

Ballard High School Orchestras 2017-2018 Handbook

"Imagination creates reality."

-Richard Wagner



September 6, 2017

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the Ballard High School Orchestra Program! I look forward to working with all of you as we continue the excellent tradition of music at BHS.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a guide and insight into the program. In it you will find ORCHESTRA DESCRIPTIONS, an explanation of the GRADING SYSTEM AND OBJECTIVES, a listing of REHEARSAL PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS, the POLICY ON PERFORMANCE ABSENCES, a detailed PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE, other GENERAL INFORMATION you may find useful, an orchestra events CALENDAR, and an ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM. Please read over all of its contents and keep it as a reference throughout the year.

I strongly encourage each family to become involved in the Ballard High School Performing Arts Boosters, which has been created to provide a better musical experience for each and every student in our program. In the process, you will have the opportunity to interact with dedicated and motivated parents who, like you, want the best possible experiences for their children.

Let's all have a wonderful year!

Sincerely,

Brittany C. Newell
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ORCHESTRA DESCRIPTIONS

Symphonic Orchestra: A large, string orchestra comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, or bass. All incoming freshmen begin in this group unless they choose to audition for Chamber Orchestra. This group performs a wide array of string orchestra literature, ranging from Baroque to contemporary. Symphonic Orchestra combines with members of the band and choir for their winter masterwork performance, and completes a Chamber Unit each year. Symphonic Orchestra attends the fall retreat, competes at regional festivals, performs at school concerts, and takes out-of-state trips. Seating and section leader auditions take place at the beginning of each school year.

Chamber Orchestra: An audition only chamber orchestra comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, or bass. This is a highly selective and motivated group of string players. Chamber Orchestra performs a rigorous array of string orchestra literature ranging from Baroque to contemporary. Chamber Orchestra combines with members of the band and choir for their winter masterwork performance. Over the course of the year students will form small ensembles (trios, quartets, etc.) for various gig and performance opportunities. Chamber Orchestra attends the fall retreat, competes at regional festivals, performs at school concerts, and takes out-of-state trips. Seating and section leader auditions take place at the beginning of each school year.

Extracurricular—Fiddle Ensemble: This ensemble is comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, bass, guitar and mandolin etc. Fiddle ensemble works to refine their improvisational skills, learn music in an aural tradition, and performs authentic American roots music by arranging traditional tunes of the American Roots repertoire. The Fiddle Ensemble performs at school concerts and special events, and is available for private performances throughout the year.

“In this world of political, economic, and personal disintegration, music is not a luxury it is a necessity. Not simply because it is therapeutic, nor because it is the universal language, but because it is the persistent focus of our intelligence, aspiration and good will.” – Robert Shaw

GRADING SYSTEM AND OBJECTIVES

The depth of coverage of material in this course requires active student engagement and participation. The failure to attend class prevents active student engagement. Because active student engagement is a necessary component of this class, attendance, tardiness, and class participation will be considered as a basis for grading in this course.

Each student is given 5 points for Daily Participation. Doing work for other classes or work not assigned to be done during class, sleeping, social talking, being tardy or leaving class early without an excuse are all circumstances that may result in loss of your daily participation points. Students will receive no participation points for days on which they have unexcused absences.

Student grades will be based on the following:

- **Daily Participation** – Students earn 5 points each day and can lose points for the following reasons:
 - Excessive Socializing or Talking.
 - Our primary goal in orchestra is to make music. It is our goal to ensure that rehearsals are run in a fun but efficient and effective manner at all times.
 - Gum, Candy, Food, or Pop.
 - You can endanger your instrument, or another student's instrument by eating or chewing gum during rehearsal. We want to keep our spaces clean!
 - Materials not brought to or being used in class.
 - Always have your folder and a pencil and mark your music.
 - Poor Posture.
 - This inhibits proper playing
 - Idle Participation.
 - Doing homework from other classes.
 - Unauthorized use of cell phones, i-pods, or other electronic devices.
 - If you are texting or talking, you are not on task and are not contributing positively to the group.
 - Disruptive Behavior.
 - Leaving before dismissed.
 - Rough housing.
 - Questionable teasing.
- **Performance Points** – Students earn up to 100 points for participation in each required concert.
 - Attendance for the entire concert is required. We must all support each other's portion of the concert.
 - Students may also be required to attend dress rehearsals or extra rehearsals as deemed necessary with proper notice ahead of time.

- **Playing Tests/Quartet Tests** – Playing tests are excerpts from current repertoire, scales, or exercises from our technique books that will be assigned, and given one week’s time to record, and upload to our schoology page. Each quiz is worth 25 points, may be made up throughout the semester for an improved score, and will test students’ musical comprehension and growth. Quartet tests are worth 10 points, are pass or fail, and are given during class without advance notice. Students will be assigned to groups of at least four, and will perform a given excerpt of a piece of music we are currently rehearsing in class. Groups may re-take quartet tests to pass, but it must be outside of school hours (before school is best).

