

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Trumbull, Connecticut

Orchestra / Strings
High School
2015

Music

Curriculum Writing Team

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Orchestra/Strings High School

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The Trumbull Board of Education will continue to take Affirmative Action to ensure that no persons are discriminated against in its employment.

CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

The Trumbull school community, which engages in an environment conducive to learning, believes that all students will read and write effectively, therefore communicating in an articulate and coherent manner. All students will participate in activities that address problem-solving through critical thinking. Students will use technology as a tool in decision-making. We believe that by fostering self-confidence, self-directed and student-centered activities, we will encourage independent thinking and learning. We believe ethical conduct to be paramount in sustaining our welcoming school climate.

We believe:

- Music is an inextricable part of the human experience, and every individual is inherently musical.
- Every student should be assured a high-quality course of music instruction, taught by qualified music educators.
- Music is a pillar of cultural heritage and a means for interdisciplinary learning.
- Music is an essential, core subject, and providing a musical education is a necessary part of educating the whole child. Therefore, every student should be offered opportunities to perform, create, respond, and connect musically.
- Learning music gives students a mode of artistic expression, a sense of music appreciation, and the tools needed for becoming lifelong musical learners.
- All individuals should have the high-quality resources and facilities necessary to achieve success within a challenging curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

The orchestra/strings curriculum aligns practices, standards, and assessments among the TPS, the Connecticut State Board of Education, Connecticut's Common Arts Assessment Initiative, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, and the National Association for Music Education.

This curriculum includes the 2014 National Core Arts Standards for Music with eleven anchor standards, and the addition of “connecting” as an artistic process along with “creating, performing, and responding.”

Orchestra/Strings is an elective course offered by the Trumbull Public Schools music department. This course is for high school students who want to continue learning and refining technical skills and musical expression in playing the violin, viola, cello, or bass.

Students will continue to develop their individual skills, learning to play more advanced repertoire and utilizing more advanced articulation and expressive techniques. Students will also continue to develop their ensemble skills by being able to listen to themselves in the context of playing with an ensemble.

Technology Competency Standards align with the 2007 National Educational Standards and performance Indicators for Students.

PHILOSOPHY

Orchestral stringed instruments have been part of our cultural heritage for hundreds of years. Learning to play a stringed instrument develops intellectual capacity in a unique way. Participation in orchestra provides many benefits. Performing on a stringed instrument requires a high level of discipline and involves both sides of the brain. Students are given the opportunity to develop individual skills as well as interpersonal skills that come from playing in a group. Teachers of all subjects are involved in passing knowledge and culture from one generation to the next. Teaching students to play in an orchestra is a vital part of this transmission of knowledge and cultures.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Name

Orchestra/Strings- Grades 9-12

Prerequisites

Elective course – open to any ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade violin, viola, cello, or bass students. No audition is required.

Materials Required

Students must provide instrument, (violin, viola, cello or bass).

General Description of the Course

The music for the orchestra will be chosen to challenge musicians of varied levels of experience. A planned program of musicianship is thoroughly implemented and students are encouraged to join small ensemble groups which will rehearse outside of class. In addition to daily rehearsals, students will also meet in small lesson groups once a week.

Major Projects

Students will perform at all school concerts.

Assessments

There will be a common core assessment at the end of each year of study.

Texts

Scales, Appoggios and Chorales for Strings. Edlund, Ian. RBC Publications
Standard String and Full orchestra repertoire of Grade 3-6 level.

GOALS

Students will:

- Continue to refine their ability to play a stringed instrument with good posture and good tone quality, playing alone and with others.
 - Continue to refine their proficiency in reading notated music, specifically in the areas of sight-reading.
 - Continue effective practice habits.
 - Build a sense of musicianship by gaining an awareness of music performance practices and becoming aware of music as a performing art.
 - Learn how to incorporate their individual skills into a group ensemble, focusing on the areas of listening to balance, intonation, and dynamics in a group environment.
 - Come to appreciate that music can enhance their enjoyment of life at home and in school, and discover how music, specifically string playing, can continue to be a part of their lives after graduation.
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- Within each unit, students who possess a higher level of ability due to higher grade level or outside musical experience will be able to expand on unit goals, by:
 - Assuming a leadership position in orchestra, either as concertmaster/mistress or principle player
 - Lead Sectional Rehearsals
 - Have opportunities to perform higher level solos with orchestra, either as a group or individual
 - Be part of a string quartet/smaller ensemble that rehearses/performs higher level repertoire
 - Have additional performance opportunities, either in school or in community
 - Prepare and perform scale/solo repertoire for Western Region/All-State audition
 - Sophomore, Juniors, and Seniors may become part of Tri-M, the high school music honors society
 - Moving from Proficient, to Accomplished, to Advanced on Goals/Unit activities as outlined in the National Standards for Music

MUSIC STANDARDS

The Performance Standards align with the 2014 National Core Arts Standards for Music.

