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## Press Release for Fairmont Private Schools (2007)

### FAIRMONT PREPARATORY ACADEMY BRINGS HOME FIVE AWARDS FROM DISNEYLAND'S MUSIC IN THE PARKS COMPETITION

ANAHEIM, CA— Fairmont Preparatory Academy's Concert Band, Concert Choir, and Show Choir shone at Disneyland's Music in the Parks Competition for middle and high schools, bringing home five awards: First Place in High School Band Division, First Place in High School Mixed Choir Division, First Place in Show Choir Division, Best Overall Choir (Show Choir). In addition, soprano Megan Brodsky '08 received the medal for Outstanding Vocalist for her solo in "Let the River Run," performed by the Concert Choir.

With almost twenty schools participating, the Music in the Parks Competition was held on Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, at Western High School in Anaheim. Each school chooses its own repertoire, and provides musical scores for the judges. Schools are ranked against each other for awards, but also receive ratings on how well they master the musical requirements of a chosen piece. Fairmont Prep's Concert Band, Concert Choir and Show Choir all received an "excellent" rating, the second highest score possible.

The Prep's success is all the more remarkable in that Music in the Parks was the school's first musical competition. Chair of Fairmont's Performing Arts Department Adela Stella states, "This was our first competition and we are completely blown away with the results! I expected this year to be a learning year, getting our feet wet, so to speak, and we certainly did not anticipate what happened."

Under the baton of Fairmont's dynamic new band and choir director, Stacey Barta, Fairmont Prep's music program is transforming. While Barta has made some structural changes to the program (brass and woodwind classes became beginning, intermediate, and performance bands), she believes that most of the changes are due to her teaching methods and her range of experience with instruments, voice, theater, and choreography. Barta's teaching methods include an emphasis on technique: "By going back to the basics, incorporating them into everyday warm-ups, and maintaining them through quarterly testing, huge leaps have been made to improve the quality of musician in this program. I also like to constantly challenge the students by working on musical literature at least one level higher than their skill level."

Barta comes to The Prep from a lifetime of experience in music. Her career includes five years as a member of the United States Marine Band, participation in community choirs and bands, and, most recently, six years teaching music at middle school and high school. Says Stella, "Stacey Barta is an exceptional teacher. When she walked through my door last spring to apply for the teaching position, I knew immediately she would be the person to bring our program to a new level. And has she delivered! She is a motivator, passionate about her art and very talented!"

Stella continues, "Although our main focus is academic, I like to think that we are also an

arts school as well. We have instrumental ‘feeder programs’ at the elementary campuses where students begin their study of the instruments that finally comprise our performing groups at The Prep. The love of making music is something in the hearts of many of our Fairmont kids.” Both Barta and Stella are working hard to build the musical program at Fairmont Prep. The next addition to the program will be the Pep Band, which will begin rehearsing this summer in anticipation of the fall football season.

Thirty-three seventh-twelfth grade students from both Fairmont Prep and Fairmont International Academy participate in The Prep’s Concert Band, Concert Choir and Show Choir. They will give a repeat performance of the Music in the Parks Competition repertoire at The Prep’s Spring concert on Tuesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. on The Prep’s campus.