



# Laurie Lock

Senior Director of Programs & Policy,  
the VH1 Save the Music Foundation

by CAROLINE HORN

What do you get when you combine musical talent, a commitment to music education for all, and a business degree? An interesting and multi-faceted career in music! A life-long musician, Laurie Lock started playing the violin at age 3 1/2 while growing up on Long Island, New York. She continued her studies in violin, music education, and voice at the University of Michigan, and went on to earn a masters degree in voice performance at Ithaca College, where she pursued her passion for musical theater. Once out of school, Laurie landed the role of Jellylorum in *Cats* and performed on Broadway while teaching music in both New York City and Hamburg, Germany. She also earned a masters of business administration degree from Cornell University's Johnson School of Management. Since 2000 she has been at the helm of the VH1 Save the Music Foundation's work to keep music alive in schools across the country—so far, 1600 schools and counting! Laurie was happy to talk with MA about her many musical involvements.



**MA: WHEN DID YOU FIRST GET INTO MUSIC EDUCATION ADVOCACY?**

**LL:** I grew up in a household of music educators, so I was very fortunate to see advocacy efforts as a child. Also, I did some student teaching during college in Detroit, Michigan and saw the need for music classes in our inner cities and rural communities.

**HOW DID YOU COME TO FIND YOUR EMPLOYER?**

In 1997 I was working out at a gym, watching TV, and on came the first announcement for the VH1 Save the Music Foundation. I literally fell off the treadmill! I was in *Cats* at the time, but I knew that would not be my long-term career path. I wanted to merge my passion for music with my background in education to help this cause.

**WHAT ARE YOUR CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES?**

I oversee the initiative to restore music education in America's public schools and raise awareness about the benefits of music education. We provide \$30,000 worth of new musical instruments to a school; we then require that the school district hire a certified music teacher to teach the program as part of the school day. This turns what would otherwise be an act of charity into an act of advocacy.

**WHAT'S THE MOST FUN PART OF YOUR JOB?**

To see the restored programs in action. Many of the students won't necessarily go on to be musicians, but I know that the skills they are gaining in the music classroom will help them succeed in any career path.

**WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART OF YOUR JOB?**

The continuous advocacy that we have to do. There is constant turnover of school leadership—principals, school board members, superintendents—so we have to keep making new people aware of the benefits of music education.

**WHICH OF YOUR SKILLS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOUR JOB?**

Knowledge of what should be in place in a comprehensive music program is key. Also, the ability to speak and write persuasively. As an advocate you need to know what will convince a particular person or group that music is important to a child's education.

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR KIDS AND TEACHERS WHO WANT TO DO SOMETHING SIMPLE TO SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATION?**

Visit our website, [vh1savethemusic.com](http://vh1savethemusic.com)—we have an Advocate's Tool Kit that anyone can use. [Supportmusic.com](http://Supportmusic.com) is another great resource. Find a way to talk to your school board or administration about the importance of music education. If you're a musician yourself, perform at a school board meeting or at local train stations or bus depots during high commute times and out information about the importance of music education and what's going on in local schools.

**DOES YOUR BEING A MUSICIAN CHANGE THE WAY YOU DO YOUR JOB?**

Yes. Because I have experienced the benefits of music education first-hand, I can speak to what it did for me in my life. Also, having gone through a strong music program, I know what can be in place. I don't see any reason why some students should have less access than I had. 🎵