I. CREATING

- Imagine: The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work emerge from a variety of sources.
- Plan and Make: Musicians' creative choices are influenced by their expertise, context, and expressive intent.
- Evaluate and Refine: Musicians evaluate and refine their work through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.
- Present: Musicians' presentation of creative work is the culmination of a process of creation and communication.

II. PERFORMING

- Select: Performers' interest in and knowledge of musical works, understanding of their own technical skill, and the context for a performance influence the selection of repertoire.
- Analyze: Analyzing creators' context and how they manipulate elements of music provides insight into their intent and informs performance.
- Interpret: Performers make interpretive decisions based on their understanding of context and expressive intent.
- Rehearse, Evaluate, and Refine: To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.
- Present: Musicians judge performance based on criteria that vary across time, place, and cultures. The context and how a work is presented influence the audience response.

III. RESPONDING

- Select: Individuals' selection of musical works is influenced by their interests, experiences, understandings, and purposes.
- Analyze: Response to music is informed by analyzing context (social, cultural, and historical) and how creators and performers manipulate the elements of music.
- Interpret: Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.
- Evaluate: The personal evaluation of musical works and performances is informed by analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

IV. CONNECTING

- Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding.
- Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding.

Note: Units 1-3 are taught sequentially, whereas Units 4 and 5 are taught continuously throughout the year.

Unit 1: Proficiency in Performance

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Tune their instruments within the ensemble using 5ths or harmonics
- MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Demonstrate the ability to perform in the 1st-4th left-hand positions
- MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Proficiently play scales and arpeggios up to two sharps and flats, with their relative minors, in two octaves
- MU:Pr6.1.E.1a Perform string orchestra music in various musical styles and appropriate to the grade level, with a goal of performing grade 3- 3 ½ level repertoire
- MU:Pr4.3.E.1a Have an understanding of the major time periods in music and be able to historically relate the music they are playing
- MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Refine tone production, specifically tension-less right arm bowing and awareness of bow placement
- MU.Pr5.3.E.1a Perform with appropriate blend and ensemble skills

Essential Questions

- How do I interact with the group to achieve a unified sound?
- What elements are needed in my playing to bring out the musical aspects of the music?

Focus Questions

- What areas in my posture/technique need refinement so I can be a better player?
- How can I play scales and arpeggios with a better tone and more accurate intonation?
- What should I listen for when I am playing with others?
- Why is it important to be aware of both the conductor and the markings in the music?
- What practice strategies should I employ at home when practicing a difficult passage?
- How does an orchestra rehearse, and what is my role, in having a productive rehearsal?

Scope and Sequence

- Tuning procedures
- Long-note scales and arpeggios, posture check, fluid right arm
- Balance and blend using Bach Chorales
- Rehearse All-District String Concert repertoire

Instructional/Teaching Strategies

- Teacher models correct tuning/rehearsal procedures
- Teacher guides students to practice correct posture / optimize tone production in scales
- Teacher guides students to play together and in small groups, listening for accurate intonation and unified sound/blend
- Teacher leads students in rehearsing concert music together, in sections, and individually
- Teacher demonstrates and assigns students to play scales and excerpts of concert music to the metronome to establish unified beat
- Teacher conveys the history and main characteristics of musical time periods and connects those to the repertoire students are playing

Evaluation/Assessment Methods

- On a regular basis, teacher will give immediate verbal feedback to student about correct playing position, notes, rhythms, dynamics, and balance
- Students will perform monthly playing quizzes on scales/repertoire being worked on in rehearsals
- Students will sometimes be asked to evaluate their own performances

Time Allotments/Pacing Guide (Expected Performance Time Frame)

