

Choir Syllabus

2007-2008

Teacher:

Mr. Americo Motta

Contact:

amotta@sla-browning.org

Introduction

"Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I will sing to the LORD, I will sing; I will make music to the LORD, the God of Israel. Judges 5:3

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord..." Ephesians 5:19

"Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come." White, Ellen – Education (1903), page 13, & 1.

"Music forms a part of God's worship in the courts above, and we should endeavor, in our songs of praise, to approach as nearly as possible to the harmony of the heavenly choirs. The proper training of the voice is an important feature in education, and should not be neglected." White, Ellen – The Sign of the times, March, 1900, & 23.

The South Lancaster Academy Choral Programs are solidly built and developed on the vision of using music as a tool to a deeper contemplation of the nature and character of the God we serve as well as to the growth of our students in the whole spectrum of their personalities.

In that sense, is the ambition of our Choral Programs not only produce skilful, well rounded musicians but – most importantly - young adults ready and willing to take responsibility, take the lead, be in charge and serve the churches and communities where they may live.

Mission Statement

Committed to spread God's Word and love serving our neighbors through the gift of music, we strive for excellence and the highest standards of choral singing.

General Objectives

- To develop young musicians to be future leaders of the worship in their congregations.
- To represent and promote South Lancaster Academy in and around the community, the country and internationally.

Specific Objectives

- To nurture the development of music appreciation and understanding through performance of quality sacred and secular repertoire.
- To develop skills through theory, sight reading and score study.
- To create interested and discriminating listeners and provide a rich musical background for all students.
- To expose students to musical styles outside the Seventh day Adventist church to broaden their vision, break cultural and denominational barriers.
- To recognize the connection between body, mind and spirit in the performance of music.
- To understand the elements of music – melody, rhythm, style, expression, tone, color, harmony and form.
- To develop an understanding of musical style as it relates to culture, period, composer and music traditions.
- To understand the spiritual, emotional, moral and social implications of music.

Program Structure

The Choral Program currently features two ensembles: Voce and Concert Choir. A Hand Bell Choir will begin in winter 2008.

Concert Choir is opened to the participation of any interested student and is designed to introduce choral singing. Students do not need previous experience in singing. This ensemble intends to teach basic vocal technique, foundational music theory and delve into music history through choral literature. Performances include Christmas and Spring concerts as well as other special occasions as needed. In those cases, the choir will be informed well before hand.

Voce is the premiere choral ensemble and is committed to singing the finest works in choral literature as well as more accessible pieces in order to attend a wide range of public. The curriculum of this course includes an emphasis on advanced vocal technique and musicianship in preparation for potential singing at the collegiate level. Voce performs works from numerous genres including classical, contemporary, multicultural and ethnic music.

Instructional Strategies

Group singing constitutes the largest portion of rehearsals. Other activities include listening to and assessing recordings, brief lectures, occasional sectional singing and watching live concerts.

Student Contribution To The Program

Being a member of SLA Choral Program implies certain responsibilities, duties and privileges. Each member of the choir is unique and has an important contribution for the group through the sharing of their voice, their ideas and positive attitude. Doing the best each day and recognizing the contribution of others is extremely important – not only for the high morale of the group but also for quality of rehearsals and performances. We are a community and function as one.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals begin promptly when the bell signals the start of the hour. Students should pick up their folders and be in their assigned seat when the bell rings or they will be marked tardy. All kind of necessities or/and issues that involves being out of the classroom must be resolved by the student prior to entering the class.

Practices will start with exercises of relaxation, breathing, some vocal technique and a brief warm-up. Those activities are fundamental for the progress of the choir; they are integral part of the rehearsal and effort and interest will be evaluated daily. The left time will be used to the preparation of choral works. There should not be any audible talking within the rehearsal as it distracts other members and inhibits students from remaining an engaged member of the rehearsal. High level of professionalism and focus are expected each day. At the end of the practice, the folders should be returned to the cabinets. Other:

1. Always come prepared with your music and pencil with an eraser.
2. Mark your music as instructed. Be prepared for unannounced music checks.
3. No gum, food, soda or candy of any kind is allowed in the music room at any time. Only water is allowed.
4. When another section is rehearsing, silently follow along, should you be called to join in or analyze a performance. This also provides constructive rehearsal time.
5. When rehearsing, remain quiet when stop to polish or make corrections. It is not a time to begin socializing or talk about what just happened.
6. Be supportive of your fellow choir member at all times; inside and out of rehearsal.
7. Turn in forms, money, materials, etc. by requested deadline. Meeting these expectations is part of the grading process.

Assessment/ Grade System

The quarterly grade is determined by the following criteria:

Rehearsals (40%)

Concert Attendance and performance (30%)

Quizzes and assessments (20%)

Responsibility (10%)

Concert Responsibility and Attendance

Attendance is required for all mandatory performances both during and outside school time. Work or not having a ride are never acceptable excuses for leaving early from or missing a performance. Also sudden family trip which conflict with a performance should be avoided if at all possible. The final grade will be lowered one full letter grade for each unexcused concert absence. In case of of illness or sudden emergency, a written excuse should be submitted at the first rehearsal following the performance. Missing a concert will require a make-up assignment.

Concert assessment

The concert grade is 30% of the final grade for all ensembles.

In order to earn full credit one should:

1. Arrive and be in place before the assigned call time. Since warm-ups and rehearsals are completed together, it is important to respect other people's time. Consequently:
 - Up to 10 minutes late: one letter grade reduction;
 - 10-20 minutes late: two letter grade reduction;
 - 20-30 minutes late three letter grade reduction;
 - 30 minutes to start of performance: four letter grade reduction.
2. Exhibit proper rehearsal etiquette during warm-up rehearsal.
3. Wear appropriate concert dress.
4. While performing, focus on the music all times. Appropriate behaviour on stage is expected for members of all choirs