



May 17, 2023

Dear Middle School Parents and Students:

Each year Middle School students and their parents are asked to make a choice from the music course selections. Detailed music course descriptions are provided below.

Please make your choice thoughtfully. Please make your selection by **Wednesday, May 24, 2023**. A change in your child's selection after June 30, 2023, may not be possible because of class size and staffing constraints.

-MUSIC FOR CREDIT- Course Description

General Music

The Grade 6 General Music course is a study of the basic elements and materials of music. Students will learn the terminology of basic music theory, learn about the instruments of the orchestra, and study concepts concerning rhythm, melody, harmony, and timbre. Students will also be involved in a beginning African Drum Circle.

The Form I General Music course is divided into two sections: Musical Form and Music History. Students will learn about the structure of music and explore the major developments of music history. Students will also present a final project on a subject taken from the music history content. Students will also be involved in learning more advanced African Drum Circle techniques.

The Form II General Music course is divided into three sections: 20th Century Music, Acoustics, and American Popular Music. Students will learn about 20th Century composition techniques and create 20th-century compositions using Garage Band. Students will learn about the four properties of sound and will design a concert hall, thinking about the acoustics of the building. Students will learn about how American pop music changed throughout America's rich musical history.

Chorus 6-7-8

This course emphasizes vocal performance and multi-part ensemble singing. In chorus music reading skills are further developed in addition to vocal technique and expressive singing. A wide range of classical and contemporary music is taught to perform different styles of music as well as music from different cultures. Previous formal training is not required to enroll in chorus, but at a minimum, the student must be able to match pitches played on the piano. Participation in school concerts and Closing Exercises is required, and a limited number of community events may also count toward the student's grade

Band 6-7-8

This course emphasizes instrumental performance and ensemble playing. Students are required to have experience playing a wind, brass, or percussion instrument as well as basic note-reading skills.

Students are also expected to practice their music outside of class. Each student's grade will reflect the amount of improvement they show during each grading period and throughout the school year. Participation in school concerts and Closing Exercises is required, and a limited number of community events may also count towards the student's grade.

String Ensemble 6-7-8

String Ensemble is a performance-based course that allows students experienced in violin, viola, cello, or bass violin to practice and perform as a string ensemble. As with the band, students should have their own instrument and possess basic note-reading skills. Advanced piano players are invited to audition for the String Ensemble, but there are a limited number of spots available. This ensemble performs a variety of music from several different musical genres. Participation in school concerts and Closing Exercises is required, and a limited number of community events may count toward the student's grade.

Note: Jazz Band, Select Strings, and Core Choir are non-credit, auditioned musical ensembles. They rehearse once or twice a cycle during Conference Period. Auditions for these ensembles take place in early September.

Please email Brian Johnston at bjohnston@shadysideacademy.org with any questions.