



Photo: Porfiria Marcello.

## HYPNOTIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

*Applause Series* Curriculum Guide  
April 21, 2017



CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS

# HYPNOTIC BRASS ENSEMBLE

## Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for this special Applause Series presentation of the Hypnotic Brass Ensemble. These seven real life brothers from the south side of Chicago come from an extraordinary music family. Growing up, family band practice was led by their jazz trumpeter father and started each day at



The seven brothers of Hypnotic Brass Ensemble. Photo by Portia Marciello.

6 a.m. Now adults who have struck out on their own, the brothers have formed their own unique sound which mixes the brass band tradition with generous doses of hip hop, soul and funk to create a boisterous musical experience. Their story is a testament to the power of music, the importance of brotherhood, and the freedom that comes from making your own path.

We hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a wide variety of discussion questions and activities. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class’s unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

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# ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

**Public education programs** allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its **K-12 School Programs**, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 55,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F.

Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts' newest initiative to support the arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 300,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:

- *Civic Center, 2744 seats*
- *Stoner Theater, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space. Features include the Lauridsen Fountain, the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by Claes Oldenburg, and the Swirl sculpture by Jim Campbell.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 21st season of school performances!

# GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



## YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Musicians and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- \* What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- \* What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- \* What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- \* Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- \* Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

### A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

## THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Des Moines Civic Center:

- \* Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- \* Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- \* Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- \* Do not text during the performance.
- \* Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- \* When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- \* **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- \* Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater and causing a distraction.
- \* Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- \* Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

\*GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

# CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



**Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.**

## ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- \* Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- \* After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- \* Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- \* Des Moines Performing Arts reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- \* Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- \* Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- \* Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- \* All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted online. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

## DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- \* Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Turn onto 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and head south.
- \* Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- \* Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- \* Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with Des Moines Performing Arts Education staff.

## ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- \* When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes.
- \* Each group will be assigned a specific location in the hall, and ushers will escort groups to their seats upon arrival. Various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may be used to assign a group's specific location in the hall.
- \* We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and that other adults position themselves throughout the group.** This helps with supervision purposes and is especially important in the event a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- \* Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging individuals' seat locations or taking students to the restroom. This helps ensure that everyone has a seat in your designated section, as well as allows us to more efficiently seat other arriving groups. This helps us to start the performance on time.
- \* As a reminder, children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause Series performances.

## IN THE THEATER

- \* In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Civic Center performances.
- \* We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- \* Following the performance, please wait for your group to be dismissed prior to exiting the theater.
- \* If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at [education@desmoinesperformingarts.org](mailto:education@desmoinesperformingarts.org) or 515.246.2355.  
Thank you!

# VOCABULARY

## BRASS VOCABULARY

**brass instruments:** musical instruments that are made out of a metal or brass. These instruments have a cup-shaped mouthpiece, bell, valves and coiled metal tubing. The following instruments are in the brass family: trumpet, baritone, tuba, French horn, trombone, cornet.



A selection of instruments from the brass family. Image courtesy of foggyrtnmusic.com.

**brass mouthpiece:** a separate, cup-shaped piece that fits on the end of brass instruments. The size of the mouthpiece varies by instrument. Lower instruments have larger mouthpieces. Sound is produced by placing the lips on the mouthpiece and blowing while vibrating or “buzzing” the lips.



A selection of brass mouthpieces. Image courtesy of www2.onu.com.

**long tones:** a single note played with a fermata. The note played must have simplicity and be flawless. Hypnotic Brass Ensemble uses the long tone as a form of warm-up and meditation. The long tones are the first exercise they learned on their instruments as children.



A fermata signifies to sustain a note.

## THEMES/CONCEPTS

**street playing:** solo or group of music performers that perform on the sidewalks to entertain pedestrians. Performers perform for money donations.



Hypnotic Brass Ensemble used street playing to find new audiences. Image courtesy of kalamu.com.

**legacy:** a form of something passed down to the next generation. It can be in the form of wisdom, life lessons, money or talents.



