



Life Well Learned.

The MBCI Band Program

FAQ's and Instrument Descriptions

*It is not enough to know merely WHICH notes to play
or HOW to play them, but WHY the notes need to be played*

Join the Band!

Here's how:

1. Sign-up for Band on your registration form.
2. Read through this booklet.
3. Join us at the Instrument Try-Outs at the New Student Orientation Evening on Monday, June 13, 2016, 7:00 pm to see which one is right for you.
4. At the Instrument Try-Outs, fill out an Instrument Choice Form and hand it in before you leave.
5. Let Mr. Klassen (667-8210 ext. 5002, aklassen@mbci.mb.ca) or Mr. Bergman (667-8210 ext. 3006, dbergman@mbci.mb.ca) know if you have any questions.



1. Why take Band?

There are many reasons: Band is a new experience - a different type of class than most you will have taken before. You will learn a skill that will stay with you all your life - the ability to make music on an instrument. You will have many opportunities to show what you have accomplished in public performance. Band is both "hands on" and academic. Playing in a band develops creativity, mental concentration, motor coordination, listening skills, group cooperation and social skills, self discipline, aesthetic expression, self-confidence, and a sense of personal achievement. God has given every one of us some measure of musical talent. Band helps

develop this talent so it can be used to His greater glory. We want to help students foster a positive attitude toward music in all its varied forms, to provide opportunities for performance, to develop each student's ability to the highest potential, and to help students use their musical gifts in serving God the Creator.

Since its inception by Mr. Ken Epp in 1977, over 2,300 students have learned to play an instrument in MBCI's Band Program. Over the past 38 years, MBCI's bands have developed a reputation for being among the finest in Manitoba, performing at local and national festivals, school concerts, church visitations, and on tour. Many former students have gone on to further music studies in education, performance, and composition, and have made music their career. It is our goal that all will graduate with the tools for nurturing a life-long avocation in music, as creators, performers and listeners.

2. What bands does MBCI offer?

There are currently five band ensembles at MBCI, the Grade 6 Band, Grade 7 Band, Grade 8 Band, Grade 9 Band, and the Concert Band (Grade 10-12). Each of these bands is an elective full-credit course. The program strives for a high standard of performance and achievement and offers many opportunities for enrichment beyond the basic curricular offering. These include ensembles such as the Junior and Senior Jazz Bands, chamber ensembles, and numerous activities throughout the year.



3. What do Band students learn?

Band students focus on developing a high level of performance, accomplished through building comprehensive musicianship in technique, notation, style, critical perception, theoretical and historical knowledge, and development of aural ability.

Concerts feature a wide variety of music, ranging from standard repertoire to new innovative works for wind band, as well as contemporary arrangements and transcriptions from other genres.

4. What events do MBCI Bands take part in?

There are many public performance opportunities for MBCI Band students, among them school events such as the Opening Program, Grandparents Day, Fall Band Concert, MS and HS Christmas Concerts, Open House, Fundraising Banquet, MS and HS Spring Concerts, Graduation Ceremony, Global Focus Chapel, other Chapel performances, and church visitations. Additional events are listed below.

Since 1979, the Grade 8, Grade 9, and Concert Bands have performed annually at the Optimist Club of Winnipeg International Band Festival, held in February at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. MBCI bands regularly receive 5-star ratings, performance trophies, and recommendations to the national level. Over this time period, MBCI bands have received seventy-six performance trophies along with numerous recommendations to perform at the national MusicFest. At the Optimist, MBCI has been honoured with the Commendation Award (1981), the Chairman's Award (2000), and this past year the George Douglas Award (2015), prestigious honours given to one school each year for overall excellence in performance level and participation.

Each year, MBCI alternates between a major music tour undertaken by the Concert Band and Concert Choir and a major musical production involving students from every grade. In recent years, MBCI has produced *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Sound of Music*, *Fiddler On the Roof*, *The Wiz*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*, (all

five which received a *Rainbow Stage Performance Award* given to the top two or three high school musical productions in the province), and an additional 19 musicals before that. Recent Music Tours have taken the Concert Band and Concert Choir to Washington D.C. /New York, Texas, New York/Boston/Ontario, Nashville/Chicago, New York/Chicago, Dallas/New Orleans, and Victoria, BC. This year, we plan to travel to Texas and New Orleans.

