

I. Course Description & Objectives

Students will learn and reinforce learning of:

- Fundamental techniques such as instrument handling/care, fingerings, intonation, and proper posture on respective instruments
- Basic musical notation and rhythmic counting
- General sight-reading strategies

Students may also learn:

- Basic music theory, general musical history, and different musical styles
- Simple improvisation techniques

Orchestra is dominantly a performance-based class and curriculum with most of our ultimate and culminating goals being synergistic and collective collaborations as a group in the form of performances. Students are expected to commit to various performances throughout the school year via concerts and music festivals and competitions. These dates have been given to you via calendar (also available on the SMB website at saratogamusicboosters.org and our Redwood music website at redwoodmusic.us). Every student is important to our group, and these events are vital to their musical progress!

Orchestra Program:

Adagio Orchestra: This group is comprised primarily of second and third year players. Goals include reinforcing learning from previous years and building upon knowledge of technique, theory, and history. Meets daily during 3rd period.

Presto Orchestra: This group is comprised primarily of 4th year players. Goals include reinforcing basic technique learned previously and venturing into advanced techniques that will allow students to play more difficult music. Curriculum includes analysis of a variety of styles of music. Meets daily during 5th period.

Vivace Orchestra: This group is comprised primarily of 5th year players. Goals include refining advanced technique that will allow students to play a very wide range of pieces. Curriculum includes more student-led composition, improvisation, and listening projects. Meets daily during 7th period.

Chamber Orchestra: This group is composed primarily of students who have been playing for 5 or more years and/or taking private lessons on their instrument. This is a small, performance-focused group. Goals include performance of chamber music and study of extended techniques, and challenging students in new ways. Meets daily during 6th period.

II. Materials

All:

- A black 1-inch 3-ring binder – organized as instructed with method books, name on the front cover
- Plastic pages (all music should be secured in plastic pages no later than the day after it is handed out)
- one college-ruled notebook that fits in your binder pocket (composition-style recommended)

- Pencil pouch to put in binder
- Pencils (mechanical or wooden, with usable erasers)
- Name and phone number on your instrument case (luggage tags and unique identifiers recommended)
- Rosin
- small towel for wiping rosin dust
- mute
- tuner/metronome with clip
- your instrument with instrument-specific accessories (listed below)

Violin/viola

- Shoulder rest

Cello/bass

- rock stop

III. Musical Instrument Care & Maintenance

The key with string instruments is preventative care. At the end of each rehearsal or practice session, always remember to loosen your bow. Wipe any rosin dust off of the fingerboard and the body of the instrument with a soft cloth. If you don't stay on top of this, the rosin dust will become stuck to your instrument and you will need a special product to get rid of it. Just like if you don't brush your teeth every day, plaque will build up and get stuck, and it will be much harder to get off! (Clearly, I am not a dentist). How often you need to rosin your bow varies instrument to instrument, but a swipe or two at the beginning of rehearsal is usually plenty. Be careful, too much rosin on the bow can be as bad as not enough! Keeping your instrument at a fairly constant temperature will help keep it in tune and keep the wood from warping. That means don't leave it in the trunk of your car!

Note: All students are expected to take their instruments home (or have another instrument stored at home) to practice and maintain daily. It is the student's responsibility to pick up his or her instrument from the music room after school. This means no friends or other adults may do this for them at any time during the day (sorry, parents!). This ensures safety of both equipment and school campus.

IV. Standard Performance Attire & Care

- PENDING

V. Classroom Rules & Expectations

Remember, the name of the game is MUSIC

Make good choices

- follow the set rules and procedures for the class, and rehearsal can run smoothly
- This will help everyone to get along better and be more successful in the long run

Use polite manners and respectful language

- no put-downs, insults, or offensive language
- everybody deserves to be treated with respect
- everyone has bad days or gets annoyed, but...
 - the best response to rude behavior will always be kindness.