Image courtesy of kingofwallpapers.com

**unity:** a whole combining all its parts into one. Hypnotic Brass Ensemble strives for unity through music.

**brotherhood:** a relationship with a community of people or blood relative brothers.

**self-driven:** to be driven by a goal or dream.

**composer:** one who writes and creates music.



Image courtesy of music.missouri.edu

**music arranger:** one who takes an original music composition or melody and uses composition to enhance the music. An arranger uses different harmonies, instruments, and sections to produce an arrangement to be performed by a soloist or a group of musicians.



Image courtesy of colourbox.com

**original music:** music that is fresh or new and is based on one's own musical ideas.

## MUSIC STYLES

Hypnotic Brass Ensemble creates their own unique sound by combining many musical styles, including:

**classical:** serious or conventional music following long-established principles.

**jazz:** an American form of music with origins in New Orleans. Jazz music uses fun rhythms, improvisation, and melodies.

**hip-hop:** a form of music that began in the 1970s. It uses rhythmic speech known as “rapping” and energetic rhythms.

**pop:** a form of music that is very popular with teenagers and originated in the 1950s. It also had strong rhythmic elements.

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



Hypnotic Brass Ensemble is a musical group made up of seven blood brothers from the south side of Chicago.

The group will get your students' hearts beating, feet moving, and hands clapping with their big "rock brass" sounds. Having performed the world over, Hypnotic Brass Ensemble is excited to be reaching a new audience on their current tour. As they've recently shared on their website, "The most impressive and most impactful addition that we've added to performing is, performing for young students. Helping to shape future minds and give them positive inspiration for growth."

Get ready for a performance that will electrify students' enthusiasm for music and motivate them with a new attitude for practicing, creating, and performing.

**Run Time:** 60 minutes

## WHAT YOU WILL EXPERIENCE

In the performance, you will experience Hypnotic Brass Ensemble's unique mix of hip-hop, jazz, rock and soul — brought to life with the brassy sounds of trumpets, trombones, and baritones.

The brothers will play their original music and discuss the process they use to compose and arrange their music. They will also share about their life stories and struggles growing up in their Chicago neighborhood, their fight to keep their music their own, and what it is like to work together as brothers in the creative process.

Audience members should be ready to jump in and be part of the sound through interactive moments, such as polyrhythmic clapping or chants.

"...a free-flowing blend of jazz, hip-hop and Afrobeat, the group can resemble the world's funkier marching band one minute, an unhinged New Orleans funeral procession the next."

*-Los Angeles Times*

## THE MUSICIANS

### Trumpets:

- ◇ Gabriel Hubert ("Hudah")
- ◇ Amal Baji Hubert ("Baji")
- ◇ Jafar Baji Graves ("Yoshi")
- ◇ Tarik Graves ("Smooove")

### Trombones:

- ◇ Saiiph Graves ("Cid")
- ◇ Seba Graves ("Clef")

### Baritone:

- ◇ Uttama Hubert ("Rocco")

### Drummer

- ◇ Hypnotic Brass Ensemble also performs with a drummer. They work with several, depending on availability.

**FUN FACT:** "Hudah" is the oldest of the brothers, and "Smooove" is the youngest!

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS, pg. 1



Hypnotic Brass Ensemble is a band formed of seven brothers who grew up on the south side of Chicago. Learn more about how the brothers of this musical family got their start and where their music careers have taken them.

(To this day, Hypnotic Brass Ensemble uses long tones in their practice. To them, playing long tones is a form of meditation and a reminder to them of their connection to the universe.)

### MUSIC WILL TAKE YOU PLACES

The boys' father believed that "music will take you places." The community that the boys grew up in was filled with crime, loveless homes, and poverty. Becoming strong musicians would help them transcend their surroundings. He also believed that his sons' music could help others. By sharing their music, they would inspire their community and bring others happiness and joy.

### PHIL COHRAN YOUTH ENSEMBLE

As they grew up in their musical household, the boys played with their father as a part of the PHIL COHRAN YOUTH ENSEMBLE. They toured around the country playing their father's jazz compositions, as well as music by other great musicians including jazz musicians Duke Ellington and Count Basie, as well as classical musicians like Bach and Beethoven. (cont.)



