



Life Well Learned.

The MBCI Music Program

- Developing musical community
- Changing lives through music
- Experiencing God's gift of music
- Touring to serve others

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

Making music together is a wonderful gift from God! In the MBCI Music Program, we want to help each student develop a positive attitude toward music in all its varied forms, to provide outstanding opportunities for choral and instrumental performance, to develop students' musical abilities to their highest potential, and to assist them in using their musical gifts in service to God and humanity. Our goal is that each of our students graduates with the tools for nurturing a life-long Christ-centered avocation in music as creators, performers, and listeners.



MBCI students in every grade have the opportunity to sing in choir and play an instrument in band. In addition, students in most grades can elect to audition for jazz band and vocal jazz, and every two years, take part in a musical production.

Students' ensemble participation give them opportunities to deepen their experiences about how music connects us at a heart level; how it affirms our common humanity, strengthens faith and builds community. Students are encouraged to develop their own comprehensive musicianship, aesthetic expression, and informed reflection about music. Although our

aim is to meet the needs of the average student who is looking to enrich their lives with music, and not necessarily pursue it as a career, many of our students have in fact gone on to further music studies, and have made careers in performance, music education, and composition.

MBCI's choirs and bands have developed a reputation for being among the finest in Manitoba, performing at local and national festivals, school concerts, church visitations, many other events, and on tour. In recent years, our choirs have been invited to sing at high profile events such as a joint concert with the Winnipeg Singers, CMU's Choral Connections, MCA Gather, the ChoralFest Gala Concert or singing the national anthem at Winnipeg Goldeyes and Manitoba Moose games. The bands regularly earn top ratings at the Optimist Band Festival, and have been honoured with the Commendation Award (1981), the Chairman's Award (2000), and the George Douglas Award (2015). The Senior Concert Band has opened for the Winnipeg Wind Ensemble on three occasions.





In the jazz area, our ensembles in both jazz bands and vocal jazz travel each year to perform at the Brandon University Jazz Festival, and have received a number of special awards and commendations over the years. Our Senior Jazz Band has opened for the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra at several of their concerts.

MBCI mounts a major musical production every second year, involving students from every grade in significant roles. Our musicals bring more MBCI students, teachers, and alumni, working together in a sustained way than any other school project. Our most recent all-school musical was *Matilda the Musical*. During the time the Rainbow Stage Musical Awards existed, MBCI received this honour an unprecedented EIGHT times! - including awards for *Shrek the Musical*, *Oliver!*, *Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Sound of Music*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Wiz*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*. Our Middle School students have additionally presented *Into the Woods*, Jr. and this year *Moana*, Jr. with great success.



On 'non-musical' years, the Senior Concert Band and Choir (10-12) travel together on a Senior Music Tour. Recent tours have taken students to Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, New Orleans, Dallas, Washington D.C., Boston, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Nashville, and Victoria, BC. This year the Seniors will head to Edmonton/Banff/Calgary on a 9-Day Tour.



Each year, both the Senior and Intermediate (8-9) ensembles travel to Camp Arnes for weekend workshops. Our music camps and tours foster lasting friendships. Many graduates comment on these as highlights of their MBCI experience!

MBCI has co-sponsored 28 Elmwood Junior Band Summer Camps, held each August at MBCI in conjunction with the Manitoba Band Association, a program which has brought over a thousand band students to our facilities each summer for a week.

- **Potential . . .**

1 out of every 2 students at MBCI is part of a music ensemble, and many are in more than one.

- **Principle . . .**

Older students have many opportunities to mentor those who are younger in the program, and younger students are challenged to lead by example.

- **Passion . . .**

At MBCI we have the freedom to explore the connections between artistic expression and our faith.

- **Purpose . . .**

Students are called upon to take personal responsibility for their development as artists.

Concert Band Program

FAQ's and Instrument Descriptions

Concert Band is an optional course in Grade 6-12 at MBCI. Students and their families often have many questions about Concert Band. Here are some answers to typical questions:

Join the Concert Band!

