NOVEMBER 2025 VOLUME NO. 2

ENCORE!

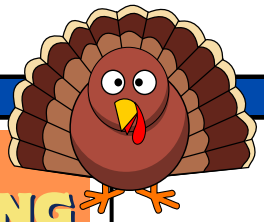
THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON MUSIC DEPARMENT

FULL REHEARSALS START THIS MONTH

It's That Time of Year!

Students have been looking forward to full rehearsals and they start this week! The schedule can be found on the daily notice and in google classroom. Rehearsal standards and expectations have been reviewed in all classes and the students are ready to collaborate with their peers to make beautiful music together while preparing for the concerts in December. All students are required to be on time and ready for rehearsals, but also do any and all make up work for their classes.





HAPPY THANKSGIVING

MUSIC AT MADISON

The 7th and 8th Grade Band
The 6th Grade Band
The Jazz Band
The 6th Grade Chorus
The 7th & 8th Grade Chorus
The Madison Singers
The Madison Orchestra
The String Ensemble
Broadway Babies Drama

IMPORTANT DATES

Here are some performances to mark in your family calendar!

Broadway Babies Info Meeting and show announcement - 11/6
The String Fling - 11/25
Broadway Babies Audition videos due-11/15, Call backs - 11/17 &11/20
Western Regionals Auditions - 12/13
Trumbull Tree Lighting -Rehearsal@MMS 11/20; Event at Town Hall 12/5
7th & 8th Grade Chorus & Madison Singers Winter Concert -12/9 @7pm
7th & 8th Grade Band and Jazz Band Winter Concert - 12/11 @7pm
Grade 6 Band and Orchestra Winter Concert - 12/16 @7pm
Broadway Babies Show - The Little Mermaid Jr - 3/11 & 3/12
Western Regional Music Festival - 3/13-3/14
6th Grade Chorus -5/5 @ 6pm
Orchestra - 5/5 @ 7:30pm
7th & 8th Grade Band and Jazz Band Spring Concert - 5/7 @7pm
Grade 6 Band and Jazz Band Spring Concert- 5/12 @7pm
7th & 8th Grade Chorus & Madison Singers Spring Concert -5/14 @7pm
Memorial Day Parade (7th and 8th Grade Band) - 5/25
Music Festival Band and Orchestra Trip - 5/29
Stepping Forth -TBA

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BAND TOGETHER

BAND AT MADISON

Jazz Band 2025



FROM MR. THORNTON

Just a few reminders as we head into concert season. Some very confident players are practicing for **Western Regional auditions** which are coming soon! Participating students should be sure to stay after a couple of times to prepare for the audition!

Jazz Band students and band students performing in the **Town of Trumbull's Tree Lighting** are reminded of the rehearsal on *Thursday Nov. 20th afterschool*, and the event is planned for at the **Town Hall** on **December 5th.** The time has been moved up a bit earlier than last year...students arrive at **4:45pm** with the event starting at 5pm. Bring your instrument, carol books, holiday sheet music and holiday spirit! Dress warmly, and bright holiday attire is encouraged! Elf hats, reindeer antlers, lights...be creative as much as you would like. Parent helpers are needed, too, if you can be available.

I also wanted to include a reminder that the **Winter Concerts** are not too far away...students should be sure they have their concert clothes ready. If they already have them, do they still fit? As you know, appropriate concert attire is required for our performances. For **band and jazz band students, the dress code is "concert black and white"** and includes either *black pants, with a white button-down dress shirt, and a tie,* or another option is *black pants or black full-length skirt/dress with a white top or dressy white cardigan*. Students should wear appropriate shoes that match their outfits...no sneakers, please. Also no jeans...this is a dressy occasion! No need for suit coats, though. Parents may want to purchase items that give students room to grow into, as the same concert attire is typically used in the Spring band concerts as well.

One of the themes of November is **gratitude**! There are many things band students can be grateful for...gratitude for the opportunity to make music together; for the supplies, equipment, sheet music, and instruments we make music with; the ability to perform and to use their creativity; and the emotional outlet that music can provide.

Happy Thanksgiving!



Some of the 7th Grade Flutes: Eleanor, Emma, and Alfred. Vive La France!

November BAND Students of the Month

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CONNOR ANDERSON, TENOR SAX

7



MATTHEW ZHANG, CLARINET

8



NALA FILLMORE, FLUTE

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Harmony HIGHLIGHTS

CHORUS AT MADISON

Practice Makes Perfect!