Phil Cohran, the father of the Hypnotic Brass Ensemble members, was a legendary Chicago trumpeter who turned his back on commercial music to pursue "astral jazz". He was an early member of Sun Ra's Arkestra. He co-founded the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), an organization dedicated to supporting jazz performers, composers and educators. He was also a community leader who advocated for African or black culture. Photo by John Broughton. Image courtesy of artsjournal.com.

### UP WITH THE SUN

The members of Hypnotic Brass Ensemble are the sons of jazz trumpeter Phil Cohran. Taught by their father, each boy began his musical training at the young age of four or five (with the exception of Smoove, who was three years old when he started playing).

Every morning, they would wake up at 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. to dress and eat before family band rehearsal started at 6:00 a.m. Throughout their childhood, the boys brought the sun up by playing long tones on their horns. Their father always emphasized that "a long tone must be played flawless. One must understand simplicity and anything that is worth anything lasts long."

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS, pg. 2

### FINDING THEIR SOUND

Through their teenage years, the boys were increasingly influenced by the music of their generation like hop-hop, reggae and rap. In 1999, they decided to separate from their father and find their own sound. Hypnotic Brass Ensemble was born!

Having an independent spirit, the boys began to compose, arrange, and play for audiences. Because it was important to them to be free to explore their own sound and control their music, they chose not to sign with a record label. Instead, they played their music on the streets to expose their sound to new audiences and sold their CD to pedestrians. Finding success at a grassroots level, they reached more than 50,000 in sales nationwide.

Since then, Hypnotic Brass Ensemble has played with DEF JAM, NO ID, BLUR, PRINCE, MOS DEF BIG BAND, SNOOP DOG, MICK JONES, DE LA SOUL, and many others. They have toured all over the world and the United States, and their song "War" was featured in the blockbuster film THE HUNGER GAMES.

### THE BROTHERS



**Smoove**  
*Trumpet*



**Baji**  
*Trumpet*



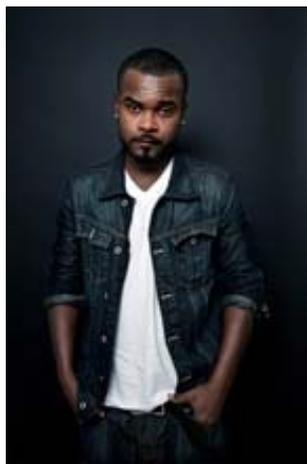
**Hudah**  
*Trumpet*



**Yoshi**  
*Trumpet*



**Rocco**  
*Baritone*



**Clef**  
*Trombone*



**Cid**  
*Trombone*

Photos courtesy of [hypnoticbrassensemble.com](http://hypnoticbrassensemble.com).

# ABOUT THE INSTRUMENTS

There are three types of brass instruments played by Hypnotic Brass Ensemble. Learn more about each instrument you will hear in the performance.

## TRUMPET

The trumpet is a brass instrument that has been played since ancient times to proclaim and announce. The very first type of trumpet was a straight long tube, and a player had to use different lip positions on the mouthpiece to play the different pitches.

The trumpet has evolved throughout the centuries in its look and form. Today's trumpets are made of brass or metal tubing that is coiled around twice with a bell on one end. Trumpets generally have three, piston-type valves used to change their pitch.

Trumpets have the highest register within the brass instrument family.

Trumpets continue to be used in a variety of settings, ranging from art forms such as jazz and concert band, religious ceremonies, and military services.



Image courtesy of guitarcenter.com



Image courtesy of thehub.musiciansfriend.com

## TROMBONE

The name trombone derives from the Italian word *tromba*, which means "trumpet", and the suffix *-one*, which means "large." So trombone literally translated means "large trumpet".