The Concert Band and Concert Choir are also involved in an ongoing CD recording project, showcasing their best music on an annual basis. The previous project, a double-CD *Music of the Soul*, was recorded over the period of time 1999-2003.

The Concert Band frequently collaborates with other ensembles in joint performances in Jubilee Place, in recent years including the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble, the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble, and various high school bands. In February, 2012, the Concert Band opened for the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble. Two years ago, the Concert Band shared the stage with the Orchestra of Recycled Instruments from Cateura, Paraguay in a fund-raising concert for the Global Family Foundation. The Concert Band has played in workshop settings with a number of distinguished conductors, including John Paynter, Bramwell Tovey, Howard Cable, Dale Lonis, Fraser Linklater, Michelle Mourre, Gillian McKay, Julian Pellicano, and others. A few years ago, a number of band students performed in an ensemble at the WSO's *New Music Festival* at the Centennial Concert Hall, a concert which was broadcast nationally on CBC Radio 1 and 2. All members of the Concert Band organize themselves into chamber ensembles, which perform annually in a project called the MBCI Concert Band Chamber Ensemble Festival. Advanced student musicians annually perform at the WSO's *Musicians in the Making* recital series at the Concert Hall representing MBCI each year.



The Grade 9 Band performs annually at Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School (Agassiz). Students in the Grade 9 Band together with the Grade 9 Choir also mount an annual Christmas program at one of four personal care homes on a rotating basis: Donwood Manor Personal Care Home, Donwood South, Bethania Mennonite Personal Care Home, and Lions Manor. These two ensembles also perform annually at an elementary school with a connection to MBCI. Recent school performances have included Archwood School, Kent Road School, Riverview School, Beautiful Savior Lutheran School, Princess Margaret School, St. Gerard School, Immaculate Heart of Mary School and Red River Valley Junior Academy. The Grade 9 Band and Choir also travel to Circle Square Ranch for an overnight workshop.

The Grade 8 Band also performs at elementary schools with a connection to MBCI. Recent school performances include Lord Selkirk School, Linwood School, Oakenwald School, Maple Leaf School, Angus McKay School, Donwood School, Emerson School, Lord Wolseley School, Kent Road School, Glenelm School, and St. Gerard School. The Grade 8 Band and Choir also travel to Circle Square Ranch for an

overnight workshop.

The Grade 6 Band and Grade 7 Band perform at the Optimist Level 1 Band Festival, held in April at North Kildonan MB Church. From time to time, these two bands also host workshops with bands from other schools such as Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School (Bedson), or Springs Christian Academy.



The Junior Jazz Band (Grade 6-9) and Senior Jazz Band (Grade 10-12) perform at a number of occasions annually, including the Brandon Jazz Festival, held in March at Brandon University, as well as banquets, personal care home concerts, and other gigging opportunities which present themselves each year. The SJB has opened for the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra the past three years. Four years ago, the SJB saxophone section was selected by the adjudicators as the Outstanding Saxophone Section of the Brandon Jazz Festival, and two years ago, one of our students was selected for the Yamaha Top Brass Award.

Band students are encouraged to audition for one or more of the three levels of the Manitoba Honour Bands - Junior (6-8), Intermediate (9-10), Senior (9-12), as well as the various Honour Jazz Bands, and Canada's National Youth Band. Over five hundred MBCI band students have been selected as Manitoba Honour Band members over the years, more than any other school in the province, and a phenomenal record for a school of our size. The MBCI contingent to

Manitoba Honour Bands is usually among the largest of any school in the province. At the National level, there has been an MBCI student or alumnus in Canada's National Youth Band every year except one, since its inception in 1991. In both of the past two years MBCI has sent three students to the NYB, more than any other high school in Manitoba!

