

Middle School Choral Curriculum

*Blue text = Objective

*Green text = National Standard

Program Goals:

- Study music of diverse cultures, religions, historical periods and styles
- Develop music literacy and knowledge of music history, theory, and composition
- Perform a wide variety of literature as studied throughout the courses
- Utilize proper singing technique and vocal care including breath support, good tone, and proper voice placement.
- Develop habits that encourage success and professionalism within and beyond the music classroom.

Course Objectives:

- 1.Sight-read selected rhythms (by playing them on hand drums) and melodic/harmonic lines
- 2.Identify rhythms and melodic/harmonic lines within their choral literature
3. Count-sing music as a method of learning rhythms
- 4.Work in groups of 4 to use a studied melody and create words (which can be nonsense words, scat, words from an existing piece of literature (students must cite their sources!), or words of your own creation. Find ways to improvise on the line, and add additional lines to their melody to create something new. Perform these for the class (10 points possible per section of this project, 40 points total.)
- 5.Listen to and critically analyze a wide variety of choral music as performed by choirs of various age groups, record these thoughts in a journal that will be turned in.
- 6.Choose a piece from the literature being studied, and find “outside inspiration”, something that brings a greater meaning to the piece- a work of art, an instrumental interpretation, something from nature, literature, etc, and write a journal entry explaining the connection between the piece and the means of inspiration. (10 points)
- 7.Identify monophonic, polyphonic and homophonic textures in music.
- 8.Analyze baroque, renaissance and romantic period music
9. Given an excerpt of a piece we are working on (without articulation markings), write in the articulation that should be used to reflect the proper character of the piece. (10 points)
- 10.Create a poster of your favorite of the studied periods of music, complete with a list of composers of the time, description of the styles composed during this time, instruments used, and an example of choral literature from or representing this time period. This is an out-of-class project (though some time will be allowed in class at the teacher’s discretion, prior notice will be given) (10 points per section, 50 points total)
11. Work in a group of 4 to do a “then and now” study- comparing music of a certain period to music in that culture today (discuss similarities and differences in style, instrumentation (voicings), historical issues that may affect music writing, composers and a few examples of music. (5 points each, 25 points)
12. Students will be divided into quartets and asked to perform for the class a specified piece we are working on.
13. Record themselves practicing selected music, and professionally present the materials we have rehearsed in class. (graded by rubric, 5 points possible each, 25 points total)
- 14.Split into sections. (sectionals will be run by section leaders) The sections will rotate between the band room, practice rooms, and the choir room. When in the choir room, I will be working with the sections individually, not focussing on pitches or rhythms, but musicality. When students are not working with me they will be working on tricky pitches, rhythms, phrases, etc, and present when they get to me any questions they may have.

15. Study a piece of music beyond what is learned in class, including vital information about the piece (title, when it was written, what it is from (musical, opera, movie, soundtrack) who is the composer, what are some other works the composer has written, and what aspects discussed in class will be applied in preparation of the piece) and write a one -page paper detailing your findings. Prepare this piece and perform it in the final concert of the year. (If a group piece is chosen, each individual must still submit a paper.) (this will be graded by checklist, each item is worth 5 points, 30 points total.)

This course will include four concerts:

Fall -“Through Time and Space”

This concert will showcase pieces from a variety of cultures, styles and time periods. Within this concert students will have two group projects: see Objective 4 and 8.

One Minute Madrigal, a Renaissance-style madrigal by Donald Moore

-Objectives 4, 7, 8

-National Standards 1,6,7,9

-Harmony (since rhythmically all parts line up, it's important to make sure each part is in tune, have students think not linearly, but vertically, chord by chord to ensure good tuning), and diction (because it is english, we want to encourage good diction and timbre.)

-Renaissance period: historical events of the time, major composers, works, and writing styles of the time

-What is a madrigal?

-Discuss Polyphonic texture vs monophonic/ homophonic. (objective 7)

Chiri Biri Bim, an Israeli Folk Song

-objective 1,2

-National Standards 1,2,3,5,8,9.

-Melody (because the tonality is different than what the students are used to singing, and also because some of the leaps may be somewhat difficult for the students), and form (DC al Coda) will be the focus on this piece.

