



**POINT GREY SECONDARY SCHOOL - VANCOUVER
DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS
CHORAL MUSIC**

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Name: Senior Concert Choir (Grades 10-12)

School Year: 2020-2021

Instructor: Morgan Kuepfer

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This course is designed to prepare students to become passionate and professional lifelong musicians by engaging with social, cultural, and personal ideas through a wide range of challenging, yet rewarding, repertoire. Students in the Chamber Choir will develop skills and conceptual knowledge in vocal technique, sight-reading, music theory and history, singers' diction, performing musicianship, professionalism, and critical thinking to achieve personal and group goals of quality vocal performance and success as a musical ensemble. Lastly, students will have the opportunity to engage in a final self-inquiry project, as well as supplemental assignments and assessments, as a means to explore what "musicking" means to them.

Required Materials

- A black concert folder will be provided to every student on the first day of class.
- Sharpened pencil and eraser to make notes in the scores.
- A notebook and binder to take and organize notes in.
- Black concert dress attire, including black socks, black shoes, black dress pants/skirt (at least down to the knees) and a black top (at least $\frac{3}{4}$ arm length).

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Inquiry & Critical Thinking: Each student will have the opportunity to consider the various aspects of the material covered throughout the first three quarters in order to choose an end of year Inquiry Project. Therefore, completion of the weekly reflection journals will be a useful way to monitor individual interests and curiosities that will help guide the direction of each student's final project.

Self-Evaluations: At the end of every unit, each student will sign up for one "Teacher Check-In" where they/she/he will complete a self-evaluation to receive and apply constructive feedback,

and use discipline-specific language to communicate ideas and “pitch” their/her/his grade thus far.

Professionalism: Each student will develop work habits and characteristics of personal and ensemble integrity that are central to becoming a performing musician. Attendance and punctuality at rehearsals and performances, proper care for course material, suitable attire for concerts, and prompt completion of course work will be taken into account.

Sectionals: Each student will contribute/express personal voice, cultural identity, and perspective, demonstrate awareness of self, others, and audience, and build relationships and community within the ensemble through sectional rehearsals and video practice logs.

UNITS OF STUDY - LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Quarter 1

- **Movement & Vocal Technique:** The student will acquire various technical movement skills and strategies to develop body awareness, as well as develop basic technical vocal skills by demonstrating self care for and use of the voice to prevent performance-related injury, using proper breath regulation and control, using singing techniques specific to their/her/his voice type, and singing through transitions between vocal registers. [In-class assessments]
- **Sight-Reading:** The student will demonstrate the ability to sight-read rhythms (using Gordon beat-function rhythm syllables) and sight-sing melodies (using solfege syllables and Curwen hand signs) including both simple rhythms (quarter notes, half notes, whole notes and equivalent rests) and pitches in the pentatonic scale (*do, re, mi, sol, la*). [In-class assessments]
- **Diction:** The student will use the Waring tone system to apply principles of singers’ diction, including vowel formation, consonants, enunciation, and phonation to develop and refine technical and expressive skills. [In-class performance]
- **Music Theory:** The student will demonstrate the ability to define basic metre, duration, rhythm, dynamics, notation, terms in Italian and other language and expressive markings, as well as pitch, texture, register, and abbreviations specific to the repertoire. [In-class written assessment]
- **Critical Thinking & Reflection:** The student will reflect on rehearsal and performance experiences and musical growth, consider the function of their voice within the ensemble, describe and analyze the use of technique in musical composition and performance, and analyze styles of music in preparation for the final inquiry project. [Weekly reflection journals]

Quarter 2

- **Vocal Technique:** The student will develop various technical vocal skills and strategies by identifying and practicing self-care to prevent performance-related injury, demonstrating proper tone quality (e.g., resonance, head voice, chest voice, vibrato, straight tone, bend, fall-off, plop, ghost, shake), and demonstrating proper articulations and inflections specific to the repertoire. [In-class assessments]
- **Sight-Reading:** The student will demonstrate the ability to sight-read rhythms (using Gordon beat-function rhythm syllables) and sight-sing melodies (using solfege syllables and Curwen hand signs) including complex rhythms (quarter notes, half notes, whole notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes and equivalent rests) and pitches in the diatonic scale (*do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do*). [In-class assessments]
- **Diction:** The student will use the Waring tone system to apply principles of singers' diction, including vowel formation (diphthongs & triphthongs), consonants, and word/syllable emphasis to develop and refine technical and expressive skills. [In-class performance]
- **Music Theory:** The student will demonstrate the ability to define harmony, timbre, tonality, instrumentation, as well as methods, processes, and concepts used in creating and performing music specific to the repertoire. [In-class written assessment]
- **Critical Thinking & Reflection:** The student will reflect on rehearsal and performance experiences and musical growth, consider the function of their voice within the ensemble, describe and analyze the use of technique in musical composition and performance, analyze and reflect on the design of musical selections, and analyze styles of music in preparation for the final inquiry project. [Weekly reflection journals]