MBCI has co-sponsored twenty Elmwood Junior Band Summer Camps, held in August at MBCI in conjunction with the Manitoba Band Association, a program which has served MBCI's band program well, and has brought hundreds of band students to our facilities each summer for a week. Next summer's camp will run from August 7-12, 2016.

5. How do I get into Band?

It depends on the grade level. The Grade 6 and Grade 7 Bands are open to anyone without previous experience, although the Grade 7 Band will have a mix of beginners and those with experience in a Grade 6 band or through private instruction. In Grade 8 and 9, new students to MBCI wishing to join need to have comparable experience at those levels. Students in Grade 10-12 must audition for the Concert Band. Audition music for each year's Concert Band is available late June. Concert Band members need to demonstrate a high level of technical proficiency, musicality, and understanding of theory. As frequent ambassadors of MBCI in public performance, a high degree of personal integrity is expected of all members.

6. How do I join band in Grade 6 or 7?

A commitment to take band means making several decisions now, the most important being what instrument you will learn to play. We want to make every effort to help this be a wise choice. At the New Student

Orientation Evening, Monday, June 13, 2016, at 7:00 pm, you can look at and try out various band instruments. We are open to additional one-on one tryout sessions as well. If you are interested in taking band, you can fill out and return an instrument selection choice form. Parents will be contacted following this event to discuss and finalize this choice.

7. What instruments are possibilities?

Students play every standard band instrument at MBCI, including flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, bass clarinet, and saxophones of various sizes (alto, tenor, and baritone), trumpet, horn (French horn), trombone, euphonium (baritone), tuba, and percussion. MBCI percussionists should have a background in piano or keyboard and must commit to learning to play every percussion instrument in their section. For a band to perform with a properly balanced sound, each of these instruments must be represented in correct proportion. This requires a fixed number of students in each section. There are usually too many students requesting flute, clarinet, saxophone, and percussion as their first choice, and as a result there will typically be a greater need for players in the other sections. If there are more people requesting an instrument than can be accommodated, after discussion by phone, we will resort to a system of random selection. Members of the percussion section are chosen partly through an audition process.



8. How do I know if an instrument is right for me?

Students respond in different ways to musical instruments. What is true for one individual may not be so for another. Do some reading and research. Find out how an instrument looks and sounds, how its tone is produced, and what its special function is in the ensemble. Talk to your school music teacher or students who already play in a band. Go to music stores that deal in band instruments. They are always willing to let you examine them up close. At the June Orientation Evening, spend time looking at the less familiar instruments, to broaden your perspective.

9. How hard is it to learn to play a band instrument?

Most people can produce an acceptable sound on an instrument almost immediately, and within a short time can play simple melodies. The discipline and motivation needed to go beyond this basic stage is what makes some students more successful than others. In general, band instruments are easier to learn than stringed instruments such as the violin, but are more complex than learning piano or recorder. Some instruments such as percussion, oboe, bassoon, or horn have special technical requirements. At more advanced levels, most instruments will present an equal challenge.



10. Can I play a band instrument if I have braces?

In most cases the answer is yes, however players need to make some allowances each time braces are adjusted. When this happens, a slight change is made in how the mouth muscles (called the

embouchure) are set. Students who begin to play a new instrument and then later get fitted with braces notice the change more than those who begin to learn their instrument with braces already on. Ask your orthodontist for more specifics. Instruments with larger mouthpieces such as trombone, euphonium, and tuba have less resistance and are often the easiest to play with braces. Many students have found that a mouth-guard product called the ‘Morgan Bumper’ is an effective means of playing any instrument comfortably with braces.



11. Where do I get an instrument?

There are several options. The major band instrument suppliers in Winnipeg (St. John's Music-204-783-8899, Long and McQuade Music-204-284-8992, and Quest Musique -204-233-4151) lease or sell new or used student models at a reasonable cost and can repair much of what goes wrong from normal usage during the year. In a lease-to-own plan, equity can be later transferred to a different or higher quality instrument at any time, or you can choose to opt out of the plan altogether.

