

Tamalpais Union High School District
Larkspur, California

Course of Study

Concert Choir

Title of Course: Concert Choir

Schools where the course will be taught: All comprehensive Tamalpais Union High Schools

Subject Area and Discipline: Fine Arts (Music)

Grade Levels: 9-12

Is this an integrated course? No

Course Overview:

Concert Choir is a course focusing upon choral singing. The course is designed to give students with little to some musical knowledge the tools and confidence to sing in a choral setting. Students will learn the fundamentals of singing, breath control, tone production and pitch matching. Music theory, note and rhythmic reading as well as interval identification will also be studied. As the focus of the course will be vocal music, students will be to the vast library of musical works, from plainchant and renaissance motets through baroque cantatas and masses up to contemporary jazz tunes, Broadway songs and art songs from around the world. Through work with the instructor, peer evaluations and self reflection, students will produce a body of work that will reflect their growing knowledge of vocal music as well as its best performance practices.

Prerequisites (required or recommended):

Prerequisites are the ability to match a played pitch, create a somewhat clear singing tone and the ability to control the volume of one's voice. An understanding of rhythms and notes is beneficial but not required

Co-requisites (required or recommended):

None

Course Content:

The course content focuses upon students building an understanding of vocal technique, developing singing skills that will allow them to create music, and investigating the interaction of vocal music with the greater world. These concepts are explored through a combination of demonstrations, lectures, guided practice and performances. Throughout the year, students explore specific vocal works and the rhythms, intervals and historical context of these pieces, making connections to the library of vocal music with the history of the world. Students understanding of proper vocal production and musical knowledge will also grow as different musical pieces are studied. This leads to a preliminary examination of artistic voice, style,

different modes of presentation as well as real world applications of preparation, study and performance. Mastery of concepts are assessed by instructors, peers and through self reflection, around the Fine Art Department learning goals.

Music Theory Topics:

Rhythm: Tempo; Division of Measures; Beat/Pulse; Time Signatures; Subdivision; Rhythmic Layers; Whole Note; Half Note; Quarter Note; Eighth Note; Sixteenth Note

Harmony: Major, Minor, Diminished and Augmented Triads; Key Signatures; Harmonic Function; Harmonic Motion; Typical Chord Progressions

Melody: Use of Scales- Major and Minor Pentatonic; Major, Natural Minor; Chord/Scale Relationship; Integrity of Melodic Themes; Variation; Melodic Relationship To Form

Technique: Posture; Breathing; Projection; Vocal Blending; Purity of vowels

Timbre: Tone Quality; Color of Sound; Attack; Sustain; Release

Form: Verse/Chorus, AABA, Rondo, Sonata, Strophic

Vocal Categories: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass

Interactions Between Student Work & 21st Century Music World

Style: Listening To And Analyzing Different Genres; Defining Qualities Of Different Genres; Composing Within Different Genres; Technical Skill To Capture A Specific Genre

Composition: Exercises For Practice And Demonstration Of Mastery On Musical Topics

Arranging: Recontextualizing Traditional Songs Within Different Stylistic Contexts; Adding Instruments In Choral Arrangements

Artistic Voice: Making Decisions About Specific Vocal Technique To Apply In Specific Stylistic Contexts

Body Of Work: Connecting With A Variety Of Repertoire From Across History, Culture, and Stylistic Genres

Presentation Of Work: Differentiating Audiences - in class/community audiences, public audiences; Role Of Artist And Interaction In Presentation Of Work; Interaction With Audience On Work

Real World Applications Of Music: Careers Involving Singing and Vocal Performance, Diversification of Skills, Promotion, and Income For 21st Century Independent Artists; Using Vocal Ability and Experience for Community Service and Outreach

Analysis Of Work: Understanding And Communicating About Specific Musical Elements Within A Performance; Pinpointing Preferred Elements In Performance That Can Be Applied In Future Works; Finding Theoretical/Technical Errors In Performance; Taking Ideas From Other Performances And Applying It In Your Own Work

Skills:

