

## Ramstein High School Instrumental Music Department



Welcome to Ramstein High School and the Instrumental Music Department. I want to take a moment to praise your choice of course selection and your inclusion of Instrumental Music in your child's high school experience. There exists today, profound and consistent data regarding students who engage in a rigorous four-year study of Instrumental Music: Students who are so engaged will have higher test scores, be judged more favorably by college admission boards and have a higher success rate in college than students who do not.

Whether your son or daughter is in the Varsity Band, the Concert Winds, or Jazz Limited, my pledge to you is a positive, standards based, life enhancing musical experience. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the need arises and please feel welcome to break the work routine and visit us during rehearsal at any time. Once again, I wish a warm welcome to RAHS.

### Concert Winds

The Concert Winds is the premier wind ensemble at Ramstein High School. The music is demanding and the work is rigorous yet the atmosphere in rehearsal and in performance is nothing if not joyous. Performances are required for successful completion of semester requirements and may include Major Semester Performances, Pep Band Performances, local (off campus) performances and Graduation. The Concert Winds is open to all 11th and 12th grade students with three years experience (others may audition) and to 9th and 10th graders by audition. If you are coming to Ramstein High School and are interested in performing a placement audition, please contact me and I will send all audition material via email. In school year 2007-2008 the band was 62 members strong and performed level IV and V literature. Thirty-one members of the Concert Winds auditioned and were selected to the DoDDS Europe Honor Band and performed there with distinction. The Concert Winds demographics are often evenly distributed among student's grades 9-12 but significant prior experience and knowledge is assumed. The Concert Winds has instrumentation limits. The director reserves the right to carefully select instrumentation that reflects the best opportunity to present the literature that we perform accurately.



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### **Jazz Limited**

Jazz Limited is Ramstein High School's showcase Big Band consisting of four or five trumpets, four trombones, five saxophones, piano, bass, drums and guitar. This band is dedicated to the historic "Basie" style of swing music but our discography will show a wide variety of classic big band charts along with new music from all the great writer/arrangers today. Heavy emphasis is placed on personal sound, excellence of technique, and individual progress in jazz improvisation. Jazz Limited is offered to the best musicians at Ramstein High School by audition only. As with other bands at Ramstein, audition music is available upon request.

One of the highlights of our musical year is the DoDDS Honor Jazz Festival. This January event brings together the absolute best musicians in Europe with one of the greatest jazz trombonists/educators, Professor Jiggs Whigham. Over a week the band is molded by clinician and staff and then presents a series of concerts over the final two days. In SY 2007-2008, twelve members of Jazz Limited were selected by audition and traveled to Shape, Belgium for the festival.

Ramstein High School is one of the few DoDDS schools with a student population large enough to offer this exciting experience. We take the responsibility seriously and offer our jazz musicians a rigorous and comprehensive program that rivals stateside offerings.

### **Varsity Band**

The Ramstein High School Varsity Band is the younger of our two bands. Made up of predominantly 9th and 10th graders it is a full-functioning performing ensemble and is normally our "entry level" ensemble. Performances are required for successful completion of semester requirements and may include Major Semester Performances, Pep Band Performances, and local (off campus) performances. All new students in the 9th and 10th grade who come to Ramstein High School and request band will be placed in the Varsity Band unless placed in a higher band by audition. If you are coming to Ramstein High School and are interested in performing a placement audition, please contact me and I will send all audition material via email. In SY 2007-08 the band was 58 members strong and performed level III literature. Four members of the Varsity Band auditioned and were selected to the DoDDS Europe Honor Band and performed with distinction.



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The Varsity Band works diligently on performance literature but also dedicates a significant amount of rehearsal time to skills development. Areas of concentration are:

1. Technical: scales (major and chromatic) and arpeggios are committed to memory.
2. Musical: attacks, releases, dynamics, ensemble skills and music language skills.
3. Rhythmic Study: the greatest deficiency in all high school musicians is the ability to read and perform rhythms accurately.
4. Sight Reading: A key to success at the next level is to read appropriate level music at sight.

In the Varsity Band, there are no instrumentation limits. For more information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mr. J. P., Band Director  
Ramstein High School