

Naperville North High School

Choral Program Student-Parental Handout 2008-09

The school district's mission statement is to graduate students who think critically, solve problems, make decisions, and have the skills necessary for productive citizenship and life-long learning by providing excellent, comprehensive programs and services in partnership with the community. Our vocal music mission is similar. To offer the skills, challenges and opportunities for our vocalists to experience music on many levels, both critically and aesthetically.

The music department at Naperville North High School is divided into the Band, Choral and Orchestra performance disciplines. Curricular music theory and music appreciation classes are also offered. Within the performance classes are seasonal ensembles opportunities such as Madrigal Singers, woodwind quintets, and string quartets. Although the emphasis is on performance, a strong focus on music theory, individual and group learning concepts, and engaging aesthetic musical concepts is vital to high school music education. The music staff is committed to set an atmosphere which allows the student the skills and support to develop as a musician.

NNHS Music Staff

Band Choir

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Orchestra

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I. Philosophy and Goals

Each student has the ability to read, produce, integrate and engage aesthetic musical concepts in their lives, allowing a more thorough and complete understanding of historical and cultural aspects of human existence. Perhaps more so than any other discipline, music has the ability to motivate, challenge and enrich each person's understanding of his or her surroundings. To this end, the necessity to take each student at his or her present musical educational level and develop the individual and group abilities to perform a wide variety of quality choral literature is at a focus. Experience level, commitment to achieve, times restraints and skill development all factor into the individual's achievement level.

II. Health

There has been much research done on health and the vocal musician. The obvious avenues of physical (colds, flu, lack of sleep, etc) and mental (trying to accomplish too many activities, lack of homework preparation, balancing a job, family, school work, etc.) maladies will impede, not only your musical, but personal growth. You owe it to your ensemble and yourself to strive for adequate sleep, exercise faithfully, eat well and drink plenty of fluids (water being the best beverage a vocalist can find). In the classroom, there will be **no food or beverage** allowed (unless a class planned repast) except water in a closed container (water bottle, etc) which you are encouraged to bring with you on a daily basis.

III. Daily Schedule – curricular choral offerings

Each ensemble meets five days a week receiving curricular credit.

Bass Choir – a non-auditioned beginning level men's ensemble – 8th period

Cecilian Singers – a non-auditioned beginning level women's ensemble – 7th period

Concert Choir – an auditioned advanced mixed ensemble – 3rd period

Treble Choir – an auditioned advanced women’s ensemble. – 4th period

All ensembles will have in school and out of school fieldtrip experiences with touring college ensembles and guest conductors.

III. Grades

Choir is a curricular elective offering and, as such, choir students receive a grade at the end of each quarter. Grades are comprised of classroom activities (theory lessons, written observations and reflections, literature comprehension, individual vocal skills, etc.) classroom participation and concert attendance. Attitude is determined by the quality of participation in each rehearsal. Components of participation include posture, talking, effort, cooperation, general attention, dedication and respect. Poor levels and quality of participation will result in poor grades.

Bass Choir/Cecilian Singers Quarterly Grade Format

- 50% - successful mastery of performance material exhibited in concert format
- 20% - music theory written quizzes/tests
- 10% - written critique of one semesterly attended concert (other than own)
- 20% - individual/group vocal skills presentation

Treble/Concert Choir Quarterly Grade Format

- 50% - successful mastery of performance material exhibited in concert format
- 10% - written critique of one semesterly attended concert (other than own)
- 10% - semesterly presentation of National Anthem at home athletic contests
- 20% - music theory written quizzes/tests
- 10% - individual/group vocal skills presentation

Membership in chorus is truly a privilege. Each member must take the responsibility to be positive and be interested in working hard for the betterment of the entire ensemble. Students who, by their actions, display that they are not interested in putting forth such effort will jeopardize both their grade and their membership in choir.

IV. Conduct

There exist powerful expectations of good conduct on the part of all choir members. Each student will represent his or her choir, the music department and Naperville North High School in the most favorable fashion at all times. In addition to expectations of conduct as delineated in the NNHS handbook, choir students are expected to display conduct and respect of the highest caliber during daily rehearsals, performances, festivals, contests, fieldtrips, or any activity associated with music activities. Respect toward peers is a bedrock expectation of our department. Conduct not befitting a NNHS choir student will result in disciplinary action following District 203 guidelines, and/or removal from choir.

V. Choral Literature

As individuals grow and deepen their ability to have aesthetic experiences, so too must the literature engaged as curricular materials expand. In efforts to broaden the realm of possible aesthetic experience, attempts are made to perceive and respond to the highest possible quality of appropriate music. A danger exists in that a large amount of literature published today is poorly crafted, insensitive, unimaginative, and devoid of qualities worthy of our study. The quality of our potential experiences is in direct proportion to the quality of a composer’s material. All of this is not to suggest that we will only perform music of Bach and Mozart. It does, however, indicate that the justification for studying and performing literature as curricular material is scrutinized and evaluated in efforts to provide variety and quality in each student’s experience. Each semester you will study literature from the Renaissance period up to contemporary scores, including the jazz idiom.

