

## **Concert/Chamber Choir Syllabus for 2010-2011**

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Students will increase their musicianship skills by singing, performing, creating and listening to a wide variety of music from around the world. Students must register for both semesters of Concert Choir. Members of Chamber Choir must do the same. Concert Choir rehearses from 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on all "A" days. Chamber Choir rehearses from 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on all "B" days. Performances occur in November, February and May. In addition, we sing at various school events including the Spring Sing and Graduation.

### **Course Objectives:**

Students in this course will

- Demonstrate knowledge of choral music notation
- Develop basic sight-reading and ear-training skills
- Demonstrate improved singing technique
- Demonstrate mastery of choral parts
- Demonstrate mastery of theoretical concepts and historical/cultural context music performed
- Demonstrate technical vocal fluency, listening skills, analytical abilities and creative expression required for music, which is performed
- Demonstrate appropriate rehearsal behavior
- Fulfill attendance requirements for rehearsals, lessons and concerts.

### **Other goals for your singing career at MPA:**

1. Finding your voice. This not only means freeing your natural voice through healthy singing. It takes on a larger meaning, if you have discovered what you need to say or what you need to express through your singing.
2. Creating musicians, not just singers. By the time you graduate you should have the skills to be able to walk into a community choir, church choir or college choir and be a valuable member to that group. What does it take to be a member of a choir? You need to be able to read music, identify musical markings, know how to create phrases and among other things, you need to be able to bring the music and the text to life through your singing. That is the job of a choral musician and the conductor is to bring the composer's intentions out of the music and into the ear and heart of the listener.
3. Develop a commitment to the arts. Continue to explore, experience and support the arts. For some of us that may mean volunteering for arts organizations, subscribing to season tickets for the theater, or become artists and teachers yourselves.
4. Understanding the role music plays in our lives. Are you able to describe the impact and importance music has for you and society?

### **Attendance Policy:**

Mounds Park Academy has attendance policies for the 2010-2011 school year. Here is a

summary as they pertain to choir:

- 1) Any student who has more than four absences (whether excused or unexcused) in a quarter will receive a full letter grade reduction for Concert Choir that quarter.
- 2) Any student who has missed more than six classes will receive an F or an N in that quarter.
- 3) The fourth time a student is tardy to a particular class in a semester, the teacher will notify the Assistant Upper School Director. The student will be assigned detention.

Attendance information can be checked online. Any errors in attendance are **the responsibility of the student to correct**. Errors must be taken care of before the last week of the quarter. Please see Ms. Petersen in the upper school office or myself in case of a discrepancy. **IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE ACCURACY of ATTENDANCE.**

If you are in class and doing what you are supposed to do you will receive all of your daily points. If you have an unexcused absence you will receive a zero for the day. Tardiness will also result in a dramatic loss of points. You are responsible for making up any work when you are not in class.

**Passes:**

Passes will also be needed when you visit the office, a teacher, the nurse, etc. If you are late to choir you will need a pass to enter the classroom. If you are late to choir and without a pass you will be marked tardy. (See the **Attendance** policy stated above.)

**\*\*Grading Policy:**

Grades will be based upon the following components:

1. **Rehearsal Technique:** based upon using proper vocal technique, ability to remain focused, no food, always being on time and ready to work, no excuses, quality effort, and enthusiasm appropriate to the learning environment. **This is what you do every day in class and how it impacts the overall ensemble.**
2. **Performance Technique:** based upon attendance to class and concerts. Also based upon appropriate behavior during a performance, concert dress, concert readiness (knowledge of music), and concert performance.  
\*There are no excuses for missing a concert except illness or an emergency. In case of sickness or an emergency on the day of the concert, a signed note by the parent/guardian is required the day after the concert. If you fail to bring a note your absence is unexcused and you will not be able to make it up. You will be given an alternative assignment to make-up the lost points. If you do not complete the make-up assignment, or if your absence is unexcused, your grade will be lowered by at least one full letter grade.
3. **Singing Assessments:** based upon ability to sing your part accurately. For example, singing the correct pitches and rhythms, creating musical phrases, using dynamics, demonstrating proper vocal technique, etc.
4. **Voice Lessons/Sectionals:** based upon attendance, effort, and preparation. You will learn how the voice works, improve your individual vocal technique, and become a stronger musician and a more expressive human being. Each student is required to attend "X" number of voice lessons each semester. The lessons will cover basic vocal technique, sight singing, ear training, learning individual parts, solos and duets, etc. Ms. Yalon, Ms. Abbe and I will be teaching voice lessons. The lesson schedule will be posted on the choir blog:

<http://blogs.moundsparkacademy.org/uschoirs/>. Missed lessons will result in lost points and will affect your overall vocal and musical growth. Tardiness to lessons may result in lost points and/or credit. (During the year it may be necessary to hold sectional rehearsals in addition to, or in place of, voice lessons. Singers will be notified when those will occur.)

5. **Music Lessons Program:** The written testing program is designed for Music Lessons 1 and 2 Theory Program. You are required to finish two units per semester. Completed progress reports should be printed and handed in. Instructions for the units can be downloaded on the choir blog: <http://blogs.moundsparkacademy.org/uschoirs/>

(\*Voice Lesson Scores and Daily Rehearsal points will be updated online every couple of weeks. Your scores will not immediately appear online. Discrepancies can be prevented by tracking your own attendance to class and lessons.)

### **Behavior Expectations:**

1. Be in your assigned seat with your music on time. Class begins at 11:45 a.m.
2. Read the whiteboard (and your e-mail once a day) for the seating chart, announcements and the rehearsal order.
3. After Mr. Habermann plays the piano or sings, end conversations and stand-up to begin vocalizing.
4. Show appropriate involvement and enthusiasm while singing.
5. Do not talk at inappropriate times. (i.e., teacher is rehearsing a section, teacher is giving directions, another student has the floor)
6. Do not chew gum, eat, or drink a beverage in the choir room.
7. Use the bathroom between classes. There will be no bathroom breaks in the middles of class. There may be one or two emergencies during the course of one quarter. However, if you are asking to use the bathroom everyday you probably have a medical condition; therefore, you will be referred to the school nurse.
8. No water breaks. During the course of a rehearsal you may be thirsty. Bring a water bottle to class or, without causing a major disruption, get a drink at the fountain located around the corner from the choir office.
9. Phone use will be allowed sparingly before or after a class with the director's permission. (Cell phones must be turned off during class.)
10. Sing expressively at all times!

### **Concert Attire:**

You will be required to provide your own attire for Women's and Men's Chorale. **Men's Chorale** members need a black dress coat, white dress shirt with a collar (no knit shirts), a colorful tie, black dress pants (no jeans), black socks and dress shoes, and a black belt. **Women's Chorale** members need black pants and a long sleeved black blouse. (No scooped neck or sleeveless blouses.) Please wear neutral nylons, black dress shoes, low heels or flats. (No platform shoes or open-toed shoes). **Concert/Chamber Choir** – Men will wear blue robes, white collars, black dress pants, black socks and black shoes. Tennis shoes and brown dress shoes are not allowed. Women will wear blue robes, a long sleeved black blouse, black dress pants and plain black flats or low heels. Jewelry and make-up should be discrete and kept to a minimum. Concert dress and appearance are components of the overall grade. (See under Grading – See No. 2 **Performance Technique**.)

Robes will be assigned at the beginning of the year. Each member is responsible for his/her robe. Do not take someone else's robe. It is your responsibility to hang up your robe properly after each performance.

### **Choir Materials:**

You will be provided a music folder and a pencil for this class. (Chamber Choir members may need to purchase their folder from Mr. Habermann). Your music should be stored in your assigned choir slot. If the music is lost or damaged you will be responsible for replacing it.

