

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Trumbull, Connecticut

Vocal Ensembles
High School
Music
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Vocal Ensembles

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The Trumbull Board of Education will continue to take Affirmative Action to ensure that no persons are discriminated against in its employment.

CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

The Trumbull school community, which engages in an environment conducive to learning, believes that all students will read and write effectively, therefore communicating in an articulate and coherent manner. All students will participate in activities that address problem-solving through critical thinking. Students will use technology as a tool in decision-making. We believe that by fostering self-confidence, self-directed and student-centered activities, we will encourage independent thinking and learning. We believe ethical conduct to be paramount in sustaining our welcoming school climate.

We believe:

- Music is an inextricable part of the human experience, and every individual is inherently musical.
- Every student should be assured a high-quality course of music instruction, taught by qualified music educators.
- Music is a pillar of cultural heritage and a means for interdisciplinary learning.
- Music is an essential, core subject, and providing a musical education is a necessary part of educating the whole child. Therefore, every student should be offered opportunities to perform, create, respond, and connect musically.
- Learning music gives students a mode of artistic expression, a sense of music appreciation, and the tools needed for becoming lifelong musical learners.
- All individuals should have the high-quality resources and facilities necessary to achieve success within a challenging curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Vocal Ensembles is an elective course offered by the Trumbull Public Schools music department that meets outside of the school day. This course is designed for the vocal student who wants to learn/refine his or her individual and ensemble skills as a member of a voice specific ensemble: namely, Women's Ensemble or Men's Ensemble. As a member also of one of the three groups that meet during the school day, the student will have a clear and specific introduction to individual and ensemble skills, musical expression, music literacy, historical principles leading to a greater understanding of a variety of repertoire, and professional performance practice. As a member of Vocal Ensembles these skills are reinforced and additional skills and techniques are introduced specific to performance in a women's group or men's group.

In accordance with National and State Standards, choral music students will be given the opportunity to learn to analyze and think critically, think and express creatively, communicate and collaborate artistically, and explore and share global connections.

PHILOSOPHY

Music is part of the human experience. We believe that every child is inherently musical, that music is an essential core subject, and that providing a musical education is a necessary part of educating the whole child. Accordingly, every child should be offered opportunities to perform, create and respond musically. Learning music gives students a mode of artistic expression and provides tools needed for becoming lifelong musical learners.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Name

Vocal Ensembles

Prerequisites

An elective course open to any ninth-, tenth-, eleventh-, or twelfth-grade student who is a member of one of the choir classes that meets during the school day. No audition is required.

Course Credit

One-half credit in Music

One extended class period weekly for a full year

General Description of the Course

This course is designed for a group of ninth-, tenth-, eleventh-, or twelfth-grade students interested in singing in an SSAA group (Women's Ensemble) or TTBB group (Men's Ensemble). This course involves the application of good vocal training through the study and performance of choral literature from all periods of music history specific to these voice parts. Both accompanied and unaccompanied music will be performed, and some of the repertoire will be in a foreign language. Vocal Ensembles will perform at all school concerts and at other selected events. This choir is open to all students in grades 9-12 without an audition, and it is a prerequisite to be part of one of the choral groups that meets during the school day. There should be a desire to learn/review basic music reading and vocal technique skills specific to SSAA and TTBB groups. Additional areas of study will be: music reading, voice production, and musical interpretation.

Major Projects

Students will perform at all school concerts.

Assessments

There will be a major assessment at the end of the year along with periodic written and performance based assessments.

GOALS

Students will:

- Develop their singing voice using proper posture, breathing technique, and placement.
- Develop the skills and techniques specific to performance in a women's group or men's group.
- Develop the skills necessary to produce a blended and balanced sound with good intonation.
- Develop their ability to sight-read musical notation.
- Develop an understanding of the historical and theoretical principles necessary to produce an informed and musical performance.
- Work towards proper concert demeanor and professional performance practice

Within each unit, students who possess a higher level of ability due to higher grade level or experience will be able to expand on unit goals by:

- Assuming a leadership position in Concert Choir as an official Group Leader
- Becoming a Sectional Rehearsal Assistant
- Performing a solo section of the choral repertoire with the group
- Having opportunities to perform higher level music as a member of a group or individually
- Having additional performance opportunities, either in school or in community
- Preparing solo repertoire for Western Region/All-State auditions
- Upon acceptance, preparing choral music repertoire for Western Region Chorus or All-State Chorus
- Having the opportunity to apply for acceptance into the Tri-M Music Honor Society

MUSIC STANDARDS

The Performance Standards align with the 2014 National Core Arts Standards for Music.

