

Montgomery Blair HS Choral Music Syllabus and Handbook 2015-2016

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Important Web Sites:

EDLINE at Blair:

Accessible via “shortcut” on MBHS home page: <http://www.mbhs.edu>

Blair Fine Arts Department Web site:

<http://finearts.mbhs.edu>

Instructional Objectives in Music

The Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes for the Fine Arts describe what students should know and be able to do in the fine arts. The four outcomes and their respective expectations and indicators represent a broad guideline for K-12 fine arts education in Maryland.

Below is the list of the outcomes for Music. The instructor's expectations and grading has been derived from the comprehensive lists of learning indicators and expectations with each outcome.

- Outcome I: Perceiving, Performing and Responding – Aesthetic Education:
Students will demonstrate the ability to perceive, perform and respond to music.
- Outcome II: Historical, Cultural and Social Context:
Students will demonstrate an understanding of music as an essential aspect of history and human experience.
- Outcome III: Creative Expression and Production
Students will demonstrate the ability to organize musical ideas and sounds creatively.
- Outcome IV: Aesthetic Criticism
Students will demonstrate the ability to make aesthetic judgments.

Choral Music Goals and Objectives

- To provide a setting in which can students can learn about music through performance.
- To develop character, self-discipline, cooperation, and creativity in student participants.
- To help students demonstrate an understanding of vocal techniques including posture and breathing to support vocal production as applied to choral literature
- To help students learn the fundamentals of reading and performing music elements: pitch, rhythm, melody, harmonic structure, style, form, expression
- To develop individual and ensemble skills through singing: purity/unity of vowels, clarity of consonants, balance, blend, expression, stage presence, confidence, cooperation
- To perform ensemble vocal music written for multiple voice parts with and without accompaniment.
- To demonstrate an understanding of performance etiquette through participation in required concert performances.
- To evaluate music performances in written and verbal form using music vocabulary and concepts
- To study and sing selections representing various historical periods, styles, and cultures, including contemporary music.

Assessment and Grading

The Grading Percentage breakdown for Music Performance Classes at Blair is as follows,

- 1) Public (Concert) Performance Assessment = 25%
- 2) Individual Performance Assessment = 25%
(e.g. sightsinging or musicianship assignments, score marking assessments, dance quizzes for show choir)
- 3) Ensemble/Group Performance Assessment = 25%
(e.g. quartets/octets, recorded assessments)
- 4) Rehearsal and Ensemble Skills (see following page) = 25%

Grades will be based on attainment of objectives as demonstrated by the following,

- Ensemble Skills: Students will be evaluated on how they prepare to perform. Students are expected to be prepared for class (rehearsal) every day. Daily instruction (rehearsals) is not only for students to learn their own parts but to learn how their work fits in with the goals of the ensemble. Students should have music and pencils in their possession. Students will be evaluated on other ensemble skills that are essential to the success of a music ensemble such as self-discipline, cooperation, communication, leadership, commitment, concentration and respect for instructors and peers. Proper maintenance and marking of music scores and 'octavos' used in class is an essential ensemble skill.
- Musical performance, as an individual within a large group setting and in small group settings, with particular weight given to concert and festival performances.
- Oral and/or written critique and analysis of live and recorded performances, including self-critiques.
- Assessments which demonstrate knowledge and understanding of concepts of music theory and notation, musicianship, music history and appreciation.

Daily Rehearsal Etiquette and Ensemble Skills

Students will be expected to...

- Respect the rehearsal by remaining attentive while the teacher or student leader is giving instruction even if it does not pertain directly to you or your section.
- Focus on whomever is leading the rehearsal, making notes in your music when appropriate.
- Have your music folder, music and **pencil** with you in class every day.
- Put your music away in the proper folder slot at the end of rehearsal. Assist with setup and takedown of chairs, stands, etc.
- Be in assigned seat with your music immediately following the tardy bell. Deposit your bookbags and other non-essential belongings in the back of the classroom.
- Enter and exit the room quietly so as not to disturb rehearsal in progress.
- Refrain from bringing food, gum, or drinks (except bottled water) to rehearsals.
- Demonstrate appropriate singing posture (sitting or standing).
- Work cooperatively with others in both large group and sectional rehearsals.
- When possible, let director know ahead of time of impending absences.
- Help ease transitions – move quickly from one activity to the next with minimal talking.
- Put away all electronic devices (except for tape recorders if you are using them to record music for practice purposes) and grooming supplies or they will be temporarily confiscated.

