

Westside High School Vocal Music Department

Course Information and Guidelines

2021-2022

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 styles 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)

Concert 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 skills in basic techniques of proper vocal production.
2. Develop skills in sight-singing and interpreting the choral score.
3. Develop skills 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 semester grades will be a combination of your achievement in the following categories: Daily Vocal Rehearsal Skills (40%), Performance Participation (40%), Musical Knowledge & Assessment (20%).

Your semester grade will be based on a letter grade system as follows:

***Daily Vocal Rehearsal Skills (40%)**

Letter grades will depend on proficiency and consistency of daily vocal rehearsal skills: Mindset (Engagement), Body Alignment, Breath Intake, Breath Support & Management, Chiaroscuro Tone Quality (Balanced Tone, Bright/Dark Tone Colors), Vowels & Consonants, Tongue/Jaw (Tension), Connection, & Performance. Everyone starts with an A+ for the week and goes down from there if the above skills are not utilized. Not singing is an automatic F for the day. A student can make up those points within a week.

*Performance (40%)

A letter grade will be given according to the preparation of the repertoire and the cumulative usage of the vocal rehearsal skills. Audience Engagement Skills will also be a part of the letter grade given for each performance.

The following are required performances for the 2021-2022 school year:

Semester 1:

September 30 (Thurs) – Fall Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

November 7 (Sun) – Cabaret Night (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

December 14 (Tues) – Winter Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

Semester 2:

February 15 (Tues) – Choral Clinic Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

May 3 (Tues) – Spring Choral Concert (7:00 PM--WHS Auditorium)

*Musical Knowledge & Assessment (20%)

*Various letter grades will be given to other written assignments as they arise.

*Semester assessments will be given and will count 10% towards the final semester grade. The first semester assessment will involve sight-reading a 4 measure melody, and the second semester assessment will involve sight-reading a 4 measure melody and singing an independent part in small groups/quartets.

Grading Scale:

Letter grades default to the median number of that specific letter grade. For example, an A will translate to a 93%, a B+ will be an 88%, etc.

Grade	%		
A+	97-100	A	90-96
B+	87-89	B	80-86
C+	77-79	C	70-76
D+	67-69	D	60-66
F	59 and below		

Google Classroom:

We will be using Google Classroom as our learning management system for Concert Choir. Students will need to enroll in the course by going to www.classroom.google.com and logging in with their Westside ID and password. Once you are in Google Classroom, click on the "+" sign in the upper right part of the screen and select "join class", then enter the class code: **bymckpu**. All assignments and course resources will be posted in this location. Assignments and recordings will also be submitted through this application. Students should plan to check it every day to stay on top of work.

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 Mr. Woodin or completing a written assignment. Having to work or babysitting is an unexcused absence. Family commitments are negotiable if Mr. Woodin 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. Woodin and he will assist the student in arranging transportation to and from school for the concert.

PERFORMANCE ATTIRE:

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

1. Performance appropriate dress or skirt/blouse and dress shoes with a conservative heel, flats work best. No sandals.
2. Dress pants, dress shirt, tie or sweater, dress shoes & socks. No jeans.

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

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

General Expectations:

Be safe, responsible and respectful. Be coachable and engaged in singing from bell to bell.

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 end and students must engage.
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. Please try and use the bathroom before or after class - we use every minute of rehearsal time.
8. Absolutely, positively and most definitely NO GUM CHEWING or candy during rehearsal. Your singing is hindered by foreign objects in your mouth. And your safety may be at risk!

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 automatically receive an F for their rehearsal grade that day. Rehearsal points can be made up during an open mod before the end of the week.** 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. Consistent tardiness will be reflected in their daily choral rehearsal skills. 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 me.

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:

Greg Woodin Office: 402-343-2805
E-mail: woodin.greg@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 National Music Education Association, 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, a 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

Student

Parent

_____ The Westside Vocal Music Department Course Information.

_____ The Guidelines for the Selection of Music.

_____ The 2021-2022 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. Woodin no later than August 27.

CABARET T-SHIRT: \$5

Each year all choir members are asked to 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 will collect the sizes from the students in class. 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. You may also pay via PayPal. Go to paypal.me/vmpa and select "Send". On the next screen enter the amount and include your student's name and "Cabaret shirt" in the note. If payment is a hardship, please let us know.

Paid _____ Check _____ Cash _____ PayPal _____