The trombone differs from the trumpet in more than just size, however. Its most unique feature is that the trombone uses a slide to change pitch. Instead of using valves, the trombone player moves the slide in and out to change the length of the instrument — ultimately changing the length of the column of air to vibrate. Trombone players must have a strong sense of pitch and tuning to know when the slide is too far in or out.

The trombone is played with the bell on the left side of the slide. The slide is held in the right hand, and the bell portion is held with the left.

Trombones can be used in orchestras, bands, marching bands, and other brass ensembles.

## BRASS FAMILY FACTS

- ◇ Brass instruments are all considered wind instruments. (Wind instruments create sound through the vibration of air, typically caused by a player blowing into the instruments.)
- ◇ Brass instruments typically have a long metal tube, either cylindrical or conical in shape, that curves at least two times and ends in a flared bell.
- ◇ The tones are produced by the vibration of a player's lips against a cup-shaped mouthpiece.
- ◇ The instrument typically has valves or a slide, which the player can use to change the length of the tube in order to produce different pitches in the instrument's range.

## BARITONE

The baritone is a low-pitched brass instrument that typically uses piston-type valves to alter the pitch. Its tube is primarily conical in shape, and altogether its tubing measures nine feet!



Image courtesy of media.musicarts.com

"We like to think we are making horns cool again, like an add-on to jazz, but in a different genre."

-Hypnotic Brass Ensemble,  
as quoted in *London Jazz News*

Baritones are often confused with euphoniums, which have a similar look and size. However, baritones have a brighter sound than a euphonium.

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 1 of 4

## 1) PREVIEW THE JOURNEY

**Goal:** To preview the musical journey of Hypnotic Brass Ensemble

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will view a trailer for the documentary *Brothers Hypnotic* then describe their observations, pose questions, and make inferences.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Computer with internet access
- ◇ Projector or way to show video to the entire class
- ◇ Copies of the Descriptive Review worksheet for each student, page 16

**Activity:**

1. Explain to students that they are going to watch the trailer of a documentary. You want them to pay careful attention to what they notice and the questions they have as they watch. You will watch it together multiple times to give them a chance to make careful observations.



2. Turn off your computer speakers so that the first time students watch the video, they will focus only on the images.

3. Play the preview for *Brothers Hypnotic* by clicking on the image above.

4. After students watch it for the first time, hand out the 'Descriptive Review' worksheets. Invite them to write down as many things they noticed, questions they had while watching, and their best guesses on the answers to some of those questions.

5. Repeat the video and adding responses:

- ◇ Watch the video in silence again
- ◇ Write for 1-2 minutes
- ◇ Watch the video with sound
- ◇ Write for 1-2 minutes
- ◇ Watch the video with sound for the final time
- ◇ Write for 1-2 minutes

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What did you notice when we watched the trailer without sound? What did you notice when we watched it with sound?
2. What questions did the video raise?
3. What do you think we will experience at the theater, based on what you saw in this video clip?

## 2) LIP BUZZING

**Goal:** To understand that brass instruments are played by buzzing the lips

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will watch a clip from the documentary *Brothers Hypnotic* and then practice "lip buzzing".

**Materials:**

- ◇ Computer with internet access
- ◇ Projector or way to show video to the entire class

**Activity:**

1. As a class, watch the clip "Clef the Trombonist" from the documentary *Brothers Hypnotic* by clicking the image at right. In it, Clef shares about how he learned to properly play the mouthpiece of a trombone when he was a boy.



2. After the clip concludes, tell students that they are going to try to properly buzz their lips as if they are going to play a brass instrument, using the following guidelines:

- ◇ First, form an embouchure with your lips in which the top and bottom lips meet, the corners of the mouth are firm, and where air can still get past the lips.  
(If they had a mouthpiece, they would place 2/3 of it on their upper lip and 1/3 on the lower lip.)
- ◇ Next, sit up straight, make sure your lips are moist, put your lips together and buzz. (To make sure your lips are firm enough, try to say "mm".)

