

**Eyes on the music.** eighth grader Alexandra Unda plays with the orchestra. Students in Orchestra learn a variety of different pieces throughout the year. "My favorite piece was the Brandenburg Concerto because it's a well-known classical song and it was fun to play," Unda said. *Photo by Rhea Dharwadker*

**1. Paying close attention** to her fingers, sixth grader Ella Cacali practices guitar during class. *Photo by Mandy Pedneau* **2. In playing position,** seventh grader Nicole Vu and eighth grader Selvia Nybo play *Japanese Lullaby*, one of Chamber Orchestra's three UIL pieces. *Photo by Rhea Dharwadker* **3. Playing a chord,** eighth grader Arik Suez performs at the Fine Arts Recruiting Tour. *Photo by Rhea Dharwadker*



## THE STRING IS THE THING

### beginning orchestra students lead the class

**Pulling their bows** across the strings, eighth grader Brady McKnight and seventh grader Christopher Aguilar Jr. play the bass. Bases are the least common instrument in the orchestra and produce the lowest sound. "The hardest part about playing the bass is keeping in time," McKnight said. *Photo by Rhea Dharwadker*

Every day, Beginning Orchestra students go up in front of the orchestra and lead the class through warm-up. Many students enjoy this because it lets them hear the orchestra from a different spot in the room.

Sixth grader Cyrus Lowden likes leading the class because he enjoys the experience.

"It's really fun, you get to hear the other instruments play together and you just have a good time doing it," Lowden said.

Sixth grader Abril Unda also likes hearing the orchestra from a different place and getting the chance to stand

on the podium. "You can hear the other sections better, and not only your section," Unda said.

Sixth grader Jackson Agnew finds leading warm-ups interesting, and is aware that the class is depending on him to play the correct notes.

"Leading warm-ups puts pressure on you to play better, and to not mess up in front of the class," Agnew said.

Leading warm-ups helps students become better musicians even though they're not physically sitting as a part of the orchestra.

"It helps you stick with the

metronome better," Unda said.

Although most of the time he likes being at the head of the class, Lowden also likes playing as part of the orchestra.

"Leading the class is fun, but sometimes I just like being in my normal seat," Lowden said.

Eighth grader Johnny Ahl prefers playing as part of the orchestra as opposed to leading because it's not as critical if he makes a mistake.

"Even though it's fun leading the group, leading the class can be scary because you don't know if you might make a mistake," Ahl said.

**In front of** the class, eighth grader Johnny Ahl leads the orchestra through their All Strings Exercise. Students in Beginning Orchestra can go up in front of the class and "conduct" while playing their instrument along with everyone else. "I love doing the All Strings Exercise because everyone else is watching you and it makes you feel important," Ahl said. *Photo by Mandy Pedneau*





**Looking over at the music,** sixth grader Maximus Mowery plays guitar. Mowery decided to take Guitar because he enjoys writing his own songs. "The hardest part of taking Guitar is learning the finger placements and how to do certain riffs," Mowery said. *Photo by Mandy Pedneau*

**Focusing on his hand,** sixth grader Reese Almendarez practices his piece. Almendarez explains what students do before class. "First we get out our footstools, then we tune our guitars and then we start to practice and learn our music," Almendarez said. *Photo by Mandy Pedneau*



## ending on a good note

Students Share Their Favorite Piece They Played This Year

"My favorite pieces were 'Ka Saya' and 'Malaguena' because I liked having a challenge and I didn't have to look at the sheet music to play because I know the songs by heart."

**Jack Nelson, 6**  
Beginning Guitar



"My favorite piece was 'Dragon Slayer' because it was really loud and energetic at the beginning."

**Drew Simmonds, 6**  
Beginning Orchestra



"My favorite piece was 'Alice in Wonderland' because it sounded a lot like the movie and I liked the melody."

**Mia Ternus, 7**  
Chamber Orchestra