Rehearsals for the 7th and 8th Grade Winter Chorus Concert begin November 13th. The full 7th and 8th Grade Combined Chorus only meet together a few times before a concert. Rehearsal standards and performance skills are practiced and assessed at rehearsals and sections get to hear the full sound in the space. Risers placemenet is also determined. Lastly, it is time to work with Mr. Cruciani, our pianist, to add accompaniment and allow for the students to watch the conductor.

THE 7TH AND 8TH GRADE COMBINED CHORUS AND MADISON SINGERS
CONCERT DECEMBER 9TH AT 7PM

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AN EMAIL WITH CONCERT DETAILS!

"CHORAL MUSIC... GOES TO THE VERY HEART OF OUR HUMANITY, OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY, AND OUR SOULS." - JOHN RUTTER



Broadway Babies show announcement meeting!



Even our Panther wants to sing!

What's happening in Grade 6 Chorus

Grade 6 Chorus meets in 4 classes and will combine for their spring concert. They have already started some music and are working on performance skills. Recently they started a unit on Dynamic Markings in sheet music. They are learning these directions in Italian and English so they can follow the markings and show expression.



DYNAMICS
Volume Markings in Music

Term	Symbol	Definition
Pianississimo	*ppp*	Very, very quiet
Pianissimo	*pp*	Very quiet
Piano	*p*	Quiet
Mezzo Piano	*mp*	Moderately quiet
Mezzo Forte	*mf*	Moderately loud
Forte	*f*	Loud
Fortissimo	*ff*	Very loud
Fortississimo	*fff*	Very, very loud
Crescendo	<	Gradually getting louder
Decrescendo	>	Gradually getting quieter

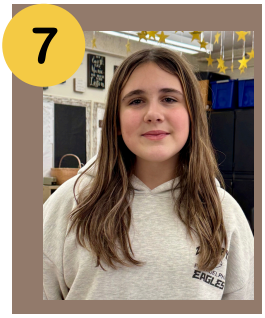
What do I wear... 7th & 8th Grade Chorus

- Students are required to be well groomed, with clean, pressed clothing that will not detract from the concert performance. No perfumes, colognes or body sprays. Be cautious of scented deodorants.
- White button-down long-sleeved dress shirt, ties, dark pants preferred (khaki acceptable). Ties must be tied prior to arriving at the concert please. No shorts, athletic pants or jeans.
- White modest tops, not tank or thin straps, black skirts, knee length or longer only. Black pants are only allowed if they are dress pants - no leggings. Black dresses with a white cardigan would also be acceptable. Avoid heavy sweaters or turtlenecks.
- Shoes must be appropriate for standing on risers. Please be cautious about shoe choices for safety. Please avoid slippers, crocs, slides, or athletic brightly colored sneakers.

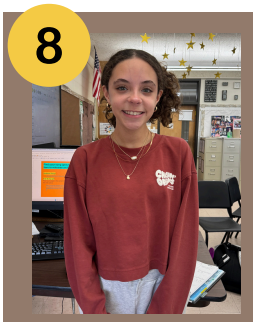
CHORUS Students of the Month November



CHARLOTTE THOMAS



TATUM JONES



GUILIANA GARCIA

GREAT MUSICIANSHIP, LEADERSHIP AND POSTITIVE ATTITUDE IN CLASS!!

THE STRINGS BEAT



A Note from Mr. Elkins

With November comes what I like to call the start of **"concert season"**—we have two performances coming up in the next two months! Our **String Fling** will be on **November 25th**, followed by our **Winter Concert** on **December 16th**. **String Fling** will feature all middle school and high school string students across the district, with the 6th and 7th/8th grade Madison orchestras performing separate, as well as combined performances of 6th Grade Hillcrest and 6th grade Madison students, and the 7th/8th grade students joining the 7th/8th graders from Hillcrest and the high school students. With these combined ensembles we have additional rehearsals before the concert, so you will notice the arrival time for the students is earlier than our concerts at Madison.

To prepare, we'll begin our **"pull-out" rehearsals**, which are the only times we can rehearse as a full orchestra. During these, students are excused from one class period to come to the stage instead. The schedule rotates so they don't miss the same class each time, and students know they're responsible for any work they miss. The first pull-out is always an exciting moment—it's when we finally get to hear all the parts come together for the first time!

It's a busy but exciting time of year! Please encourage your student to fit in a few extra practice sessions over the next few weeks so we can truly shine on stage.

STRINGS Concert Dress Reminder:

Please review the concert dress GUIDELINES so we look uniform.