**Extension:**

Consider asking a high school brass player to come to your class and show students how to buzz their lips. Have them demonstrate with just their lips, then with just their mouthpiece, and last with the mouthpiece in their instrument.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Was buzzing your lips properly easy or difficult? Why or why not?
2. Clef talked about how he had to produce an even tone on the mouthpiece before he was given a horn. Can you think of something you had to learn or achieve before you were able to do something else that you wanted?

Clip graphics courtesy of PBS Independent Lens.

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 2 of 4

## 3) COMMITMENT

**Goal:** To self-reflect on personal values

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will watch a clip in which Hypnotic Brass Ensemble describe the values they are committed to and then reflect on what commitments guide their own choices and lives.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Computer with internet access
- ◇ Projector or way to show video to the entire class
- ◇ Paper and writing utensils
- ◇ Art supplies (optional)

**Activity:**

1. Discuss the definition of the word commitment as a class.

**commitment:** the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause, activity, etc.

2. Explain to students that they will be attending a performance by Hypnotic Brass Ensemble, a family of musicians who have several values that they are committed which impact the choices they make both as individuals and an ensemble.

3. Watch the clip “An Unyielding Commitment to Excellence” from the documentary *Brothers Hypnotic* as a class by clicking on the image.



4. Ask students what types of things the brothers listed to which they are committed. Discuss how you think this impacts the way they approach their music and careers.
5. Next, invite students to reflect on the values that they are each committed to. What is important to them? What do they prioritize? What do they think about when making choices?
6. Have students brainstorm a list of ideas and write them down.
7. If time allows, invite students to create a drawing or art piece that they feel embodies one or more of the values that they are most committed to.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Do we all have the same commitments or values? Why or why not?
2. How does what you value help you make choices about where you spend your time or energy?

## 4) LONG TONES

**Goal:** To experience long tones, which are a foundational exercise for Hypnotic Brass Ensemble

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will watch a clip in which Hypnotic Brass Ensemble plays long tones and talk about why they are a part of their practice.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Computer with internet access
- ◇ Projector or way to show video to the entire class

**Activity:**

1. As a class, watch the clip “The Principle of Simplicity” from the documentary film *Brothers Hypnotic* by clicking on the image at right.



2. Reflect on the clip using the guiding discussion prompts below.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What did you notice about the long tones?
2. What were some of the reasons the brothers gave for why long tones were the first thing they learned to play as children?
3. Why do they continue to play long tones?
4. Are there ways that you find stillness in your life or to feel connected “to the universe”? If so, how does that action make you feel?
5. What do you think the brothers’ father meant by “anything that’s worth anything lasts long”? Do you agree with that idea?

Clip graphics courtesy of PBS Independent Lens.

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 3 of 4

## 5) ANALYZING “WAR”

**Goal:** To listen and to analyze Hypnotic Brass Ensemble’s song “War”

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will explore the sections of Hypnotic Brass Ensemble’s “War” through listening and movement.

**Materials:**

- ◇ Computer with internet access
- ◇ Speakers
- ◇ Writing utensil
- ◇ One ‘section chart’ per student made by printing and trimming copies of page 17

**Tip:** You may want to collaborate with your school’s music specialist for this activity.

**References:**

Here are the sections of “War”:

**Introduction**

**A**  
**B**  
**A**  
**C**  
**A**  
**B**  
**A**

**Coda (ending with the “C” theme)**

As students complete the activity, they will fill out a chart to track these sections, with the final chart looking like this:

Intro- duction	A Section	B Section	A Section	C Section
A Section	B Section	A Section	Coda	<b>WAR</b>

**Activity:**

1. Introduce the activity:

*Music is made up with sections. Many times these sections are repeated to make a song pattern. The song “War” has several sections. We are going to do a listening exercise today and discover how Hypnotic Brass Ensemble uses sections to arrange their song “War”.*

*We will use the following sections: Introduction, A, B, C and Coda.*

2. Listen to the first 4 measures of “War” by clicking on the image at right.



- ◇ Ask students to figure out the time signature. (Figure out together that it is 4/4.)
- ◇ Listen to the first 4 measures again and have students push their hands up in the air on the downbeat (the 1st beat of each measure).

