

# **PROJECT HORIZON!**

Project Horizon was launched in March 2008 at Barrington High School (Randy Karon) following pilot programs at Grainger Middle School (Annette Cooper) in 2006 and Oak Park River Forest High School (Anthony Svedja) in 2007.

## **AWAKEN . . . INSPIRE . . . AND ENGAGE**

### **PURPOSE**

Project Horizon is a comprehensive program developed by the Chicago Brass Band. Its purpose is to promote and enhance the performance and enjoyment of live music by young musicians, their families and peers in public schools throughout the State of Illinois.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

To *AWAKEN* young musicians, their families and peers to the wonderful world of music that exists in their communities and to the vast array of opportunities to perform, experience and enjoy the many different styles and forms of music that exist.

To *INSPIRE* young musicians in our public schools with the knowledge, hope and belief that they can and should continue to perform and enjoy live music at a high level, even if they do not pursue music as their chosen profession.

To *ENGAGE* local school districts and communities in an ongoing dialogue to promote music education and the performance of live music.

### **RATIONALE**

Studies conclusively show the many and substantial benefits of music education and performance. Here is just a small sample of what we now know:

A ten year-study, tracking more than 25,000 students, shows that music-making improves test scores. Regardless of socioeconomic background, music-making students get higher marks in standardized tests than those who had no music involvement. The test scores studied were not only standardized tests, such as the SAT, but also reading proficiency exams.

Hearing music stimulates the mind, improves the mood and brings people together. A study at the University of California at Irvine demonstrated that young students who participated in music instruction showed dramatic enhancements in abstract reasoning skills.

Research at McGill University in Montreal, Canada showed that grade-school students who took music lessons scored higher on tests of general and spatial cognitive development, the abilities that form the basis for performance in math and engineering.

Children who make music have been shown to get along better with classmates and have fewer discipline problems.

Playing a musical instrument strengthens eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills, and kids who study an instrument learn a lot about discipline, dedication and the rewards of hard work. Despite all of this, the future of traditional music education in our public schools is not bright. All too often, fiscally challenged school districts choose to significantly cut, or even eliminate, music education from their budgets. At the state level, funding of public education remains a political football instead of a commitment to excellence. None of this is likely to change any time soon.

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As a result, fewer and fewer students will ever experience the joy of performing live music at a high level. Fewer and fewer students will be exposed to the world of music and the vast array of styles and types of music that exist.

Even for those who are fortunate enough to enjoy the opportunity to study and perform live music in their public schools, most will stop playing altogether once they graduate from high school. Many of those who do stop playing do so because they are under the mistaken belief that unless they study music in college and continue to pursue music as their chosen profession, there just are not any real opportunities in their "adult lives" to perform live music at a high level.

The Chicago Brass Band cannot change the landscape of public school finance or the fiscal priorities of certain local school districts. However, it can partner with schools willing to accept the challenge. By working together to awaken, inspire and engage young musicians, their families and peers, we can strive to promote and enhance the performance and enjoyment of live music. Together we can make a difference.

### **ACTION PLAN**

Identify and partner with four school districts each year, at least one of which being a fiscally challenged district, inner city school or district with a high percentage population of minority students.

With each such partnering school or district, provide a workshop, clinic and concert to promote the goals and objectives of Project Horizon.

Where appropriate, work with the parent support group or booster club to build community support for the program. This should include a presentation to the parent organization that describes Project Horizon, its purpose, goals and objectives.

The in-house workshop and clinic at each school should include master classes and exposure to the various types and styles of music performed by volunteer adult ensembles such as the Chicago Brass Band, as well as the performance opportunities that are available.

Each concert should be participatory in nature with at least some degree of joint performance and, whenever possible, showcasing one or more students as soloists with the Chicago Brass Band.

### **FUNDING**

Where available, some degree of financial support should come from the partnering district, school or parent support group.

Charitable Foundations and individual benefactors should be approached as co-sponsors of Project Horizon. Corporate sponsors, particularly those with a vested interest in music education in our public schools and in the performance of live music in their communities should be encouraged to fund either a single concert, or a series of concerts.

Local businesses in the communities should be encouraged to support the program at their local school through a program of targeted advertising for a concert program.

Contact Greg Malovance or by telephone 847-772-4425 for further details.