

# **Westside High School Vocal Music Department**

## **Course Information and Guidelines**

### **2017-2018**

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#### **Vocal Music Mission Statement:**

The Westside High School Vocal Music Program exists to give all students the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with the preparation and presentation of musical performances and to give them the opportunity to experience the fulfillment of involvement in the choral art.

#### **Nebraska Fine Arts Standards: Music**

Students will develop and apply knowledge and skills to create, perform, and respond to music, making connections to human experiences.

\*Students will compose, arrange, improvise, read and perform music with an analytical understanding of the language of music. (Create)

\*Students will sing and/or play, independently and/or with others, a variety of music genres and style using technical accuracy and expression, and synthesize feedback from various sources to evaluate performance. (Perform)

\*Students will analyze and evaluate how music elicits intended responses. (Respond)

### **Freshman Choir**

#### **Course Description and Outcomes**

By participating in at least two choral music performances per semester and daily rehearsals focusing on a variety of choral literature, students will make progress toward using musical symbols and terminology to interpret choral literature, making critical evaluations of their own and other's performances and demonstrating the ability to become a productive ensemble member. These will be met through attainment and/or assessment of progress toward fulfilling the following course outcomes:

Each student will:

1. Develop skill in basic techniques of proper vocal production.
2. Develop skill in sight-singing and interpreting the choral score.
3. Develop skill in maintaining an individual part within the ensemble.
4. Rehearse, perform, and understand the historical significance of choral music from representative cultures, styles and periods.
5. Develop the skills necessary to become a productive ensemble member and display appropriate concert etiquette.
6. Demonstrate a commitment to the ensemble by attending all performances when given at least two weeks notice.
7. Demonstrate the ability to memorize the music being performed.

#### **Grading and Performance Assessments**

Your grade in chorus is an earned one. It will not be based solely on one's ability to sing. Rather it will be based upon the contribution you make to the success of the ensemble. Because you will not be tested regularly as you are in other academic classes, your grade will be based on observable rehearsal skills. Your quarter grades will be a combination of your achievement in the following categories: Ensemble Skills (50%), Performance Participation (30%), Vocal Technique & Musical Knowledge (20%).

Your quarter grade will be based on a point system as follows:

\*5 points for each rehearsal successfully completed.

Actual points awarded will depend on the level of engagement during rehearsals and execution of targeted rehearsal objectives.

\*50 points for participating in each required performance:

## The following are required performances for the 2017-2018 school year:

### Semester 1:

September 26 (Tues) — Fall Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

November 5 (Sun) — Cabaret Night (3 PM--WHS Auditorium)

December 11 (Mon) — Winter Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

### Semester 2:

February 20 (Tues) — Choral Clinic Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

May 2 (Wed) — Spring Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

\*Various points for vocal technique and musical knowledge

ex: singing performance assessments/rubrics, concert quizzes, writing prompts, proficiencies.

### **Outside Learning Activities: All students must earn 10 additional points from the following activities each semester:**

\*10 points for enrolling in voice class

\*5 points for each individual or group lesson with the instructor (15 minute lesson)

\*10 points for taking private voice lessons (must receive written verification from the instructor)

\*5 points for private piano or instrumental lessons (must receive written verification from the instructor)

\*5-10 points for musical participation outside of school—ex: church choir, community musical theater, soloist at community function (Points will be based on the time commitment of the activity and written verification is required.)

\*5 points for attendance at musical events outside of required performances ex: Omaha symphony, band or orchestra concert at WMS, musical at the Playhouse (Must supply a concert program and a brief written review of the performance)

\*10 points for participation in WHS Band or Orchestra

\*Other musical activities may be submitted for teacher approval on an individual basis.

Points will be totaled and categories will be averaged to determine a final percentage. Grades will be awarded according to the school's standard grading scale.

Grade	%		
A+	97-100	A	93-96
B+	89-92	B	85-88
C+	81-84	C	77-80
D+	74-76	D	70-73
F	69 and below		

### **Semester Assessment:**

A semester assessment will be given and will count 15% toward the final semester grade. This assessment will normally involve sight singing an exercise from our sight reading book. (Time is spent in every rehearsal learning sight singing skills.) A writing component may also be required.

## **Additional Information**

**REGARDING REQUIRED PERFORMANCES:** Absence from performances adversely affects a student's grade in this class. Students are expected to be in attendance at all required performances. Unexcused absences are any absences not notified within two weeks prior to a concert. If a student is absent from school on the day of the concert, he/she will be allowed to make up the concert by singing the music for the director or completing a written assignment. Having to work or babysitting is an **unexcused** absence. Family commitments are negotiable if the instructor is notified in advance of the concert and an alternate solution cannot be reached. If you have any questions regarding these performances, please contact me.

**TRANSPORTATION TO CONCERTS:** If transportation is an issue, please contact Mr. Johnson and he will assist the student in arranging transportation to and from school for the concert.

### **PERFORMANCE ATTIRE:**

Freshman Choir members are asked to dress up for our concerts. My preference is as follows:

Women: school appropriate dress or skirt/blouse and dress shoes with a conservative heel

Men: dress pants, dress shirt, tie or sweater, dress shoes

Feel free to visit with me if you have any concerns with these expectations.

### **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

General Expectations:

Be here. Be on time. Be prepared. Be teachable. Be responsible and respectful.

Specific Rules and Procedures:

1. Enter the room in an orderly manner and go directly to your assigned seat.
2. When warm-ups begin, talking must cease.
3. Keep a pencil in your folder at all times and use it when appropriate.
4. Treat the folders and music with care.
5. Respect the rights of others to learn and participate.
6. Remain in your seats until you are dismissed. Do not leave your seat without permission during the rehearsal.
7. Absolutely, positively and most definitely NO GUM CHEWING or candy during rehearsal. Your singing is hindered by foreign objects in your mouth.