***Note: In recent years, a number of non-music retail outlets have begun to offer musical instruments for sale, usually at less than half the price of the music stores. We strongly advise that you avoid these instruments, since they are usually made with thinner, poor quality materials, and have no support system at the store for repairs and part-replacement.**

Another option to a new instrument is to purchase a used instrument privately. If they are in excellent shape, and relatively new, they might cost less than half the price of a new instrument. Avoid getting instruments older than ten years, they may have technical problems which might hinder student progress. So that money isn't an issue, MBCI rents at low cost (\$150.00 per year) some of the more expensive instruments such as horn, euphonium, tuba, bass clarinet, bassoon, and baritone saxophone. Percussionists also pay a rental fee of \$150.00 to the school, and additionally must purchase a number of mallets and sticks over several years. Students using school-owned instruments pay rent over a three year period only, after which the instrument can be used free of charge.

12. I take piano lessons. Will I be too busy to play a second instrument?

About two-thirds of students in band take lessons on another instrument. These students are often the strongest players in the band. Students find that the work put into two instruments complements each other. If you already play another instrument, and can read music, you will make quicker and easier progress on a band instrument.

13. Should I take lessons on my band instrument?

A number of students take lessons, but the majority receives all their instruction in class. There are benefits to learning both individually and in a group. In a class setting, students are motivated to improve by comparing and learning from each other, often making faster progress than if they had only taking lessons privately. On the other hand, private instruction can be more specialized, challenging the most advanced students, but also



helping any student with specific needs. Band students progress through a fairly structured program of study which introduces every necessary aspect of theory, notation, and playing technique. Sectionals are incorporated into the timetable, where individual problems can be addressed. Since each instrument is different, and no two students learn best through an identical process, lessons are always encouraged.

14. I want lessons. How do I find a qualified private instructor?

If you inquire, we can recommend professional instructors in various parts of the city in which we feel confident (667-8210, ext. 5002). You can phone them directly and make arrangements. The Manitoba Band Association (<http://www.mbband.org/>) has a link which lists a number of qualified instructors on each band instrument. It is important to have a good match between student and teacher. Several current Concert Band members and alumni also offer lessons to beginners.

15. How much individual practice time is required for a band instrument?

We require that band students individually practice a minimum 100 minutes per week (80 minutes at the Grade 6 level) to maintain a basic rate of progress. These times are noted on a daily practice record which is signed by parents each weekend and submitted the following Monday. Many students practice two or three times this minimum requirement. Ultimately, these students attain the highest levels of proficiency. Having



said this however, the most important idea to remember is that quality is more important than quantity. Practice is only worth doing when it is done well, and that it is important to decide what needs to be accomplished before beginning each practice session. Better practicing produces better playing habits. 30 minutes of focused practice is far better than 60 minutes of unfocused practice.

16. Where and when can band students practice?

Students do most of their individual practice outside of class at home where their parents can hear and monitor their progress. However, at school, students may practice before and after classes as well as during the lunch hour under teacher supervision. The main and upper band rooms, the band practice rooms, the choir room, and Jubilee Place are available for this purpose when they are not being used by other classes or private lessons. Students should mostly practice individually, but are encouraged to form small groups for a portion of their practice time.

17. I'm anxious about all the new things I will experience at a new school, in addition to joining the band and learning a new instrument. How can I be sure I'll do okay?

It is common for students to worry at first coming into a new school as well as learning a new instrument in band. Asking the question "How can I be sure I'll do okay?" now before the new school year begins is already a good way to help ensure you'll be successful. Rest assured that we will take the time to make sure you are well prepared for every challenge you face, and that we teachers will help you through each step of the way.

Feel free to contact us if you have more questions concerning Band (Mr. Klassen and Mr. Bergman), or the Choral Program (Mr. Bergman and Mr. Taves). We would appreciate hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Andrew Klassen
MBCI Bands

MBCI Band Instrument Descriptions

A picture and brief description of each band instrument is included below to help you increase your knowledge and familiarity. There is also a wealth of detailed information in libraries or online. Students and their parents are strongly encouraged to listen to recordings or attend live concerts featuring these instruments to learn how they sound in the hands of an experienced musician. Students can also talk to older players who know about these instruments, or visit music stores such as St. John's Music (204-783-8899) or Long and McQuade Music (204-284-8992).

