



Somerset High School *Vocal Techniques*



2011-2012 Course Syllabus

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Vocal Technique

Overview

Vocal Techniques meets 6 times per cycle and is open to all students in grades 9-12. This course is designed for the serious vocal performer who is looking to improve their skills in preparation for a future in the music industry. This course will focus in the development of all skills required to research, prepare, and perform vocal music in a variety of genres and styles. Particular emphasis will be placed on all aspects of healthy vocal technique, including proper posture, breathing, diction, and tone. Time will also be spent on furthering the student's knowledge in music theory, basic piano, music history, and rehearsal technique. All students enrolled in the course will be expected to perform in a recital setting several times over the course of the year using the skills they have gained in the class. Successful completion of this course will set each student well on their way to pursuing a bright future in music!

Instructional Activities

1. Class Rehearsal
2. Class Lecture and Discussion
3. Frequent use of Internet for Research
4. Performances (In-Class & Recital Settings)
5. Individualized Vocal Rehearsal with Teacher
6. Teacher Demonstration
7. Class Performance Evaluation
8. Melodic Sight-Reading with Solfege
9. Worksheets for music theory, music history, and vocal technique

Instructional Materials and Resources

1. Piano
2. Various solo and ensemble sheet music
3. Recordings of various vocal performances
4. Videos of various vocal performances
5. Various textbook excerpts and teacher-created worksheets
6. SmartMusic (music assessment software)
7. Steps to Singing for Voice Classes

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Grading Requirements

Grading is scored quarterly as follows:

- **20% Homework/In-Class Assignments**

Several assignments be given to reinforce lectures and lessons given during class time. While sometimes worked on during class, many times these assignments will be given as homework in order to maximize in-class rehearsal time.

- **20% Term Projects/Tests & Quizzes**

There will be at least one major (1-2 week) project given each term. These projects will relate to the particular musical units discussed in class and will typically involve a presentation to the class.

- **30% In-Class Performance**

You will have several opportunities to perform in front of your classmates during the year. Over the course of the year, you will be performing music of various styles and genres. There will also be opportunities to perform as a soloist and with other classmates. Some music will be chosen independently and other music will be assigned by Mr. Arcello. All music must be approved by Mr. Arcello, however, in order to assure that it is suitable for you to sing. Each performance will be assessed by Mr. Arcello for all aspects of vocal technique and musical expressiveness.

- **30% Participation/Cooperation**

It is expected that all students will actively participate in all class lectures and discussions. There will also be many opportunities, however, for you to rehearse independently for your upcoming in-class performances. It is expected that you use all of this time effectively and appropriately, working towards your goal of a successful performance.

- **50% Final Recital (TERM 4 ONLY)**

Much of term 4 will be dedicated to using all the skills you have gained as a musician and performer to prepare and execute a final recital. Preparation from start to finish will be your responsibility and this performance will be the one opportunity for your friends and family to hear you in this class. Because this project is much more extensive in nature, it will be worth 50% of your term 4 grade. All categories listed above will be worth half their typical term value for term 4 only.

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Instructional Objectives

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

I. Vocal Technique

- Demonstrate the techniques of proper posture and diaphragmatic breathing
- 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

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 three 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 individual and team effort
- Demonstrate an understanding of the personal strive for excellence
- Respond to and critique performances by themselves and others using correct musical terminology

IV. Complete Preparation of a Vocal Performance

- Understand the purposes of an extensive vocal warm-up
- Demonstrate proper independent and group rehearsal conduct
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to effectively use a piano or audio device to enhance the rehearsal experience
- Understand the importance of full researching the history of a piece, its text, and its composer
- Demonstrate an understanding of an effective rehearsal plan to thoroughly prepare a performance in all aspects (vocal technique, stage presence, musicality)
- Understand the process of effectively creating a character to communicate the message of a song

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Course Materials

Pencil

A pencil is not only important for taking notes during class lectures, but is also crucial in the rehearsal process, as you will be making adjustments and adaptations to the music in each class. Failure to write such things down in the music will result in a lack of preparation for your rehearsal time in class. Additionally, pencil must be used instead of pen due to the changes you may make to markings previously notated in the music. Failure to come to class with a pencil will result in a loss of participation credit towards your grade.

Three Ring Binder (1 or 1 ½ inch)

All class papers, notes, music and materials must be held in a 3-hole binder. Please have this binder dedicated to this class only, as you will most likely fill the binder by the end with class materials. I may also require to keep your binders overnight, which would conflict with other classes if you use the binder for multiple subjects. Failure to come to class without your binder will result in the loss of participation credit towards your grade.

1-Subject Notebook (with 3 holes)

All notes from class lectures should be taken in one notebook dedicated only to this class. This notebook should be kept in your class binder. I may require to keep this notebook overnight, so using it for multiple subjects could create a conflict. Failure to come to class without your notebook will result in the loss of participation credit towards your grade.

Agenda Book

All homework, project, quiz, test, and performance dates should be recorded in your agenda to prevent and confusion. Please get in the habit of using your agenda for these purposes in class. Failure to come to class with your agenda book will result in the loss of participation credit towards your grade.

Water

While all other liquids and foods are prohibited from the chorus room, water in a closed container is permitted and encouraged for class. 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.