This course is aligned with the Fine Art Department's learning goals. These are:

Create

- A. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- B. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work
- C. Refine and complete artistic work

Perform

- A. Analyze, interpret works for presentation
- B. Develop and refine artistic techniques and works for presentation
- C. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Respond

- A. Perceive and analyze artistic work
- B. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- C. Apply Criteria to evaluate artistic work
- D. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art

Connect

- A. Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding

Assessment Criteria:

Students are assessed on their progress around the Fine Art Department learning goals: Create, Perform, Respond, and Connect. This happens through a variety of perspectives, including instructor, peer, and self assessment. Instructor assessment focuses the learning goals around vocal technique, developing understanding of repertoire, mastery of music theory, and the student's relationship to style and genre. While peer and self assessments also cover these topics, these experiences also provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their use of musical language and the depth of their artistic critique.

Course Materials:

Students use written sheet music to learn repertoire in a variety of formats, including traditional music notation, piano/vocal, lyric sheets, and lead sheets. Students will learn the usage of and interact with a variety of amplification hardware, including sound boards, powered speakers, and a variety of microphones. Students will utilize a variety of performance equipment, including risers, music stands, and stage lighting. Students will use a variety of recording methods for analysis and capturing parts, including basic computer DAWs such as Apple GarageBand, as well as mobile phone based recording apps. Students will use written materials, both physical and digitally to reflect and analyze, such as notebooks, word processing software. Students will also engage in music notation, both physical and digitally to pursue composition and arranging, including physical staff paper and music notation software.

Sample Units:

Introduction of New Piece

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Listen to published versions of new piece
- B. Give Students copies of music
- C. Introduce pitches, rhythms and text in context
 - a. Sing pitches with accompanist for students to hear
 - b. Demonstrate rhythms by clapping with a metronome
 - c. Speak text of the piece with regard to rhythm, articulation and dynamics

ACTIVITY:

- A. Sing through selected measures per class period with accompanist and metronome to assimilate pitches, rhythms and text
 - a. Students sing pitches with accompanist
 - b. Students demonstrate rhythms by clapping with a metronome
 - c. Students speak text with regard to rhythm, articulation and dynamics

ASSESSMENT:

- A. Perform piece in school concert
- B. Students reflect and self-assess
- C. Student written analysis of video of school concert
- D. Students reflect, self-assess and offer feedback for peers

Piece Connections - Historical, Stylistic and Lyrical Context

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Identify the historical context of the new piece
- B. Discuss the stylistic considerations of the new piece with regards to historical setting
- C. Analyze the lyrics in terms of composer's intent and personal connection

ACTIVITY:

- A. Students listen to recordings from the same time period and discuss how compositional, musical elements relate to current social and political events of the corresponding time period
- B. Students discuss the stylistic, compositional and musical elements used in a specific time period and how those relate to contemporary music
- C. Students identify and discuss the composer's intent for the lyrics of the piece and reflect on how to relate the lyrics and composer's intent to their own lives.

ASSESSMENT:

- A. Students will introduce each piece at school concerts and display their knowledge and understanding of the historical setting
- B. Students will identify stylistic parallels among pieces in the class repertoire in a written assignment
- C. Students will share their lyrical analysis of pieces and how it relates to the composer's intent with the class and receive peer feedback

Practical Application of Scales & Triads

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Review scales and triads with students using solfege and piano accompaniment
- B. Demonstrate the creation of a simple melody using the pitches within scales and triads
- C. Demonstrate notation skills and provide students with music paper.

ACTIVITY:

- A. Students divide into groups to compose small, brief melodies that include only the pitches within the scales and triads
- B. Students compose lyrics with clear intent
- C. Students explain process for creating melody and lyrics in a written reflection

- D. Students record melodies on mobile devices and upload to shared drive
- E. Students practice melodies to bring to performance standard

ASSESSMENT:

- A. Teacher feedback on uploaded recording and written reflection
- B. Students sing melodies for the class and receive peer critique
- C. Instructor feedback based on performance rubric

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