The Woodwind Section



Flute - The flute is the highest-pitched voice of the woodwind section, and reads music in the treble clef. Flute tone is produced by a vibrating column of air set in motion by blowing across a tone hole, and pitch is altered through the use of fingered pads. In the upper grades, flutists often double on the piccolo, which sounds one octave higher. Students can obtain this instrument through store rental or purchase. (The four least expensive instruments to rent or purchase are flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone.)



Oboe - The dark, expressive tone of the oboe is produced by a vibrating column of air set in motion by a small cane double reed. Pitch is altered through the use of fingered pads. Oboe players read music in the treble clef, and the oboe functions as a soprano or alto voice in the woodwind section. As the music becomes more advanced, the oboe frequently plays important solo lines. Because of the technical challenges involved in playing this instrument, private instruction is strongly recommended. Students can obtain the oboe through store rental or purchase.



Bassoon - The technique of the bassoon is similar to the oboe, but its music is read in the bass clef. The bassoon functions as a tenor or bass voice in the woodwind section. Because of the technical challenges involved in playing bassoon, private instruction is strongly recommended. Students can obtain this instrument through store rental or purchase, and on occasion one is available to rent through MBCI at a subsidized cost matching less expensive band instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone).

Clarinet (also known as the Soprano Clarinet) - The clarinet is the core of the

woodwind section, and there are always many players needed. Reading in the treble clef, this versatile instrument has the greatest range of all the band instruments, and is used in every style of music. Clarinet tone can be either dark or brilliant, and is created by a vibrating column of air set in motion by a small cane single reed. Pitch is altered through the use of fingered pads. Students can obtain the clarinet through store rental or purchase. (The four least expensive instruments to rent or purchase are flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone.)



Bass Clarinet - The bass clarinet reads and fingers the same as the regular (soprano) clarinet, but sounds one octave lower. It functions as a tenor or bass voice in the woodwind section. Note: It is fairly easy to switch among the various members of the clarinet family, and often a player will begin playing the bass clarinet after developing a basic technique on the soprano. Students can obtain the bass clarinet through store rental or purchase, and on occasion one is available to rent through MBCI at a subsidized cost matching less expensive band instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone). In the upper grades, bass clarinetists are sometimes invited to play the contrabass clarinet, which sounds an octave lower than the bass.



Alto Saxophone - Functioning as a tonal link between the woodwind and brass sections, the warm yet flexible sound of the saxophone is created in a similar way to that of the clarinet. Read in the treble clef, this saxophone functions as an alto or tenor voice. Because of high interest, prior experience and a random draw often determines placement in this section. Students can obtain this instrument through store rental or purchase.

Tenor Saxophone - Read and fingered the same as the alto saxophone, the tenor sounds a fourth lower, and often functions as a bass voice in the beginning grades. In more advanced grades, this saxophone becomes more of a tenor instrument. Because of high interest, prior experience and a random draw often determines placement in this section. Note: It is fairly easy to switch among the various members of the saxophone family, and often a player will play the lower pitched baritone saxophone after developing a basic technique on either the alto or tenor. The tenor can be obtained through store rental or purchase. In the more advanced grades, a baritone saxophone is sometimes available to rent through MBCI.



The Brass Section



Trumpet - The trumpet is the highest-pitched voice of the brass section, and reads music in the treble clef. Its brilliant tone is produced by a vibrating column of air set in motion by buzzing the lips, and pitch is altered through the use of three fingered valves. Students can obtain this instrument through store rental or purchase. (The four least expensive instruments to rent or purchase are flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone).

Horn (also called French Horn) - The playing technique of the horn is similar to that of the trumpet. Its music is also read in the treble clef, but sounds a fourth lower than the trumpet. The horn has a deep, mellow tone because of its more conical shape. It functions as an alto or tenor voice in the brass section, and is an important influence on the total sound of the band. The horn also acts as a bridge between the sound of the brass and woodwind sections. Students can rent a horn from MBCI at a subsidized cost matching less expensive band instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone).



