

# ENCORE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Ms. Lisa Forkish  
[lforkish@oakarts.org](mailto:lforkish@oakarts.org)

Fall 2014- Spring 2015  
Tu/Th: Periods 4 and 5

## **Course Description:**

Encore is an advanced audition-only Middle School a cappella ensemble, made up of 6 - 10 students, grades 6-8. Students in this ensemble will be exposed to a wide variety of complex 4 to 8-part choral arrangements. The primary emphasis will be on learning contemporary repertoire from the soul, pop, rock and R&B idioms. The style of arrangements will pull from the contemporary a cappella model, in which there are one or two lead vocalists, backed by singers imitating the sound of instruments. Encore will differ from our advanced high school ensemble, Vocal Rush, in that they will not feature vocal percussion. Encore is a repertoire-driven ensemble and requires learning music at a quick and advanced steady pace. Students will need to spend a great deal of time outside of class learning Encore's repertoire and should put in approximately 3 – 5 hours a week of outside preparation for the course. As well, students will have to do regular exercises and drills to maintain their theory and aural skills as they pertain to the repertoire at hand. Encore will perform semi-frequently at the school, as well as out in the community, and students are expected to handle the demands of a moderately busy performance schedule. In addition, students in Encore are expected to be exceptional leaders and role models in the School of Vocal Music, both in artistic merit and personal character.

## **Course Objective:**

Encore aims to achieve a high level of contemporary a cappella singing through a rigorous rehearsal process. It requires dedication from all students both inside and outside of class. Student leadership, passion, drive, and integrity are crucial to membership. Students will also be expected to possess an advanced level of sight-reading and musicianship skills. Any students struggling with advanced sight-reading, Theory, or basic musicianship expected in class will be expected to do outside work to better these skills. Struggling students in Encore will be required to attend weekly theory tutoring at school to work on Encore repertoire. Encore students will learn repertoire at a fast pace, and will choreograph their own songs, requiring an exceptional amount of focus, dedication and respect for a productive, no-nonsense rehearsal environment. Students must aim to be ambassadors of Encore and OSA, exemplifying what it means to be a model student and upholding the absolute highest standards of professionalism, poise and humility at the school and within the community at large.

## **Course Requirements:**

In order to be eligible for Encore, the department's top Middle School ensemble, Vocal Music students must pass our audition process. Once in the ensemble, students must demonstrate mastery in the following areas:

- Strong sight-reading ability
- Strong ability as a soloist
- Ability to hold your part solidly on a 5-part arrangement
- Ability to work independently on music, solidifying notes and rhythms on your own
- Ability to recognize all intervals and their quality
- Ability to work and read music in complex time signatures
- Ability to self-direct in an ensemble setting

- Stylistic versatility – ability to sing in a variety of musical genres
- Strong stage presence and performance acumen
- Ability to move while singing and learn choreography without struggle
- Knowledge of choral markings and vocabulary
- Mastery of past repertoire
- Strong sense of leadership and accountability
- Active in the department -- auditions for shows, school musical, etc.
- Past Behavior Evaluation: punctuality, regular attendance in rehearsal and performances, focus during rehearsal (no side-talking), preparation for class, consistent positive attitude and strong work ethic, professionalism in and outside classroom, maturity, reliability (no excuses), singing posture and presence in class, accountability, and a strong sense of purpose.

### **Probation:**

Due to the nature of Encore being a small advanced ensemble, it is essential that every member of the group be able to successfully hold their part in a 4 – 6 part setting. Often students are singing one-on-a-part and note, rhythmic, and pitch accuracy are essential to the overall sound of the group. In order to maintain placement in Encore, students must demonstrate strong musicianship skills and score successfully (a grade of 80% or above) on their weekly rep checks. Rep checks are a way for Ms. Forkish to assess a student's knowledge of their repertoire, ability to hold their part, and knowledge of the music they are reading. Students that regularly receive low scores on rep checks will be put on probation for a period of one month. During this probation period, they must attend mandatory theory tutoring sessions on Thursdays and Fridays during lunch to work on their Encore repertoire. If, over the course of one month, a student is still receiving consistent low scores on their rep checks (3 or more) and demonstrating difficulty with the advanced concepts and repertoire of Encore, they will be asked to move to Select Ensemble for the remainder of the year. This decision is entirely up to the discretion of Ms. Forkish.

### **Course Policies:**

- **Students are required to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA to remain in Encore.** To further clarify, students must receive a passing grade (70% and above) in all courses. Grade checks will take place at the end of every quarter. If a student does not meet this requirement, they will be moved to Select Ensemble.
- Students will receive 0 out of 15 participation points for each absence. **In order to have the absence excused, a parent/guardian must send an email notification with the reason for student's absence within one week's time.**
- Students are required to learn a large portion of their music outside of class, as designated by Ms. Forkish. Rep Assignments will be given on a weekly basis with a Rep Check taking place one week after the assigned date. **If a student fails three or more rep checks, they will be placed on probation (see above).**
- All performances, fundraising events, trips, and retreats are mandatory. **If a student has two or more unexcused absences OR four or more excused absences from gigs/trips/other extra-curricular events, it will result in the student being placed on probation.** Ms. Forkish will most often be able to give advanced notice for extra-curricular gigs and events, but students must also be flexible and ready to jump in on short notice. It is the expectation that students in Encore place a very high priority on the

group and all of their endeavors.

- Students must demonstrate great to exceptional classroom behavior in Encore and all other OSA courses. **After three reports of unsatisfactory behavior (including but not limited to: showing disrespect to teacher and/or peers, engaging in cross-talk, not keeping up with coursework or making up exams, skipping class, and leaving class for extended periods of time) a meeting will be held with the student, parent/guardian(s) and faculty and the student will be placed on probation.**
- **No eating, chewing gum, or use of cell phones**, including calls/texts to or from parents – students should ask to go to the main office to make a call but may not answer their phone under any circumstances in the classroom. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in deducted daily participation points.
- Students will respect and follow all OSA policies outlined in the student handbook. **Students will arrive on time, prepared and focused.**

#### Course Grading Criteria:

- **Attendance and Participation (15 points per day)**
  - 5 points off for each tardy
  - 5 points off if student has no binder / music
  - 5-10 points off for unsatisfactory classroom behavior *Note: see handbook for Vocal Department behavior expectations*
- **Rep Checks (Point value varies depending on the number of measures tested in each song)**
- **Gigs/Trips/Fundraising Events (25-100 points each)**
  - Gigs are mandatory for all Encore members
  - If a student has an excused absence (must be notified a minimum of 24 hours prior to gig date), they are permitted to do a make-up assignment in lieu of participating in the event. Make-up work is due the following school day, without exception.

#### Required Materials:

- Pencil and eraser
- Binder with all Encore music, three-hole-punched and labeled
- Water Bottle

“I \_\_\_\_\_ and my parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_ understand what is required of me as a member of Encore. I understand that concerts and gigs are mandatory, and that my music must be learned on my own time if I am to be successful in this class. I commit to being prepared for every rep check, occurring one week after a new piece is handed out. I will be a model student, demonstrating leadership, positive attitude and an excellent work ethic in the Vocal Department, in my academic classes and in my community .

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ PRINT Parent / Guardian name

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ PRINT Student name

*is subject to change with or without advance notice*