

# Students learning science through music

By PENNY CASTER  
Advocate staff

Fairview Elementary School students are learning about matters scientific through the medium of music this week.

It's all thanks to artist in residence Peter Lenton, who has brought his background in music, theatre and science to the Red Deer school.

"Basically what I am doing is using my experience as a former teacher and curriculum specialist, and biologist," said Lenton.

He is in the process of moving his base from Calgary to Edmonton, he said. He got his education in Ontario.

Lenton started out as a biologist before moving to teaching, but always maintained a lively interest in the arts, particularly music.

Towards the end of his time with the Calgary school board, Lenton dreamed up the idea of teaching science through the media of music, theatre and language arts.

His colleagues began asking him to use his methods in their classrooms.

Now he runs his own company and is known professionally as Peter Puffin.

Lenton, aka Puffin, said it's great having a whole week at Fairview Elementary School, enabling him to work with the individual classrooms.

He also gives single workshops and concerts and has a couple of albums out.

The most recent, *Passengers*, features songs that encourage environmental stewardship.

Before he goes to a school, Lenton surveys the teachers, he said, then plans activities to complement what they are working on with their students.

"A huge part of it is self-esteem building, community building," said



Photo by RANDY FIEDLER/Advocate staff

**Musician Peter Lenton leads a Grade 3 class in stretching exercises at Fairview School this week. Lenton is an artist in residence, working with students and teachers to satisfy and reinforce curriculum requirements through the use of music and theatre. The artist in residence program is funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the school's parent council.**

Lenton, adding that leads to a safe and caring school.

"At the end of the week, we have a final celebration concert that includes a lot of student content."

The concert will also feature a

song all about the school, he said, with input gleaned from the students.

Teacher Colleen Stuart said Lenton's residency was arranged thanks to funding from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Red

Deer Foundation, school fundraising and donations.

She said a fresh approach such as the one Lenton brings is important for the students.

"They are really enjoying it."