



Somerset High School

Concert Choir



2011-2012 Course Syllabus



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Concert Choir

Overview

Concert Choir meets four times per cycle and is open to any students in grades 9-12. There is no audition to participate in the ensemble, but each student is individually heard for voice placement purposes. Participation in Concert Choir encourages the intellectual, musical and social development of the individual through performance of music of excellent quality. In addition, students are encouraged to further enhance their vocal skills through private lessons or Vocal Techniques class. Loyalty to the school through cooperation with other departments in presenting musical programs is stressed; participation in music festivals, exchange concerts, local civic events and All-State festivals provide opportunity for both recreation and development of intellectual and aesthetic interest.

Instructional Activities

1. Class Rehearsals
2. Individual & Group Testing
3. Performances (Class, School, Festival and Community)
4. Music Vocabulary Study
5. Teacher Demonstration
6. Oral Rhythmic Counting
7. Rhythmic Performing
8. Melodic Sight-Reading with Solfege
9. Worksheets for terminology, notation and rhythm
10. Reflective writing assignments

Instructional Materials and Resources

1. Piano
2. Audio recordings of literature discussed in class
3. Use of the internet
4. Various music history reference materials
5. Selected Concert Literature formatted for SATB & SAB voicing, involving 2-part to 6-part harmony with a difficulty of 3 - 6 on a scale of 1-6, that range in stylistic periods from Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern, Broadway, Contemporary, Seasonal and Popular Music in both sacred and secular settings.

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Grading Requirements

Grading is scored as follows:

Concert Choir members will be graded on musical progress, cooperation, attitude and attendance. Grading is scored quarterly as follows:

- **10% Writing Assignments**

All students must write a short essay each term. The essay will sometimes be reflective in nature, asking the student to think about their growth in the ensemble or critically reflect on a particular performance. Other essays will involve historical or stylistic research about a particular piece of concert literature being rehearsed in the ensemble. All writing assignments are expected to adhere to the basic rules of proper grammar and spelling.

- **10% Worksheets and Quizzes**

All students will be required to hand in one worksheet pertaining to music theory or sight-singing at each rehearsal. This worksheet will not only be graded, but will serve as their proof of attendance for that particular rehearsal. The worksheets will be designed so that the concept is explained and then short exercises must be completed showing the student's understanding of the concepts. Quizzes on these topics, as well as other topics discussed in class, may also be given during class time. Please note that students enrolled in both concert choir and treble choir will be using the same worksheets for each ensemble.

- **20% Live Group Performance Testing**

All students are required to be tested in small groups each term. Groups should involve 6-8 students from 2 different voice parts (ex. 3 altos and 3 sopranos). Students will be asked to perform isolated sections from concert literature currently being studied in rehearsal. Students are assessed on the basic fundamentals of proper vocal production, including posture, breathing, tone, diction, articulation, and musicality. It is expected that all students perform in testing at the same level as the entire ensemble performs the pieces.

- **60% Attendance and Participation:**

All students must be present at all rehearsals and performances for the full duration. As well, all students are responsible for having their music with them for every rehearsal. You must also put your best effort in everything you do. Anything less is not acceptable. You must practice and have our parts prepared for rehearsal. PRACTICE AT HOME - REHEARSE AT SCHOOL! Audio files of specific vocal lines for each part are available to all students on the Somerset High School Music Department website, www.somersetmusic.org. Also be prepared for rehearsals, set-up in a timely fashion, be quiet and attentive during rehearsals, and support and respect your fellow classmates.

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Instructional Objectives

During 4 years of participation, the successful student will have learned to:

I. Vocal Technique

- Demonstrate the techniques of proper posture and diaphragmatic breathing
- Follow conducting patterns and cueing techniques
- Utilize the principles of diction to English and other languages in vocal music
- Utilize the techniques of posture, breathing, and placement to affect good solo and ensemble tone
- Recognize the contribution their individual voices make towards the total ensemble sound
- Utilize the basic ensemble techniques of balance, blend and intonation
- Demonstrate proper rehearsal conduct

II. Music Theory/Sight-Reading Skills

- Demonstrate melodic and rhythmic skills through sight-reading of diatonic music examples
- Understand and follow a vocal score with at least four vocal staves and accompaniment parts
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the major scale degrees to identify and perform diatonic intervals
- Demonstrate a knowledge of music notation, rhythm, and key signatures

III. Musical Expressiveness

- Demonstrate knowledge of concepts for skilled, tasteful performances
- Recognize the music from different periods, mediums or styles
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of team effort
- Demonstrate an understanding of the personal strive for excellence
- Respond to and critique performances by themselves and others using correct musical terminology

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Course Materials

Pencil

A pencil is crucial in the rehearsal process, as we will be making adjustments and adaptations to the music in each rehearsal. Failure to write such things down in the music will result in a loss of rehearsal time in the future when cues and markings are not notated in your music. Additionally, pencil must be used instead of pen due to the changes we may make to markings previously notated in the music. Failure to come to rehearsal with a pencil will result in a loss of participation credit towards your grade.

Three Ring Binder (1 inch)

Although all music will be memorized for performances, a three ring binder is essential for organization of all music and other materials handed out during the year. This binder should come with you to every rehearsal and leave with you every night so that you may practice at home! If you forget to bring your binder with music to class, you will lose participation credit towards your grade.

Music Theory Worksheets

As stated in the grading requirements, you will be required to submit a music theory worksheet at each rehearsal you are present for. There will be a specific sequence that these worksheets must be completed in. Failure to bring these worksheets to class will result in a zero for the assignment as well as possible unexcused absences (if you do not notify me that you have forgotten the assignment).

Water

While all other liquids and foods are prohibited from the chorus room, water in a closed container is permitted and encouraged for the rehearsal. Your voice is your instrument and it is important to keep it properly lubricated while singing. This is not mandatory, but please be aware that I will not allow frequent trips to the water fountain unless it is an emergency.

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Attendance

Participation in the concert choir is not only based on attendance at rehearsal, but also attendance for the concerts we perform in during the year. It is critical that every member of the choir be in attendance for these concerts in order to perform to the best of our ability. Failure to attend a concert or performance will result in a significant loss of performance credit toward your grade unless a make-up assignment (assigned by Mr. Arcello) is completed.

The only absences that will be excused are for extreme illness, family emergency, or a death in the family. Written parental notification is required. In cases where the concert choir and other school event activities conflict, a reasonable compromise will be worked out between the concerned directors/coaches. Your employment and family events are not emergencies. In the case of minor illness, you are expected to attend the performance.

Concert Attire

All high school performing groups have a uniform that they are expected to wear for all performances. Anyone who does not wear this to a performance will not be allowed to perform at that event.

Men:

Black Dress Pants
Uniform Tuxedo Shirt and Bowtie
(to be ordered through the music dept.)
Black Dress Shoes (no sneakers)
Black Socks

Women:

Long Black Dress (to be ordered through the music dept.)
Black Dress Shoes (no open toes)