VI. Concerts

Quarterly choral concerts provide opportunities to showcase learned choral technique, quality

literature presented in a historical format, as well as family and friend support at school related activities. All choral concerts are presented by the District 203 school board without financial cost. Quarterly concerts on the Calendar of Events, found in this handbook, are events of required attendance. **Failure to attend a required event without a valid, written excuse fully explaining the absence will result in the lowering of the student's quarter grade by two full letters. Punctuality also impacts grades.** Each case will be evaluated individually with the choral director, in collaboration with the department instructional coordinator, will make determination of excuse validity and legitimacy A written note explaining, in full, any student absence must be received at least one week prior to the concert in order for the excuse to be considered. Student job obligations will not be considered for excused student absence. Concert dates and times have been scheduled to have as few school activity conflicts as possible. Notification of emergency conflicts will be received up to one week following the concert. Do not expect high degrees of cooperation or assistance from your choral director in resolving long existing conflicts brought to the director's attention at the last minute plan.

Concert Apparel

Bass Choir – suit or sport coat, white shirt, long tie and dress shoes

Cecilian Singers – dark tea length skirt, white blouse and reasonably heeled dress shoes

Treble Choir – black/dark tea length skirt, dark blouse and reasonably heeled dress shoes

Concert Choir

Girls – black/dark tea length skirt, dark blouse and reasonably heeled dress shoes

Men – suit or sport coat, white shirt, long tie and dress shoe

All - no athletic shoes or the like, scent neutral and no extreme jewelry.

VI. Vocal Concert Calendar – see www.nnhsmusic.org

VIII. Folders and Music

Students are to furnish a black three ring notebook in which to keep rehearsal handouts and music. **Music must be returned the day following the last performance of that work.** All markings should be made in light pencil only. The music is the responsibility of the student. Lost music will be assessed replacement cost.

IX. Private Voice Lessons

A number of highly qualified voice instructors give private voice lessons to choir students at NNHS. Private instruction at school will be during the student's regular choral class, lunch period, study hall or after school. At the onset of each semester, students will be asked about their interest in studying privately. Arrangements of schedule and payment are done through each instructor. Private voice study is highly recommended. Though not a requisite for membership, auditioning into upper level choirs can only be enhanced through private study. Detailed written information concerning lesson protocol, payments, etc is available from the choral director.

X. Fundraising

Fundraising events are scheduled each year through the student activity office. Each choir member's profits are placed in their individual choral accounts. Only touring choirs will have the opportunity of participating in NNHS sanctioned fundraising activities.

XI. Practice Rooms

The music department of NNHS is fortunate to have a number of practice rooms, several with keyboards and pianos. To preserve these facilities, the following guidelines have been established:

- 1) No food or drink allowed in the practice rooms other than water.
- 2) No equipment may be removed without consent of instructor or director.
- 3) Practice rooms are for practicing only, no socializing.
- 4) When using the practice rooms the light must be on.
- 5) Private instructors have priority to the practice rooms.

XII. Extracurricular Vocal Opportunities

Madrigal Singers

The Madrigal Singers are extracurricular accapella vocal ensembles that focus on Renaissance and Christmas music during the fall semester culminating in an annual Madrigal Dinner. Rehearsal times are to be determined. There will be a beginning Madrigal Ensemble - auditions held the week of September 4.

Vocal Jazz Singers

The Vocal Jazz Singers are an extracurricular vocal ensemble that focuses on different genres of jazz music during the spring semester presenting a 40's Dance with the instrumental jazz program and a number of off campus presentations. The number of ensembles will depend upon student interest and instructor time. Auditions for a fall Mixed ensemble is TBA. Auditions for all other ensembles will be held at the beginning of the second semester. Rehearsal times are to be determined.

Sr. HS IMEA District and All-State Festivals – see www.nnhsmusic.org

The IMEA (Illinois Music Educators Association) offers a Sr. HS District (grades 10-12) and All-State Festivals which is a prestigious and highly sought after achievement by high school musicians. Preparation involves individual and group rehearsals outside of the school day. Those accepted into the District IX Jazz Choir or Sr. HS Chorus becomes eligible for the All-State choral ensembles based on the same audition results.

Musical (by audition, open to all NNHS students)

Specific audition and rehearsal information will be available to all students in a timely manner.

XIII. Fieldtrips

Each semester, a number of off campus fieldtrips will be offered to the choral department members. Many of them are to attend professional theatrical productions or professional choral/jazz concerts in the Chicagoland area. All fieldtrips are school approved (you are responsible for missed curriculum but must be offered time to make up work) and will be kept to a thrifty cost. Most students find these excursions extremely meaningful in terms to bond with their fellow classmates and to observe professional productions.

XIV. Touring

A natural extension of the choral music experience is an opportunity to travel and concertize in unique settings. Past tours have included New York City, Boston, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Toronto, Montreal, London, Oxford, Lincoln, Edinburgh Scotland. Membership in the touring ensemble is necessary, but attendance on the tour is not required. The upper level choirs (Concert and Treble) have the opportunity of touring on a yearly rotational basis. A student tour committee works closely with the instructor to plan an educational, affordable and enjoyable trip. This year, the Treble Choir is planning a 2009 concert trip with concerts in Great Britain.

This will be a challenging, exciting and creative year. I look forward to working with you.

Mr. Y

I Feel Great by Pat Croce

1. Always say 'hello' and 'goodbye'

2. Be on a first name basis as soon as possible
3. Listen, listen, listen
4. Communicate clearly
5. Be neat, clean and fit
6. Be prompt and professional
7. Be positive
8. Give compliments
9. Have fun
10. Do it now