-Set the character of the piece by having the class read the story written by Mark Binder, split the class up into groups and give each of them a part of the story to act out, and then have a theatrical performance.

-Discuss Rosh Hashanah, and the traditions surrounding the piece.

Bist Du Bei Mir, a Baroque aria by Stözel, arranged by Emily Crocker

-objective 1,2,5,6,8

-National Standards 1,2,5,6,7,8,9

-Melody (again, the tonality may be a little difficult for students to internalize, but with the use of objective 1, hopefully they will be able to dissect those more difficult places and work on those exclusive of the words and rhythms even, when we add them back into the piece with objective 2 it will be much easier for students to accomplish right notes with confidence which will then encourage good tone and then proper characterization.)

Rhythm will also be a part of objectives 1 and 2, some of these rhythms may be a bit tricky, but again, taking them away from the other elements of the music will make them

much more approachable.) Of course, diction will also be worked on, we will discuss IPA, and have students write the IPA into the music and read through the words poetically (without the rhythms or melody) as we learn the piece.

-Discuss what an opera of the time would have been like, discuss the parts of the opera and major composers of opera of the time.

-Since the score of *Diomedes, oder die triumphierende Unschuld* has been lost, leaving *Bist Du Bei Mir* as it's only remaining aria, listen to a couple arias from other operas of the Baroque period, and compare them.

-Discuss other musical and historical elements of the Baroque period.

Dies Irae from Requiem Mass in D Minor, a Classical work by Mozart

-objective 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 & introduce objective 10

-National Standards 1,5,

-Harmony will be focused on, again encouraging vertical thinking, there are some parts where the dissonances may be quite confusing, so extracting them and working chord by chord will help that tuning. Diction, tone quality and timbre will work together and be very important in this piece, it is a darker piece, but making sure it isn't just "loud" but it is also clear, precise, and approached in a healthy way (placement within the voice+ good breathing= healthy singing- very very important.) Characterization will be important as well, as this is a very heavy and intense piece, they need to understand why it was written that way, and demonstrate that with their expression throughout the piece.

-Discuss the requiem mass, explain where the sequence (Dies Irae) fits into the mass, and the purpose.

-Listen and discover use of articulation within the piece; staccatos, slurs, accents.

-Discuss Mozart

-Discuss the Classical era in history, and music of the time.

-Harmony will be one of our main focuses in this work, as we make musical decisions regarding which part has the foreground, and which has the background, and bringing out the more important parts.

Winter -"The Most Wonderful Time of the Year"

This concert will bring together a variety of winter music including a familiar holiday tune, and holiday tunes from other cultures/religions, and a fun Russian piece that celebrates winter time.

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year by Eddie Pola and George Wyle, arranged by Alan Billingsley

-objective 4

-National Standard 1,3,4,5

-This song will be a familiar tune for most students; it's on the radio constantly around Christmas time, and played at stores, restaurants, in commercials. This is a very up-beat tune about winter time and Christmas. We will work on proper timbre and diction so this tune does not sound "popish" (as they may hear it sung on the radio), we want it to have a good choral tone! We will also work on harmony, some of the dissonances are tricky,. It will also be important to encourage good balance; even though the sopranos have the melody, and that is the familiar part, we want to bring out the harmonies which are what make this arrangement interesting, and we don't want them to be overpowered. Students will be asked to identify the form of the piece, and provide reasoning.

Riu, Riu, Chiu, Spanish Villancico style Medieval spanish Christmas Carol

-objective 1,2,3,5,8

-National Standard 1,2,5,6,7,8,9

-Harmony and Rhythm will both be very important to work on. It will be important that the students can feel the pulse together, and observe the meter changes. This piece will be practiced slowly so that students can focus on their tuning, and then as they get their harmonies lined up well, and they can accurately execute the rhythms at the slower tempo we will speed up, and work on maintaining the accuracy a-tempo.

-discuss music of Spain then and now (objective 11)

-Percussion instruments will be played by members of the choir to keep the pulse and aid in the Medieval character of the piece. (While learning this, all students will play the drum beat these students will be playing using body percussion).