- Approximately 12 weeks

Unit 2: Refinement and Extension of Proficiency

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- MU:Pr4.3.E.8a Refine articulations, specifically staccato, spiccato, and quick detache bowings
- MU:Pr4.3.E.8a Begin or refine vibrato technique and incorporate in playing
- MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Be proficient in scales and arpeggios of three sharps and three flats and their relative minors, and be able to play at least one scale in three octaves
- MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Violins will be proficient in 5th position
- MU:Pr6.1.E.IIa Perform string orchestra music in various musical styles and appropriate to the grade level, with a goal of performing grade 4 level repertoire
- MU:Pr6.1.E.Ia Perform full (symphonic) orchestra repertoire using appropriate blend, of a grade 2 ½ to 3 level

Essential Questions

- How do different bow techniques change the sound of the music/ensemble?
- How does sitting in different sections of the orchestra affect my ability to be a good ensemble player?
- Where should I place my bow to achieve appropriate articulations/sound?
- What are the tools to effective shifting/playing in tune in higher positions?
- How is playing with winds/percussion different from playing with strings alone?

Scope and Sequence

- Practice/rehearse scales using different articulations: staccato/quick 16ths/spiccato
- Vibrato exercises with/without bow
- Rehearse Bach Chorales using vibrato
- Rehearse Winter Concert repertoire
- Prepare for Scale Assessment (midterm exam)

Instructional/Teaching Strategies

- Teacher models different articulations/bow placements
- Teacher demonstrates and has students practice different articulations with scales
- Teacher introduces/reinforces main vibrato exercises
- Teacher instructs students to employ vibrato in Bach Chorales
- Teacher shifts students' seats so that students in back are moved to front, students in front are moved to back, students in middle are moved either front or back, and each student is paired with another stand partner

- Teacher extracts shifting excerpts from repertoire and rehearses with sections, going over proper shifting technique
- Teacher introduces students to Scale Assessment pattern

Evaluation/Assessment Methods

- On a regular basis, teacher will give immediate verbal feedback to student about correct playing position, notes, rhythms, dynamics, and balance
- Students will perform monthly playing quizzes on scales/repertoire being worked on in rehearsals
- Students will sometimes be asked to evaluate their own performances
- Students will complete Scale Assessment as the midterm exam
- Each student will participate as a member of school orchestra in Winter Concert

Time Allotments/Pacing Guide (Expected Performance Time Frame)

- Approximately 12 weeks

Unit 3: Achievement of Greater Technical Competency

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- MU:Pr4.3.E.8a Continue refinement of left-hand position for basic vibrato motions and/or increase use of vibrato motions
- MU:Pr4.3.E.5a Increase dynamic range through altering bow speed/weight/amount used/placement on string as individuals and as group
- MU:Cr6.1.E.IIIa Perform string orchestra music in various musical styles and appropriate to the grade level, with a goal of performing grade 4 ½ to 5 repertoire
- MU.Pr6.1.e.IIa Perform full (symphonic) orchestra repertoire, using appropriate blend, of a grade 3 to 3½ level
- MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Play double-stops of major and minor 3rds with accurate intonation

Essential Questions

- How has the ability to express emotions of the composer and performer been enhanced through the practice of technical and musical topics that I as an individual player and the orchestra as a whole have developed over the course of the year?
- What the technical obstacles that still challenge my playing can I continue to refine over the summer and/or how can I continue to use my musical knowledge and ability after high school?
- How aware am I of how I'm using my bow and the tone I produce?
- What challenges does higher grade level repertoire present for myself and the orchestra as a whole?
- How can I continue to grow as a string player and musician over the summer and in the years to come?

Scope and Sequence

- Practice scales and Chorales with varying dynamics
- Rehearse Spring Concert repertoire
- Prepare High School Strings common assessment

Instructional/Teaching Strategies

- Teacher models bow technique to enhance dynamic expression
- Teacher guides students to practice scales and Chorales in varying dynamics/dynamic patterns
- Teacher has students continue to practice sight-reading techniques
- Teacher introduces students to and guides rehearsal/practice of Strings common assessment

Evaluation/Assessment Methods

- On a regular basis, teacher will give immediate verbal feedback to student about correct playing position, notes, rhythms, dynamics, and balance
- Students will perform monthly playing quizzes on scales/repertoire being worked on in rehearsals
- Students will sometimes be asked to evaluate their own performances
- Students will complete High School Strings common assessment
- Each student will participate as a member of school orchestra in Spring Concert

