FEBRUARY 2026 VOLUME NO. 5

ENCORE!

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON MUSIC DEPARMENT

WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT MUSIC

WE ASKED TEACHERS WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT MUSIC...
AND HERE ARE THEIR ANSWERS!

- It's versatility - it can make you feel a range of emotions and inspire you to indulge in those emotions - i.e., make you want to dance, make you want to sing, make you want to contemplate life, etc.
- I love that music has the ability to make you feel different emotions depending on the genre, tempo, and words of the song.
- I love that lyrics can tell a story that I can relate to! I also love how music is so connected to memories - when I hear a song, I can remember who I was with, what I was doing, or the time period in my life!
- It lifts my spirits.
- The way that music can inspire me and evoke wonderful memories.
- It can make you feel very different emotions depending on the song. I can also bring you back to times in your life that were good and bad, just by hearing it.
- Music helps me regulate my moods. Certain songs can boost my mood and make me feel like dancing (when possible) or tapping my feet at a minimum. Other songs help me calm down or concentrate.
- I will never be able to truly describe the place and the way that music transports me. When I'm creating artwork and my ears are filled with the right songs, there is nothing that exists in the world but myself and my ideas. It makes hours fly by like minutes, and in the end, there's peace.
- Music makes me happy and brings back memories for me. In my opinion, it would be a sad world without music!!
- I love that music is basically time travel for feelings.
- Three notes in and you're suddenly 17 again, or back in a kitchen you haven't seen in years, or feeling happy when you weren't five minutes ago.
- It is relaxing. It has history. It is cultural.
- It punctuates human emotions- joy, sadness, longing, and spirituality. When words cannot be expressed, music and song can!
- I love how songs connect me with great moments from the past. For example, every time I listen to Hotel California by the Eagles it brings me back to the many family gatherings where we would wind down the night playing 70s rock. My mom passed 5 years ago but this song always makes me think of her and brings a smile to my face.
- Everything. I couldn't live without it. It gets me through both hard and happy times!
- Everything! Helps me navigate the highs and lows of life. Songs can make me laugh, cry, think, heal, love, relate, relax, party, reminisce, and dance!

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 Rehearsals - see google classroom for schedule
- Broadway Babies Show - The Little Mermaid Jr - 3/11 & 3/12
- Western Regional Music Festival - 3/6-3/7
- 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

A NOTE FROM MR. THORNTON

Congratulations to the eighth grade percussion class on performing as a **drum line** kicking off the **Winter Rally** with a short warmup, a cadence from the Trumbull Classic, and the famous "Jig 2", with Shan, CJ, and Max being featured soloists.

Jazz Band also performed in the winter rally, including an arrangement of "You've Got a Friend in Me" (from Toy Story) and also our version of Camila Cabello's famous pop tune "Havana".

While the winter concert season has passed, February continues to keep band students busy. At this time of year most students are making a lot of progress developing their playing skills by progressing in their **method books** and learning material toward their end-of-trimester test examples. Students should be practicing regularly, and 6th/7th grade students should also be turning in **practice sheets** to get credit for their practice time. Whether working on test examples, passing new scales, preparing Western Regionals music for the upcoming festival, jazz standards, folk songs, music from different composers and time periods, music arranged for small ensembles, online play-alongs, trendy pop songs, overplayed memes, or your favorite movie theme...the only way to improve on an instrument is to practice!

It is also a good time to be sure students have any needed **supplies** (reeds; drumsticks/mallets; valve oil; cork grease or slide grease; etc.) and that all instruments are in good working order. The spring will be a very busy time, so now may be a good time to have any **instrument repairs** taken care of as well. Before you know it, rehearsals will be starting up again to prepare for the Spring concert season. Starting next month, 7th and 8th grade band will also begin getting ready to march in the **Memorial Day Parade**, as well as beginning to prepare for the festival trip to Six Flags New England (more information coming soon). We're definitely looking forward to some warmer weather!

"Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong."
~Ella Fitzgerald



February BAND Students of the Month

6



GIUSEPPE DiLIETO,
TROMBONE

7



HANNAH CHOI,
ALTO SAXOPHONE

8



MAX MORELLI,
PERCUSSION

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Harmony HIGHLIGHTS

CHORUS AT MADISON

The Vocal Music Learning Process.
Hear it. Think it. Sing it.