3. Next, tell your class that the object of this part of the listening exercise is to discover how many measures are in the introduction. Tell your students that the drums are introduced at the end of the introduction.

- ◇ Have the class close their eyes and listen to the Introduction section and try to count the measures.
- ◇ Listen to the introduction a second time, and then have students discuss their answers in pairs.
- ◇ Come to the consensus that the introduction has 8 measures.
- ◇ To finish your exploration of the introduction, hand out a blank section chart to each student and have them write ‘Introduction’ in the first box, so their chart looks like this:

Intro- duction				
				<b>WAR</b>

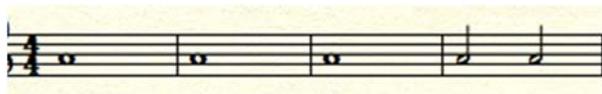
(Cont.)

# PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 4 of 4

## ANALYZING “WAR”, cont.

4. The next section is called “A” section and it has an awesome bass line.

- ◇ As a class clap and count the following rhythm motive:



- ◇ Next, add movement to this rhythmic motive as follows:

- Whole note: clap hands once, then make a circle in front of your body with your hands clasped (a “stir the pot” motion)
- Half Note: clap hands once at head level and then bring hands down with hands still clasped.
- Play “War” again and ask students to do the motions to the A section.
- After doing their motions for the A section, have them add the section to their chart:

Intro- duction	A Section			
				<b>WAR</b>

5. The next section is called “B”. When you hear the “B” section students will get up from their chairs and sway back and forth from the right to left.

- ◇ After swaying to section “B”, have students add the section to their chart:

Intro- duction	A Section	B Section		
				<b>WAR</b>

6. Have students listen to the next section of music and to think about if it is a section that is new or one that is repeated.

- ◇ Have them discuss their opinion/answer with a classmate sitting next to them.
- ◇ Take a class vote: put their thumb up if they believe it is a repeated section or thumb down if it is not a repeated section.

- ◇ Guide students to the conclusion that section A repeated and then add to the charts.

Intro- duction	A Section	B Section	A Section	
				<b>WAR</b>

7. The next section is called “C” section. When students hear this section, their movement is to air punch their hands forward (right, left, right, left). Every measure they will also jump a quarter turn to the right and repeat the air punching action.

- ◇ After doing the movements, add section C to chart:

Intro- duction	A Section	B Section	A Section	C Section
				<b>WAR</b>

8. Listen to the remainder of the song, working to fill out the rest of the chart:

Intro- duction	A Section	B Section	A Section	C Section
A Section	B Section	A Section	Coda	<b>WAR</b>

9. Last, replay the whole song from the beginning and use body rhythms for the entire song.

- ◇ Introduction: hands up in the air on the downbeat
- ◇ A section: “stir the pot” motion on whole notes, hand claps at head level on half notes
- ◇ B Section: sway back and forth
- ◇ C Section: punch right, left, right, left with jumping a quarter turn to right on each measure
- ◇ CODA: free dance

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which piece was your favorite and why?
2. Do you remember any of the rhythms that were played during the show? Can you recreate them?
3. Do you remember the different instruments used? How did each instrument sound? How did their unique sounds contribute to the overall feeling of the piece?
4. Did the performance remind you of anything you have seen, heard or experienced before? If so, in what way?
5. The musicians told stories during the performance. What stories do you remember? Did any of them have a message? If so, what?
6. If you have been to a traditional concert band concert and/or hip-hop concert, how did this compare? What were the differences? What were the similarities?
7. What do you think Hypnotic Brass Ensemble's mission is with their performances? What do they want you to think about after seeing them perform?
8. Why do you think the brothers chose to name their group Hypnotic Brass Ensemble? What does that name mean to you?
9. Hypnotic Brass Ensemble was inspired by many distinctly different musicians from different time periods and styles. What types of people influence or inspire you? Have you ever been inspired by someone who is no longer living? If so, who?
10. How has your parent/guardian shaped you? Have you ever struggled to exert your own independence and ideas from them?
11. Have you ever collaborated with siblings or other close family members on a project or art? What was rewarding about that collaboration? What was challenging?
12. If you could have a conversation with any of the musicians, what would you ask them? Why?

