

Milton Foundation for Education

January 7, 2002

Jazz Ensemble and Concert Band CD

When you sign up a child for an activity, you just don't know where it might lead.

Who really expects their child to be on a World Cup Soccer Team when they're standing on the sidelines on a raw Saturday Morning watching twenty-two kids run around after a ball?

Who expects their child to cut a compact disc when they bring home that clarinet for the Music Program in the Milton Schools?

The Milton Foundation for Education has just announced the latest round of Education Grants to teachers in the Milton Public Schools. Did you ever wonder what happens with those grants? What does it take to make something wonderful happen? Does anything happen that really makes a difference?

Well, every once in a while organizations, collaborations and opportunities can come together to produce something quite extraordinary.

In the case of the Milton High Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble, it became a reality this past year. Thanks in part to hard work, practice, practice, practice, and a director who inspires young musicians to go places they couldn't have dreamed of.

Though the title isn't really catchy: "Milton High School Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble 2001," it sure does sum it up. The music is smooth. And when you put this on the CD player with four other discs and set the mode to random play you'd be hard pressed to tell the pros from the high school kids.

There's something special about this CD. It's built on the past. My daughter was a member of both the Concert Band and the

Jazz Ensemble. She graduated before the CD was made. It would have been great to have a recording of group playing together. Who knows? Maybe someday it will happen.

But for these kids it has happened. And they sound terrific. And I remember most of these faces and names from years of listening to recitals, starting at Glover, then Pierce and the High School. I watched these kids struggle and grow at concerts, football games, gigs and town parades and celebrations. The Milton High Band is part of our community.

But there's something else that's special about this CD. It's special for the whole Town of Milton, not just the Milton Schools' Music Program. It says we've reached a certain plateau on a climb to higher achievement. These kids would come back from Music Festivals with awards, Honorable Mention, Silver Medals, Gold Medals, State Championships. It was an amazing thing to see.

And now, they have a CD.

Imagine.

That's what it takes: Imagination, Commitment, Leadership and Inspiration.

A lot of this is from Al Cron, teacher and director. I know first hand what Mr. C has done for our children. It truly is awesome. He gets so much out of these kids. "They work so hard," Mr. Cron said, "rehearsals three times a week, two mornings, regular school work, and private lessons. They've shown me their committed to their music."

"This was another good experience we've offered the students as part of their musical education here in Milton", says Cron. "At one level they knew we were going to make a CD. They prepared by practicing. And when the day we recorded the music and they came in and saw the equipment set up, something changed. It really struck them that what they were doing was something special. This was a piece of a program that had tradition. And this would be their contribution to that tradition."

So just how did the Milton High Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble 2001 CD come to be?

The recording was made possible by grants from the Milton Foundation for Education and Celebrate Milton! Last spring, the Foundation approved a number of grants to teachers in the Milton Public Schools. "We were impressed with the creative and innovative nature of the proposal," recalled Foundation President Herb Voigt, "This project provided a unique opportunity to create a professional CD."

Peter Kontrimas of PBS Sound recorded the music on May 2, 2001 at Milton High School. Kontrimas is one of the premier sound engineers in New England. He has recorded many of the areas top jazz musicians. He has worked with the Foxboro High School and recently the Boston Ballet.

An extra benefit from the CD sales is that the proceeds will allow successive CD's to be recorded by this year's bands. It makes a great holiday gift. But beware, they're going fast and may soon be a collector's item.

I think the most impressive part of this CD is a sentence on the CD liner notes. "This project is dedicated to the alumni of the Milton High Band."

There it is - Classy and Smooth, just like their director and their music.