

SCHOOL

MHS 7 O'Clock Jazz Band Selected as Essentially Ellington National Finalists

MIDDLETON—The Middleton High School's 7 O'Clock Jazz Band, under the direction of Doug Brown, has been selected as one of 15 finalists to perform at the 24th Annual Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition and Festival in New York City May 9-11.

The bands were selected from a competitive pool of 112 after submitting recordings of three tunes performed from the Essentially Ellington library. During their three days in New York City the musicians will participate in workshops, jam sessions, and sectionals before competing for top honors. After the competition, a concert and awards ceremony will take place featuring the three top bands alongside the Jazz at Lincoln Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis.

"I am humbled and honored by the opportunity that lies before us," Director Doug Brown said. "This festival will allow our students a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I look forward to the wisdom that is shared by both Wynton Marsalis and his fellow members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra as I know it will help our students grow both as musicians and human beings."

Brown credits "the countless hours put in by fellow music educators, support staff and private instructors, community members, families, and past students that have all helped to pave the way for this year's success."

Middleton High School Principal Steve Plank, a for-

mer music teacher and current Wisconsin School Music Association Board Member, is also excited about this opportunity for the MHS music students and states in a press release, "I am able to deeply appreciate the tremendous dedication and commitment from MHS jazz band director Doug Brown and the passion and sacrifice of these amazing jazz students. As a community, I know that we are all full of pride for these young musicians, who with respect and admiration, represent the school district and community."

"It goes without saying that Middleton High School is home to one of the finest music programs in the state. We strive to develop an experience that helps students to develop a lifelong appreciation for music and the arts...and many have gone on to professional music careers. Our high-quality, comprehensive music curriculum is a result of the strong culture for the arts at MHS. We celebrate that our music program serves nearly 600 students or more than a quarter of the MHS student body. To be selected as one of the best jazz ensembles in the country is an incredible achievement, a wonderful learning opportunity for our students and yet another example of this excellence. At a time when education is being highly scrutinized and many are more focused on accountability rather than the development of the whole child, Middleton High School recognizes and celebrates music as a positive driver of school climate and



Photo Raopa Shah

The 7 O'Clock Jazz Band, back row, L-R: Aaron Brenton, Althea Wincek, Logan Frey, Rachel Roberson, Ben Petersen, Alexis Stahnke, Kyra Ginsberg. Middle row, L-R: Director Doug Brown, Rohan Shah, Jude Fleischmann, Greg Scheer, Tyler Huff, Jack Ohly, Aaron Stettner, Megan Andrews. Front row, L-R: Ella Hirsch, Ben Foster, Amanda Roesch, Max Newcomer, Lucy Croasdale, Jonathan Downs, Andrew Stine. Not pictured: Charlotte Buck.

community life. Additionally, the arts allow us to deeply explore who we are as human beings, individually and collectively helping us to be more sensitive and understanding of others. They enrich life, make us happy, are an incubator for creativity and help to feed our souls."

Members of the 7 O'Clock Jazz Band include:

Woodwinds: Max Newcomer, Ben Foster, Amanda Roesch, Jonathan Downs, Lucy Croasdale, and Andrew Stine.

Trumpets: Ben Petersen, Rachel Roberson, Alexis Stahnke, and Kyra Ginsberg.

Trombones: Jack Ohly, Tyler Huff, Greg Scheer, and Aaron Stettner.

Rhythm: Charlotte Buck (vocals), Rohan Shah (guitar), Althea Wincek (piano), Aaron Brenton (bass), Logan Frey (drums), and Jude Fleischmann (drums).

Ella Hirsch (Flute) and Megan Andrews (French Horn).

Two of the other 15 bands selected as finalists are from the Big Eight Conference: Beloit Memorial and Sun Prairie. The other finalists include Denver School of the Arts (Denver, CO), Dillard Center for the Arts (Fort Lauderdale, FL), Foxboro High School (MA), Garfield High School (Seattle, WA), Mount Si High School (Snoqualmie, WA), Newark Academy (Livingston, NJ), Rio Americano High School

(Sacramento, CA), Roosevelt High School (Seattle, WA), San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts (CA), Tarpon Springs High School (FL), Philharmonic Association (Raleigh, NC), and William H. Hall High School (West Hartford, CT).

"Essentially Ellington shows off America's young people at their best," Jazz at the Lincoln Center Managing and Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis said in a statement. "High school students from across this nation have worked tirelessly on the highest quality of our orchestral music. They've met the challenge of mastering vocal effects on horns, of improvising fresh, new individual ideas, and of swinging which means embracing and nurturing the common ground...in these divisive times, it's important to

teach and celebrate our most sacred values: freedom of speech, empathetic listening, and constructive engagement with others. These kids have a lot to teach us. I'm looking forward to hearing them play, and to being instructed and inspired by them."

Marsalis continues, "Duke Ellington envisioned the unlimited creative possibilities afforded to all of us by our way of life. This musician shared that vision and made it real. This is the banner under which we fight. It more enlightened and engaged America."

Visit www.jazz.org/press to read the news release or <https://academy.jazz.org/ee/about> to learn more about the Essentially Ellington program.

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