Time Allotments/Pacing Guide (Expected Performance Time Frame)

- Approximately 12 weeks

Unit 4: Theory/Musicianship

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- MU:Re7.2.E.1a Identify and notate key signatures, both major and minor, up to four sharps and flats
- MU:Re7.2.E.1a Identify and notate major and minor scales, including the natural, harmonic, and melodic minor versions of the minor scale
- MU:Re7.2.E.1a Understand how to interpret time signatures
- MU:Re7.2.E.1a Count aloud and write underneath the counting for rhythms contained in the musical repertoire being played
- MU:Re7.2.E.1a Create major, minor, diminished, and dominant seventh triads and chords on a given note
- MU.Re8.1.E.1a Identify important music terminology and how it affects performance, including dynamics markings, tempo markings, articulation markings, and expressive markings.
- MU:Cr2.1.C.1a Compose an 8-measure phrase in a specified key using a variety of note values and pitches.

Essential Questions

- How does the knowledge of theory enhance a musician's understanding of a composer's music?
- How do scales create both melody and harmony?
- Why do keys have different numbers of sharps and flats?
- Why are there three versions of the minor scale?
- How do triads and chords create the harmony of a piece of music?
- How should I count a difficult rhythmic passage?
- What are the differences between simple and compound time signatures?

Scope and Sequence

- Introduce and differentiate a whole step and a half step
- Learn major scales and their corresponding key signatures according to the pattern of whole/half steps
- Learn natural minor scales, comparing them to their relative majors
- Discuss and demonstrate differences among the three forms of the minor scale
- Introduce and differentiate major third and minor third
- Construct triads combining different patterns of major and minor thirds
- Teach the definitions of and abbreviations of musical terms
- Teach how to count rhythms using "1 e and a 2 e and a etc." and "1 and a 2 and a etc." subdivisions

Instructional/Teaching Strategies

- Teacher instructs students how to visually differentiate whole steps and half steps on the staff and the keyboard, and plays various whole steps and half steps on instruments
- Teacher leads students to examine the whole steps and half steps of a scale, and discover patterns
- Teacher assigns students to use pattern of whole steps and half steps of the major scale to construct scales
- Teacher conveys shortcuts to quickly identify a key signature, both the major and relative minor, and memorize which scale degrees to alter to make a natural minor scale either harmonic or melodic
- From the repertoire being rehearsed, teacher has students examine the definitions of the musical terms the composer used
- Teacher differentiates between simple and compound time signatures, helping students discover whether to use “1 e and a” or “1 and a” subdivisions
- Teacher presents various rhythms and counts them both verbally and in writing
- Teacher guides students in writing, playing, listening to, and identifying all four types of triads and the dominant 7th chord

Evaluation/Assessment Methods

- On a regular basis, students will be quizzed during rehearsals on theory topics found in the repertoire
- Students, about once a week, will be taught a specific topic and complete a worksheet/listening activity
- Students will compose and be evaluated on an 8-measure composition

Time Allotments/Pacing Guide (Expected Performance Time Frame)

- Continuously throughout school year

Unit 5: Evaluation/Connecting

At the completion of this unit, students will:

MU:Re9.1.E.1a Assess others' and their own performance

MU:Pr5.3.E.11a Develop rehearsal strategies for specific challenges/problems

MU:Re9.1.E.1a Use technology as a means for assessing and improving

MU:Pr4.3.E.2a Understand and connect repertoire being rehearsed/performed to major music history time periods

Essential Questions

- What should a musician listen for when assessing a performance?
- How does an understanding of the time period in which a piece was composed affect the way a performer chooses to perform/interpret that piece?
- What are the main elements to listen for when assessing a performance?
- How does listening to a performance guide one's practice?
- What are the main characteristics of each musical time period?