Strive for excellence

- pay attention in class to whomever is speaking
 - avoid side conversations
- complete your notebook assignments
- practice regularly – 15 minutes a day, 4 or more days a week is a good goal
- when you don't understand something, use your teacher and your fellow classmates as resources
- never be afraid to ask for help
- remember that everyone brings to the room a different set of skills

Involve yourself

- **respond verbally when asked a question**
- when Ms. McPherson is working with another section, think on what you can quietly do to improve your own performance while you are waiting
 - ideas: look ahead in the music, practice fingerings, do bow/hand exercises, stretch, listen to the other section

Care for the room and the instruments

- do not touch or play anybody else's instrument
- don't let others touch or play your instrument
- label your case clearly so there is no confusion about who it belongs to
- no food, drink, or gum allowed in the room (water is allowed in a closed bottle)
- phones may be used as a tuner at the beginning of class, then must be put away under your seat
- do not use music stands as a desk, as this makes them wear out faster
 - making small marks in your music is fine, but when taking notes or writing in your notebook, use your lap (tip: use your binder as a hard surface)

*“If what you're doing helps others and makes you better, it's allowed.
Otherwise, we don't have time.”*

VI. Classroom Management

In order to maintain the most effective environment for learning and synergy for the group, one or more of the following comprehensive steps will be taken in the event of unacceptable behavior in violation of Classroom Rules & Expectations, depending on the frequency and/or seriousness of the infraction:

- Level 1A: Behavior is noted, student is warned (conference with teacher), and Rehearsal Contribution grade is lowered
- Level 1B: Student puts instrument away and sits out of rehearsal
- Level 2: Parent(s) contacted and/or lunchtime or after-school detention
- Level 3: Student is referred to the office/principal
- Level 4: Student may be removed from the music program at discretion of the director and administration

You are fully responsible for your own actions!

VII. Teacher's Oath:

- I will not allow you to do anything that is not in your best interest or in the best interest of the class.
- I will not tolerate any behavior or distractions that prevent me from teaching.
- I will trust you until you give me reason to do otherwise.
- I will respect you and work with you to solve problems.
- I will work with you to meet learning goals.

VIII. Performance & Public Visibility Expectations

Performances are the equivalent of midterms or final exams!

- Attendance at all rehearsals and scheduled performances; if you have prior commitments and conflicts you must sort them out with your teacher **at least one month before the performance.**
- It is the responsibility of the student and families to review their group's music calendar, mark down performance dates, and anticipate any potential conflicts within the stated timeframe.
- Conflicts must be excused by the director via a **Performance Excusal Request** form (included in this packet) turned in **at least one month before the performance.** Failure to do so, or failing to be present at a performance without excusal may result in the lowering of a student's performance grade.
- Fliers will be sent home with students one or two weeks before a performance to remind families as each event approaches.
- All other special concerns or conflicts (i.e. sudden illness, injury, death in the family, etc.) should be discussed with your teacher **ASAP.**
- Appropriate concert attire at every performance event (attire as detailed above, unless specified otherwise)
- A commitment to good citizenship and appropriately representing your community, your school, and yourselves at every event. When performing as part of a group, you represent the music program, your school, and the Saratoga community. Be polite and respectful at all times, you never know who is listening...

IX. Evaluation, Assessment & Grading

Grading for music will be determined through three main categories: Participation, Progress, and Performance.

Rehearsal Contribution (in the classroom): 30%

Students are expected to be on time for class, seated and prepared to work when the bell rings. Please be sure to have the following ready/completed at this time:

- all daily materials (see above)
- during class, observations will be made about proper playing techniques on your instruments including posture, hand positions, efforts to demonstrate proper technique, and overall behavior

- students are expected to be attentive and respectful of the teacher and other students when called upon; the unique quality of instrumental music is that the goals of the class are group-oriented in making a collective sound and performance through synergy; consequently, distracting side-discussion and other activity is detrimental to the learning progress and ultimate goals of the class
- students' grades will be lowered for every noted violation of the **Classroom Rules & Expectations** and other **Presence category expectations**
- most of all, have a good attitude! – we will get much more done when we are working hard and having fun!

