

The Young Musician's Guide to the Valley Orchestra Program

A Guidebook for Students and Families of the
Valley High School and Valley Southwoods Orchestras

More complete information can be found by accessing this information through the Valley High School or Valley Southwoods web pages.

The most up-to-date information on the Valley and Valley Southwoods Orchestra Program can be found by accessing the Valley Orchestra Guild website: www.valleyorchestraguild.org

The Valley Orchestra Program

The Valley Orchestra Program consists of three string orchestras: a freshman string orchestra, a high school string orchestra, and the chamber orchestra. From these groups, symphonic orchestras are created each year by adding members of the Valley Southwoods and Valley High School band departments. Additionally, students participate in many small ensembles throughout the year performing as string quartets and trios at various community functions. Co-curricular ensembles change every year and have included traditional fiddle groups, an electric string ensemble and will include Mariachi music and Chinese Instrument ensembles for the first time this year. The orchestra has collaborated with the Valley Vocal music program to produce four Masterwork concerts and fully staged productions of several operas including Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in 1997 and two one act operas in 1999: Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Mascagni's *Cavallaria Rusticana*. Collaborations with the School of Classical Ballet and Dance resulted in ballet productions of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* (2002), Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* (2003), and a contemporary dance production in 2004.

The Valley Orchestra program has consistently received superior ratings at state contests and has participated in several music festivals including Music of the Rockies in Denver in 1996, the Banff International Festival of High School Orchestras in 1997 and the Heritage Music Festival in St. Louis in 2001. The orchestra also represented the state of Iowa and performed four concerts in Germany and Austria as part of Music Celebrations International Austria 2000 festival. The orchestra performed at the Heritage Festival of Gold in Chicago in 2002 and traveled to Italy in June of 2004 to participate in the Music Celebrations International Festival of Music. In 2006, the Valley/Valley Southwoods orchestra participated in the Winter Park Ski-Music Festival, earning superior ratings. The Valley String Orchestra was selected as the 2006 4A Honor Orchestra for the Iowa String Teachers' Convention. The VHS Orchestra also participated in the New York Band and Orchestra Festival, hosted by World Projects, and performed on the stage at Carnegie Hall in June, 2007. In the spring of 2009, the orchestra traveled to France with the Valley choir and performed four concerts in Paris and Normandy.

West Des Moines Orchestra

Calendar of Events

2009-2010

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Aug. 10	6-8 PM	All State Orchestra Workshop	VHS Room 404
Sept. 2	5:30 PM	4 th Grade Parent String Open House	IH Auditorium
Sept. 14	4-7 PM	Orchestra Instrument Rental Night	VHS Room 404
Sept 15	7:00 PM	4th Grade Parent Lesson	IH
Sept 15-17	AM – TBA	5th/6th Grade Rehearsals Begin	TBA
Sept. 21	7:00 PM	Valley Orchestra Guild Meeting	VHS Room 404
Sept. 24	1:00 p.m.	VHS Orchestra to WDM Women’s Club	WDM Methodist Church
Oct. 13	7:30 PM	VHS/VSW Orchestra Concert	VHS Auditorium
Oct. 18	2 PM & 5 PM	Orchestra All State Solo Recitals	VHS Room 413
Oct. 19	7:00 PM	Valley Orchestra Guild Meeting	VHS Room 404
Oct. 24	All Day	All State Music Auditions	Indianola HS
Nov. 3	6:00-8:00 PM	Skating Party	SkateWest
Nov. 16	7:00 PM	Valley Orchestra Guild Meeting	VHS Room 404
Nov. 19-21	All Day	All State Music Festival	Ames
Nov. 23	In Class	VHS Yearbook Picture Day	VHS
Nov. 24	All Day	Jr. High Orchestra Tour	Elem Schools
Dec. 2	7:30 a.m.	6 th Grade Orchestra Combined Rehearsal	Hillside
Dec. 8	7:00 p.m.	Stilwell Orchestra Concert	Stilwell Auditorium
Dec. 9	All Day	6 th Grade Orchestra Winter Tour	JC, HD, CL, CV