*Hearing a pitch before singing it acts as a, "*target*" for the brain to match, allowing you to compare the reference note with your own, adjust, and hit the correct pitch. This process, often called* ***audiation****, involves using your auditory feedback loop and ear training to control your vocal chords, turning it into a "reproduction" of sound rather than a "guess".*



Baritones in Day 2 Period 5

WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT MUSIC TEACHER EDITION CONTINUED

- I love that it can change my mood, provide inspiration and connect me to my kids.
- One thing that I love about live music specifically is when you can see the artist having fun while performing. That is the best kind of music for me. Knowing that the person is having the best time, sharing their talents with others, is why I prioritize live music in my life!
- When I'm in a bad mood or sad, if I play music, brings me back to my happy place.😊
- Many songs remind you of someone special, or a special event that is a big part of your life.
- Music makes me happy!
- I can uplift your mood in minutes!
- There is so much to love about music: its ability to be used therapeutically, to revive memories, and the technique involved in creating the melodic sounds we hear.
- I love the way music can change my mood. An upbeat song makes me happy and a song from my childhood or an important day in my life can bring back great memories.
- Music refreshes my soul, it relaxes me and it lifts up my spirits when I am down.
- Music has always been an important aspect of my life. I played clarinet from fifth grade to senior year of college, as well as both the tenor and bari saxes, in concert, jazz, marching, pep, and pit bands. The most amazing part of music to me has always been the opportunity to create something beautiful with others and create life-long friendships in the process.

THANK YOU TO OUR TEACHERS FOR CONTRIBUTING!

February CHORUS Students of the Month

6



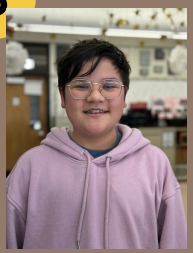
AVA CARDOZO

7



ANDREW MONTINI

8



AIDEN ENG

GREAT MUSICIANSHIP, LEADERSHIP AND POSTITIVE ATTITUDE IN CLASS!!

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THE STRINGS BEAT



WINTER CONCERT IN REVIEW

A NOTE FROM MR. ELKINS

It's hard to believe we are already putting January in the rearview mirror and heading into February! Students jumped right back into orchestra after the break and have already begun working on two new pieces that will be programmed for our May concert.

Seventh and eighth graders have started Warrior Legacy, their longest and most technically challenging piece yet. The piece has the feel of an epic movie soundtrack and will challenge students to build endurance, precision, and strong ensemble skills. They have also begun Dhyaana, which provided an excellent opportunity to learn about Sanskrit and the cultural importance of music in Indian culture. Dhyaana is a Sanskrit word meaning meditation or focused contemplation, and students learned that music used for meditation requires a very different mindset and approach than traditional Western performance. We will continue exploring Indian music and culture in the months ahead.

Sixth graders focused on learning effective practice strategies and participated in a "guided practice" lesson to model how to practice successfully at home. They will be applying these strategies while learning their two new pieces, Desert Sands and Can Can.r The most important aspect of successful practice is having a plan and using strategies intentionally. Over the next few weeks, sixth graders will complete weekly practice forms where they record their practice time and reflect on the strategies they used. These forms will be graded and will replace the video "playing quiz" from the first term. Your support in monitoring this process is greatly appreciated, as students will need a parent/guardian initial on each completed form.

Although the String Ensemble was only able to meet once this month due to holidays, illnesses, and weather, they still had a successful performance of the National Anthem at the Crosstown Showdown earlier in the month. This is always a performance I look forward to, as we team up with Hillcrest string players and enjoy a very attentive audience for The Star-Spangled Banner. The ensemble will return to regular Monday rehearsals, though please note there will be one Monday holiday in February.

This month, all seventh and eighth graders in the regular orchestra, as well as sixth graders who are members of the String Ensemble, will learn more about our end-of-year festival performance and field trip in late May. This year's destination will be Six Flags New England, and more information will be coming home soon. Please note that students must be in good standing to participate.

While February may be the shortest month, it's sure to be packed with new music, growing skills, and lots of exciting musical momentum as we move closer to spring. 🎶



photo credit - Frank Vitucci Photography

THE STRINGS BEAT

PAGE 2

Practice TIP

Students are encouraged to create a written plan and record of their practice, similar to a “practice journal” or “practice diary.” Putting thoughts down in writing can help students stay focused and make their practice time more effective. Before each practice session, students should identify specific spots or passages they want to improve and choose the strategies they think will work best.