I. CREATING

- Imagine: The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work emerge from a variety of sources.
- Plan and Make: Musicians' creative choices are influenced by their expertise, context, and expressive intent.
- Evaluate and Refine: Musicians evaluate and refine their work through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.
- Present: Musicians' presentation of creative work is the culmination of a process of creation and communication.

II. PERFORMING

- Select: Performers' interest in and knowledge of musical works, understanding of their own technical skill, and the context for a performance influence the selection of repertoire.
- Analyze: Analyzing creators' context and how they manipulate elements of music provides insight into their intent and informs performance.
- Interpret: Performers make interpretive decisions based on their understanding of context and expressive intent.
- Rehearse, Evaluate, and Refine: To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.
- Present: Musicians judge performance based on criteria that vary across time, place, and cultures. The context and how a work is presented influence the audience response.

III. RESPONDING

- Select: Individuals' selection of musical works is influenced by their interests, experiences, understandings, and purposes.
- Analyze: Response to music is informed by analyzing context (social, cultural, and historical) and how creators and performers manipulate the elements of music.
- Interpret: Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.
- Evaluate: The personal evaluation of musical works and performances is informed by analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

IV. CONNECTING

- Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding.
 - Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding.

Unit 1

Proficiency in Performance

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate an understanding of the basic layout of the SSAA or TTBB choral score
- MU: Pr5.3.E.8a Demonstrate an understanding of the range and tone quality parameters for specific voice parts
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate proper posture, seated and standing
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate an understanding of basic breathing techniques
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate competence with proper voice placement using a lifted and activated face
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate proficiency in the basics of proper diction in English and Roman Liturgical Latin
- MU: Pr5.3.E.8a Demonstrate competence with choral balance and blend between and among individuals and voice parts
- MU:Re7.2.E.8a Demonstrate proficiency in performing choral music of various musical styles and appropriate to the grade level and group competency, with a goal of performing level 3-4 repertoire
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a

Essential Questions

- How do I transfer the skills I am developing into my performance of the repertoire?
- What adjustments should I make to achieve a unified sound as a member of Vocal Ensembles?

Focus Questions

- Given my range, tone quality and experience, what voice part would be appropriate for me to sing in Women's or Men's Ensemble?
- What areas in my posture and technique need refinement so I can be a better singer?
- What do I need to do to produce a free and clear tone?
- What exercises can I do to improve my breathing?
- What should I listen for when I am singing as a member of Vocal Ensembles?

Scope and Sequence

- Voice part identification
- Proper posture seated and standing
- Layout of the choral score
- Proper breathing and voice placement
- Proper diction
- Rehearse repertoire

Instructional / Teaching Strategies

- Teacher guides the student to discover the appropriate voice part to sing in Vocal Ensembles
- Teacher demonstrates and students practice/review proper posture, seated and standing
- Teacher explains the intricacies of the SSAA and TTBB choral score layout
- Students practice/review exercises for proper breathing and voice placement
- Teacher models and students practice/review proper diction
- Students rehearse repertoire of various musical styles and appropriate to the grade level and group competency using the skills introduced in class

Evaluation / Assessment Methods

- On a regular basis, the teacher will give immediate verbal feedback to students regarding the skills introduced, the accuracy of notes, rhythms, dynamics, diction, etc.
- Students will be assessed periodically on an individual basis on the skills, competencies, and concepts introduced in class
- Students will be asked to evaluate their own performances through in-class discussions as well as written reflections

Time Allotment

- Approximately 12 weeks.

(Please note that a number of the concepts, such as proper posture, breathing, intonation, placement, diction, etc., introduced in Unit 1 will be reinforced and refined throughout the remainder of the year and are points of study and refinement throughout the careers of professional musicians.)

Unit 2

Refinement and Extension of Proficiency

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Continue score study including the navigation of the SSAA and TTBB closed and open choral score, musical terms, and musical symbols
- MU:Re9.1.E.1a Demonstrate an ability to evaluate performances of other SSAA and TTBB groups
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate competence with proper mouth position necessary for a blended sound
- MU:Re7.2.E.8a Demonstrate an awareness of proper intonation as an individual performer and as a member of Vocal Ensembles
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a
- MU:Pr4.3.E.8a Sing choral music repertoire demonstrating an understanding of phrasing and expression
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate proficiency in proper concert demeanor
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate an understanding of the differences in presentation from an SATB group to an SSAA or TTBB group

Essential Questions

- How do we judge the quality of a performance?
- How can my performance achieve a connection with an audience?

Focus Questions

- By what means should I evaluate the quality of a performance?
- How does the position of my mouth affect my individual sound as well as the overall sound of the group?
- What do I need to do to sing in tune?
- What tone quality and range adjustments will I need to make as a member of Vocal Ensembles?
- In what way does proper breathing affect phrasing?
- What does it look like to have proper concert demeanor?