Dec. 10	7:30 A.M.	Dress Rehearsal 5 th Grade	Hillside
Dec 10	7:00 PM	5th/6th Orchestra Winter Concert	Valley Southwoods GYM
Dec 14	7:30 PM	Indian Hills Orchestra Concert	IH Auditorium
Dec 14	1:00 PM	Orchestra to WDM Women's Club	WDM Methodist
Dec. 21	7:00 PM	Valley Orchestra Guild Meeting	VHS Room 404
Jan. 6	8:00 AM	Pizza Fundraiser Kickoff	Hillside
Jan. 18	7:00 PM	Valley Orchestra Guild Meeting	VHS Room 404
Jan. 22	6:30 PM	Orchestra Winter Dance Party/Concert	VHS Cafeteria, Auditorium
Jan 26	7:00 PM	All District String Orchestra Showcase Concert	VHS Field House
Feb. 4	6:30/7:30 PM	4 th Grade Orchestra Concert	Stilwell
Feb 6	9-11AM	Pizza Pickup	TBA
Feb. 13	TBA	IHSMA State Piano Contest	TBA
Feb. 15	7:00 PM	Valley Orchestra Guild Meeting	VHS Room 404
March 5	3:30-7:30 PM	Jr. High Orchestra District Solo and Ensemble Festival	IH
March 9	7:00 PM	Chamber Recital	IH Auditorium
March 26	3:30-6:30 PM	HS District Solo/Ensemble Festival	VHS
April 6	6:00-8:00 PM	Skating Party	SkateWest
April 14	7:30 a.m.	6 th Grade orchestra dress rehearsal	TBA
April 17	ALL DAY	State Solo/Small Group Contest	TBA
April 19	7:00 PM	Valley Orchestra Guild Meeting	VHS Room 404
April 21	ALL DAY	6th Grade Tour	CR, WH, FM, WR
April 22	AM	5th Grade Orchestra Festival Rehearsal	Valley Free Church
April 22	6:30 PM	5th grade Orchestra Festival Concert	Valley Southwoods Gym
April 22	7:30 PM	6th grade Orchestra Concert	Valley Southwoods Gym

May 6	7:30 PM	VHS/VSW Orchestra Concert	Valley Auditorium
May 7	5-10 PM	State Large Group Contest	TBA
May 11	7:00 PM	6 th Grade Honor Concert	VHS Auditorium
May 13	6:30/7:30 PM	4th grade Orchestra Concerts	VSW Gym
May 17	7:00 PM	Valley Orchestra Guild Meeting	VHS Room 404
May 18	7:30 PM	Indian Hills Orchestra Spring Concert	IH Auditorium
May 20	7:30 PM	Stilwell Orchestra Spring Concert	Stilwell Auditorium
May 23	TBA	VSW Orchestra/Band/Choir Conc.	VSW Forum
May 25	6:30 PM	VHS/VSW Orchestra Banquet	TBA
May 27-28	4-6 PM	Orchestra Instrument Rental Return	VHS Room 404
May 30	TBA	VHS Orchestra plays Commencement	Knapp Center @ Drake U.

Events in BOLD are for Valley High School and Valley Southwoods Orchestra students. Other events are for students in the elementary and junior high programs.

* Please note that the dates and times of events vary occasionally due to conflicts within our district. Watch for additional notes from your child’s orchestra director prior to events for confirmation of date, place, and time.



“The life of the Arts, far from being an interruption or a distraction in the life of a nation, is close to the center of a nation’s purpose – and is a test of the quality of a nation’s civilization.” ~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy

GENERAL INFORMATION

CONCERT DRESS

Girls are required to wear a long sleeve black dress purchased or rented from the Valley Orchestra Guild. Information regarding the purchase or rental of dresses is given to all eighth grade girls in the spring before entering VSW. Other girls new to the program will get specific information from Mr. Peters or Ms. Senger in the first weeks of the school year. Additionally, all girls should wear black hose and dress black shoes.

Boys will wear black tuxedos rented from the Valley Orchestra Guild, black socks and dress black shoes. Boys are responsible for obtaining their own white tuxedo shirt. Ties and cummerbunds will be provided with the rental tuxedo. **RENTAL FEES FOR TUXEDOS AND DRESSES ARE \$40 FOR THE YEAR (THIS INCLUDES CLEANING). FEE IS DUE PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1, CHECK SHOULD BE PAYABLE TO THE VALLEY ORCHESTRA GUILD**

INSTRUMENT RENTAL

The school district has several violas, cellos and basses available for rent. The instrument rental fee is \$25 per semester or \$50 for the school year. Forms will be sent home with the students at the end of the first week of classes. **The rental fees need to be paid before the end of the second week of classes.** Students renting instruments from the school are responsible for ALL maintenance during the rental period, including replacing any broken strings. Due to availability, cello students may only rent one instrument. If a second instrument is desired for home practice to avoid transporting the instrument, you will need to rent a second instrument from a local music dealer. **NOT HAVING AN INSTRUMENT AT HOME IS NO EXCUSE FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO PRACTICE!**

