TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Symphonic Band Course of Study
(Advanced Band)

Title of Course: Symphonic Band	
Course Author(s): Chip Boaz, Spiro Tsingaris, Mario Aparicio	Schools where the course will be taught: Redwood High School, Tamalpais High School, Archie Williams High School
Length of Course: 1 Year	Subject Area and Discipline: VAPA (Music)
Grade Levels: 10 - 12	Is this course an integrated course? No
Is this course being submitted for possible UC honors designation? No	UC approval category: F
Required Prerequisites: Concert Band	
If there are prerequisites for the course, please include a justification as to why they are in place: Required Skills For Success in Symphonic Band are built in Concert Band	
Check all that apply: ✅ UC A-G course ❑ Graduation Requirement (specify the requirement this course meets) ✅ Elective ❑ Honors/AP ❑ CTE	

Introduction to the Course

Course Overview:

Advanced Band (Symphonic Band) is a rigorous performance-based course where students refine technical mastery and musicianship through the study of advanced (from Grade III to V) literature. The course emphasizes Creative and Independent Learning, Collaboration, and Intercultural Competence. Students will explore a diverse repertoire that reflects various global traditions, analyzing how musical expression is shaped by cultural identity and historical struggle, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of perspectives different from their own. Students work towards the overarching goal of a "satisfying aesthetic experience," achieved through Collaboration and a commitment to a high-quality "group product" in public performances. Through the 'Studio Session' model, students develop Character by practicing constructive empathy during peer-to-peer feedback and demonstrating resilience when facing technical challenges. Ultimately, the course prepares students for the demands of collegiate or professional musical environments.

The course promotes **Intercultural Competence** by studying works from diverse composers and historical contexts, ensuring that the satisfying aesthetic experience is rooted in a global understanding of music as a human universal." Students develop **Critical Thinking** and **Communication** skills by using technology - such as

Logic - to record, critically analyze, and provide effective feedback on their own performances. Through this ensemble environment, students practice **Collaboration** by listening intently to decipher meaning and working effectively toward the common goal of a professional-level performance.

Unit Title: Aesthetic Expression through Contemporary Repertoire

Unit Summary:
In this unit of study, students will be able to independently use their learning to analyze a new piece of Grade IV literature, apply technical solutions to rhythmic and intonational challenges, and contribute to a professional-level group performance. Students will understand that a satisfying aesthetic experience requires a balance of individual mastery and ensemble listening. Students will understand that musical elements (form, dynamics, and articulation) are tools used to convey specific cultural or historical contexts.

Essential Questions:
- How does an individual's technical accuracy affect the collective aesthetic experience of the ensemble?
- How do a composer's intentions and the historical context of a piece influence our performance choices?

Unit Outcomes

Students will know:
- The specific technical demands and danger zones within their individual parts for a Grade IV piece chosen by the director
- The historical and stylistic context of the piece and how it defines the aesthetic traditions of the piece.
- How to identify significant musical events within the score, such as thematic hand-offs between sections or pivotal harmonic shifts.
- The terminology of professional self-critique, such as phasing, intonational tendencies, and dynamic balance

Students will be able to:
- **Demonstrate Mastery:** Perform their individual parts within the ensemble with technical accuracy, maintaining consistent tone quality and bow control through the entire work.
- **Apply Expressive Intent:** Execute complex phrasing and musical dynamics as dictated by the composer's markings to convey the intended emotional narrative.
- **Sectional Leadership (Collaboration):** Work effectively within their instrument section to "solve authentic problems" related to unified articulation and pitch matching.
- **Technological Analysis (Critical Thinking):** Use recording software to isolate their recorded part, critically analyzing it for accuracy against the professional "group product" standard.
- **Aural Adjustment:** Demonstrate group listening skills by adjusting their volume and intonation in real-time to match the ensemble tone quality and balance parts

Sample Unit Assignment: Students learn about key signatures and scale patterns relevant to the piece they are playing. They record a rehearsal segments and critique ensemble tone quality.