I also remind students to go with the “practice flow.” Once they begin practicing, they may discover that a different strategy works better than expected, or that another section of the music needs more attention. This flexibility is an important part of effective practice. As always, quality is more important than quantity. For beginning practice habits, 15–20 minutes, 3–4 times per week is an appropriate goal.

After practicing, students should write down what they accomplished and what still needs work. This reflection helps them stay organized, track progress, and begin planning for their next practice session.

STRINGS Students of the Month

6



“In a world full of chaos, music always brings balance.”

Abhay K.
Abhay is a motivated violinist who played with the String Ensemble at our National Anthem performance and also auditioned for Western Region. He brings a positive and cheerful attitude to class each day.

7



“Playing the violin is extraordinary!”

Loudon P.
Loudon shows strong work ethic both at school and at home, is always prepared in class, and never needs to be reminded to use his best posture and technique. Great job!

February

8



“I like the variety of songs I get to play.”

Trishna S.
Ever since the sixth grade, Trishna has been an extremely responsible student, has strong rehearsal etiquette, and is a leader in her class. Excellent work!

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BROADWAY BABIES DRAMA

THE LITTLE MERMAID JR 2026

MEET THE CAST - PART 2- THE ENSEMBLES

ENSEMBLE #1
Eva Luna Lund
Olivia Berry
Regan Smith
Tessa Grabowski
Ava Cardozo
Maddie Lynch
Sofia Mooney
Sadie Salzono
Timo Santiago Byrne

ENSEMBLE #2
Madison Pendelos
Amanda Guerrero
Zoe Hoyt
Vivian Sabo
Brooklyn Rondon
McKinley Rust
Sammi Roumer
Illiana DaSilva
Aliyah Williams

what do you love about being in the show?



NO MATTER WHAT PART ANYONE HAS, EVERYONE GETS TREATED LIKE A MAIN CHARACTER.

AVA

THE DANCING!



MADDIE

WHAT I MOST LOVE IN THE SHOW IS THAT WE GET TO GO OUT THERE WITH OUR CREATIVITY AND MAKE THIS SHOW AWESOME!



REGAN

I LOVE ACTING.



TIMO

I LOVE BEING IN THE SHOW BECAUSE I LIKE MY GREEN TURTLE COSTUME, THE FRIENDS I'VE MADE ALONG THE WAY, SHOW EXPERIENCE,, THE DIRECTOR, AND BECAUSE OF THE SENTIMENTAL VALUE THEATRE HOLDS IN MY HEART.

BROOKLYN

I LIKE BEING ABLE TO WATCH MY FRIENDS AND CHEER THEM ON!



OLIVIA



I LOVE BEING AROUND EVERYONE THERE SO NICE AND I LOVE PERFORMING AND I LOVE THIS SHOW!

JULIETTE



I LOVE BEING A PART OF AN AMAZING DANCE ENSEMBLE.
I LOVE ALL THE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS I CAN ACT OUT AND DANCE LIKE, PLUS DEFINITELY LEARNING NEW TECHNIQUES ON DANCING.
I ALSO LOVE HOW WE WORK AS A TEAM.
EVERYONE IS SO AMAZING AND AWESOME!
THANK YOU MS. SAUNDERS!

WYNTER

MEET THE DANCE ENSEMBLE



Left to right- Alexis, Zoe, Saanvi, Charlie, Juliette, Julia,Molly, Jada and Wynter!

MADISON MIDDLE SCHOOL BROADWAY BABIES

THE LITTLE MERMAID JR.

TICKETS ON SALE SOON!!

Look for a QR code in Google Classroom, on the Daily Notice, the school Website and Instragram! Or go directly to Infinite Campus School Store to purchase.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11

AND THURSDAY MARCH 12

6:30PM

BIG NEWS!

MADISON BROADWAY BABIES IS PROUD TO BE A JAMIE HULLEY ARTS FOUNDATION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AWARD RECIPIENT!

JAMIE HULLEY ARTS FOUNDATION

thank you!



WWW.JAMIEHULLEYARTSFUND.ORG