INSTRUMENT STORAGE

Lockers are available in the orchestra room to store instruments during the school day. Combination locks will be provided at no charge. It is expected that ALL instruments will be secured in a locker when not in use. Instruments left out in the orchestra room will be taken to lost and found. **ALL SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENTS ARE TO BE LOCKED IN LOCKERS WHEN NOT IN USE. THE PRIVILEGE OF USING A SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENT WILL BE LOST IF THE INSTRUMENT IS NOT SECURED. ANY RENTAL FEES PAID FOR SUCH INSTRUMENTS WILL NOT BE REFUNDED.**

SCHOOL POLICIES FOR ORCHESTRA ACTIVITIES

All Valley High School/Valley Southwoods rules are in effect at all times during orchestra activities. These policies should be reviewed in the Student Handbook.

Valley High School Orchestra

Seating Policy

Seating within the string sections will be based on auditions and/or playing tests as announced throughout the school year. The director will place violinists in sections that will remain in place for the concert cycle. Students will be able to challenge the player immediately in front of them. Challenge procedures are posted in the Valley Orchestra room and will be discussed in depth with all students. The decision of the director regarding all seating within the orchestra is final.

Note that the above policy is for Valley High School only. Valley Southwoods will use a rotating system for all seating.

Principal Chairs

Auditions and interviews for principal chairs will take place at the beginning of each semester. The successful principal player will demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Consistently strives for excellence in all performance activities.
2. Is always prepared for rehearsals, including advance preparations and all materials.
3. Demonstrates responsible behaviors appropriate for a section principal (including setting up and being ready to play before the rehearsal begins).
4. Shows a willingness to assist all members of the section in learning parts, bowings, fingerings, etc.

Communication with Directors

Students and parents are encouraged to communicate with the directors at all times. Phone calls, emails, and meetings to discuss any concerns or successes are welcome. Feel free to contact the directors at the following numbers/email addresses:

Phil Peters	633-4219	petersp@wdmcs.org
Michele Senger	633-4510	sengerm@wdmcs.org

The Valley Orchestra Guild

The Valley Orchestra Guild is the parent support group for the 4-12 West Des Moines Orchestra program. This group supports events including concerts, master classes, skate parties, trips, instrument purchases and rentals, summer camp scholarships, and commissioning new works for string orchestra at the elementary and high school levels. Additionally, the VOG provides several scholarships for high school students each year. Scholarship information and application forms are available online. Please visit our website regularly for the most up-to-date information (www.valleyorchestraguild.org).

PLEASE VISIT THE ONLINE SITE FOR MORE INFORMATION AS WELL AS FORMS
FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, LETTERING AWARDS, AND MORE.

Educational Non-Discrimination Statement

The West Des Moines Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation or physical or mental disability in educational programs and activities.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Out of School Performance Practices

Performing groups are both classroom and out-of-class time in nature. They are considered co-curricular because the outcomes of class instruction are used in public demonstrations for an audience. The groups most frequently used in such a dual role are band, orchestra and vocal groups. The vitality and value of these classes are much affected through preparation as a group for public performances at out-of-class times. The student cannot be a satisfactory member of the organization if his/her only participation is that part carried on in the classroom in school time. Satisfactory membership must also include the out-of-class time participation.

It is essential that students who enroll in such classes understand that the conditions for satisfactory grades include out-of-class performances. A schedule of performances for the semester will be prepared at the beginning of each semester and sent home to parents/guardians for their information. Written agreement of the out-of-class schedule from both parents/guardians and students is desirable. Approved absences will be honored when the director is informed before the performance. Decisions concerning absenteeism beyond this point will be made by the principal, following consultation with the director.

If a student is absent, arrangements to make up the absence should be discussed with the director. Students are encouraged to make up the work in advance if possible. Parents are asked to telephone the director when their student will be absent from a performance. In the event a conflict should arise between activities within the school, an arrangement agreeable to all parties will be worked out in consultation with the student, the activity sponsors involved, the principal, and the parents.

All performing groups encourage parent/student communication with the respective directors. Parental participation in the junior and senior high schools continue to enhance the performance program. The directors will be continually informing administrators, students and parents of upcoming events, performances and festivals that will take place during the year. The structure and implementation of these out-of-school performance practices in the music disciplines should be consistent within each building and throughout the district.

Thank you for reviewing the information presented. The communication and performance expectations are important to your child's development in the music program. Please return the following form to your music teacher.

We have received and reviewed the information and understand the additional commitment to out-of-school performances and presentations.

Student _____

Parent _____

Date _____