NEWS RELEASE

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO PBS Wisconsin

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2026 WSMA State Honors Concerts to premiere Nov. 26 on WPR Music and Dec. 28 on PBS Wisconsin

Performances by more than 400 of Wisconsin's young musicians will air and stream statewide

More than 400 high school musicians from across Wisconsin will take center stage on WPR Music and PBS Wisconsin this holiday season, with broadcasts and streaming performances from the 2026 Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) State Honors Concerts.

WPR Music will share selections from the concerts on Thursday, Nov. 26, from 8 to 10 a.m. during “Morning Classics with Ezra Wall” and from 4 to 6 p.m. during “Drivetime Classics with Jason Heilman.” Performances from the concerts will also air from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 27.

PBS Wisconsin will present a one-hour highlights program at 8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 28, followed by an encore presentation at 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 2, 2027.

Full performances from five different ensembles will also be available to stream beginning Wednesday, Nov. 25, at wpr.org and pbswisconsin.org.

Recorded this fall in Madison, the annual concerts feature students who auditioned from schools throughout Wisconsin to perform in five ensembles: the State Honors Band, Orchestra, Mixed Choir, Treble Choir and Jazz Ensemble.

“These concerts are a wonderful reminder of the extraordinary music being made in Wisconsin schools,” said WPR Music Program Director Peter Bryant. “For many of these students, it's a chance to perform with musicians they've never met before, and for our audiences, it's a chance to hear what young people across the state can accomplish together.”

“We have been collaborating with the WSMA for nearly 15 years to share these high-quality performances with our statewide audience,” said PBS Wisconsin Executive Producer Deb Piper. “Something magical happens when these young artists gather together to create this music.”

Established in 1967, the WSMA State Honors Music Project gives accomplished student musicians the opportunity to rehearse and perform with leading conductors in a professional

setting. Students are selected through auditions, participate in a summer music camp and work with Wisconsin music educators and guest conductors in preparation for the culminating fall concerts in Madison.

The annual performances celebrate not only the students' musical accomplishments, but also the music education programs in schools throughout Wisconsin that help make those accomplishments possible.

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