Sample unit Assessment:

The Ensemble Comparative Analysis
As a class, students produce a high-fidelity **Ensemble Recording** of a piece of Grade IV literature chosen by the director. Students then use this recording to complete a **Performance Portfolio Reflection** that includes:

- **Aural Comparison:** Students use digital recording software to listen to their ensemble's take alongside a professional recording
- **Critical Analysis:** A 1-page written reflection where students must analyze and describe significant musical events perceived in the ensemble recording, such as balance between sections, collective intonation, and rhythmic precision.

- **Justification of Intent:** Students must evaluate how well the ensemble met the composer's intentions regarding dynamics and articulation, providing specific time-stamped examples from the recording to support their argument

Other Evidence:

- **Sectional Intonation & Balance Check:** In-class assessments where small sections (e.g., the viola section) are recorded together. Students must provide and receive effective feedback on their ensemble tone quality and group listening skills
- **Full Ensemble Intonation & Balance Check:** In-class assessments where the full ensemble is recorded together. Students must provide and receive effective feedback on their ensemble tone quality, intonation, and balance
- **Daily Rehearsal Contribution:** Evaluation based on the student's rehearsal participation and contribution and their ability to demonstrate school-to-work transition skills such as punctuality, focus, and professional conduct.
- **Stylistic Feature Report:** A brief oral or written report where students analyze the stylistic features of a Grade IV piece to define its historical and cultural context.

Unit Title: The Literate Performer: Decoding and Expressing at First Sight

Unit Summary:
Students will be able to independently use their learning to accurately perform a previously unseen Grade III or IV musical score with appropriate style, expression, and technical accuracy on the first attempt. Students will understand music literacy is a gateway to diverse repertoire and professional flexibility. Students will understand that identifying patterns (scales, intervals, and rhythmic cells) allows the brain to process music in "chunks" rather than individual notes.

Essential Questions:

- How does the ability to "read ahead" change a performer's accuracy?
- How can a musician maintain the aesthetic experience of a piece when they are focused on decoding new notes?

Unit Outcomes:

Students will know:

- Common rhythmic motifs found in Grade IV literature (e.g., asymmetrical meters like 5/8 or 7/8).
- Standard roadmap symbols (D.S. al Coda, multi-measure rests, and complex repeats).

Students will be able to:

- Sight-read Level 3 difficulty music with a high degree of accuracy
- Scan a new score for danger zones (key changes, accidentals)

Sample Unit Assignments:
Students learn to spot style by sight-reading two contrasting pieces and adjusting articulation without teacher input.

Sample Unit Assessment:
As an ensemble, students will be given a Grade III/IV excerpt they have never seen. They will have silent study time, followed by a recorded performance.

- **Self-Critique:** Students must then listen to their recording and take notes, marking where their aural expectation differed from the actual printed page.

Other Evidence

- **Visual Scanning Assessment:** Students are given a new musical excerpt and need to identify and circle

critical roadmap markers (e.g., key changes, time signature shifts, D.S. al Coda, or sudden dynamic shifts). This assesses their ability to read/view and analyze material quickly.

- **Rhythmic "At-Sight" Performance:** Using a tool like Modern Reading Text in 4/4 , the ensemble plays a complex 8-measure rhythm they have never seen. Success is measured by the collective ability to maintain a steady pulse without conductor intervention.
- **Error Detection Exercise:** Students listen to a recording of another ensemble sight-reading and must follow along in the score to detect and describe rhythmic or pitch errors made by that group.
- **"The Survival Shift" (Collaboration):** During a first-read, the conductor intentionally stops. Students must immediately identify exactly where they are in the music and explain to a neighbor how they found their place.
- **Style-Identification Check:** After the first read of a new piece, students must provide a brief justification for the "style" they chose to play in (e.g., "I played with a separated articulation because the marking was “stringendo").