ORCHESTRA OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

1. Recognize notes and note values.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of time signatures.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of key signatures.
4. Play major, minor, and chromatic scales.
5. Read treble, alto and bass clef.
6. Perform basic rhythmic patterns using all note values and rests.
7. Demonstrate proper posture for playing.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of bow hold and right hand technique.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of left hand technique.
10. Perform with proper tone.
11. Perform in a variety of playing positions.

My goal is an “A” for everyone! Can you do it?



REHEARSAL PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Be in your seat with your music binder, instrument and a pencil at the start of class.
2. You will be expected to participate fully every day that you are in attendance. I realize that there will be some days you will not feel like playing. However, if you are well enough to be in class, you will need to participate. You may not chew gum, eat, or drink anything other than water in class.
3. Listen and pay attention at all times during rehearsal. Even if only one section is rehearsing, everyone else should be following along in the music.
4. Play with good posture at all times. Make posture a habit, rather than something you save for performances.
5. Mark your music IN PENCIL during rehearsals.
6. Do not write on the white board.
7. Do not play the grand piano. This is an extremely expensive instrument and we only have one!
8. Keep cell phones put away. Consider this your first and only warning. Your cell phone may be confiscated for the period if it is out.
9. Conflicts with the performance schedule and other personal business should ALWAYS be discussed OUTSIDE OF CLASS and on a one-on-one basis with the director.
10. A respectful attitude toward your classmates and the director must be maintained at all times. Disrespect will not be tolerated. There will be challenging times in this class, but there will be many more good times. I want you to enjoy orchestra and a positive atmosphere will make that possible.

“Always rehearse your performance because you will perform your rehearsal.”

POLICY ON PERFORMANCE ABSENCES

As a member of the Ballard High School Orchestras, you are required to be at all dress rehearsals, performances, and festivals. Important musical factors, such as balance and blend, are affected by the absence of even a single performer! You accept the responsibility to be at required concerts when you join a musical group. Your grade will reflect how well you meet this responsibility.

- Look over the calendar carefully NOW. Note the performances which are required as a member or your orchestra.
- Decide which optional activities you might want to be involved in.
- Write appropriate dates on your family's activity calendar NOW.
- Absences from required concerts will result in a loss of points with the exception of:
 - **Illness** – Students claiming illness but having attended school the day of the concert and the day following the concert will not be excused.
 - **Death in the immediate family**
 - **Planned absence** – This means that the director has been notified several weeks (if not months) in advance, and that every attempt has been made to rectify the conflict.
- Absences from required concerts due to the following reasons will not be excused:
 - **I had to work.** Students are given the performance schedule on the first day of school so that they can avoid conflicts with work schedules. Employers told far in advance of a specific date will most likely avoid it.
 - **I couldn't find a ride.** There are many other students in the music program that will gladly help you get to and from the concert. In addition, we have a wonderful public transportation system. If you are having trouble finding a way to get here, please speak to the director.
 - **I had family obligations.** The performance schedule is given out on the first day of class so that students can clear their calendar and avoid personal conflicts.
 - **I forgot.** Students are reminded daily for at least one week prior to a concert and are given a performance schedule on the first day of school.

PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE

Uniforms

Formal concert attire: Owned and maintained by the Ballard Performing Arts Department.

- Men: Tux jacket and pants, bow tie, and cummerbund. All men will be measured by a professional. Date to be announced after school in the band room in early September. This is mandatory for all men. Concert attire is loaned out to students for the school year. Students must provide black socks, black dress shoes (no tennis shoes), tux shirt, cuff-links, and studs. Tux shirts, cuff-links and studs can be purchased at Tux shirts are available to purchase from Ted Brown Music, 1006 NE 50th St, 206-622-0171. The tux shirts cost \$19.99 plus tax.
- Women: Black top, and skirt. All women will try on their concert clothes on September 1st or 2nd at BHS. Attire is loaned out to students for the school year. Students must provide black, closed toe dress shoes and black hose.

T-shirt: All orchestra students will have the same t-shirt, which comes included with the annual fee. This shirt is worn on trips and at informal events where formal attire is not required.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Private Lessons

Students in the Ballard Music Program are encouraged to study their instrument privately with a teacher. Benefits of doing so include:

- Growth of musical ability
- Increased musicianship
- Improved stage presence which benefit:
 - Communication skills
 - Presentation skills
 - Interpersonal skills
- Personal goal setting and achievement skills
- Increased self-confidence and stronger contribution to the ensemble

Students may arrange to take lessons with one of the instructors who teaches lessons at school during class, and can also obtain a referral for a teacher outside of the school day from Ms. Newell, or see the private teacher list on the class schoology page.

Financial Assistance

If at any time during the year you experience financial hardship that inhibits paying for a required fee, please call, e-mail, or send a note. You may also talk to me before or after class. WE WILL FIND A WAY TO MAKE IT WORK!!!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I acknowledge that I have received and read the 2017-2018 Ballard High School Orchestra Handbook. I understand that being in the music program at Ballard is an important commitment. By signing this form, I pledge to honor that commitment and do my part to help make my orchestra successful.

Student Name (Printed)

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please return by Friday, September 15th, 2017.

-Life is too short for ordinary experiences.-