

INCOMING 9TH GRADE STEEL DRUMS AUDITIONS FOR 2023-2024

MARCH 27, 28, AND 29, 2023 (in person at SMCHS)

Interested in taking Steel Drums next year? Do you have prior musical experience and looking for a new instrument to play?

Most importantly, do you want to **HAVE FUN** and take an **AWESOME ELECTIVE** with your friends?

If you said **YES** to any of those questions, sign up for an audition with Ms. Duncan, the Steel Drums director!

Scan the QR code below to sign up for a 20-minute audition timeslot:



Auditions will be held in person at SMCHS on the following dates and times:

Monday, March 27

4:30 – 6:30 pm

Tuesday, March 28

4:30 – 6:30 pm

Friday, March 29

4:30 – 6:30 pm

SMCHS STEEL DRUMS PROGRAM FAQs

Do I have to have musical experience to join Steel Drums?

Nope! If you've never played music before, don't worry – Ms. Duncan will teach you everything you need to know. Sign up for the academic-level class before you leave tonight.

Do I have to know how to read music to join Steel Drums?

Nope! If you've only ever played music "by ear" or by watching, that's fine! Ms. Duncan will teach you how to read musical notation. Sign up for the academic-level class before you leave tonight.

What kind of music do we play in Steel Drums? Is it just "island music"?

We play all kinds of music! From pop to rock, from reggae to calypso, from jazz to even classical (yes, even classical!), all Steel Drums students gain experience learning a wide range of musical styles. Variety is the spice of life!

Will I be learning about scales and chords?

Most definitely! Just like orchestra, band, and choir, we learn about major, minor, and chromatic scales; chords and harmony; dynamics, ensemble blend and balance, and sightreading.

The importance of playing by rote – meaning, playing music by ear or by watching, without written music – is emphasized in Steel Drums. All students will gain experience in memorization, improvisation, and composing/arranging both with and without sheet music.

How many times will we perform?

The academic classes perform four to six times per year. The honors classes perform six to eight times per year, on average.

We have four major concerts where all Steel Drums classes perform

The honors class also performs for other events on campus (“gigs”). The academic class often performs one gig at the end of the spring semester.

I heard from my older siblings/friends/cousins/etc. that Steel Drums is just an “easy A”...is that true?

If a student comes to class every day and gives their best effort and focus, regardless of skill level, they will be successful!

Can I join Steel Drums if percussion isn't my primary instrument?

YES!! Of the students who come to Steel Drums with prior musical experience, around 75% play piano or guitar, and around 25% play a woodwind or brass instrument.

Can I play electric guitar, bass guitar, or piano in Steel Drums?

Yes, there are definitely opportunities for that! Depending on your skill level and the needs of the ensemble, you may be able to specialize on it (especially bass guitar).

All first year-Steel Drums students will learn the basics of playing the steel drum, but very advanced guitar/bass/piano players may be given the chance to play their primary instrument around 50% of the time. **Bass guitar players are especially encouraged to join the class!**

Can I just play drum set in Steel Drums? Do I have to learn how to read notes and stuff?

Depending on your skill level and the needs of the ensemble, you may be able to play drums in class during the school year! **All** students will learn the basics of playing the steel drum, even if they specialize on another instrument like drum set.

NOTE: only students who have extensive experience playing drum set and working with a private teacher will be allowed to play as the “full time” drummer in their class. The drum set “chair” holds a great level of responsibility, both from a musical and a maturity standpoint – similar to the concertmaster in a symphony orchestra.

Will we only be playing steel drums? Or will we learn any other instruments?

Students will play steel drums around 90% of the time, and will have the opportunity to learn the basics of drum set and the “engine room” section: congas, brake drum, and scratchers/shakers/other small percussion. Indeed, the academic-level class has a Drum Set Unit in the spring semester!

After students spend a year in the program, they can choose to specialize in the engine room instruments if there is availability (juniors and seniors have priority).

Do I have to take a steel drum home to practice every day?

Nope! Indeed – we don’t own enough steel drums for every single student to keep at home all the time. Students will be given specific “exploration time” to get to know their instrument in the first few weeks

of school, and some set practice time during each class meeting, especially at the academic level.

Can I take a steel drum home and keep it there for the duration of the school year?

We have a limited number of extra tenor and double second steel drums that we may not always use during class time. Interested students should speak with Ms. Duncan, and if approved, will fill out an SMCHS School Instrument Loaner Form along with their parent/guardian.

What if I have a question that's not listed here?

Email Ms. Duncan: duncana@smhs.org