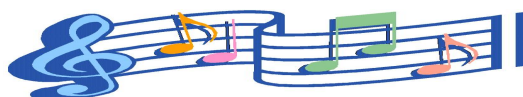




# Orchestra Newsletter



## Upcoming Events:

- Wed., December 14<sup>th</sup>: Fall Orchestra Concert (at Roosevelt), 6:30 (arrival times vary!)

## **Fall Orchestra Concert—Fast Approaching!**

The first few months of orchestra this year have been exciting, and have gone by quickly! Evidence of this is the fact that our first concert of the year is just over three weeks away, on December 14<sup>th</sup> at Roosevelt. Please note that although the concert itself begins at 6:30, I will need students of each grade to arrive at different times for warm-ups. The primary reason for this is that this concert will be the first time students from each class and at each school will have a chance to play together. Sixth graders are asked to arrive earliest so that they can help with preparations for the other grades. Fourth graders are the last to warm up because they are the largest group and also the first group to perform. Arrival times, then, are as follows:

6<sup>th</sup> Graders: 4:30 p.m.

5<sup>th</sup> Graders: 5:15 p.m.

4<sup>th</sup> Graders: 6:00 p.m.

As experience from last year suggests, it may be a good idea for older students to eat dinner prior to their warm-up and/or bring something to eat between our warm-up time and the start of the concert. There will also be time for 6<sup>th</sup> graders to change into their concert outfits after their warm-up. The Roosevelt PTA will also be providing coffee and juice during the rehearsal times on a donation basis, with funds to support the OPI experience for next year's Roosevelt 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

## **Concert Attendance: Please Read**

By now, all students (unless they do not yet have an orchestra binder!) should have received a purple Calendar of Events, listing all of our performances for the year. This is intended to help students and families in their scheduling. My expectation is that students attend all performances—which are graded activities. The only excusable absences will be for debilitating illness and family emergencies. Please understand that I normally cannot excuse students for other reasons—including forgetfulness, family trips, or lack of a ride. If students have activities such as sports, other music recitals, etc., I ask that you let me know as soon as possible (at least two weeks in advance) and provide me with contact information for coaches and/or teachers; we can usually work out a mutually beneficial solution with advance notice. Unfortunately, I cannot excuse for these reasons if I am only given notice a few days in advance; proper planning is beneficial for everyone involved!

## **Instrument Repair**

Occasionally, accidents happen. When they do, I ask that you be diligent in making sure that repairs are handled as quickly as possible. The longer a student goes without a fully-functional instrument, the more difficult it will be for him or her to “catch up.” Also, please note that cases of broken or missing strings are easily addressed; all you need to do is provide the replacement string (for the correct instrument and size), and I can easily make those repairs at school, usually during the student's class. Replacing a string shouldn't necessitate leaving an instrument at the shop overnight.

## **Orchestra Materials**

At this point in the year, we are making use of the materials listed in the previous newsletter (and included here again, for your convenience). However, there are still a number of students who do not yet have each of these necessary items. Most significant among these are orchestra binders, books, and shoulder rests/rock stops. As I have explained to students, I can only give them handouts (including the concert calendar) if I know they have a binder for them to store them in. Otherwise, pages get lost and/or damaged beyond usability. Further, I only hand out one copy of papers (including sheet music) per student, so it is important that each student has a binder, used only for orchestra, to easily keep track of them.

### 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Graders (regardless where you get your instrument):

- Bow rosin (as designed for your instrument)
- 3-ring binder **for orchestra use only**; should be ½” or 1” thick, with folder pockets
- Extra set of strings (make sure it matches the size of your instrument)
- Cleaning cloth (cotton or microfiber; a spare handkerchief will do)
- Instrument stabilization:
  - Violin/Viola: Shoulder rest
  - Cello/Bass: Rock stop or endpin anchor
- Basses only: A stool for home practice (should be nearly waist-high when student is standing)
- (Recommended) Folding wire music stand for home practice (does not need to come to school)

### 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Graders only:

- *Essential Elements 2000, Book 1* for your instrument
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Two Unsharpened, 6-sided #2 pencils
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Two sharpened or mechanical #2 pencils (any style)

### 6<sup>th</sup> Graders only:

- *Essential Elements 2000, Book 2* for your instrument
- Two sharpened or mechanical #2 pencils (any style)

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns. I look forward to our December concert!

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### ***Practice Tip: Little-by-Little***

*Sometimes, the amount of material we need to learn can be so scary it can scare us away from practicing altogether! However, consider the fact that you never have to learn everything in a single night! If you're working on a long tune, it's usually best to focus on just a couple of lines in any one practice session—and even then, just a couple of measures at a time. If it's a new skill that you're working on (such as left hand shape; playing written note values, or shifting), break that skill into smaller parts and work on those parts one by one. As long as you are practicing daily (which you definitely should be), this small-steps strategy will help you be more successful.*

*Also, remember that you'll improve fastest when you spend the majority of your practice time on the "hard stuff"—the measures or parts of a skill that give you the most trouble. Save the easy parts for the end!*