

BRONZE COMMUNITY BAND

BACKGROUND

Much of Mexican American music is not notated. Instead, as is typical in community-based cultures, it is passed down from generation to generation. However, if there is no platform and dedicated spaces for oral based traditions to flourish, there is a danger of lost history, culture, and language.

Additionally, consider the following:

- Latinx students are overtly underrepresented in high school ensembles. Participation in music education programs often require a financial commitment many Latinx families cannot afford.
- Most music education programs center Western European classical music. Programs that center other kinds of music, like Mexican American music, with ensembles just as legitimate as Western symphonies and orchestras, are still few.
- There are few music teachers entering the profession who are Latinx. Approximately, over 80% were White (as reported in 2011 by music education researchers).

As a result, many Mexican American musicians, though accomplished, didn't have equitable opportunities to learn to read music. With no basic music reading skills, this may negatively impact their opportunities in the music industry.

The Bronze Community Band provides culturally relevant music education rooted in community-based practice in the regional bajo-sexto conjunto and orquesta music tradition of Mexican American heritage.

It works directly with musicians taking an intergenerational approach (young adults to elders) utilizing a community-based model to teach basic music literacy and, simultaneously, capture Mexican American music in notated form. The Bronze Community Band passes down the skills that elder Mexican American musicians have learned in their lived experiences within and outside the music entertainment industry.

MISSION

The Bronze Community Band's mission is to *research, promote and preserve the bi-musical heritage of the Mexican American community.*

The Bronze Community Band's basic music literacy and performance program has four components: 1) Research Development (culturally relevant and inclusive music history), 2) Basic Music Reading (notation lessons) 3) Rehearsals (community-based) and 4) Presentation. This is a 30-week program of engaging educational workshops that culminates in a community concert. Participant musicians exhibit their new musicianship skills in reading and performance.

SUPPORT FOR BRONZE COMMUNITY BAND

Since its founding 8 years ago in 2016, the Bronze Community Band has received both in-kind services and funding by:

- ESB-Mexican American Cultural Center (2016 – 2022)
- Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin (2018)

- **Austin Public Library (2019)**
- **Austin History Center Humanities Grant (2019)**
- **Austin Live Music and Elevate Grant (2023)**

While the Bronze Community Band has current active diverse sources of funding, with a total annual cost of \$15,000, there is a still of gap of \$3,000.

This funding ensures the:

- Continued historical music preservation of Mexican American music
- Access to high quality music education that is culturally relevant, community-based, and inclusive among marginalized musicians
- Exposure and cultivation of Mexican American music in the present among the Latinx community with Tribute Shows of La Música Chicana

The Bronze Band humbly requests the consideration of the ESB-Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board for additional support with the City of Austin.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Additionally, in 2019, the Bronze Community Band had the honor of being the recipient of:

- **Proclamation issued by City of Austin Mayor Steve Adler, whereby September 22, 2019, was declared The Bronze Band Community Project's Tribute to the La Música Chicana Day**
- **Raza Award at the 34th Annual Día de la Raza Celebration presented by ESB-MACC**