### **ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES**

Unexcused absences will be verified by an automated phone call to the parents from the Dean's Office. It is the student's responsibility to discuss incorrect attendance with the director in a timely manner. (Refer to the district's policy on unexcused absences and other attendance issues in the current Warrior Bulletin.) **A student with an unexcused absence will receive an "F" for their rehearsal grade that day.** Tardiness is a major distraction to the choral rehearsal. Students will be given ample passing time. Anyone arriving after warm-ups have begun will be considered tardy. Points may be deducted from the daily grade. The student, Dean and parents will be notified when tardies have become excessive and consequences will be determined.

### **REPERTOIRE SELECTION**

Vocal music students will experience a wide range of choral music. Music to be performed is selected solely for its educational value. We strive to balance the students' musical experience by exposing them to music of varying cultures, languages and time periods. Music with sacred texts will be a part of this experience. Please refer to the music selection guidelines included in this document. You are welcome to look at the student's choir folder at any time. If you ever have any concerns with the repertoire, please contact the director of the ensemble.

### **TWO ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESS**

**PRIDE:** Pride is a personal commitment. It is an attitude which separates excellence from mediocrity.

**TEAMWORK:** Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

Our success or failure as a group depends on these two crucial components. It is my fundamental belief that all we do musically will be a reflection of these two components. I thank you in advance for believing in the importance of music in your high school education and for demonstrating a commitment to excellence. I promise as your director to use your time and talent wisely.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students involved with vocal music fall under the official Westside Code of Conduct. Students found to have violated these policies will be excluded from musical performances for the time period specified. The student's grade will not be impacted. Please read the separate policy and initial the appropriate blank on the signature page.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Doran Johnson Office: 343-2793

E-mail: johnson.doran@westside66.net

# WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF MUSIC

## Criteria for the Selection of Music

All repertoire studied and performed by student ensembles is selected solely on the basis of musical and artistic merits and includes literature spanning a wide variety of eras and genres. A quality composition, no matter what the level of difficulty, has qualities that are lasting. When selecting music for study or performance, the following criteria are considered:

- Overall musical quality of the composition
- Aesthetic and musical effect created
- Potential for musical development
- Characteristics of musical elements for study: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, style, texture, timbre, expressive elements
- Appropriate difficulty for the ensemble: sophistication of composition, technical requirements, rehearsal time required
- Individual strengths of personnel, voicing, instrumentation of ensemble
- Variety and balance in programming: length, audience appeal, balance of styles and genres, musical effect, uniqueness
- Significance of composer or arranger
- Text: literary value of text, poet/lyricist, language, tone painting, sounds for their own sake, musical setting of text

*(Adapted from Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance Project, 1977)*

Pieces chosen for study at Westside High School are significant examples of musical literature and are selected solely on the basis of their musical and educational value, not on their context. In addition, sacred music selections are presented objectively as part of a secular curriculum. We also understand that it is important that the school music curriculum be more inclusive, not exclusive, and that it be comprised of music from all styles, forms, periods and cultures. We continue to strive for a balance in the music student's experience. However, since music with a sacred text or of a religious origin, particularly choral music, comprises such a substantial portion of music literature and has such an important place in the history of music, it should and does have an important place in music education.

It also needs to be understood that there are times and occasions where the selection of music lies outside of the control of the director. Examples of these situations include the NMEA All State repertoire and performances with the Omaha Symphony.

## Rationale for the Study of Sacred Music

The Music Educators National Conference, the nation's leading association of music educators, has adopted the position that "the study of religious music is a vital and appropriate part of the total music experience in both performance and listening. To omit sacred music from the repertoire or study of music would present an incorrect and incomplete concept of the comprehensive nature of art." (adapted from *Religious Music in the Schools*, Music Educators National Conference, Reston, VA 1996)

Although the First Amendment does not forbid all mention of religion in public schools, it does prohibit the advancement or inhibition of religion by the state. Taking a neutral approach concerning music with a sacred text, neither promoting nor inhibiting religious practices, the music program at Westside High School exercises caution, sensitivity, and good judgment when selecting sacred music for study and performance.

## Alternatives

The Music Department acknowledges religious and moral differences. Therefore, students and parents who express a significant concern about a piece of music presented for study may request an alternative musical experience. An alternative activity will be assigned and accepted only after private discussions in which the student brings his or her concerns to the teacher's attention. It is the student's responsibility to come forward early in the rehearsal process and express their concerns. Alternative musical experiences could include: musical analysis of similar literature, research paper about a composer, recorded performance of solo literature, concert or rehearsal critiques.

## Vocal Music Department Acknowledgement Signature Form

We have received, read and understand the following (please initial):

Documents can be found on Google Classroom or on the Vocal Music home page: [www.westsidechoirs.com](http://www.westsidechoirs.com)

Student

Parent

\_\_\_\_\_ The Westside Vocal Music Department Course Information.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Guidelines for the Selection of Music.

\_\_\_\_\_ The 2017-2018 performance calendar.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Westside Code of Conduct.

Parent or Guardian's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Parent or Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this signature page to Mr. Johnson no later than August 25.

### CABARET T-SHIRT: \$5

Each year all of the choirs purchase a t-shirt to be worn at our Cabaret Night performances. We are able to get a great deal from Lawlor's to keep the cost as low as possible. We would like to collect the money now rather than waiting for Cabaret. Please send \$5 (cash or check made payable to VMPA) along with this form. If payment is a hardship, please let us know.

Size \_\_\_\_\_

Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_