



JENISON ORCHESTRAS

More information available at www.JenisonOrchestras.org

May 2020

Dear Fourth Grade Parents and Students,

It's that time of year when Fourth Grade families have the opportunity to learn about Jenison's outstanding Orchestra Program! Your child has the choice to begin learning the Violin, Viola, Cello, or Bass during their Fifth Grade year. We hope you will take a moment to look through the information in this packet, and to view the available videos for Fourth Grade families on our website.

Fifth grade is the year that Jenison students have the opportunity to begin Orchestra. Classes are held three times each week (two mornings at 8:00am at the Junior High, and one afternoon during school at each elementary school). The Fifth Grade Orchestra performs at two concerts; one in late November, and one in early May. The Jenison Orchestras are among the finest in the state of Michigan. They have consistently received the highest ratings at district and state festivals and received invitations to perform at sites throughout Michigan. Jenison Orchestra students are among the top students in their classes and most participate in many activities outside of Orchestra.

Classes for those interested in being a part of the Jenison Orchestras begin next fall and continue through mid-May. If your child is solely planning on playing a wind, brass, or percussion instrument, then you should wait for the start of band in Sixth Grade.

There will be two Open Houses next fall where you may sign up for orchestra, get more information about the program, be sized for an instrument, and even rent an instrument from a recommended music store. The dates in the fall are **September 1 and September 2, from 4:00 to 7:00 PM in the JCA.**

Your child will receive all this information again in the first week of school in the fall, but if you have any questions please feel free to contact us at any time via the email addresses below. There is also a wealth of information about the orchestras on our website. Please feel free to check us out at www.JenisonOrchestras.org and click on "Classes," then "5th Grade."

Sincerely,

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What do I need to know about renting an instrument?

First of all, consider yourself lucky to be living in an area where there is lots of healthy competition between music stores. The fact that there are several stores all desiring your business has caused rental prices to go down significantly recently. It is now more affordable than ever to rent an instrument for your child.

The Jenison Orchestra program works closely with three carefully selected **music stores**: Baroque Violin Shop, Guarneri House, and Marshall Music. These stores have worked with the Jenison Orchestras for many years, and are reputable and responsible companies. (You may opt to rent from another company if you choose, but we recommend that you avoid internet instruments for a variety of important reasons.) Your orchestra directors strongly recommend renting an instrument (as opposed to purchasing one), due to the benefits offered by renting. All three rental companies offer many **“perks”** for the duration of your rental. These include:

- a bow and case included with your instrument rental
- your method book included with your rental
- a shoulder pad included with all violin or viola rentals
- an endpin strap included with all cello rentals
- a portable music stand included with your rental
- free maintenance and repair of instrument/bow/strings/case
- free “loaner” instrument provided while any repairs are being completed
- repairs and loaners are taken care of at school, so parents don’t have to travel to a store
- free “size-ups” to larger instruments as your student grows

All three music stores will be present at the **Orchestra Open Houses on September 1 and 2 (4-7pm) at Jenison Center for the Arts**. They will have large selections of inventory to try out and rent that night. More detailed information will also be available at the Open Houses regarding each store and their rental programs.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO GET AN INSTRUMENT FOR YOUR CHILD AT THIS TIME.

We will take care of this at the Orchestra Open Houses in the fall. However, we know that many of you would like to plan ahead, so this information is for you to consider at this time.

Exact rental prices will be available in the fall, but the prices are usually as follows:

- Violins: between \$16 and \$20 per month
- Violas: between \$16 and \$20 per month
- Cellos: between \$31 and \$40 per month
- Basses: between \$45 and \$60 per month

**There is no fee to enroll in JPS Orchestras. The classes and concerts are free.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact the directors at any time. Contact information is printed on the other side of this sheet.

Want to know more about the Jenison Orchestras?

Please visit our website! www.JenisonOrchestras.org

Click on “Classes” and “Fifth Grade Orchestra” to see a brief video introducing the program, and to find more details about Fifth Grade Orchestra.



On behalf of Teachers, Violin Shops, and Beginning Players across the country, we encourage parents to avoid the temptation to buy a cheap internet-auction violin outfit, commonly known as a V.S.O. – Violin Shaped Object. V.S.O.'s look like violins, but a very high percentage are virtually unplayable due to innumerable structural and set-up problems. Many well-meaning parents bring in their V.S.O.'s to violin shops around the country and are disappointed to find out that the repairs needed to make their instrument playable far exceed both the price they paid for the instrument and the price of a properly made and set up instrument without any of the problems of a V.S.O.

