DECEMBER 2025 VOLUME NO. 3

ENCORE!

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON MUSIC DEPARMENT

THE MAGIC OF LIVE MUSIC

Experience the JOY of Live Music

This time of year provides so many wonderful opportunities to bring people together. Celebrations, gatherings, experiences and adventures are all available locally with a little planning. Musical performances and shows are a wonderful way to share in the joy of the season. We love to see the pride on the faces of the performers as they search for their family and friends at the end of a concert. Hope you take the time to attend a live music performance this season!

Many of our current and former Madison students are involved in this year's Trumbull Community Theater show! Get your tickets!





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!

Little Mermaid Vocal Rehearsals - see google classroom for schedule.
Madison Singers perform at Swearing-In Ceremony - 12/1 at 7pm
Little Mermaid Parent Meeting 12/5 at 4pm
Western Regionals Auditions - 12/13
Trumbull Tree Lighting - 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

FROM MR. THORNTON

As you know, our winter band concerts have nearly arrived. **The 7th and 8th grade band concert** is **Thursday, December 11th** at 7pm and will feature Jazz Band and Seventh and Eighth Grade Band. The **6th grade winter instrumental concert** is **Tuesday, December 16th**. The concert begins at 7pm, and will feature Beginning Band, Sixth Grade Band as well as the Strings. Students should be sure they bring their instruments, music, and any other needed supplies, and **come to school at 6:30pm** and go to the band room; jazz band meets in front of the stage.

Students should sign in by crossing their name off the lists provided. The concerts are mandatory and are part of the students' grade. Students unable to make the event should submit a note in advance. Students sick or injured the day of the concert should have their parents leave a message in the office so it can be planned for.

Concert Attire: Our concert dress is "black and white". Boys wear black pants, white button-down shirt, and a tie. Remember the dark socks and look presentable, but no jackets please. Shoes should be dressy or dress-casual, but no sneakers! Girls wear a long black skirt or black pants with a dressy white top or blouse. Dress up for the occasion.

Tickets will be available in advance or at the door with a $5 donation. Parents are advised to avoid a substantial wait at the door by having students purchase tickets in advance during the school day.

Please be aware that parents should plan on staying for the entire concert, not just the part your student is in.

Also, please encourage your young musician(s) to practice a little more than usual in preparation for the upcoming performance. I look forward to it and hope you will enjoy the concert.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



Rob Thornton
Band and Jazz Band

Years at Madison - 26

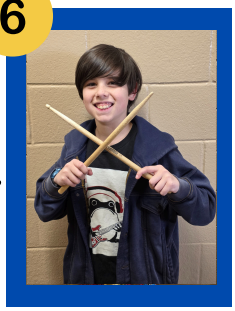
Education-
Hartt School of Music, BM in Music Education; Central CT State University, MA in Music Education

Favorite thing about teaching - Every day brings something new

Hobbies- Cooking new and interesting foods, Hiking outdoors, Gaming/ World of Warcraft

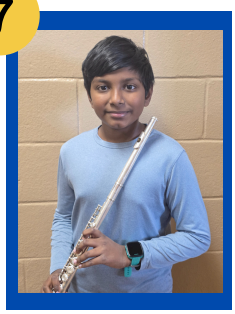
December BAND Students of the Month

6



ANDREW PIVOR, PERCUSSION

7



ALFRED BENSELY, FLUTE

8



BENJAMIN LEE, TROMBONE

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Harmony HIGHLIGHTS

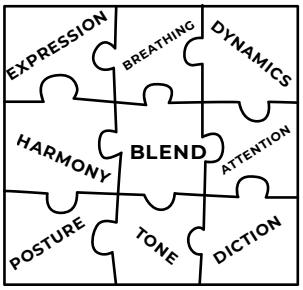
CHORUS AT MADISON

Putting It All Together!