Example: Students meeting the following guidelines will earn a grade of 100% in Rehearsal and Ensemble Skills.

- Student always has all of their materials, including folder, music, and pencil.
- Student is prepared musically for class – has always prepared the music at home. Student practices an average of 3.5 hours/week (30 mins/7days).
- Student's eyes are always on conductor; student is respectful of conductor, student leaders, and other peers in class, whether in sectional or full ensemble rehearsal.
- Student is always in proper singing position.
- Student is always focused on the rehearsal task at hand; consistently participates with no encouragement; is always on time: on the risers and ready to warm up.
- Student respects the rehearsal by not talking while it is in progress and makes score markings per conductor or section leader instruction.
- Student is a committed and contributing member of the ensemble, who respects classroom policies.
- Student goes above and beyond, seeking out opportunities to sing outside of class, working to improve group performances, and auditioning for honor choirs.

**** Please note:** Students are required to sing on a daily basis in order to fully participate in class activities. If for medical reasons, a student cannot sing for one day, parents are asked to provide a note of explanation. If a medical condition is persistent, a doctor's note will be requested.

Expectations for Concerts and Public Performances

Students will be expected to...

- Acknowledge that performances are the culmination of many hours of work and serve to complete the music learning process. It is important that you meet your performance obligations except in cases of severe illness and emergencies. A performance calendar is attached, and families are asked to consult it when making plans for the school year. Additional performing engagements may be accepted during the year but only with the approval of the performing group, and may not be mandatory. Please check Edline and the Chorus bulletin board for updated performance calendar information.
- Report at the appointed time for a concert or assembly warm-up. Sufficient warm-up time is needed for ensembles to prepare themselves both musically and psychologically for performance. Students should remain for the duration of concerts in order to watch other ensembles and make sure that any school-issued wardrobe items (e.g., robes) are returned to the proper location.
- Arrive in the appropriate attire to all performances. If a student arrives without the proper attire (see attached sheet detailing concert wardrobe for each ensemble), the student will not be able to perform in the concert. If a student is issued a concert wardrobe, he or she will be responsible for its care and proper storage. Concert attire should be clean and pressed in time for performance.
- Demonstrate attentiveness, self-control and proper concert decorum during the performance of other musical groups as well as his or her own ensemble.
- Recognize that our public performances will sometimes take the form of field trips. Please submit signed permission slips in a timely fashion. All academic work missed should be made up as soon as possible, and when possible, ahead of time. Being responsible for work missed because of performances is one of the major responsibilities a student assumes when he or she joins the Music Department.
- Remember that at outside festivals, competitions, workshops, showcases and performances, you are representing Montgomery Blair HS. School rules and regulations still apply in these situations.

Other Opportunities

Spring Musical- this musical production is presented by W.J. S*T*A*G*E. This year's production is *Kismet* and auditions dates are to be announced (most likely early 2016). Rehearsals are held after school leading up to the performances in April.

County, State, Regional, and National Honor Choirs – See the next page for more information about these opportunities.

Tri-M – National High School Music Honor Society. For more information on Blair's chapter, go to <http://finearts.mbhs.edu/music/tri-m.shtml>

A Note on Private Instruction

Though not a requirement, private study of voice is encouraged for students who have the means and wish to accelerate improvement of their individual vocal skills. See Miss Hernandez-Cata or the bulletin board near the entrance to Room 016 for more information about local private voice teachers.

Concert Wardrobe Guidelines

(subject to change to suit individual performances)

TBA, but black slacks or skirts will be required. Please stay tuned for specifics, which may vary by performance. More information and resources very soon!

***A NOTE ON SHOES...:** Please, no sandals, flip-flops, sneakers, stilettos, slippers or ballet shoes. For ladies, best bet is a closed toe, flat or low heel. Black dress shoes or loafers are best for men. Please consider that you will need to walk on and off stage which may involve navigating stairs and/or risers. Furthermore, we want to maintain some degree of uniformity within the ensembles. Anyone who is dancing is encouraged to invest in black character or jazz shoes.*

2015 – 2016 Honor Choirs (outside of Blair)

Please see Miss H-C (or e-mail
isabel_hernandez-cata@mcpsmd.org)
for registration info

❖ **Maryland Junior All-State Chorus (9th Graders Only)**
Auditions: Saturday, November 14, 2015

This choir will rehearse and perform in Towson, Maryland, from March 4-6, 2016. A fee is charged for hotel and meals for the weekend. A fee is charged for hotel and meals for the weekend. The deadline to sign up to audition is September 30.

