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The Denver Musician

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Editor: Adolph R. Mares

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Give Them Music (cont.)

Denver Musician: Tell us more about your link between music and sports, and why this connection is fundamental to arts education?

Bron: The link between music and sports has always made a lot of sense to me. I've often wondered why music organizations seem to ignore the affluent athletic community when it comes to promotion and outreach. To me, the performance aspect alone is a natural fit. Within a few months of moving to Colorado I took up cycling and it has been the single most beneficial element to my trombone playing. When you start to make the educational connection between sports and music it becomes most apparent through the confidence-building benefits you receive from both. These benefits can quickly bleed into other disciplines and often cause side effects like greater self-esteem. These two qualities alone help to guarantee success in almost any area of life. Take a recent Super Bowl ad for instance. Chester Pitts went to San Diego State on an oboe scholarship where he did a walk on for the school football team. He made the team and was later drafted into the NFL with the Houston Texans. My jaw hit the floor when I saw that Super Bowl commercial because that is what *Give Them Music* is all about. And it's not just sports. Many friends of mine who played in youth orchestra with me are now doctors, NASA scientists, airline pilots and even a friend who secured a contract to widen the Panama Canal. This is why Give Them Music exists. Their stories would not be complete had it not been for the discipline and connections they received through music. The opportunities of music are boundless.

Denver Musician: A musical "Petting Zoo" is a unique area of your website (<http://www.givethemmusic.org/>), which presents an innovative use of musical demonstration as performed by an array of accomplished musicians. What are your thoughts on the use of audio clips and excerpts as they relate to music education and industry promotion?

Bron: Frankly, I'm disgusted with how hard it is to acquire recorded samples for educational use and outreach. I've tried for almost two years now to develop educational samples for my own orchestra. Both times the project was put on hold because

of electronic media issues and rights. To me, that's not only embarrassing to our industry but irresponsible to our surrounding communities. I see a tremendous void within many arts organizations and a strong need for outreach within the communities around them. My frustrations with my own orchestra led me to develop *Give Them Music* in order to fill this void.

More should be done on both the part of musicians and the union towards greater access to educational materials and recordings. When I was a young student almost all of my teachers would allow me to borrow recordings, sheet music, and even other musical instruments they owned. They would always make sure I had comp tickets to all their concerts, and so much more. My former teacher of the Kennedy Center Opera would regularly arrange for me to sit next to him in the pit during performances. If it weren't for the extra exposure they afforded me I would not be where I am today. Now it's my turn to give back to the next generation of young musicians.

Denver Musician: Performers and educators obviously must align their interests if we are to realize genuine investment in arts education. What can our industry as a whole do to further community development and outreach projects?

Bron: What's difficult for our industry to perceive is the value of long term development. We are obsessed with needing to see an immediate bottom line or return on our investment and too much time and effort is spent focusing on one year at a time. If we want to see a 25% increase in ticket sales and donor contributions four years from now, we need to start developing new and innovative programs now. The problem is that even if this four-year goal is reached it's almost impossible to pin point the direct source of its success. The truth is, we are living in an age of technology and immediate gratification. People want greater access, and they want it now. They want to download and see previews, hear samples, read more informed reviews and program notes, and they want to do it all from home. Who will be the first orchestra to post free audio or even video previews of every concert in their upcoming season? Who will be the first to make it possible to print concert and parking tickets from home? Who will be the first to offer free concert downloads to season subscribers? Now that's an orchestra and progressive industry I want to be a part of.