here was yet one more speaker who would be trivializing brain research, overly-simplifying the notion of “right brain and left brain” functions. Fortunately, I was wrong. Pink was a very engaging speaker, who used the “right-brainer” language as an access point to speak about the kind of thinking and action that is needed in every facet of our world.

With astute and convincing arguments, Pink proposes that our world is ready and waiting for a “new” age where inventiveness, empathy, and meaning predominate. (<http://www.danpink.com/wnm.html>) Pink uses three categories to explain the keys to the future: automation, Asia, and abundance.

Especially pertinent to advocates of arts education, Pink’s writing touts the ability of arts education to best prepare our young people for such a future in inventive, meaningful, and compassionate thinking, feeling, and acting. Pink is a passionate and engaging speaker (see a clip of his speech on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhKLSTBSgwI>).

Pink states that for “big picture thinking” that is so important in the world, six abilities matter most:

1. Story, not just argument
2. Empathy, not just logic
3. Play, not just seriousness
4. Meaning, not just accumulation
5. Symphony, not just focus

Those of you looking for ways to articulate the value of music and arts education may find some fresh and cogent perspectives in Pink’s book.

Peggy Bennett, April 2009