



Course Syllabus: Philharmonic Orchestra

Instructor Information: Allison Rhoades

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Class Description: Philharmonic level orchestra class focuses on continued technique development and the skills of ensemble playing. Shifting to and from third, fourth and fifth positions within two octave major scales through four sharps and flats is addressed along with the introduction of vibrato and additional experience with sight reading.

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.

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

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

September

Class introductions, class expectations, pass out folders and music. Review of basic key signatures and rhythm patterns while reinforcing skills of ensemble playing and responding to conductor non-verbal direction. Review and expand ear training while teaching students to tune their own instruments. Assess music theory knowledge; teach method to determine key signature and its relationship to finger patterns and scales. Assess posture, hand shapes and set individual goals for improvement while training class in series of pre-shifting exercises including the exploration of harmonics.

October

Introduce the concept of 3rd position for violins/violas and 3rd and 4th positions for cellos. Begin exercises for early vibrato. Continue to reinforce ear training and finger pattern awareness through method book assignments and weekly rehearsal of sheet music. Introduce dotted rhythm studies while expanding our writing and counting skills. Rehearse and refine ensemble skills including challenges of working with a stand partner. Discuss and develop tools for effective home practice while establishing personal goals for solo and ensemble festival.

November

The concept of shifting on the D and A string is introduced along with treble clef for viola, shifting on E for violin and G string for bass. Introduce sixteenth note studies while expanding our writing and counting skills. Expansion of vibrato exercises and training for transition of self-assessment of personal performance goals. Listening and assessing performances by other groups of concert literature in addition to recording and assessing class performance. Rehearse and refine sheet music in anticipation of December concert.

December

Students learn to notate position fingerings, musical symbols and articulation. All instruments now shifting and vibrating on all strings. Shifting between 1st and 2nd positions for violin/viola students. Reinforcement of music theory concepts including key signatures, intervals, finger patterns, rhythm patterns (both read and performed). Students participating in solo and ensemble select appropriate music and schedule rehearsal time. Continued rehearsal and refinement of music for December concert.

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January

Listen, identify and assess the elements of our December performance. Set personal and ensemble goals for next performance. Apply the method of STARS for sight-reading new sheet music. Introduce the concept of syncopation and play recognizable songs utilizing the concept. Incorporate singing the parts, shadow bowing and more. Apply our shifting and position skills to 2 octave major scales beginning with C and G and perform short songs specifically designed to reinforce new position facility.

February

Based on selection of concert literature, explore in greater depth the history, life and other compositions of selected composers. Expand two octave scales to include D and A. Viola students explore treble clef and 4th position. Students learn to mark half steps while reinforcing finger patterns, interval relationships and expand interval recognition both aurally and visually to include more advanced intervals as part of our continued growth of ear training. Introduce 6/8 rhythm and various combinations. Students will identify and perform songs that incorporate this meter.

March

Students attending Solo and Ensemble Festival this month intensify rehearsal schedule and perform for their class. Students learn the criteria of adjudication and assess peer's performance with appropriate positive and critical feedback. Additional scales of F and B-flat Major are added to our repertoire with violins experiencing 5th position for the first time. Bowing styles of loure, brushed staccato, col legno are explored. Continued rehearsal and refinement of concert literature for large group performance and adjudication next month.

April

Final two octave scale of E-flat major is introduced along with enharmonics, chromatics, chromatic scale and chromatic fingering. Through the preparation of concert literature, students are developing their ensemble, listening and self-assessment skills. Class will perform for the large group adjudication festival, followed by a class discussion of our performance and ways to improve for our final concert in May. New music is distributed and process for sight-reading reviewed.

May

Different forms of the minor scale are introduced and performed. Students are given a composition assignment with clear objectives to utilize in writing a short minor key composition. Individual conversations are held with students identifying personal goals for the summer and following year. Some will promote to symphony while others will remain in Philharmonic for an additional year. Continued rehearsal and refinement of literature to be performed at May concert. Information/brochures are distributed for summer music opportunities to continue musical growth.