

Local 47 Member Spotlight:

## You Can Do it if You Try

With his nonprofit organization teaching music to inner city kids, Kevin Brandon 'Brandino' proves nothing can stand in your way

BY LINDA RAPKA, OVERTURE MANAGING EDITOR

One of the busiest and most prominent bass guitarists in Los Angeles, multiple Grammy- and Emmy-award winning bassist Kevin Brandon "Brandino" proves that nothing can stand in your way, as long as you make the effort.

Kevin's start with life was rough. Hailing from the inner city of Compton, he was born with congenital club feet and a hip displacement, being a Shiners and Orthopedic Hospital patient throughout his life. Kevin always knew his passion lay with music, and he never allowed these obstacles to deter him from pursuing his dream and desire to give back to the community.

Coming from a musical family, Kevin taught himself piano at age 4, learning a host of musical instruments. Turning down a USC scholarship, he attended Cerritos and Long Beach colleges, known for their jazz programs. After a stint playing with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra in New York, he returned to Los Angeles to continue his classical acoustic bass training, studying under renowned bassists David Borkenhagen, Nathaniel Gangursky and Ami Porat, becoming the protégé of Barry Lieberman from the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. Kevin finished his education at Cal State

University, Long Beach. Today, he has found great success working with many of the world's top recording artists, entertainers and musicians, and is involved in a myriad of projects within the music, entertainment, television, multimedia, web designing and film industries.

All while growing up, in the face of challenges, Kevin lived by the belief that "if you have the tenacity to hold onto your dreams and have a work ethic to match, you can succeed." This tenacity led him to establish a nonprofit organization, You Can Do It If You Try, designed to offer hope and encouragement to the physically and mentally challenged, and underprivileged of the inner city.

"Children who study the arts show heightened confidence, inventiveness, communication skills and problem solving, and continue to substantially outperform non-arts students on the SATs," Brandino said. The organization aims to spiritually motivate people of all ages through music, learning, arts, speech, and example.

"When well taught, the arts provide young people with authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts and bodies," he said. "Engagement in the arts – whether the visual arts, dance,



music, theatre or other disciplines – nurtures the development of cognitive, social and personal competencies."

You Can Do It If You Try works actively with the American Disability Association (ADA) offering performance and lecture series at colleges and other venues that are completely accessible to the physically challenged. From an educational point of view, these demonstrations "offer a breakdown on how music is a vital part of a person's growth, character building discipline and strong study and reading skills," Kevin said. Students are taught how to use computers to compose, write, read, and produce their own music.

Recently Kevin set up two local grammar schools with software from Sibelius, a music notation and music education software developer, for music-therapy programs with autistic children. He is currently working on publishing a songbook with music from his solo CDs featuring Sibelius software that enables users to transpose music to any instrument, in any key.

For more information about the You Can Do It If You Try organization, visit [www.youcandoitify.org](http://www.youcandoitify.org).