Hanukkah Night by Jean Perry

-objectives 1, 2, 5, 12

-National Standard 1, 6, 7, 9

-Because this piece has a different tonality than what the students are used to singing, we will focus on melody and harmony using objectives 1 and 2. To assess each student's progress with the piece, students will be split into quartets and will have one class period to work with their quartet to make sure each individual has their part down, they can help each other with what may need work, and of course, ask for help from me. The next 2 class periods, the quartets will perform for their peers. Whoever is not performing is critiquing as we would a recorded choir. They will give their feedback to the students, both positive and negative, and the quartets will reflect on their work in a journal entry.

-Discuss Hanukkah and provide background for the song.

Minka, Romantic period Russian Folk Song arr. by Jill Jones

-objective 1, 2, 5

-National Standard 1, 5, 6, 7, 9

-Harmony will be a definite focus of rehearsals.

-Discuss the elements of Russian folk music, and identify how they are demonstrated in his piece.

-Have a student play the "jingle bells" while the song is sung.

Spring -"Festival"

-objective 1,2,3,5,12,13,14 - these will apply to all pieces

-National Standard 1,5,6,7

These pieces will be performed for a jury of judges who will rate the choir, and rank them against other choirs in the area. Within this concert we will focus on good timbre, diction, tall vowels, precision of rhythms and not just note accuracy, but true musicality.

Students will submit individual recordings (audio or video) of themselves practicing the pieces. For each piece we work on, students recordings will be graded in the following fashion:

What I'm looking for:	1 point	2 points	5 points
Pitch/Rhythmic Accuracy (student knows the pitches and rhythms, and performs them correctly (if they make a mistake, they acknowledge and correct it))	Needs Improvement Student misses 7 or more pitches or rhythms, students makes no attempt to correct mistakes.	Good Student is quite accurate with his or her pitches, misses 4-6 pitches and/or rhythms, but acknowledges the mistakes and attempts to correct those mistakes.	Excellent Student is accurate with his or her pitches, makes 3 or fewer mistakes, but acknowledges them, and corrects them quickly.
Musicality (phrasing, musical expression, correct articulation, following dynamic and tempo markings)	Student misses 7 or more opportunities to show musicality, or makes no attempt to be musical	Student is quite musical with his or her singing, makes 4-6 mistakes, but acknowledges them and attempts to correct those mistakes.	Student is very musical with his or her singing, makes 3 or fewer mistakes, but acknowledges them and corrects them quickly
Timbre- good singing (approaches singing with good tone, clear attacks, avoids wide vibrato, sings in the appropriate register of voice)	Student is missing 3 or 4 aspects of good singing.	Student is missing 1-2 aspects of good singing.	Student sings with a clear tone, exhibits clear attacks, avoids wide vibrato, and is singing in the correct voice register
Breathing (breathes in appropriate places, takes full breaths that allow for a good tone, and ability to sustain notes and fulfill phrases)	Student takes unfocused breaths in incorrect places, breathing between words or phrases.	Student takes a somewhat shallow breath, causing him or her to breath in the incorrect place 2-3 times.	Student takes a good breath in the correct places, not breaking a word or phrase.
Professionalism (approaches the recordings in a professional manner. Announces his or her name,	Student does not present a professional	Student makes 1-2 mistakes in the	Student presents his or her recording in a

the name of the piece and the composer. Thanks the listener for their time.)	recording.	presentation of his or her recording.	professional manner, and thanks the listener for his or her time.
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(have students print this and use it as a guide while they practice)

How Can I Keep From Singing Gwyneth Walker

-This is an excellent piece, with a gorgeous melody and harmonies, on which we will emphasize our study of the piece. There is a lot that can be done with musical expression (phrasing, dynamics, tempo) and I want the students to be comfortable enough with the piece that we can play with those aspects, and make this a gorgeous piece.

Walk Together Children Ken Berg

-This upbeat gospel-style tune has some tricky solos and melody lines. The solos will be individually prepared outside of class, and as an audition, anyone interested will include the solo sections in their recording assignment. Students will submit a journal describing an experience they think would be impacted positively by hearing or singing this piece, thus applying the piece to life outside of music.

