



Southmoore Bands

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VIRTUAL 2020 SHS BANDS WINTER CONCERTS ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to a variety of factors to be outlined below, the Southmoore Bands Winter Concert Series Grades 7-12 will be moved to a public virtual “watch party” format and include an in-house private concert involving our students. Details concerning our two junior high programs will be delivered by Mr. Street and Mr. Baldwin via the band app. For details concerning grades 9-12 see below:

Friday, December 11: Concert Performance 1-3 Hours

- On Friday, December 11, students will report to school in their concert attire. Concert attire is “dress black” – simply black dress clothes head to toe. Button up shirts, black slacks, or black dresses and black dress shoes are preferred. Please remember your black socks (long ones, like marching season).
- All performing groups including all three jazz bands and the three concert bands will perform their concert during 1-3 Hours.
- Students not performing will serve as audience members. The event is not open to the public and is an in-house event.
- This concert will be recorded for a watch party broadcast later, see below. We will make every effort to produce a nice recording to be enjoyed by all.

Friday, December 18: Winter Concert Watch Party

- On Friday, December 18, the SHS Band will host a watch party of the Winter Concert. We would love you to invite all the family to watch with you at home.
- This event will be “pseudo-professionally” hosted by members of the band staff (complete with lame jokes) and may include some other features.
- The watch party will be live-streamed on the Southmoore Band YouTube page – in this way you do not have to be enrolled on the band app to be able to watch the concert allowing families to invite whomever they wish to watch.
- Exact details and times will be announced via the band app. The event will likely begin closer to 6:30pm since there will be six virtual band performances that evening.

Why?

This is a tough decision and it obviously was not made lightly. Here are just a few of the thoughts I had in shaping this decision:

- Certainly, the first and obvious issue is the current spike in COVID cases. We have a great tradition of very full concerts at Southmoore. Speaking from a dude who just recovered from COVID, this simply does not seem like the best decision right now.
- Additionally, due to the spike in COVID cases, we have several students out due to COVID issues. Though we could still have a concert in some fashion, the product will inevitably suffer.
- Most importantly, this plan allows our students to still have a live concert experience. Essentially, our students still earn a performance, dressed up, on a stage, under the lights, followed by applause signifying an appreciation for their work. It is very noteworthy that our students will still experience a payoff for learning new literature.

But I want to watch my kid...

Though the most important consideration is our students’ musical experiences, I am quite mindful that our parents and patrons enjoy watching their kid “do their thing.” I am very aware that a virtual concert does not quite replicate a live



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experience. An option that may still happen for future concerts is putting limits on audience numbers. This could be through per-student ticket allotments or limiting patrons to only watching one band, etc. Currently, I admittedly am not yet prepared to pull that trigger, here is why:

- One of the cultures that is important to our program is supporting all ensembles and all bands by attending and celebrating each performer. The virtual watch party, though not nearly as good as a live concert, does allow all to watch the Southmoore Band program as a whole. This is important. In my mind I see families all around the fire and their awesome Christmas tree (or one of six trees if you are me) sipping eggnog and watching the concert in musical bliss.
- Honestly, I am not yet ready to have a more adversarial relationship with our audience. A limit on audiences means that families must choose who gets their ticket allotment. Also, I am not keen on telling people to please get out if your kid is not on the stage or fuss at folks to get on your mask or I must ask you to leave. There are future concerts in the spring semester and I am prepared to cross that bridge if I must, but let's wait on that for a bit.
- Finally, we have a logistical issue. We would likely need to use our large gym to allow more space and our gyms are not available due to basketball season. Gyms are available in the spring and we may use that option at that time.

In short, as a parent, I completely understand the love we feel from attending our kids' events. I will continue to let this heart knowledge play a major factor in my decisions.

To Conclude...

At the end of the day, we are a music education organization with some fun and cool events that result from that education. Though I am disappointed we can not share our music in the normal manner, I have been highly encouraged by our students this year. 2020 may have caused our events to be altered, but I can assure that the music education of our students has not been impeded.

On a more personal note, I am so very honored to serve as your band director. I was overwhelmed with the kind acts and messages from our band family during my absences due to contracting COVID. Truly, my family and I are blessed to serve this community. We will be together again in person at some point watching our great students "do their thing," until then, I'll see you online. I sincerely wish you and your family an incredible holiday season.

All the Best,

Adam Mewhorter
Director of Bands, Southmoore High School