Scope and Sequence

- Mouth position and vowel modification
- Performance evaluation
- Individual and group intonation
- Phrasing and expression
- Proper Concert Demeanor
- Rehearse repertoire

Instructional / Teaching Strategies

- Based on informed analysis and established criteria, students evaluate performances of other SSAA and TTBB groups
- Students practice range and tone quality exercises necessary for success as a member of an SSAA or TTBB group
- Teacher models and students practice correct mouth positions for all vowels
- Students practice exercises for proper voice placement, support, and mouth position for intonation
- Teacher models and students practice expressive singing and good phrasing
- Through discussion and observation of professional groups, students practice proper concert demeanor
- Students rehearse repertoire of various musical styles and appropriate to the grade level and group competency using the skills introduced in class

Evaluation / Assessment Methods

- On a regular basis, the teacher will give immediate verbal feedback to students regarding the skills introduced, the accuracy of notes, rhythms, dynamics, diction, etc.
- Students will be assessed periodically on an individual basis on the skills, competencies and concepts introduced in class
- Students will be asked to evaluate their own performances through in-class discussions as well as written reflections

Time Allotment

- Approximately 12 weeks.

Unit 3

Achievement of Greater Technical Competency

(Please note that the concepts introduced in Units 1 and 2 will be reinforced and refined during Unit 3)

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate an ability to perform both a cappella and accompanied choral music
- MU:Re8.1.E.1a Explain and support interpretations of the expressive intent of musical works
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Demonstrate proficiency in proper diction in English, Roman Liturgical Latin, and additional foreign languages
- MU:Pr4.2.E.1a Demonstrate an understanding of basic historical and theoretical principles necessary to produce an informed and musical performance
- MU:Re7.2.E.1a
- MU:Cr1.1.E.8a Create and perform eight-measure melodies using proper notation in a given key
- MU:Re9.1.E.1a Assess their individual and group performances demonstrating an understanding of the concepts, skills, and terminology studied in Units 1-3
- MU:Pr5.3.E.8a Demonstrate an ability to troubleshoot their individual performances and the performance of the ensemble using the skills learned throughout the year
- MU:Re7.2.E.8a Demonstrate proficiency in performing choral music of various musical styles and appropriate to the grade level and group competency, with a goal of performing level 3-4 repertoire
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to present an informed musical performance?
- How do we discern musical creators' expressive intent?

Focus Questions

- What are the rules for proper pronunciation of Roman Liturgical Latin as well as the additional foreign languages encountered in the repertoire?
- How do I identify and support interpretations of the expressive intent of musical works?
- What tone quality changes should I make for the performance of repertoire in a variety of styles and genres and specific to an SSAA or TTBB ensemble?
- How will I select and develop musical ideas?
- How will I assess my individual performance as a member of Vocal Ensembles and of the group as a whole?
- Based on my assessment, how might I refine my performance as a member of Vocal Ensembles and of the group as a whole?

Scope and Sequence

- Perform a cappella music
- Evidence to support interpretations of musical works
- Basic rules for proper pronunciation of Roman Liturgical Latin and additional foreign languages
- Tone Quality variations for music of different styles and genres
- Creation of eight-measure melodies
- Self-assessment and group performance assessment
- Troubleshoot challenges uncovered in assessment
- Rehearse repertoire

Instructional / Teaching Strategies

- Students practice the strategies for successful performance of a cappella music
- Students support an interpretation of a musical work, citing as evidence the elements of music, contexts, and the setting of the text
- Teacher models and students practice proper diction for Roman Liturgical Latin as well as additional foreign languages encountered in the repertoire
- Students listen to examples of tone quality variations in music of varying styles and genres and incorporate these changes into their performance of the repertoire
- Students create and perform eight measure melodies using the skills learned in sight reading practice
- Students evaluate their own performance and that of the group as a whole
- Using the skills and understandings learned in Units 1 and 2, students troubleshoot the problem spots uncovered in the evaluation
- Students rehearse repertoire of various musical styles and appropriate to the grade level and group competency using the skills introduced in class

Evaluation / Assessment Methods

- On a regular basis, the teacher will give immediate verbal feedback to students regarding the skills introduced, the accuracy of notes, rhythms, dynamics, diction, etc.
- Students will be assessed periodically on an individual basis on the skills, competencies, and concepts introduced in class
- Students will be asked to evaluate their own performances through in-class discussions as well as written reflections

Time Allotment

- Approximately 12 weeks

Technology Competency Standards

1. Creativity and Innovation - Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology.
2. Communication and Collaboration - Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.
3. Research and Information Fluency - Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information.
4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making - Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources.
5. Digital Citizenship - Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.

