APRIL 2026 VOLUME NO. 7

ENCORE!

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MADISON MUSIC DEPARMENT

CONCERT SEASON BEGINS

FULL REHEARSALS BEGIN THIS MONTH

Full ensemble rehearsals are an essential part of a successful school music program because they allow students to practice the collaborative skills required for performance. While students often rehearse in smaller classes or sections—such as 7th and 8th grade chorus meeting separately or band students practicing within their instrument families like woodwinds, brass, and percussion—these rehearsals focus mainly on learning individual parts. Full group rehearsals provide the crucial opportunity for students to hear how their parts fit within the larger musical texture, balance their sound with others, and respond to the ensemble as a whole. They also allow the director to address musical elements such as blend, balance, tempo, and expression that can only be refined when the entire group is together. With limited opportunities—sometimes only four rehearsals before a concert—full ensemble rehearsals are vital for building confidence, unity, and a polished performance experience for students.



The full rehearsal schedule will be posted in google classroom and annouced daily on the daily notice. Students are required to be on time, prepared, and use the rehearsal time wisely. They are also required to make up any missed work while at rehearsal.

CHECK GOOGLE CLASSROOM FOR CONCERT INFORMATION

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!

- 7th & 8th Grade Chorus Concert T-shirt Orders DUE APRIL 9th.
- 6th Grade Chorus Spring Concert -5/5 @ 6pm
- Orchestra Spring Concert - 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

The band concerts have nearly arrived, and students should be **putting in a bit of extra practice time** to prepare. In April we will have just a few more rehearsals to get ready for the concerts, and then in May we have the final "dress rehearsals" and concerts. The 7th/8th Grade Band music is especially demanding, and students should be working on all of the challenging parts in their sheet music to be sure they are ready to play. For many students, 20-30 minutes a day for 3-4 days of the week is a reasonable effort. They should also be working on **memorizing their parade music** as well!

Parents are reminded to please be sure students have their **concert attire** ahead of time, just like the last band concert (concert black and white). Please check that their concert clothes still fit! Also please note that sneakers are not appropriate footwear for a concert. Also, band and jazz students should plan on **arriving early (6:20pm)** for the concerts so they have time to warm up, tune up, and get ready.

There are also a few payments left to be made for the 7th/8th/Jazz band trip...any parents who paid only the first half are reminded that the **2nd payment** is due as well, if it hasn't already been paid.

Please see the posted **handout in google classroom** for more information about the upcoming Spring concerts for band and jazz band. Looking forward to a great spring concert season!



Jazz band saxophone section practicing their soli feature in "Georgia on My Mind"

Reminder:

BAND CONCERTS

Thursday May 7th @ 7pm
7th & 8th Grade Band
and Jazz Band

Tuesday May 12th @ 7pm
Grade 6 Band
and Jazz Band

APRIL BAND Students of the Month

6



ANNI BRENNAN, TRUMPET

7



OLIVER BENNETT, BARI SAXOPHONE

8



ISHIKA GADKAR-WILCOX, MALLETS

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BAND TOGETHER

BAND AT MADISON

WESTERN REGIONALS BAND/JAZZ 2026

On March 6th and 7th, the CMEA **Western Region Middle School Festival** was held at Sacred Heart University. Outstanding music students from over 20 schools joined together to perform. Madison's band program was well-represented by the seven students who had successfully auditioned back in December. In the regional concert band were **Alfred Bensely**, Flute; **Aiden Golrick**, Trumpet; **Cora Bowcock**, Alto Sax; **Hannah Choi**; alto sax; and **Matthew Zhang**, clarinet. In the regional jazz band were **Andrew Staffaroni**, alto sax; and **Ben Lee**, trombone. (Strings students also participated, see the article that follows). Festivals like this challenge students to use their technical proficiency, musicality, and music-reading skills in a new environment, as well as introducing new music literature, styles, and high-quality repertoire, expanding their musical horizons. I was very impressed by all of the concerts. The students were very well-prepared and did an outstanding job of representing Madison.