Your grade for this section will be determined by how many points you have at the end of each grading period. All students will receive 10 points per day. Five (5) points will be deducted from this total for every noted violation of the **Classroom Rules &**

Expectations and other **Presence category expectations** such as (but not limited to):

- disturbing rehearsal
- failure to bring materials to rehearsal
- not ready to play within allowable time limit
- tardy to class
- not returning instrument to proper place after rehearsal
- not returning music to proper place after rehearsal
- playing an instrument other than your own
- playing an instrument with poor technique or posture
- playing an instrument when not instructed to do so
- having no identification on your instrument case
- leaving your instrument and/or music at school without prior permission

Progress: 50%

In music, daily practice is the same as the expectation that you would do your daily homework for any other class. Students are expected to practice at least 4 or 5 days a week and demonstrate sufficient progress throughout the semester (head to our website and find the "Practice" page for some pointers and reference your Practice = Music handout). In-class and at-home playing assignments of both musical material from class music literature, material covered on practice tasks, and scales may be held from time to time throughout the year.

Elements that may be evaluated include:

- tone quality & intonation
- breath & air control
- posture and body position
- general music reading
- entrance & attack
- rhythm & articulation
- dynamics
- phrasing & style
- pitch accuracy (intonation)
- note accuracy
- overall progress

Progress grades will be earned through 3 main kinds of assignments:

1. Students may be asked to record themselves performing a playing task at home and submit it electronically through Google Classroom. This can be done with a computer, a cell phone or any other functional digital recording device. It needn't be a "professional-quality" recording. If you need help, see your teacher for help. Remember, you do not have to be perfect to receive a great grade! What we are after is improvement, so do your best!
2. Written quizzes relating to musical terms, symbols, concepts, and intellectual growth and analysis relating to music and the arts may be given. These will be announced with adequate time to prepare for and/or complete. Point values on these will vary.
3. Students' daily work in their notebook. This includes goal-setting and reflection, simple questions reviewing concepts learned, comments on music they like to listen to, and logging practice time.

There are a couple items that, if used consistently and properly, will greatly contribute to the success of their practice. Metronomes and tuners are both necessary to develop accuracy in any level of a musician's playing. Some companies combine both into one device.

Performances - OUR FINAL EXAMS: 20%

Each and every student is essential to our success as an ensemble. A large percentage of time spent in any musical performing class is the preparation of concert music. The performance, therefore, becomes the final test of the group's ability to perform the prepared material. All performances have been listed at the beginning of the school year, giving more than sufficient time for each family to schedule these dates and ensure commitment on these performance days.

Students are expected to be present for all performances unless discussed at least **one month before the event** or in the event of a special circumstance (review more information on performance excusals above). Unexcused absences will result in a potentially failing grade for these assignments.

Each performance will be worth 50 points. At the director's discretion, points may be deducted for being late to a report time, uniform infractions, and behavior throughout the entire duration of an event.

Grade Inquiry:

Students are expected to be their own advocates and responsible for discussing initial questions about grades with the teacher directly. Students should ask the teacher to schedule a meeting time. This may be done any time outside of class, over email or phone. Actual grading issues will generally not be discussed immediately before or after a class. Further policies on grading inquiries in the Student Handbook will be followed.

X. Other Encouragements, Recommendations & Considerations

- Students are highly encouraged to take private lessons on their respective instruments. Individual playing is equally important to the progress of a music student, and private music teachers can help facilitate refined and advanced improvements. Private instruction keeps students accountable and builds confidence in their own playing. With the right teacher, private lessons are absolutely worth the investment!
- 7th and 8th grade students are encouraged to participate in our local CMEA Solo & Ensemble Festival in March. 6th graders taking private lessons may also participate by performing a solo piece. Registration forms will be handed out soon. Sign up sooner than later – spots go fast! The earlier you register, the more certain you can be of getting a spot.
- Students should research and find recordings of famous performers of their respective instruments and orchestras. Having an “ideal” sound of instrument and ensemble in their minds is necessary for effective musical progress.
- Students are always encouraged to attend as many music performances of other school-level as well as professional musical groups as possible. The more we experience, the more musical we become, and the more our critical musical thinking evolves!
- Remaining procedures will also be followed and aligned with school policy. Please consult your Student Handbook for more information.

Please detach and complete this sheet, sign below, and return this page by Friday.

Redwood Instrumental Music Contract & Contact Information

We have read and understood the 2018-2019 Redwood Middle School Music Syllabus.
We understand what is expected of each musician and agree with the guidelines as stated.

Student Name: _____ Period: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Best Contact Phone Number(s): _____

Parent Email: _____

Date: _____

Thank you, and welcome to Redwood Orchestra 2018-2019!