❖ **Maryland Senior All-State Chorus (10th - 12th Graders)**
Auditions Saturday, November 21, 2015

This choir will rehearse and perform in Baltimore, Maryland from February 18-21, as part of the Maryland Music Educators Association 2016 convention. A fee is charged for hotel and meals for the weekend. The deadline to sign up to audition is October 4.

❖ **MCYC (Montgomery County Youth Chorus)**
Auditions: April 2016 (Precise dates and locations TBA)

This Honors Chorus is comprised of over 100 of the most advanced high school singers in Montgomery County Public Schools. MCYC rehearses one evening each week during the fall semester. A registration fee is charged.

Montgomery Blair H.S. Choral Music

“Year-at-a-glance” 2015-2016

SUBJECT TO CHANGE – please check Edline and the Fine Arts Website for updates

SEPTEMBER

17 Possible Back to school night performance (6pm call)

OCTOBER

Late possible cluster concert with feeder schools @ MBHS auditorium

NOVEMBER

14 Junior All-State Chorus Auditions (Grade 9)

21 Senior All-State Chorus Auditions (Grades 10-12)

DECEMBER

11 or 12 MCPS Show & Jazz Choir Festival, Winston Churchill HS

21 or 22 TBD – Middle School Articulation Days

23 Possible holiday sing (around school)

17 Winter Choral & Guitar Concert @ MBHS Auditorium
Time TBA – but reserve 4-9pm (with break for dinner)

FEBRUARY

18-21 Senior MD All-State Chorus Weekend, Baltimore, MD

MARCH

TBD MCPS High School Choral Festivals, site TBD

4-6 Junior MD All-State Chorus Weekend, Towson, MD

APRIL

TBD MCYC (Senior County Honors Chorus) Auditions for ‘16-’17

8-10, 15, 16 Blair Drama presents *Kismet*

25-29 Maryland State High School Choral Festivals

MAY

12-20 Blair “Fine Arts Festival”, to include

Spring Choral & Guitar Concert @ MBHS Auditorium
Time TBA – but reserve 4-9pm (with break for dinner)

27 Blair Chorus members perform at Graduation
@ DAR Constitution Hall, Washington, DC

Winter and Spring Choral Concerts are REQUIRED for all choral students

For updates, check EDLINE or e-mail Miss Hernandez-Cata at
isabel_hernandez-cata@mcpsmd.org

A few ways to support Montgomery Blair Chorus and your child's music education:

- ♪ Attend concerts and plan family activities around Music Department calendar dates.
- ♪ Consider donating to the Music Department or volunteering your time (see below)
- ♪ Encourage private practice; listen and offer praise, advice or constructive critique.
- ♪ Contact me if you are concerned with any aspect of the program or your child's progress.
- ♪ Arrange for family outings to a concert or performance, many of which are free, taking place in our area.
- ♪ Consider private music instruction for your student (contact Ms. H-C for list of local voice and piano teachers, a list will be posted in Room 016).
- ♪ To stay current with Blair Chorus News, register for Edline via the link on the Blair web page:
<http://www.mbhs.edu>

Isabel Hernandez-Cata, Choral Director

Isabel_hernandez-cata@mcpsmd.org 301-649-2839

Parent Data & Volunteer Form

Any time you can volunteer during the year is greatly appreciated and we hope you will enjoy being a part of the music program. Please check one or more volunteer categories and submit this form to Miss H-C via e-mail or by mail to Blair HS CHORUS, 51 University Blvd, East, Silver Spring, MD 20901-2451. Thank you!!!

Parent or Guardian's Name(s) _____

Student's Name _____

Daytime Phone _____ Home Phone _____

E-mail Address

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- Coordinating Concert Volunteers** **Coordinating end-of-year Awards Presentation**
- Ushering/Program Distribution** **Monitoring doors, audience at concerts**
- Sewing** **Video or Audio recording** **Video editing** **Photography**
- Wardrobe fitting** **Carpentry/Welding** **Marketing/Publicity**
- Office/clerical**
- Baking** **Event planning** **Musical accompaniment or clinics**
- Chaperoning local field trips** **Concessions at sporting events**
- Fundraising Assistance (trips, instruments, music, recording equip., attire, clinics, etc...)**
- Communications** **Other:** _____
- I'm quite busy, but please send me e-mail updates and I'll see what I can do!**

COMMENTS:

Any other ideas? Please feel free to include comments or contact Ms. H-C.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

I have reviewed the Choral Handbook and understand the expectations therein.

Signed,

Student Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____