

Chamber Music Unit

Goal: provide opportunities for students to perform various music in various groups and ensembles

Purpose: allow students to create music in different groups and hold everyone to a level of responsibility. An active chamber music program is an effective way to nurture independence. Emphasis on work ethic and attitude can shape success of the group and compensate for technical and expressive dissimilarities. Students are capable of rehearsing and assessing their own chamber music group performance preparation.

Curriculum: Following our band curriculum, the chamber music units will have the same class outcomes.

1) Ensemble Skills

Ensemble elements: cohesiveness, balance, phrasing, style

No conductor, one to a part, consensus rehearsal process

2) Literacy

Improved technical mastery

3) Musicality

Articulation, dynamics, stylistic expectations

Aesthetic intent of the composer and of the work

4) Sound

Enhanced sensitivity to appropriate tone and intonation

5) Rehearsal and Performance Skills

Interdependent performance

Innovative presentation, including ornamentation, cadenzas, physical placement, etc.

Each part plays an integral role; identify role for each member (melody, counter-melody inner voice, bass line) and for the whole group (dance, lyrical, programmatic, etc.)

Building a group narrative or story of their rendition - in either rehearsal and/or performance

6) Aesthetics

Improved listening discrimination

Enhanced ability to analyze the ensembles' performances and use group problem solving in rehearsals

Development of a 'musical ear', an inner hearing that guides accomplished musicians in making quality musical performance decisions.

Timeline:

Opening Session & Group Rehearsals (Sept. 24 - Oct. 19): Students receive group assignments and music (one or two scores for rehearsal purposes). Students conduct individual at home practice to work out technical and expressive details. Look for model recordings of the work and now is the time to ask for help with fingerings, rhythms, etc. but you must prepare responsibly on your own. Students begin ensemble rehearsals. Ensembles will need about three minutes of performable music. Many ensembles each rehearsal day will be expected to perform in front of the class and receive feedback from their classmates and director. Guidelines for working social dynamics of chamber music and efficient rehearsal techniques will be provided. Efficient rehearsal techniques include:

Technical Procedures: tuning carefully and often, deciding by consensus on a rehearsal plan; dividing the musical selection into sections and working through each; for densely-textured sections, rehearsing two parts at a time in different combinations then adding one more part at a time; technical work can benefit from rehearsing the last section back to the first; using slower tempos; and tuning critical chords.

Effective Expressive Procedures: discussing stylistic mood for each contrasting section; learning to listen to the other parts and fitting the parts together; exaggerating dynamic contrasts; singing parts; making eye contact, moving, playing portions from memory; remembering the story and telling it musically

ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Practice at home to select possible pieces**
- 2) Ask for help**
- 3) In front of class Inform-ance**
- 4) Provide feedback in constructive and meaningful way**

Student Recordings and Assessment (Oct. 22 - Oct. 29): Ensembles record a portion of their selection and conduct a listening analysis with specific rehearsal suggestions from all members. A tuner and metronome are essential equipment. Recording and analyses are sent to Mr. Walsh and he will in turn respond with comments. This phase is repeated as needed. After sufficient rehearsal and review, instructor-led coaching sessions begin.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Ask for help**
- 2) 30 second Video Recording of Ensemble Performance...submit through Schoology assignment**

The Coaching Sessions before or after school (Oct. 29 - Nov. 5): Ideally the groups are now ready for coaching sessions from the instructor and since notes, rhythms, basic dynamics and initial stylistic details have already been rehearsed, these sessions can start from a more musically expressive point.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Ask for help**
- 2) Submit exit slip**

The Performance (Nov. 8): Friends and family are invited to our Ensemble Performance in the auditorium. It will be a rotating format or prism concert where we will use lights and staging to create an interactive audience performing experience.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1) ROCK ON!!!

Other Sources for Music:

<http://imslp.org/> - International Music Score Library Project is a collaborative library of scores that are free from royalty restrictions. Since this is a user-contributed site, some of the scores are arrangements (in most cases these are indicated as such); scores are available free in PDF format; some entries include streamed recordings.