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Willie Nelson raising awareness to keep public school music programmes from being cut

In AUSTIN (Texas), Willie Nelson, Ray Benson and Michelle Shocked are among the artists behind ``Don't Mess With Texas Music," a public awareness campaign to help music programmes survive in schools amid budget cuts.

The campaign, being launched by the Texas Music Project, is similar to a national programme by video music channel VH1 called ``Save the Music."

Nelson is honorary chairman of the Texas Music Project. Benson, leader of the band Asleep at the Wheel, and Shocked, a Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter, are on the advisory board.

``Everyone supporting the project is doing it because they love music, and because they understand music education helps kids reach their full potential, regardless of what they grow up to be," Nelson said in a recent statement.

``Don't Mess With Texas Music" also is the name of an upcoming benefit CD with songs by 21 artists with state ties. Other musicians joining the effort are Clarence ``Gatemouth" Brown, Lucinda Williams and Erykah Badu.

The US\$15 CD will be released next month. Proceeds will fund grants for music programmes in schools.

The Texas Music Project rose out of concern that many school districts facing budget crunches are starting to cut back on music programmes, said executive director Bruce Orr.

http://www.utusan.com.my/utusan/content.asp?y=2003&dt=0808&pub=Utusan_Express&sec=Entertainment&pg=en_10.htm