Unit Title: The Musician’s Toolkit: Theory in Practice

Unit Summary:
Students will be able to independently use their learning to deconstruct the harmonic and melodic DNA of a musical work and apply those theoretical principles to create original musical statements and perform complex technical patterns from memory. Students will understand music theory is a practical tool that allows performers to predict patterns and make informed expressive decisions. Students will understand composition is a form of communication that requires a synthesis of technical rules and creative risk-taking.

Essential Questions:

- How do the "building blocks" of music (scales, arpeggios, and intervals) empower a performer to decode and communicate complex artistic ideas?
- In what ways does a theoretical understanding of a score’s "architecture" (harmonies and form) allow an ensemble to achieve a "satisfying aesthetic experience"?
- How does the ability to recognize patterns in music—both through performance and composition—increase our efficiency as "fully functional and contributing members" of a professional lab ensemble?

Unit Outcomes:

Students will know:

- The construction of all 12 major, natural minor, harmonic minor, and melodic minor scales and their corresponding arpeggios and seventh chords
- Basic music theory terminology (e.g., intervals, chord functions, and form).

Students will be able to:

- Perform all 12 major, natural minor, harmonic minor, and melodic minor scales and their corresponding arpeggios and seventh chords from memory playing sixteenth notes at 100 bpm
- Analyze and describe the use of musical elements that make a specific work unique.
- Compose a short melodic variation based on a theme from the current concert repertoire or learned theoretical material

Sample Unit Assignment: Students learn about the architecture of scale by developing mastery of scales and intervals to provide students with the artistic agency to decode complex works independently

Sample Unit Assessment:

The Composer’s Blueprint Project
Students demonstrate their mastery of music theory by moving from the alphabet (scales/intervals) to a complete sentence (original composition). They will complete a three-part project that does not rely on their

current concert music:

1. **The Structural Map (Analysis):** Students are given a short score they have never seen. They will analyze the key, the melody (for scalar and arpeggio content), the harmony, and arrangement techniques
2. **The Original Statement (Composition):** Using a specific theoretical constraint (e.g., Must utilize a natural minor scale), students will compose an original 16-measure melody for their instrument..
3. **The Digital Realization (Technology):** Students will input their composition into notation software and use recording software to capture it. They must then critically analyze their own work for accuracy, ensuring the recorded pitch and rhythm match their theoretical intent.

Other Evidence:

- **Memory Benchmarks:** Weekly Scale Checks where students perform randomly selected major, natural minor, harmonic minor, or melodic minor scales, arpeggios, or seventh chords at the required tempo.
- **Aural Dictation Checks:** In-class "lab" exercises where the instructor plays intervals or short rhythmic patterns, and students must transcribe them accurately onto staff paper.
- **Peer-Review Sessions:** Students swap their compositions and provide effective feedback to their peers regarding the technical playability and theoretical accuracy of the work.

Representative Repertoire (Vetted Instructional Materials)

The following Grade IV works are examples of pieces that may be used for performance, analysis, and study:

- Alfred Reed, *A Festival Prelude*
- Omar Thomas, *A Mother Of A Revolution!*
- Eric Whitacre, *October*
- Norman Dello Joio, *Scenes from "The Louvre"*
- Jennifer Jolley, *The Eyes Of The World Are Upon You*
- Brant Karrick, *Bayou Breakdown*
- LeAndre Benton, *A Joyous Homage*
- Leonard Bernstein (arr. Beeler), *Overture to Candide*

Digital Resources and Technology (Vetted for Media Literacy)

In alignment with the TUHSD Graduate Profile regarding responsible technology use and critical thinking, the following software is utilized:

- **Recording Software (such as Logic, Garageband):** For capturing performances to facilitate student self-critique and portfolio development.
- **Electronic Tuners and Metronomes:** For real-time student self-correction of intonation and pulse.

Board Approval Date: 06/27/89
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