

Montgomery Blair High School

51 University Blvd. East
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Music Office: 301-649-2839

Fax: 301-649-2830

Website: www.mbhsmusic.com



INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC REGISTRATION

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Hello Future Blazers!

Congratulations as you enter the final stretch of Middle School! I'm writing to you today to let you know that we want YOU to continue playing music at Montgomery Blair High School! We offer SEVEN performing ensembles that meet as regular classes – three string orchestras, three bands, and a jazz ensemble; an extracurricular Marching Band and Color Guard; an extracurricular jazz combo for a select group of advanced students; an extracurricular string quartet for a select group of advanced students; and an extracurricular pit orchestra that performs at the spring musical. We definitely have a place for you!

Please visit our website at www.mbhsmusic.com to find the answers to many of your questions about our program, to see the many accomplishments of our instrumental music students, to learn how you can become a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society in your junior and senior years, and to learn more about our Marching Band and Color Guard.

The following information is to help you sign up for the appropriate class(es).

ENTRY-LEVEL

Concert Band (No audition required) #6821/6822 – This entry-level class includes woodwind, brass, and percussion players who already have some performing experience but still require more development before advancing to the Symphonic Band. Students in the Concert Band will have a structured and deliberate learning environment in which to progress/improve fundamental music skills. The ensemble will perform at concerts throughout the year and may be adjudicated at festivals. *Most incoming 9th grade students who want to enroll in a BAND class will sign up for this class.*

Concert Orchestra (No audition required) #6851/6852 – This entry-level class includes string players who already have some performing experience but still require more development before advancing to the Symphonic Orchestra. Students in the Concert Orchestra will have a structured and deliberate learning environment in which to progress/improve fundamental music skills. The ensemble will perform at concerts throughout the year and may be adjudicated at festivals. *Most incoming 9th grade students who want to enroll in an ORCHESTRA class will sign up for this class.*

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Symphonic Band (*Entrance by audition/Director approval*) #6826/6827 – This class includes intermediate-level woodwind, brass, and percussion players who already have some performing experience but still require more development before advancing to the Wind Ensemble. The ensemble will perform at concerts throughout the year and will be adjudicated at festivals.

Symphonic Orchestra (*Entrance by audition/Director approval*) #6866/6867 – This class includes intermediate-level string players who already have some performing experience but still require more development before advancing to the Chamber Orchestra. The ensemble will perform at concerts throughout the year and will be adjudicated at festivals.

ADVANCED LEVEL

Wind Ensemble (*Entrance by audition/Director approval, called Advanced Symphonic Band on registration card*) #682631/682731 – This advanced class is the select ensemble for woodwind, brass, and percussion musicians. The ensemble will perform at concerts throughout the year and be adjudicated at County/State festivals. Woodwind, brass, and percussion students from Wind Ensemble may join the Chamber Orchestra in performance of full orchestral arrangements.

Chamber Orchestra (*Entrance by audition/Director approval, called Advanced Symphonic Orchestra on registration card*) #686631/686731 – This advanced class is the select ensemble for string musicians. The ensemble will perform at concerts throughout the year and be adjudicated at County/State festivals. Woodwind, brass, and percussion students from Wind Ensemble may join the Chamber Orchestra in performance of full orchestral arrangements, allowing the ensemble to have an expanded repertoire of music spanning most of the major musical time periods.

JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Jazz Ensemble (*Entrance by audition/Director approval*) #6871/6872 – This is a class specifically devoted to playing jazz styles of music. The curriculum focuses on the fundamentals of jazz performance – including improvisation, rhythms, blues scales, jazz articulation, and musical dialog. It will generally adhere to standard big band instrumentation (vocalist(s), 5 saxophones, 4 trombones, 5 trumpets, and 1 player on each rhythm part). The Director may ask students from other performing groups to also play in the Jazz Ensemble to ensure proper instrumentation. The Honors Jazz Ensemble performs frequently throughout the year for community events, school events, concerts, and adjudicated jazz festivals.

VERY IMPORTANT – FOR STUDENTS WHO WANT TO AUDITION!

I will be coming to feeder middle schools to hear the auditions of students who want to be considered for placement in our Intermediate and Advanced ensembles or our Jazz Ensemble. Sign up for an audition with your teacher, and be sure to include your name, instrument, and the ensemble(s) for which you will be auditioning. If you do not attend a feeder middle school, please contact me via email to schedule an audition time.

Audition materials and requirements are available on our website:

www.mbhsmusic.com

YOU MUST BE PREPARED AT THE TIME OF YOUR AUDITION –
we're sorry, but we can't hold "second chance auditions" if you just aren't ready.

VERY IMPORTANT – DON'T LOSE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TO A SCHEDULE CONFLICT!

Because of clarification we received from MCPS Rockville, *students should be able to postpone taking two courses that have often created schedule conflicts* in prior years, which forced students to drop music classes for one or two semesters.

HEALTH: Students may "...take the course in Grade 10 or later than Grade 10—possibly online during the school years when they are enrolled in 10, 11, or 12. Note that only one section of online Health is offered each spring, with priority enrollment for seniors; a limited number of slots are available to underclassmen each spring. After Grade 9, students also may take Health in summer school or online during the summer."

FOUNDATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY: "While Foundations of Technology has been designed as a Grade 9 course, the course bulletin shows that the course can be taken in Grades 9-12. It also is available online during the summer as early as the summer before Grade 9."

****If the correct music class does not appear on your schedule, YOU SHOULD **CONTACT YOUR COUNSELOR** AS SOON AS YOU DISCOVER THE PROBLEM (EVEN OVER THE SUMMER) TO CHANGE YOUR SCHEDULE.

REQUIRED CLASSES FOR MCPS HONORS AND ALL STATE ENSEMBLES

If you want to perform with an MCPS Honors Ensemble or All State Ensemble, YOU MUST BE ENROLLED in an instrumental music class for BOTH SEMESTERS or you will not be eligible! This rule is out of our control, and we have been told that there are no exceptions.

We look forward to working with you for all four years while you are at Montgomery Blair High School. If you haven't already, you will discover that our Instrumental Music Program is simply superb – and a lot of fun!

Please check our Music website frequently, and be sure to come to our free concerts. And don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Stay in touch with our latest events by following us on Social Media! Thank you so much for making music an important part of your life, and I look forward to meeting you soon!

Musically yours,

Michelle Roberts
Instrumental Music Director
Michelle_Roberts@mcpsmd.org
Twitter: @mbhsmusic
Instagram: @mbhsmusicdept
Facebook: www.facebook.com/mbhsmusic
Soundcloud: @mbhsmusic