Scope and Sequence

- Evaluate and compare excerpts of music being rehearsed
- Use metronome as a means to play rhythms accurately and at specified tempos
- Constructively criticize oneself, others, and the orchestra, and develop practice strategies
- Discuss the major time periods (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Contemporary) and the major composers of each

Instructional/Teaching Strategies

- Teacher breaks down assessment criteria into major elements: intonation/rhythmic accuracy/dynamic and expression/balance
- Teacher has students compare performances of their own and performances from other orchestras, focusing on assessment elements
- Teacher guides students to use iPads to record and assess themselves playing scales and musical excerpts
- Teacher guides students in how to use a metronome effectively
- Teacher conveys characteristics of major time periods and composers, specifically from the repertoire students are rehearsing and performing

Evaluation/Assessment Methods

- Students will assess themselves from time to time as part of rehearsal
- Students will complete written self-assessments of their playing quizzes
- Students will complete a written assessment after each major concert

Time Allotments/Pacing Guide (Expected Performance Time Frame)

- Continuously throughout school year

Technology Competency Standards

1. Creativity and Innovation – Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology.
2. Communication and Collaboration – Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.
3. Research and Information Fluency – Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information.
4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making – Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources.
5. Digital Citizenship – Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.

Trumbull Music Department – High School Orchestra Common Assessment Rubric

Student: _____ Evaluated by: _____

Date: _____

(circle one) Senior / Junior / Sophomore / Freshman

1. Scales

Total Points (20 pts possible) _____

- Deduct 1 point for each note played inaccurately
- Rhythm & Tempo:
 - ___ Steady rhythm and tempo throughout (5)
 - ___ Mostly steady rhythm and tempo throughout (4)
 - ___ Tempo sometimes unsteady (3)
 - ___ Some stopping and starting (2)
 - ___ Poor tempo, much stopping and starting (1)
- Add one point for each of the following:
 - ___ Posture (holding of the instrument) proficient
 - ___ Full/Confident tone demonstrated
 - ___ Left-hand technique proficient
 - ___ Bow hold proficient
 - ___ Ease of bow arm/technique proficient

2. Orchestra Music List excerpt _____

Total Points (25 pts possible) _____

- Tone/Quality of Sound: The student's tone quality . . .
- ___ is focused and characteristic throughout (5)
 - ___ distorts occasionally (4)
 - ___ has some flaws in basic tone production (3)
 - ___ has several major flaws (2)
 - ___ is not a tone quality characteristic of the instrument (1)

- Note Accuracy: The student . . .
- ___ performs all pitches/notes accurately (5)
 - ___ performs most pitches/notes accurately (4)
 - ___ performs many pitches/notes accurately (3)
 - ___ performs a number of missed pitches/notes (2)
 - ___ performs a large number of missed pitches/notes (1)

- Intonation: The student's intonation . . .
- ___ is accurate throughout (5)
 - ___ is accurate but fails to adjust on isolated pitches (4)
 - ___ is mostly accurate but includes notes that are out of tune (3)
 - ___ has basic sense but fails to adjust to acceptable standard (2)
 - ___ is consistently out of tune (1)

Rhythmic Accuracy: The student's rhythm . . .

- is accurate and precise throughout (5)
- is nearly accurate but lacks precise interpretation (4)
- is in consistent tempo, but some patterns lack precision (3)
- is inconsistent in performance of most rhythmic patterns (2)
- is not accurate (1)

Dynamics/Articulation: The student performs . . .

- all markings correctly and expressively (5)
- all markings correctly (4)
- most markings correctly (3)
- some markings correctly (2)
- no proper attempt at articulation/dynamics (1)

3. Sight-Reading List excerpt _____

Total Points (15 pts possible) _____

Note Accuracy: The student performs . . .

- all pitches/notes accurately (5)
- most pitches/notes accurately (4)
- many pitches/notes accurately (3)
- a number of missed pitches/notes (2)
- a large number of missed pitches/notes (1)

Intonation: The student's intonation . . .

- is accurate throughout (5)
- is accurate but fails to adjust on isolated pitches (4)
- is mostly accurate but includes notes that are out of tune (3)
- has basic sense but fails to adjust to acceptable standard (2)
- is consistently out of tune (1)

Rhythmic Accuracy: The student's rhythm . . .

- is accurate and precise throughout (5)
- is nearly accurate but lacks precise interpretation (4)
- is in consistent tempo, but some patterns lack precision (3)
- is inconsistent in performance of most rhythmic patterns (2)
- is not accurate (1)

Resource File/Appendices

Websites for Teachers

www.nationalartsstandards.org/

nccas.org/

www.nafme.org

www.metronomeonline.com/

www.jwpepper.com

www.youtube.com

www.musictheory.net