

# Contemporary Musicianship (a.k.a. The Lab School Funk Band)

## The Contemporary Musicianship Program

The Contemporary Musicianship Program is an after-school program of the University Laboratory School and is designed to give students an opportunity to learn and develop their skills playing music of a more contemporary nature (pop, rock, funk, blues, ska, etc.), which might not otherwise be possible during their regularly scheduled daily music curriculum. Students are encouraged to play and further develop their skills on instruments they are already learning at the Laboratory School, but the ensemble is open to all instruments/vocalists and all levels of ability (see important note below). In general, the ensemble is open to any student in good academic standing in grades 9-12; however, exceptions may be made for talented and motivated 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Rehearsals consist of focused and intensive sessions in the fundamentals of contemporary musicianship combined with the practice of ensemble performance skills.

### **The Objectives of the program are to:**

- introduce students to the fundamentals of contemporary musicianship and to cultivate the basic skills and attitudes required to excel in contemporary popular music
- develop the ability to listen clearly and accurately and with precision and awareness
- introduce students to the fundamental skills required for improvisation
- prepare contemporary and traditional pieces for performance
- introduce students to the skills required for effective small group participation and rehearsal
- give students the opportunity to perform regularly in front of audiences
- give the students the opportunity to learn studio recording skills and techniques and to create recordings of music which can be used for the benefit of others (especially the elementary students at the Lab School)
- become aware of our role as contemporary musicians and human beings in our local and global socio-cultural milieu

### **Musicianship:**

During each rehearsal we will incorporate various exercises, games and drills each designed to develop accurate listening skills and precise body-mind coordination. Topics include theory and aural skills such as rhythm, pitch and harmonic identification and dictation. Drawing on the traditions from many cultures around the world, (African, Indian, Western European and others) students will be introduced to a dynamic, energetic and engaged way to gain the skills of the practicing musician.

### **Performance:**

We will prepare a variety of contemporary material for performance, depending upon the skills and interests of the students, including vocal and instrumental etudes and contemporary popular music (funk, rock, alternative, etc.). We may also prepare popular music from other cultures for performance.

**Special Note:** All guitarists and other juniors and seniors wishing to join the group should have some developed level of skill on the instrument they wish to play. For chordal instruments (keyboard, guitar, etc.) students should be able to readily play basic chords in the regular voicings common for that instrument. For example, guitar players should be able to play the basic chords (I, ii, iii, IV, V, vi), in at least a few keys (C, D and G are common beginnings). Melody instruments should be able to play the major scales in the first couple of sharp and flat keys, i.e., concert C, G, D, F and B flat. (The ability to transpose is encouraged.) Younger students may join the group as developing players – these students will gradually assimilate into the performances group as their skills improve. Private lessons are encouraged for all students. If you have questions, ask!

*“Undertake until the last day of your life to learn; which to do readily requires a great humbleness, for the haughty do not win the hearts of those who know secrets.” – Louise Bourgeois*