

WOODWINDS

Flute



The beautiful tone of the flute has made this a popular instrument. Flute is special because to produce its sound, the player blows across the hole in the mouthpiece instead of into the mouthpiece. Students with a thicker upper lip will usually produce a good sound on the flute. Students with a pronounced tear drop on their upper lip may have difficulty playing the flute.

Oboe



Students interested in the oboe should have a highly developed musical ear since the instrument is at times difficult to play in tune. The oboist must be an independent thinker since there are only two or three players in each band. Students with overbites will usually have success on the oboe. Oboe students will need to have longer fingers to reach the keys. Oboes are available to rent through MMS.

Bassoon



The bassoon is a special and beautiful sounding instrument. Since there are only two or three bassoons needed in each band, the aspiring bassoonist must be able to think independently since he/she will not have a lot of students to follow. Bassoonists should have larger hands and longer fingers to reach around the instrument. Bassoons are available to rent through MMS.

Clarinet



The clarinet is fun to play because it is a primary melodic instrument of the band. Students need to have longer fingers and regular length arms so that they can reach the bottom joint of the clarinet. Students must be able to make the main face shape, "embouchure," of the clarinet in order to be considered for it. Good front teeth structure is important, but not vital for clarinetists.

Saxophone



The saxophone is a very popular instrument, but there are only a few students selected to play it because a concert band only employs 4-7 players for good balance. In planning for the future in order to maintain a quality band sound, only students who score very strongly on this instrument will be selected to play it.

BRASS

Trumpet



The trumpet is the primary melodic brass instrument in the band. It is one of the most versatile of all the band instruments and is used in the concert band, jazz ensemble, and symphony orchestra. The trumpet requires fairly straight teeth and the right balance of upper and lower lip.

French Horn



Many students are attracted to the horn through movie music like "Star Wars" in which the horn is prominently featured. The horn is a challenging instrument to play. The horn requires a good sense of pitch and a good ear. When you extend the length of the coiled tubing, the horn is eight feet long! The horn is available to rent through MMS.

Trombone



Like the trumpet, the trombone is a very versatile instrument. It uses a larger mouthpiece than the trumpet which makes it easier for students who are likely to have braces. The trombone is special because it uses different slide positions to play the notes instead of pushing valves or keys. Trombonists should have longer arms to be able to reach the various positions. A good musical ear is also important because the slide positions are variable.

Euphonium



The euphonium is very similar to the trombone in its sound quality and to the tuba in appearance. It has a very sweet melodic sound that is very special and specific to the instrument, called upon often by composers. Euphonium players should enjoy the sound of the instrument and be able to buzz on the larger mouthpiece. The euphonium is available to rent through MMS.

Tuba



The tuba is the largest and lowest of all the brass instruments. It is very similar to the euphonium but is special because it is the foundation of the band. Tuba players should be able to buzz on a large mouth piece and have long arms to wrap around the instrument. The tuba is available to rent through MMS.

PERCUSSION

Percussion



Percussion is one of the most difficult instruments to learn. Students who select percussion as their first choice will be selected by ability. A concert band requires only 5-7 percussionists to maintain proper balance and cover various parts called for in band arrangements. Prior piano experience is strongly encouraged. Percussionists must be able to think independently and have good organizational skills since he/she will be playing several instruments. Students who are selected to play percussion will learn mallet instruments, snare drum, and auxiliary instruments. Each year many students select percussion as a first choice, making a test of ability necessary to ensure the best balance for the band. Please have a second choice in mind that you would LOVE to play!
