

## **Bass Bars to Keep the Beat**

**Brownsburg Education Foundation- Staff Grant Application**  
**William C. Doublestein, Music Teacher at Brown Elementary**

### **A. Project Activity Description**

The music curriculum within the Brownsburg School Corporation and including Brown Elementary is heavily influenced by Orff Schulwerk, a philosophy of music education that encourages instrument playing as well as singing in the classroom. This provides a well-rounded experience for all students, adding options that increase the retention of musical understanding, appreciation and skill. The challenge with Orff Schulwerk is acquiring the funds necessary to purchase the instruments, but at Brown Elementary, the PSG has generously provided most of the needed materials. We now have xylophones, but we still need two very important instruments called “contrabass resonator bars.” These instruments, also known as “bass bars,” allow the students to feel the beat and play together in time. The two bass bars, in this case C and G (allowing students to play in C pentatonic), are played by a student who can then lead the group at a steady tempo, a skill crucial to the success of any musical performance. The bass bars allow the students to take charge of leading the ensemble while at the same time keeping everyone together.

### **B. Needs Assessment**

The funding of this grant would greatly increase our student’s success in performance. Elementary aged students tend to struggle keeping a steady beat, and contrabass bars would help them not only hear it but feel it. At the moment I am using PVC pipes cut at certain lengths to produce the bass notes needed to keep the beat. The problem with this solution is that the pipes are too cumbersome and difficult for most students to play and the notes produced are hardly audible. However, with the funding of this grant we could have bass bars just as functional as the rest of the instruments, and all 580 students would benefit from the added stability of a strong underlying bass line.

### **C. Goals and Objectives**

At the elementary level, the goal of music education is for students to have fun learning about and creating music. Keeping a consistent tempo through a steady beat is essential because the beat is the backbone that holds a piece of music together. The easier it is for students to hear or feel the beat the more success they will have in performance. The beat will become secondary to the more advanced concepts of expression, dynamics, and note accuracy. This follows Indiana State Standard #2, “Playing an instrument alone and with others,” as well as the following achievement standards (one per grade):

- K.2.2 Maintain a steady beat while playing an instrument in a group.
- 1.2.2 Maintain a steady beat on a percussion instrument while playing in a group.
- 2.2.2 Maintain a steady beat and play with appropriate dynamic levels.
- 3.2.3 Play instruments in a group with a steady beat, appropriate dynamics, and correct technique.
- 4.2.1 Play melodic, rhythmic, and chordal patterns with correct rhythms, tempo, and dynamics by rote and by reading.
- 5.2.4 Play melodies, accompaniments, and ensemble parts of various styles and cultures expressively with correct rhythms, tempos, and dynamics.

#### **D. Assessment/Evaluation**

Every student in Brownsburg schools is given the opportunity to perform for their peers and their parents, and the funding of this grant will increase the student's success in and appreciation for those opportunities. It would be difficult to measure music performance statistically, but the need for functional instruments persists, and because instruments are so expensive it would be impossible without the help of others. For this reason and because all children deserve positive experiences with music I request the funds to purchase contrabass bars from the Brownsburg Education Foundation.

#### **E. Project Budget**

The contrabass resonator bars would be purchased through westmusic.com, a trusted company offering quality Orff instruments to elementary schools across the nation. Below is an itemized list of materials:

Studio 49 KB/KBX Rosewood Contrabass Resonator Bar, G (Item #200226)	\$336.00
Studio 49 KB/KBX Rosewood Contrabass Resonator Bar, C (Item #200215)	\$524.00
Standard Shipping	\$68.80
Tax	<u>\$0.00</u>
Total	\$928.80