



September 2011

Dear Parents/Students:

Welcome to Orchestra! We have an exciting year planned and I am looking forward to making music with your student this year. Please read through the information below; I have outlined the year with my expectations for the students, and our events – some are required and others are optional.

**Concert Dress:** The students are required to wear the OHMI concert shirt/blouse with black pants and shoes for the boys and black skirts (at least knee length) or pants and shoes for the girls. See Mrs. Clark for information on sizing and ordering the shirts/blouses.

**Student Expectations:** Students are expected to be on time for class with their instruments, music, and a pencil each week. Practicing at home throughout the week is essential for personal learning as well as for the advancement of the group as a whole. Meeting one hour, one time a week provides an interesting challenge to the goal of moving through our method book. In this setting, regular practicing becomes a critical factor in an orchestra student's ability to retain and progress throughout the year. The most effective practice schedule is designed for practicing each day for a set time. Practicing for shorter time periods each day is better than longer time periods a couple of days each week. It's important during this time that students practice good posture and playing position. Please assist them by providing a music stand that can be kept in a quiet area of your home. I encourage violin and viola students to stand or sit in a firm chair when practicing. Sitting on the bed only encourages poor, slouching posture. Cellists of course will need a firm chair for their practice. The quality of the practice time is far more important and effective than the quantity! In keeping with the goal of quality home practice, the students will receive a detailed list of goals each week that asks them to check a box each time they practice that specific task during the week. I will look at their charts at the beginning of class each week. In addition, a new one will be distributed at the end of each class as many of the tasks will change with the weekly lesson plan.

**Grading:** Grades are available for this class, and will be based on the following criteria:

- Class participation, preparation, behavior & attendance will be 40%.
- Concert attendance will be 30%.
- Assessments – both written (homework assignments) and performance (students will be asked to play in small groups and/or my listening and assessing during rehearsal class time) will be 30%.

Grades are based on the work and improvement that the student has shown, not on their musical ability since each student has varying amounts of experience. If a student participates in Solo & Ensemble Festival, they will receive extra credit towards their grade because that involves a significant time investment outside of class.

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**Required events:**

Showcase Concert – Waterford, Monday Dec. 5, 2011

Troy, Tuesday Dec. 6, 2011

Note: This is a showcase concert for beginning classes only

December Concert – Waterford – Monday, Dec. 12, 2011 Clarkston Community Church

Troy – Tuesday, December 13, 2011 Rochester Church of Christ

Showcase Concert - Waterford – Monday, March 5, 2012

Troy - Tuesday, March 6, 2012

Note: This is a showcase concert for beginning and intermediate classes

February Pre – Festival Concert – Thursday, March 7, 2012 Waterford Kettering Performing Arts Center

Note: This is a concert is for both Philharmonic classes.

May Concert – Waterford – Monday, May 21, 2012

Troy – Tuesday, May 22, 2012

**Optional events:** (suggested, but not required)

- MSBOA District IV Winter MS Solo & Ensemble Festival – December 3, 2011; registration deadline TBA
- MSBOA District IV Spring MS Solo & Ensemble Festival –Saturday, April 14, 2012  
This Festival is for students in grades 7 through high school wishing to prepare a solo, duet, trio, etc. and sing for adjudicators to be rated. This is OPTIONAL, and will require preparation time outside of class. I encourage all students wanting to go to do so for the experience. Please see me for questions on Solo and Ensemble.

Please avoid planning vacations around the concerts. We need all the ensemble members there for the concert as this is a group effort and requires everyone! I look forward to working with you and your students this year. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

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