

Musical Theater Choir

Vocal Music Room 205
Periods 8 and 9 Wednesdays
Ms. McKenzie Semester I and II

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Course Description

This choir is an ensemble that will study and perform the great music that has emerged from musical theater. One of the most exciting aspects of this select repertoire is that it is some of the most beloved music of this country. Musical theater is a tradition born in this country out of vaudeville and musical revues and the Greek Amphitheatre! We will explore musical theatre from the beginning of the last century to the exciting evolution of the now popular rock and hip hop musicals. Also included in the repertoire will be some important music from film and television. We will explore the performance traditions, styles and “art” of the musical. Students will also be introduced to the vocal requirements of musical theater. One of the major strengths of this focus is that it gives our students an opportunity to expand their vocal performance to drama, movement and storytelling. It also looks into the behind-the-scenes workings of a production – directing, playwriting, producing, staging.

Course Objectives

This course provides students with the opportunity to:

- Understand musical theater
- Learn the timeline and history of musical theater
- Understand the import of musical theater in the performing arts
- Perform varied repertoire from the diverse styles of musical theater
- Learn and execute different vocal techniques and applications that are specific to musical theater
- Read music in a variety of voicings, meters and tempos
- Understand the art and significance of dynamics and arrangements
- Interpret melodic structure and lyric content
- Develop music sight reading skills
- Learn the structure of musical theater: book, lyrics, musical numbers, dance numbers
- Understand the process of a musical from inception to opening night
- Understand the historical background and cultural significance of the musical

Classroom Policies and Procedures

- All OSA policies as outlined in the **Student Handbook** will be respected as well as all policies in the **Vocal Department Handbook**
- It is against OSA policy to accept late assignments. Exceptions are handled on a case-by-case basis by the instructor. Students will be given extension day(s) to complete missed assignments for excused absences based on the length of the absence.
- In order to maintain a safe and organized environment, students must handle all supplies and materials with respect. All students are responsible for setting up

and cleaning up project materials, and properly storing all materials at the end of each class.

- No talking during rehearsal unless specified by teacher. The rehearsal process is to be honored as the opportunity to acquire knowledge that is imperative and invaluable in the learning process for vocal students.
- Must have a pencil (highlighter recommended) at EVERY rehearsal to make notes on music. Pencils are mandatory.
- No late homework accepted unless student has an excused absence.
 - Note: for an excused absence, a student must turn in the assignment the day after he/she returns to school. There are no exceptions.
 - Students are expected to come to class on time.

Required Materials

- Must bring pencils, required black 3-ring binder and filled water bottle to class daily

California State Standards Covered

All academic courses are aligned with California State Standards. For a comprehensive listing of state standards, visit: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

Course Outline

What is musical theater? What distinguishes this category from a show with music? What is the history of musical theater? How did musical theater come to be? Where did it begin? We will discuss musical theater and its influence and significance in the world.

Singing in musical theater. What are the vocal techniques, purpose of and stylings of singing in the theater? Who are some of the great vocalists in the history of musical theater? What are the distinguishing factors in their style and mastery? We will answer all of these questions that delve into the singer's relationship and major significance in musical theater. We will also do particular work with vocal strength, "staying power" and artistic discipline that is required in this field of vocal performance.

Musical: The Production

What are the major elements of a musical production? How does a musical move from its inception to Broadway? Who are the major players in producing a musical? This discussion will involve understanding what the producer, the director, the stage manager and some other key players do. This is, of course, an overview for the students to have an understanding of the full scope of musical theater.

Musical: The Parts

This is learning about the basic forms of musical theater – how they differ and are similar. Understanding the book, lyrics and music. How they work together. How interpretation in this setting is different.

Musical: The Songbooks

We will discover and experience musicals that vary in time, style, composer, form. We will look at significant ground-breaking musicals that changed this genre of theater and show music. We will also look at how music of the musical has influenced the music of our time.

Performance of the Music

We will look at what is required to do the specific work of a ‘choir’ doing music that was intended as solos and production numbers. How do we adjust the music within and for our context? How do we honor the music with what we do?

Repertoire

This becomes the most important factor in this learning, creative and artistic experience. We will spend much of our time singing! Learning and interpreting the lyrics, the melody, the context, the intent and create a choir that brings an exciting and ‘fresh’ approach to music that is some of the most beloved of our time.

Student Assessment

Class grades will be calculated as follows:

The grading system in this class is on a points system and is **not** weighted by category. Total points for class work are subject to change based on teacher discretion and the nature of the assignment. However, some assignments will have concrete total points.

Daily Participation: 15 Points per day

These daily participation points include consideration of attendance, tardiness, participation and preparedness (includes binder check) as stated below.

15 points per day for participation*

10/15 for tardiness

10/15 or **5/15**: for behavior issues at the discretion of the teacher)

0/15 for absences

(a note or an email from parent **must** be submitted for an **excused absence**. Student’s grade will then be changed to EX)

*Non-participating students will be awarded 10-12 points for the class at the discretion of the instructor.

Categories: Points vary according to assignment

Weekly Rehearsal - The work that is done in rehearsal/workshop is work that cannot be made up based on the nature of the course. Therefore, attendance is mandatory.

Projects – Projects are assignments that present opportunities for vocal students to acquire knowledge that brings more substantial understanding of various repertoire. This includes information on cultures, composers, history of musical styles and artists of note.

Assessments – These assessments will be examinations of learning acquired by the students and its application. The main focus will be repertoire, choral parts and vocal/choral technique.

Performances: 25 Points each

All performances in this class are MANDATORY. If a student is unable to attend a performance there must be written notification submitted in advance by the parent or guardian. The make-up assignment for those students who miss the performance is due the next school day (no exceptions). Any students who are ineligible to perform MUST attend all performances at OSA.

Final Assessment: 50 pts

At the end of each grading period, students will take a cumulative final exam [repertoire check (“rep” check) or assigned project – class or individual] for that quarter (two each semester).

I have reviewed the entirety of this Musical Theatre Choir syllabus with my student and both my student and I understand all course policies.

Parent / Guardian Signature

PRINT Parent / Guardian name

Student Signature

PRINT Student name

Parent email address: _____ (please print clearly)