From September until concert week the 8 sections of the 7th and 8th grade chorus have been learning not only the notes and lyrics of their songs, but also develping performance skills. See the Elements of a Successful Rehearsal below. These were devloped by students and are used as expectations and a reflection tool after each rehearsal.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL REHEARSAL:

- Quickly and quietly walking in and getting settled on risers
- Attention/quiet while director is giving opening directions
- Singing with proper tone/shaping sound
- Standing with proper posture for singing
- Musical support, energy, respect, courage & attitude
- Quiet while another section is working on part
- Pitch and rhythm accuracy
- Dynamic contrast accuracy
- Expressive singing
- Project sound to fill the room
- Redirecting efficiently
- Avoid excessive distraction
- Efficient use of time
- Kinesthetic discipline on risers





7th & 8th Grade Chorus Rehearsing for the Winter Concert

"FOR ME, SINGING SAD SONGS OFTEN HAS A WAY OF HEALING A SITUATION. IT GETS THE HURT OUT IN THE OPEN INTO THE LIGHT, OUT OF THE DARKNESS."
-Reba McEntire

What's happening in Grade 6 Chorus

Winter Song Projects

Along with singing, the 6th grade chorus students are currently working on their song research projects. A long time tradition in chorus at Madison, this project involves developing a creative display on a slide show or a poster with historical information about a song of their choice and then sharing it with the class. Due dates are Dec. 4th for day 1 and the 5th for day 2. See google classroom for details.

AND SO IT BEGINS...

LITTLE MERMAID REHEARSALS HAVE BEGUN!

December happenings...

CHECK GOOGLE CLASSROOM FOR DETAILS.

Cast List was posted on Nov. 20th
Congratulations to this year's cast!
Vocal rehearsals have begun!
Leads have received their scripts!
Costume fittings are in the works!
Custom props are being designed.
Dances are being choreographed!

PLEASE HELP! CHECK YOUR CLOSETS!

We will be asking for your help outfitting the show over the next few months. Please send in any **donations** starting now. Thank you in advance!

- Anything with sequins
- Black and white stripped shirts
- Curtains
- Red fabric (shirts, sheets, curtains)
- Tutus of any color
- Old dance costumes, any size

CHORUS Students of the Month

December

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REGAN SMITH

7



GOSIA MALGORZATA

8



AYDAN KOVLAKAS

GREAT MUSICIANSHIP, LEADERSHIP AND POSTITIVE ATTITUDE IN CLASS!!

7TH & 8TH GRADE CHORUS CONCERT INFORMATION

DEC 09
TUES
7:00PM

FOR SINGERS

Concert Time!

SINGERS ARRIVE AT 6:45 PM

- 7th and 8th Grade **Chorus** to the Cafe at 6:45pm
- **Madison Singers** to Room 125 at 6:45pm

CONCERT DRESS GUIDELINES

As a symbol of unity and membership of the group, all chorus students are to follow the guidelines for concert attire. Please try to follow these guidelines as closely as possible in an effort to ensure all students feel as though they belong. These guidelines are used commonly in Trumbull public school music performances.

- Students are required to be well groomed, with clean, pressed clothing that will not detract from the concert performance. **No** perfumes, colognes, body sprays or overly scented deodorants. No phones.
- White button-down long-sleeved dress shirt, ties, dark pants preferred. 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 or jeans. Black dresses with a white cardigan would also be acceptable. Avoid heavy sweaters or turtlenecks.
- Shoes must be appropriate for standing on risers and safety. Please avoid slippers, crocs, slides, or athletic brightly colored sneakers.

winter



TICKET SALES & GUEST INFORMATION



Tickets - $5 **cash** donation at the door.

Guests should use the main entrance by the gym and proceed down the hallway past the main office to the ticket table, allowing for the ticket line to remain indoors at this chilly time of year. Concert program will be a QR Code.

Also, we ask that you do not attend if you are experiencing any symptoms of illness, as we are expecting a large audience and we want to keep our singers, families and friends healthy.

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THE STRINGS BEAT



STRING FLING 2025 HUGE SUCCESS!



A NOTE FROM MR. ELKINS

I was incredibly proud of our students at the first concert of the year, String Fling! This event is always a major undertaking—with numerous stage changes, pre-concert rehearsals, and instruments that don't always stay in tune as the weather shifts (plus the occasional broken string here and there). Despite all of that, Madison students handled everything with grace and presented their best on stage.

While String Fling is always exciting, I'm especially looking forward to our Winter Concert, which takes place on our "home turf." Performing in a familiar space with fewer moving parts before and during the concert allows students to feel more comfortable and confident.