WESTERN REGIONALS 2026

Top Left: Andrew soloing on alto sax with the Western Region Jazz Band

Top: Western Region Concert Band 2026 in rehearsal, directed by guest conductor (and composer) Anthony Susi

Left: Western Regionals band students (from left) Alfred,flute; Andrew, saxophone; Ben, trombone; Aiden, trumpet; Matthew, clarinet; Cora, saxophone; and Hannah, saxophone

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Harmony HIGHLIGHTS

CHORUS AT MADISON

WHY WE HAVE FULL CHORUS REHEARSALS

Full rehearsals are critical for developing music groups. When a chorus meets in separate class sections, they are the only opportunity for all voice parts to come together and hear how the music sounds as a **complete ensemble**. While students may learn their individual parts—soprano, alto, or baritone—in smaller groups, they cannot fully understand **balance, harmony, and timing** until they sing alongside the other sections. Full rehearsals help students adjust to each other, **listen** across the ensemble, and develop a **unified sound**. It is also the only opportunity for the group to work together to **follow the conductor** and **collaborate** with the **piano accompanist**.

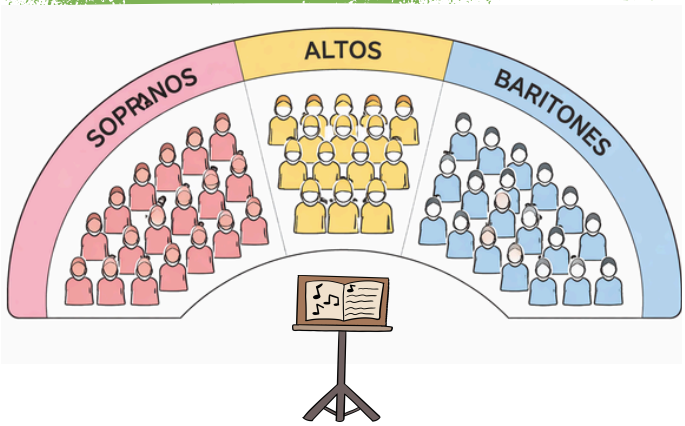
With only four full rehearsals before a concert, that time becomes especially valuable. It allows the group to fix issues with **blend, entrances, dynamics**, and overall musical **expression** that simply cannot be addressed in sectional rehearsals. These rehearsals also build **confidence**, helping students feel **prepared** and **connected** as a full ensemble, which leads to a more polished and successful performance.

Reminder

GR. 6 CHORUS & MADISON SINGERS CONCERT
Tuesday May 5th at 6:00pm

7TH & 8TH GR CHORUS & MADISON SINGERS CONCERT
Thursday May 14th at 7:00pm

Chorus Riser Placement

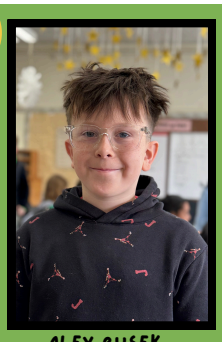


Did you ever wonder how students get arranged on the risers? Here's how using the 7th & 8th Grade chorus as an example.

In a middle school chorus, dividing 7th and 8th graders into sopranos, altos, and baritones means grouping singers by their vocal range—the set of notes they can comfortably and safely sing. Sopranos typically sing the higher melodies, altos cover the middle range, and baritones sing the lower parts. This arrangement allows each student to sing in a range that suits their developing voice, which is especially important during adolescence when voices are changing. It also creates richer, more balanced harmonies, helping the group sound fuller and more musically interesting. The sections are also able to follow conductor's cues.

APRIL CHORUS Students of the Month

6



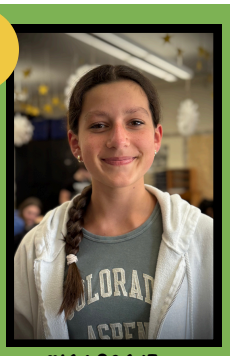
ALEX RUSEK

7



CONNOR DECKER

8



MIA LORANT

GREAT MUSICIANSHIP, LEADERSHIP AND POSTITIVE ATTITUDE IN CLASS!!