Here's how:

1. If you sign up for Concert Band on your Registration Form, Mr. Andrew Klassen (aklassen@mbci.mb.ca) will contact you by email or phone during the week of June 15, 2026 to answer questions and help you choose an instrument to play.
2. If you did not sign up for Concert Band on your Registration Form, ask your parents to contact Ms. Danelle Kasdorff (admissions@mbci.mb.ca) to add your name.
3. Read this [Band Welcome Letter](#) for more information.

1. Why take Concert Band?

There are many reasons: Concert 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. Concert 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. Concert Band helps develop this talent so it can be used to His greater glory.

2. How do I get into the Concert Band?

It depends on the grade level. Every student in Grade 5 takes a course called Intro to Concert Band. In Grade 6-12 Concert Band is an optional course. The Grade 6 and Grade 7 Concert Bands are open to anyone without previous experience, although the Grade 7 Concert Band will have a mix of beginners and those with experience having played in Grade 6. In Grade 8-12, new students to MBCI wishing to join should have comparable experience at those levels.

3. What do I need to do to join Concert Band in Grade 6 or 7?

A commitment to taking Concert Band means making a decision on what instrument you will learn to play. We want to make every effort to help this be a wise choice. Mr. Klassen will send you some resources to help you make this choice. We are open to additional one-on one tryout sessions as well.

4. What instruments are possibilities in a Concert Band?

Students can play every standard concert band instrument at MBCI, including flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, bass clarinet, and saxophones of various sizes (alto, tenor, and baritone), trumpet, horn (also known as French horn), trombone, euphonium (also known as 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 certain number of students in each section. There are sometimes too many students requesting certain instruments as their first choice, and as a result there will be a greater need for players in the other sections. If there are more students requesting an instrument than can be accommodated, after consultation, we will employ system of random selection to choose. Members of the percussion section are chosen partly through an audition process.

5. 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 concert band. Go to music stores that deal in band instruments. They are always willing to let you examine them up close. Check out the videos and links in this [Band Welcome Letter](#).



6. 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. But each student has to individually practice on a regular basis.



7. 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.

8. Where can I get an instrument?

There are several options. The major band instrument suppliers in Winnipeg ([Long & McQuade](#) or [St. John's Music](#)) 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 (\$200.00 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 \$200.00 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. Read more in our [Band Instrument Rental Fee Policy](#).

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

Many Concert Band students 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.

10. 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 structured program of study which introduces every necessary aspect of theory, notation, and playing technique. As each instrument is different, and no two students learn best through an identical process, lessons are always encouraged.

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

For those who would like additional instruction, information on trusted qualified private teachers can be obtained at the Manitoba Band Association website (<https://www.mbband.org/private-teachers.>) If you inquire, we can recommend professional instructors in various parts of the city in which we feel confident.

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



Concert Band students are required to individually practice a minimum 100 minutes per week (90 minutes at the Grade 6 level) to maintain a basic rate of progress. Students record these times on an online Electronic Practice Record (EPR). Many students practice two or three times this minimum requirement. Ultimately, the amount of practice will produce the highest levels of proficiency. Having said this however, it is important to remember 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. *“Practice makes Permanent”*. Twenty minutes of focused practice is far better than an hour of unfocused practice.

13. Where and when can band students practice?

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

14. 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 Concert 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), or the Choral Program (Mr. Reimer). 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 [Long & McQuade](#) or [St. John's Music](#).

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, tam tam (gong), 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 blocks, 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, crotales**, several **pianos, electronic keyboards**, and drums such as **congas, bongos, concert toms, darbukas, djembe, timbales, and log drum**, and four **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 \$200.00 cost matching less expensive band instruments (flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone). Beginning percussionists are given 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. Successful percussionists tend to have the following characteristics:

- some keyboard background,
- an above-average sense of rhythm,
- they are leaders/soloists - not afraid to take a risk,
- they have excellent social skills - work well in a group,
- they have a growth mindset - never completely satisfied with their current level of performance.

Students who indicate percussion as their first choice on their [Instrument Selection Form](#) will be given further information on this choice and asked to complete an online [Percussion Instruments Naming Assignment](#) to return by Friday, June 19, 2026. They will also be asked to perform a brief audition scheduled some time after school or in the evening the week of June 22, 2026, 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 five players in Grade 7.

Photos of Concert Band percussion instruments can be found on the next page.