Trumbull Community Television filmed the performance, so I expect the video to be available online in the next week or two. We will watch—and most importantly, listen—to our performance together, because as I always remind the students, musicians are always striving to do "even better." Performing again so soon is a great opportunity for us to revisit these pieces, and we'll be adding a few new selections as well.

Thank you for your support both before and during the concert. I look forward to seeing you in the audience again soon!

STRINGS Concert Dress Reminders:

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.









Winter Concert Details

Tuesday, December 16th

Drop-Off: 6:15 p.m.

Concert Begins: 7:00 p.m.

(doors open around 6:45)

Tickets at the door: Suggested $5 donation to support the Madison Music Department

THE STRINGS BEAT

PAGE 2

practice TIP

Much of the time when we practice, we simply play through our music, notice where we made mistakes, and try to fix them. However, it can be difficult to truly hear ourselves—sometimes it's hard to "see the forest for the trees." That's why listening to ourselves from an outside perspective is so valuable.

With cell phones, it's easy to record a short practice session. Place the phone on your stand in selfie mode so you can not only hear your playing but also check your arms, hands, and fingers to make sure your posture and technique are set. Remember: always notice something positive first, then choose **one** specific thing to improve.

FUN FACTS

Here are some famous individuals who surprisingly play an instrument proficiently—people you might not immediately associate with musical talent:

1. Tom Hanks – Plays the guitar, piano and drums.
2. Ryan Gosling – Beyond acting, he's a skilled singer and keyboardist, even performing in his indie band Dead Man's Bones.
3. Johnny Depp – Often seen with a guitar, but many don't know he's a highly skilled guitarist who has performed with legends like Alice Cooper and Jeff Beck.
4. Emily Blunt – She's a trained cellist, having learned the instrument in her youth and continuing to play.
5. Keanu Reeves – Known for action films, but he was also the bassist for the alternative rock band Dogstar in the '90s and early 2000s.
6. Meryl Streep plays piano and violin.

STRINGS Students of the Month

December

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"I like that the viola has a deep, but not too deep tone, and can also play high, but not too high, it's just right."

Nuria O'Donald

Like her two older sisters, Nuria plays the viola. She has joined the String Ensemble as a sixth grader which takes a lot of dedication and determination, and is an excellent role model in class as well.

7



"I like the lower tones of the cello and that we keep the beat."

Penelope Gordon

Penelope only began playing the cello last year (she played violin before that), but has made the switch with ease, even playing with the String Ensemble this year.

8



"I like being the only one who plays bass!"

Nathan Thach

As the only bass player at Madison, Nathan is in demand! In addition to playing with the orchestra, he is also a member of the String Ensemble AND the Jazz Band. This is no small feat considering he was a beginner in 6th grade!

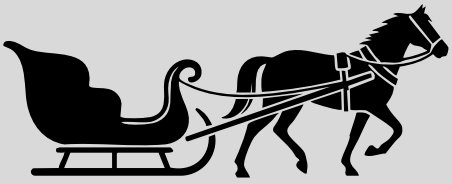
SPECIAL FEATURE

CONCERT SEASON!

THE 7TH & 8TH GRADE CHORUS AND MADISON SINGERS TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH AT 7PM

THE 7TH & 8TH GRADE BAND AND JAZZ BAND THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11TH AT 7PM

MADISON ORCHESTRA AND THE GRADE 6 BAND TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16TH AT 7PM



"COME ON, IT'S LOVELY WEATHER FOR A SLEIGH RIDE TOGETHER WITH YOU"

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season!

Song Facts:

"Sleigh Ride" was composed in 1948 by Connecticut native Leroy Anderson as an instrumental piece meant to capture the joyful motion of a horse-drawn sleigh in winter. Two years later, lyricist Mitchell Parish added words, turning it into a song about wintertime fun—though it never actually mentions Christmas. The Boston Pops Orchestra, under Arthur Fiedler, helped popularize the tune, and its cheerful melody, complete with sleigh bells, whip cracks, and horse-hoof sounds, quickly made it a holiday favorite. Over the decades, countless artists have recorded it, cementing its place as a festive classic.