## 1) WRITE A REVIEW

Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are going to write a review of Hypnotic Brass Ensemble to inform others about what they experienced. They should describe: what they saw; what they heard; how the performance made them feel; what the performance reminded them of; and what their favorite part was and why. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not attend the performance can imagine it.

## 2) YOUR ARTISTIC IMPRESSION

Create your own artistic impression of the performance. Using shapes, lines, colors, patterns and other artistic elements from your imagination, draw or paint a picture that expresses how the music made you feel. Use art to interpret your impression of the performance and qualities of the music.

## 3) WRITE TO THE MUSICIANS

Once you have seen the performance and you and your students have had a chance to discuss what you saw and heard, write to the Hypnotic Brass Ensemble musicians.

Letters may be sent to:

Education Department  
Des Moines Performing Arts  
221 Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

## 4) DESIGN A CD COVER

Ask students to imagine that Hypnotic Brass Ensemble has asked them to design a CD cover for their next album. They want the CD design to celebrate how they fuse different musical styles together to create their own sound. Have students think about important ideas and images that come to mind when they think about the concert and use those ideas to guide their design. Students should also create a title for the album. After students have created their cover using art materials, have them imagine that they are going to present their design to members of Hypnotic Brass Ensemble (played by the teacher). Ask students about the elements they included in their design, why they made those design decisions, the title they gave the album, and what the design communicates about Hypnotic Brass Ensemble's music and message.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**“WAR” SECTIONS CHART** (Activity on pages 13-14)

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			<b>WAR</b>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**“WAR” SECTIONS CHART** (Activity on pages 13-14)

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			<b>WAR</b>

# RESOURCES AND SOURCES



## DISCOGRAPHY

### ALBUMS:

- ◇ ORANGE, 2001  
Self-released
- ◇ GREEN, 2002  
Self-released
- ◇ NEW YORK CITY LIVE, 2007  
Self-released
- ◇ THE BROTHAS, 2008  
Pheelco Entertainment
- ◇ HYPNOTIC BRASS  
ENSEMBLE, 2009  
Honest Jon's Records
- ◇ KELAN PHILIP COHRAN  
& THE HYPNOTIC BRASS  
ENSEMBLE, 2012  
Honest Jon's Records
- ◇ FLY: THE CUSTOMS  
PRELUDE, 2013  
Self-released

### SINGLES/EPs INCLUDE:

- ◇ "Jupiter/Balicky Bon (2006)
- ◇ "War / Mercury" (2007)
- ◇ "Brass in Africa" (2007)
- ◇ "Alyo / Flipside" (2009)
- ◇ "The Heritage EP" (2010)
- ◇ "Bulletproof Brass" (2011)
- ◇ "Fire" (2012)

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

"How Brass Instruments Work — Al Canon."  
*A four-minute video that explores the physics of brass instruments and how they function, including animations, from TED-Ed.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYHfiQ4R7Bs>

"How Playing An Instrument Benefits Your Brain — Anita Collins."  
*A five-minute video that explores the impact of playing an instrument on the brain, from TED-Ed.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0JKCYZ8hng>

Hypnotic Brass Ensemble. Official YouTube Channel.  
*Performance clips, interviews and other ensemble content.*  
*Note: recommended to preview videos before sharing with students.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/hypnoticbrassstv>

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## STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Brothers Hypnotic. Independent Lens. PBS.  
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/brothers-hypnotic/>

Brothers Hypnotic. Producer/Director Reuben Atlas.  
<http://www.hypnoticbrassfilm.com/>

Hypnotic Brass Ensemble. Official Website.  
<http://www.hypnoticbrassensemble.com/>

"Trombone."  
<http://www.beginband.com/trombone.shtml>  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trombone>

"Baritone Horn."  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baritone\\_horn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baritone_horn)

"Trumpet"  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trumpet>