Quarter 3

- **Vocal Technique:** The student will develop their/her/his range and use ornamentations (e.g., sostenuto, portamento) specific to the repertoire. [In-class assessments]
- **Sight-Reading:** The student will demonstrate the ability to sight-read rhythms (using Gordon beat-function rhythm syllables) and sight-sing melodies (using solfege syllables and Curwen hand signs) including complex, dotted, and syncopated rhythms and pitches in the diatonic scale (*do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do*). [In-class assessments]
- **Diction:** The student will use the Waring tone system to apply principles of singers' diction, including vowel formation (diphthongs & triphthongs), consonants, and word/syllable emphasis to achieve balance and blend within the ensemble. [In-class performance]
- **Music History:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of traditional and contemporary First Peoples worldviews and cross-cultural perspectives, innovative artists from a variety of genres, contexts, periods, and cultures, and a range of global and intercultural musicians, movements, and genres specific to the repertoire. [In-class written assessment]

- **Critical Thinking & Reflection:** The student will reflect on rehearsal and performance experiences and musical growth, consider the function of their voice within the ensemble, and document and compile resources that inform musical interpretation in preparation for the final inquiry project. [Weekly reflection journals]

Quarter 4

- **Vocal Technique:** The student will continue to develop and refine singing techniques specific to individual voices, as previously mentioned, in order to perform a diverse repertoire of choral music that includes multiple perspectives, themes, and contexts during the end of year performance. [School concert]
- **Music History:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the influences of historical and contemporary societies on musical works and the ethics of cultural appropriation and plagiarism. [In-class written assessment]
- **Critical Thinking & Reflection:** The student will reflect on rehearsal and performance experiences and musical growth, consider the function of their voice within the ensemble, engage in dialogue with peers in response to feedback, and develop gestural vocabulary that communicates musical intentions. [Weekly reflection journals]
- **Final Inquiry Project:** The student will create a final project in either a written, visual, audio (or any combination) format based on a topic of their/her/his own choosing. The student may, but is not limited to: collaborate to express personal voice, story, cultural identity, and perspective; connect musical performance with personal narrative; evaluate and demonstrate understanding of the creative process; investigate and describe the relationships between music and personal, social, or cultural change; evaluate personal, educational, and professional opportunities in music and music-related industries; and/or evaluate and demonstrate personal and social responsibility associated with creating, performing, and responding to choral music. [End of year project]

III. GRADING CRITERIA

This course is graded using a combination of a teacher-evaluated “points” system that will be converted to a percentage grade, as well as student self-evaluations. Seeing as it has been noted that students will achieve a high level of success the more they have studied and engaged in a particular concept or idea, more “points” will be assigned to the end of the year than the beginning. Additionally, students will be expected to fill in weekly reflection journals in preparation for the final inquiry project, as well as complete a self-evaluation at the end of each unit in order to “pitch” their self-assessed grade (based on their achievement of the above-stated objectives) to the teacher and have a follow up conversation regarding their progress throughout the year.

| | Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 | Total |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Professionalism & Participation | 10 points | 10 points | 10 points | 10 points | 40 points |
| Sectionals | 5 points | 5 points | 5 points | 5 points | 20 points |
| Vocal Technique | 5 points | 5 points | 10 points | 15 points | 35 points |
| Sight-Reading | 5 points | 5 points | 10 points | 15 points | 35 points |
| Diction | 5 points | 5 points | 10 points | 15 points | 35 points |
| Music Theory & History | 5 points | 10 points | 5 points | 10 points | 30 points |
| Reflection Journals and Final Inquiry Project | 10 points | 10 points | 10 points | 45 points | 75 points |
| Total | 45 points | 50 points | 60 points | 115 points | 270 points |

IV. ATTENDANCE POLICY: (Refer to school policy)

Regarding school concerts and community performance: Students will be given two unexcused absences from any concerts and/or performances. Any subsequent absences will need to be approved by the course instructor at least 24 hours in advance and a doctor's note may be required. Please note that students attendance and participation in in school concerts and community performances will count towards their course participation grade. Additional work required to make up any absences may be required and will be communicated by the course instructor.

V. PRIMARY INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND MATERIALS

This course uses Gordon beat-function rhythm syllables, Koldály/Curwen hand signs, solfege pitch syllables, and the Waring tone system within the context of large ensemble rehearsals, sectional and/or small group rehearsals, and individual coaching. Students will also participate in school concerts, including an end of year school-wide performance, and community performances throughout the year. Materials include choral music and scores, teacher created handouts and exercises, and various written quizzes and tests.

VI. ENRICHMENT / REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES: May include off-campus choral ensemble performance and festivals, guest speakers and visiting clinicians/conductors, and excursions to amateur and professional vocal and choral performances.