### **How do I earn a Music Letter?**

1. Active participation in the music department throughout your high school career.
2. Students must maintain an “A-“ average in their music classes.
3. Exemplify the characteristics of an exemplary ensemble member. These include:

excellent rehearsal and lesson attendance  
positive attitude and a high level of effort  
respectful and responsible behavior  
leadership through example  
takes initiative  
shows growth through musicianship  
puts the ensemble ahead of self  
stay focused, attentive and engaged during rehearsals

4. Fill out and turn in the necessary paper work. A committee reviews applications for approval.

### **What’s the process for choosing music?**

1. My first consideration is always the music. Does this piece stand by itself as a work of art? Is it written well? Is there a structure or form to the music (rondo, ABA form, etc.)? Is there a good marriage between the text and music?
2. Then I consider the piece vocally (i.e. Are the parts written so that they are conducive to singing? Are we learning to improve our listening/reading skills? Are we stretching our range? Are we improving our breath control? Are we becoming more agile, flexible singers?) Basically, what can we learn about our singing through this music. Does it challenge the singer without overwhelming them?
3. Is it part of a healthy musical diet? As a music educator it is my responsibility to expose you to a wide variety of choral music throughout your high school career. You should be exposed to everything from Gregorian chant to popular music. However, the basis of western music and our choral tradition stems from European and North American roots; I believe it is especially important to study and rehearse the music of Palestrina, Bach, Mozart, Brahms, Copland, etc. Their works are the foundation of western music.
4. Can the lessons learned from this piece promote our other class objectives and goals? See the first page of syllabus.
5. If you have suggestions of music you would like to study please feel free to share your ideas with me.

\* Here's the bottom line: Is this piece worth studying, rehearsing, learning and listening to for an extended period of time? If I believe it is, then I program it. If not I start looking for something else. Sometimes I agonize over a concert series for days, weeks, months and even years. These decisions are not made lightly. Please respect my decisions. Oftentimes it's hard to appreciate or enjoy singing a piece of music until you have lived with it for a while. Give it a chance.

Music Terms used everyday in choir

pp	=	pianissimo - very soft
p	=	piano - soft
mp	=	mezzo piano - medium soft
mf	=	mezzo forte - medium loud
f	=	forte - loud
ff	=	fortissimo - very loud
fp	=	fortepiano - loud, then soft
sfz	=	sforzando - a sudden very loud accent
rall.	=	rallentando - to slow down immediately; broadening
rit.	=	ritardando - to slow down gradually
legato	=	smooth, flowing
staccato	=	short, detached
delicato	=	delicate
cres.	=	crescendo - gradually get louder
deces.	=	decrescendo - gradually get softer
unis.	=	unison - singing a single melody line; singing the same pitch at the same time
expressivo	=	expressive
molto	=	very, or much
al fine	=	to the end
rubato	=	uneven tempo
moderato	=	moderate
tacet	=	don't sing or play
D.C. al Fine	=	da capo al fine. Go back to the beginning and sing until you come to "fine."
D.S. al Fine	=	dal segno al fine. Go back to the sign and sing until you come to "fine."
D.S. al Coda	=	dal segno al coda. Go back to the sign and sing until you get to the coda sign, then sing the coda

**US Choir Calendar for the 2010-2011 School Year**

Wednesday, September 29 Concert Choir Rehearsal 6-9 p.m.

**Thursday, November 18 Upper School Vocal Concert 7:30 p.m.**

Monday, January 31 Tri-Metro Fine Arts Festival (TBD)

Wednesday, February 2 Cabaret Concert (Jazz Choir) 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 18 and Saturday, February 19 All-State Choirs reconvene

**Saturday, February 26 Upper School Vocal Concert 7:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, March 5 AIR Festival Rehearsal (TBD)**

March 14-26 All-State Choir Auditions (Various locations)

**Friday, May 13 AIR (Artists-in-Residence) Festival Concert (TBD)**

**Wednesday, May 18 US Vocal Concert 7:30 p.m.**

**Friday, May 27 Spring Sing 2:10 p.m.**

Wednesday, June 1 Chamber Choir Auditions 3:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, June 2 Jazz Choir Auditions 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 2 US Music Awards Night 7:00 p.m.

**Friday, June 10 Graduation Rehearsal 10:15 a.m.**

**Saturday, June 11 Graduation 5:00 p.m.**