RESOURCE FILE/ APPENDICES

Rating Scale – REPERTOIRE

Name: _____

Pitch	5	Performs all pitches correctly
	4	Performs most pitches correctly
	3	Performs some pitches correctly
	2	Performs a few pitches correctly
	1	Performs no pitches correctly, but attempts the exercise
Rhythm	5	Performs all rhythms correctly
	4	Performs most rhythms correctly
	3	Performs some rhythms correctly
	2	Performs a few rhythms correctly
	1	Performs no rhythms correctly, but attempts the exercise
Tone Quality	5	Performs with a free and clear tone
	4	Performs with a mostly free and clear tone
	3	Performs with a somewhat free and clear tone
	2	Performs with a minimally free and clear tone
	1	Performs without a free and clear tone
Expression	5	Performs with a lifted and expressive face
	4	Performs with a mostly lifted and expressive face
	3	Performs with a somewhat lifted and expressive face
	2	Performs with a minimally lifted and expressive face
	1	Performs without a lifted and expressive face

Self-Assessment – Winter Concert

Name: _____

1. Posture

During the performance were your:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------|------------|
| i. Shoulders Back? | very little | somewhat | completely |
| ii. Ribs Lifted? | very little | somewhat | completely |
| iii. Feet Slightly Separated? | very little | somewhat | completely |
| iv. Knees straight, but not locked? | very little | somewhat | completely |

2. Activation of the Face

During the performance:

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|----------|------------|
| i. Were your cheeks lifted? | very little | somewhat | completely |
| ii. Were your eyes bright? | very little | somewhat | completely |
| iii. Was your face expressive? | very little | somewhat | completely |
| iv. Did your face reflect an understanding of the text? | very little | somewhat | completely |

3. Mouth Position

During the performance was your mouth positioned to produce:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|----------|------------|
| i. An open sound? | very little | somewhat | completely |
| ii. Tall vertical vowels? | very little | somewhat | completely |

4. Overall contribution

a. During the performance were you:

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|----------|------------|
| i. Focused, and free from distractions? | very little | somewhat | completely |
| ii. A vocal leader in your section? | very little | somewhat | completely |

5. From the results of this assessment, what will be your focus for improvement as we move forward to the Second Semester?

Self-Assessment

Name:

Daily Performance in Class

1. Have music folder, all of the music, and a pencil:
 - a. I have my music and pencil every day in class
 - b. I almost always have my music and pencil in class
 - c. I sometimes have my music and pencil in class
 - d. I rarely have my music and pencil in class
2. Make all appropriate marks in the music:
 - a. I always mark my music even without being reminded
 - b. I always mark my music when reminded
 - c. I sometimes mark my music
 - d. I rarely mark my music
3. Follow instructions for proper Vocal Production: Posture:
 - a. I always have proper posture, seated or standing, even without being reminded
 - b. I always have proper posture, seated or standing, when reminded
 - c. I sometimes have proper posture
 - d. I rarely have proper posture
4. Vocal Production: Breathing:
 - a. I always use proper breathing technique even without being reminded
 - b. I always use proper breathing technique when reminded
 - c. I sometimes use proper breathing technique
 - d. I rarely use proper breathing technique
5. Vocal Production: "Activation" of the face:
 - a. I always sing with a lifted and activated face, even without being reminded
 - b. I always sing with a lifted and activated face when reminded
 - c. I sometimes sing with a lifted and activated face
 - d. I rarely sing with a lifted and activated face
6. Follow procedures for sight singing:
 - a. I always follow procedures for sight singing
 - b. I sometimes follow procedures for sight singing
 - c. I rarely follow procedures for sight singing
7. Participation in class discussions regarding repertoire, vocal production, performance evaluation, and theoretical and historical issues:
 - a. I often participate in class discussions on a volunteer basis
 - b. I sometimes participate in class discussions on a volunteer basis
 - c. I participate in class discussions when called upon
 - d. I rarely participate in class discussions
8. Full participation & cooperation:
 - a. I fully participate and cooperate on a daily basis
 - b. I oftentimes participate and cooperate
 - c. I sometimes participate and cooperate
 - d. I rarely participate and cooperate

CURRENT REFERENCES

- National Core Arts Standards – NafME <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>
- <http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/beginlst/med2vox.html>
- <http://singers.com/group/world/>
- *American Choral Directors Association Journal*
- *Music Educators Journal*
- *Music for Sight Singing* – Robert Ottman
- *A Choral Approach to Sight Singing* – Emily Crocker and Joyce Eilers
- *90 Days to Sight Reading Success* – Stan McGill and H. Morris Stevens
- *Essential Sight Singing* - Emily Crocker and John Leavitt
- *Choral Warm-Up Collections* – Sally Albrecht and Klaus Heizmann
- Octavos from various periods and in a variety of styles