"I have many families who believe that returning to their home country, China, they can easily purchase violins and bows at lower prices. When they return, they often find that the instrument doesn't work properly. The pegs don't fit, or the bridge, nut, and/or fingerboard are a problem and/or the neck is crooked. When you buy an instrument from a dealer you are also buying their loyalty, service, and integrity to stand behind their merchandise."
Sunny Cirlin, Private Teacher

"A frustrated customer came in with an internet-auction V.S.O. violin and when I tried to help them tune it one of the pegs literally broke off in my hands. Looking at the peg more closely it looked like some kind of composite material or very soft wood. After that they gladly bought a Hoffmann Amadeus [a music store brand]."
Amanda, SHAR Retail Store

Common V.S.O. Problems

VSO Tuning Problems

Frustrating pegs that are very hard to turn making tuning difficult even for an experienced player or they "slip" causing frustration when instrument constantly goes out of tune. Caused by improper peg installation and/or low quality pegs made of wood that is too soft or green (not dried properly). Cost to install new pegs: \$50 to \$100

VSO Sound Problems

Awful sounding strings that have a shrill sound or just one or two bad ones that give an uneven and unpleasant sound from one string to the next. Caused by low quality strings and/or improper set-up causing string damage. Cost for new set of strings: \$10 to \$30

Annoying & frustrating string buzzing sound when played. Caused by string being too close to fingerboard due to improper set-up and/or low quality wood parts (fingerboard, nut, bridge, neck) that are too soft or too green (not dried properly). Cost for a new nut \$30 to \$50, plane the fingerboard \$30 to \$50, new bridge \$30 to \$75, correct neck projection \$200+.

VSO Discomfort/Pain Problems

Painful/uncomfortable fingers (especially younger players) during and/or after playing because string height is too high requiring too much pressure to push them down to the fingerboard. Caused by nut being too high, and/or fingerboard not having proper "scoop", and/or bridge being too high, and/or neck projection being too low. See "string buzzing" for cost.

VSO Playability Problems

Frustration with bow hitting two strings when trying to just play one string. Caused by improper set-up where bridge curvature is too flat so difficult to have bow touch just 1 string at a time. Cost for new fitted bridge: \$30-\$75

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For questions or assistance, call 800.248.SHAR or email sharserv@sharmusic.com

We asked current Jenison Junior High Orchestra students:
Why is it “worth it” to be in orchestra?

You make friends
It's a different way of expressing yourself
To enjoy music
It's cool to be able to play an instrument!
Breaking barriers
It's fun!
 To work as a team
 Builds trust
 Support and involvement from parents
 To experience a part of yourself in a different way
 Nice change of pace during school day
 Makes me a better person
Memories
 Play fun music!
TO CHALLENGE MYSELF
 Expand your passion for music
 Makes you smarter
 It's a way to express how you feel
 Hilarious teachers!
 Learn new things
Teaches perseverance
 Meet new people
Seeing music in a different way
 Different way of learning
Opens career choices
FUN FOCUS!
To be part of a bigger "family"

Fifth Grade Orchestra Class Schedule

Each Fifth Grade Orchestra student has class three times per week, beginning on Wed Sep 9:
 (Bus transportation is provided back to elementary buildings after morning classes.)

PINEWOOD 5th Graders:	Mon 1:00-1:45pm @ PW,	Wed 8:00-8:45am @ JH,	Fri 8:00-8:45am @ JH
BAUERWOOD 5th Graders:	Tues 1:00-1:45pm @ BW,	Wed 8:00-8:45am @ JH,	Fri 8:00-8:45am @ JH
BURSLEY 5th Graders:	Mon 8:00-8:45am @ JH,	Wed 11:30am-12:15pm @ BU,	Fri 8:00-8:45am @ JH
SANDY HILL 5th Graders:	Mon 8:00-8:45am @ JH,	Wed 1:00-1:45pm @ SH,	Fri 8:00-8:45am @ JH
ROSEWOOD 5th Graders:	Mon 8:00-8:45am @ JH,	Fri 8:00-8:45am @ JH,	Fri 1:00-1:45pm @ RW
EL PUENTE 5th Graders:	Mon 8:00-8:45am @ JH,	Thur 1:00-1:45am @ EP,	Fri 8:00-8:45am @ JH

5th Grade Orchestra Concerts

The Fifth Grade Orchestra participates in two concerts, both in the JCA:
Wed, Nov 18, 2020, 7:00 pm and **Wed, May 5, 2021, 7:00 pm**