ALL BLACK (formal): Dress pants only, no JEANS/LEGGINGS. Black skirts or dresses, below knee length when seated. Black shirts or tops, NO T-SHIRTS. Dress shoes, NO SNEAKERS or SLIPPERS and black socks if wearing loafers.

*Be sure to check out the concert dress code each specific group!

Concert information letters will be emailed prior to each event. If questions, contact teacher.

STRING FLING 2025

*Note:

Beginning Strings students will not perform at this concert, but will perform at the Madison Winter Concert

Students arrive at 4:30 p.m. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. Concert begins at Trumbull High 6:30 p.m.









THE MADISON STRING ENSEMBLE



THE STRINGS BEAT

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Years at Madison - 5
Education-
Eastman School of Music, BM in Cello Performance
Ball State University, MA in Educational Phychology
Favorite thing about teaching -
Students sucecfully performing on stage.
Hobbies - Biking, grilling and aviation.



Justin Elkins, Orchestra Director

practice TIP

Using a Metronome

Metronome practice is one of the most effective ways to improve accuracy and rhythm—and thanks to technology, a metronome is always close by on a Chromebook or phone app!

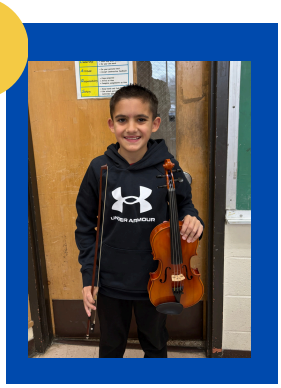
When a student struggles with a tricky passage, they should start by playing it slowly with the metronome, then gradually increase the tempo as it becomes easier. Another great strategy is what I call “hot and cold” practice—play the passage at the goal tempo, then slow it down by about 20 clicks, and alternate back and forth. This helps students build both precision and confidence!

“TO PLAY A WRONG NOTE IS INSIGNIFICANT; TO PLAY WITHOUT PASSION IS INEXCUSABLE.”
— LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

STRINGS Students of the Month

November

6



“What I like the most about orchestra is that it doesn’t just depend on one person, but is a team effort.”

Jimmy Ralabate

Jimmy performed at the Madison’s Got Talent show, one of two string players that represented the orchestra that night. He also joined the String Ensemble now that Cross Country has finished and has been a dedicated and responsible student since the beginning of the school year.

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“I like who I am when I play the viola.”

Diana Champagne

Not only is Diana a leader in her string class period, she has been a great leader in the String Ensemble as well. Both Mrs. Saunders and I were very impressed by how she led a viola sectional recently after school. In addition to playing the Viola, Diana is also a dedicated vocalist, singing in Madison Singers as well as the Fairfield County Children's Chorale.

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“What I like most about the violin is that it allows me to express myself and play beautiful music.”

Yuvan Jain

In addition to earning top marks in all of his academic classes, Yuvan always finds the time to excel on the violin as well. He is co-concertmaster of the 7th/8th grade orchestra and String Ensemble, studies privately, and performs with the Greater Connecticut Youth Orchestra and sings in Madison Singers as well.

SPECIAL FEATURE

THE 2026 SHOW IS...

MADISON GOES UNDER THE SEA IN 2026!

Planning a show begins immediately after the last one ends. To say that maintaining secrecy is challenging is an understatement! If Ms Saunders had a dollar for every time a student asked “what is this year’s show?”, she would be rich! It is also very difficult to contain the excitment! With planning comes the joy of imagining all the show can be - the prospective talent, the scenery, the costumes, and props! All this has already been in the works, even before the show was announced on November 6th. The reaction at the meeting after the countdown and title of the show appeared was the loudest cheer ever! We hope the kids know that many people have already been putting in effort to make the 2026 production a success. This includes costume and prop gathering, sewing, planning, and even driving a Uhaul! (Thanks Mr. Hamilton!) A very special feature this year will be the addition of some beautiful props and scenery donated from Amity High School! We can’t wait to see you *Under the Sea* in March!



LITTLE MERMAID REHEARSALS START DECEMBER 5TH

All audition videos are due November 15th. The cast list will be posted after call backs are completed.
First rehearsal for the show will be on Dec. 5th in the auditorium from 2:30-4:00pm with a parent meeting following at 4:00pm.
Check Google Classroom for updates.



The 2024 production of Charlotte’s Web

The Debonair Dads (and Hudson)

The Goose and the Gander



Over 100 students are in our cast and crew each year and for the past three years, the students performed for 2 sold out nights!



The orphans of the cast of Annie from 2023

DRAMATIC IMACT