-Discuss gospel music's origins and purpose.

The Pasture Z. Randall Stroope

-This sweet melody is quite low in parts. Diction will be important so that we can understand the words throughout. Tall vowels, and good clear tone are very important. There are some beautiful harmonies in this piece- there must not be too much vibrato, so that the lines can be sweet, clear and focused. Thinking about subdivision will be crucial in the longer notes, so that the energy remains in those lines throughout their duration.

Winter- "POP Concert"

-objective: 15

-National Standard: 1, 8, 9

Variety of style is crucial for young students. Through the year in choir we will have explored music including the Classical, Medieval, Baroque and Romantic periods, an aria from a German opera, folk tunes, and some more modern arrangements. This list is excellent, and gives students a great opportunity to learn about music history as they develop their abilities as a choral ensemble. The benefit of having a POP concert is to expand that range to include options such as musical theatre, modern tunes students are hearing on the radio, or even pieces they wish to perform in the future in a solo and ensemble competition. This concert gives the students ownership by allowing them to select the music they wish to prepare and it gives them the opportunity to be responsible and professional by planning out their rehearsal time (since this project is individual and small-group based.) The students will have constant opportunity to ask for help or advice regarding preparation of the piece, as I will be monitoring each group's progression. There will also be a daily journal entry for students to describe what they have worked on, why they chose that method of practice, and whether or not it was successful. (This will help students begin to further understand what practicing styles work best for them, which will

help me know how to better reach each student.) Students will also write a one page paper about the song they chose, when it was written, where it is from (if from a movie, musical, or other sound track), the composer, other songs by that composer, and which aspects that we discussed in class they will be demonstrating in their performance of this song.

The list of recommended literature includes selections that I believe are excellent tunes to have in your vocal repertoire, pieces that would be great for future auditions, pieces that are fun and exciting, some of a more emotional nature which allows students the opportunity to show their characterization of the piece. Students may of course select a song not on this list to perform, use a piece they have composed themselves, and are encouraged to incorporate playing of any musical instruments they are studying within or outside of school, as long as good singing is still the focus of the piece.

This is the list of some recommended literature for students to select from for their final POPs concert, if students have a piece in mind that is not on this list, they must request to perform it.

Girls Solos:

Somewhere Over the Rainbow - The Wizard of Oz
The Wizard and I - Wicked
Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again - Phantom of the Opera
Castle on a Cloud- Les Miserables
Mama Who Bore Me- Spring Awakening
Summertime- Porgy and Bess
You're Never Fully Dressed Without a Smile- Annie
Notice Me Horton- Seussical the Musical
Matchmaker- The Fiddler on the Roof
A Lovely Night- Cinderella
Part of Your World- The Little Mermaid

Boys Solos:

Put On Your Sunday Clothes- Hello Dolly
Gaston- Beauty and the Beast
There's No Business like Show Business- Annie Get your Gun
They Say that Falling in Love is Beautiful- Annie Get your Gun
Luck Be a Lady Tonight- Guys and Dolls
If I were a Rich Man- The Fiddler on the Roof
Put on a Happy Face- Bye, Bye, Birdie
The Kite- You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown
All I need is the Girl- Gypsy
A Girl Worth Fighting For- Mulan
One Jump Ahead- Aladdin
The Pirate King- Pirates of Penzance

2+ singers:

What is this Feeling- Wicked
If Momma was Married- Gypsy
People Will Say We're In Love
All 'Er Nothin' - Oklahoma

There is Nothin' like a Dame- South Pacific
Mama I'm a Big Girl Now- Hairspray
Anything You Can Do (I Can Do Better) - Annie Get Your Gun
Dream Girls- Dream Girls
I Want the Good Times Back- The Little Mermaid
A Whole New World- Aladdin
I'll Make a Man Out of You- Mulan
Be Our Guest- Beauty and the Beast
Scales and Arpeggios- The Aristocats

<http://www.jwi.org/page.aspx?pid=3058> - the Chiri Biri Bim story

<http://library.thinkquest.org/15413/history/history-bar-voc.htm> a quick look at baroque
opera