Trombone - The trombone is similar to the trumpet and horn in tone production, but its pitch is altered by a moving slide. Trombone music is read in the bass clef and sounds an octave lower than the trumpet. Capable of both powerful tone and subtle nuance, the trombone functions as a tenor or bass voice in the brass section. Although it has its roots in early church music, the trombone is useful in a wide variety of styles, from symphonic music to jazz. Students can obtain this instrument through store rental or purchase. (The four least expensive instruments to rent or purchase are flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone).

Euphonium (also called Baritone) - Similar in technique to the trumpet, the euphonium has the same range as the trombone, yet because of its more conical shape, it has a deeper and more mellow tone. In the beginning grades it functions as a bass voice in the brass section, but in the more advanced grades, it fulfills more of a tenor role, often playing important solo lines. Players who begin on euphonium read music in the bass clef, making it easy to switch to tuba. Players who begin on trumpet occasionally switch to euphonium by reading treble clef notation which sounds an octave lower when played on euphonium. Students can rent a euphonium from MBCI at a subsidized cost matching less expensive band instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone).



Tuba - The tuba is similar in technique to the euphonium, but sounds an octave lower. As the lowest bass voice in the brass section, it is the tonal foundation and most valuable member of the band. In the more advanced grades, the tuba becomes even more important as its bass lines become independent from the other instruments. In any grade the tuba is always in demand to play in brass quintets or other small ensembles. Beginner tuba players often play a ‘compact tuba’ about $\frac{3}{4}$ ’s the size of a full tuba, before later switching to the full size. Students can rent a tuba from MBCI at a subsidized cost matching less expensive band instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone).

The Percussion Section

The MBCI band program has a large inventory of practically every percussion instrument, including **snare drum, concert bass drum, timpani**, auxiliary percussion such as **concert crash cymbals, gong (tam tam), triangle, finger cymbals, cowbell, agogo bells, animal bells, wind chimes, bell tree, sleigh bells, maracas, concert and rock tambourines, shakers, rain stick, guiro (gourd), beaded gourd, wood block, temple blocks (granite blocks), claves, castanets, ratchet, cabasa, vibraslap, flexatone, whip, siren, car horn, train whistle, slide whistle, anvil, thunder sheets**, keyboards such as **bells (four sets), xylophone, vibraphone, marimba, chimes**, several **pianos**, two **organs**, and a **synthesizer**, and drums such as **congas, bongos, concert toms, djembe, timbales**, and **log drum**, as well as two **drum sets**. Photos of these instruments can be found on the next page.

MBCI percussionists must be committed to practicing and learning to play each of these instruments, reading music in treble clef, bass clef, and non-pitched clef. Each percussionist pays a rental fee to MBCI at a subsidized cost matching less expensive band instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone). Beginning percussionists are also required to purchase a pair of drum sticks and a pair of bell mallets, and add to this collection each year of the program.

Because of the importance of the percussion section in enhancing both rhythm and colour in a band, the selection of its players is very important. To be considered, prospective percussionists:

1. should have prior experience on a keyboard instrument;
2. should have a superior sense of time and rhythm;
3. should be a leader - a soloist who is not afraid to take a risk;
4. should have excellent social skills - is able to work well in small groups;
5. should be a perfectionist - never completely satisfied with their present level of performance.

Students who indicate percussion as their first choice on their Instrument Choice Form will be asked to attend a meeting in the Main Band Room at the end of the Instrument Try-Outs evening. They will be given a Percussion Instruments Naming assignment to take home, complete, and return by Friday, June 12, 2015. They will also be asked to perform a brief audition scheduled some time after school or in the evening the week of June 15-19, 2015, demonstrating:

1. an above-average skill level in maintaining a steady tempo while correctly reading and playing some simple quarter note rhythms on a drum;
2. above average psycho-motor coordination while echoing some rhythms by ear; and
3. an above average ability to play a simple repeated rhythm along with a recording of music.

After the above auditions have concluded, the percussion sections of both bands will be selected, to a maximum of four players in Grade 6 and four players in Grade 7.