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THE STRINGS BEAT

A NOTE FROM MR. ELKINS

Wow, where did March go? It began with more weather disruptions but now it seems like Spring is finally taking hold. With that is the official start of what I tell my students is "**Concert Season**". This is when full group rehearsals will begin as we prepare for our next concert, which happens to fall on Cinco de Mayo this year- **May 5th**. This is also where I hope you hear practicing at home increase as students prepare to show their best at the concert. Please continue reminding your students to bring their instruments home; they should not be left in the classroom or in their lockers. Unfortunately, there are still cases of cases (pardon the pun) left at school, which especially shouldn't happen over weekends and school breaks.

In March, two students, **Yuvan Jain** and **Nathan Thach**, as well as a handful of band students, represented Madison at the **Western Region Music Festival** held at Sacred Heart University. They auditioned back in December and were selected. After five hours of intense rehearsals over a Friday evening/Saturday morning they presented a concert with a guest conductor. It was a fabulous concert and I'm proud of them. I'm also proud of the other students that auditioned, even though they weren't selected this time, it takes a lot of "guts" to prepare and perform an audition and is a great learning experience.

This year our **Spring Concert** will feature only the orchestra, **please be aware of the new time, 7:30 pm instead of 7:00 pm** (The sixth grade chorus concert will be held prior). Drop off will be at 6:50p.m., please don't drop off early so there is time for the choir students/families to leave, but no later than 7:00 so there is time for tuning. Also new for this concert will be a featured performance by the 8th grade students as their farewell "swan song" to Madison. It is a sentimental Pop selection sure to draw a few tears from the audience. Concert season is always a busy, but exciting time, and I'm looking forward to it!

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ROOM 123

BEGINNING STRINGS IN ACTION!





Reminder

ORCHESTRA SPRING CONCERT

TUESDAY MAY 5th at 7:30pm

CHECK GOOGLE CLASSROOM FOR CONCERT INFORMATION

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practice TIP

THE STRINGS BEAT

PAGE 2

Stamina work!

As we prepare for our concerts, it is important that students build up their **stamina**, both physical and mental, and play through all their pieces one after another - just as they will at the concert.

This is also a good opportunity to play in front of their families to give a sneak preview of the performance!



STAMINA

The ability to do something for a long time without getting tired or giving up

When practicing at home, students should prepare by thinking of 2-3 spots they know will be challenging ahead of time, so they play *proactively*, not reactively.

STRINGS Students of the Month APRIL

6



Eden Munden

Eden has been a dedicated cello student since the beginning of the year and an excellent leader for a small, but mighty cello section!

7



Vienna Maignan

Vienna is an awesome role model in class and rehearsal, always prepared, ready to play when the conductor is ready, and always demonstrates excellent posture.

8



Anay Vyas

Despite beginning sixth grade as a beginner who didn't even arrive at the start of the year, through excellent practice Anay is now one of the most technically proficient violin students in the 8th grade!

Western REGIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL



Congrats to the Western Regional Music Festival participants Nathan Thach and Yuvan Jain!



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SPECIAL FEATURE

THE LITTLE MERMAID JR 2026

BROADWAY BABIES DRAMA



Caragh O'Neill (Ariel)and Deana Saunders, Musical Director, pose for a picture after the show!

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE INVOLVED WITH THE PRODUCTION OF

THE LITTLE MERMAID JR!

IT WAS A HUGE SUCCSESS!

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

JAMIE HULLEY ARTS FOUNDATION

Thank you!

THE LITTLE MERMAID JR.

MADISON MIDDLE SCHOOL BROADWAY BABIES

2026

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THE LITTLE MERMAID JR 2026


























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The Madison Middle School Broadway Babies Theater program and many other area arts programs are supported by the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation.

Please consider supporting this organization to help the arts contintue to grow!

Scan the QR code to purchase a raffle ticket!

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JAMIE HULLEY
ARTS FOUNDATION

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www.jamiehulleyartsfund.org



Tickets: $20.

Winners announced
live on Facebook
May 5th, 2026 at 7pm