Omaha Northwest Magnet High School
Honors Concert Choir & Honors Studio Singers
2019-2020 Course Syllabi

Instructor: Georg Getty
E-mail: georg.getty@ops.org
Office Phone Number: 402-557-3544
Plan Periods: 7 and 8
Teacher Web Site: bit.ly/northwestchoral
Office/Classroom: 153

Best times to contact: 7:15-7:30; plan; after 3:15PM

Course Descriptions

**Concert Choir** is the principal performing choral organization of Northwest High School. Students rehearse and perform music of a diversity of musical styles. Performance usually includes four core concerts, and other special engagements such as NSAA District Music Contest, Choir Day at the Holland Center for Performing Arts, outside of Omaha festivals, the spring musical and others. In order to achieve successful performances, students work on building their knowledge of music theory as well as their vocal technique, rehearsal discipline, and ensemble responsibility. Members in Concert Choir are selected by audition.

**Studio Singers** is the elite, versatile performing extension of the Concert Choir, and focuses primarily on community performances, school ambassadorship and competition both in the guise of a show choir and as a chamber choir. Co-enrollment in Concert Choir or another flagship ensemble (band or orchestra) is required in order to be a member.

Instructional Philosophy (Mr. Getty)

As an educator and musician, I believe singing in a choir is something everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime. It’s good for physical and psychological health, mental strength, social function and finding the value in one’s self and others. The experience of working with others to overcome challenges and achieve a common goal is a perfect metaphor for life itself, and you can’t put a price on that. Besides—while being good for you, the process is also a lot of fun.

It is my goal that students will leave my class able to use their voices to communicate effectively as well as learning to effectively become part of a tight-knit team of colleagues and friends, while also discovering the cultural identity of their community.

Content Standards (Grading - 65% Summative (final evaluation) 35% Formative (current progress))

- **OPS Physical Education Standard 1** – Social and emotional development - addresses successful habits built from rehearsal discipline, good vocal technique, and teamwork.
- **OPS Physical Education Standard 2** – Literacy and Application - addresses the knowledge and application of: music theory, history, and science of the voice.
- **OPS Physical Education Standard 3** – Cultural Connections - addresses listening to / analyzing music performances, reflection and the application of music in society.

Physical Education Standards (For Studio Singers PE Credit)

- **OPS Physical Education Standard 1** - Skill - learning and execution of movement techniques and understanding how physical activity works.
- **OPS Physical Education Standard 2** - Knowledge - knowing the components of fitness and the ability and willingness to put it into practice.
- **OPS Physical Education Standard 3** - Participation - having the willingness to put knowledge and skill into practice.
- **OPS Physical Education Standard 4** - Nutrition Knowing elements of health / nutrition in relation to performance, health, and vocal technique.

Common Types of Graded Assignments

**Assignments may be either formative (monitor of current progress) or summative (evaluation at the end).**

Below are common examples of typical graded tasks. It is not exhaustive, however.

**Performance**

- **Concert / Performance** – Required assessment. Summative—this is the culmination of daily rehearsal.
- **Rehearsal** – In good faith, preparation for performance and musical development happens daily. Formative.
- **Part Test** – Students are assessed over individual knowledge of their part. Summative.
- **Rehearsal Audit** – Students are randomly chosen and assessed on progress for that particular day. Formative.

**Literacy**

- **Theory Work / assessment** – Work on the structure and mechanics of music. Can be formative or summative.
- **Rhythm reading practice/assessment** – Reading rhythm in time by identifying symbols and patterns of symbols. Formative or summative.
- **Melodic reading practice/assessment** – Interpreting intervals by associating vertical and step-skip relationships. Formative or summative.
- **Interpretation** – Using the knowledge of musical vocabulary to interpret the statement of a piece. Formative or summative.

**Culture**

- **Reflections** – Writing about one’s own experiences with performing and the arts. Formative.
- **Enrichment exercises** – Other activities that delve into themes we explore in our music in further detail. Formative.
Major Units of Study
The year is divided into four quarters, each running up to a set of major performances. Students will use resources provided to them (choral octavos, sheet music, rote sources, etc.) to vocally perform in numerous different styles, historical periods and cultures from around the world. Students will have “audits”, which are randomly administered to provide a snapshot of student progress. They will also engage in theory exploration exercises.

General Course Expectations
Performances serve as the primary summative assessment component for these courses. In an ensemble class, however, the success of everyone enrolled in the course is tied together. In part because of this, attendance at all performances is mandatory, and it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that they are present for all performances as well as all regular daily rehearsals. All calendar dates are given ahead of time, and only emergencies (i.e. hospitalization, bereavement, extreme illness) will be excused absences at the director’s discretion.

Students: Punctuality and regular, daily attendance are crucial to your success as well as the success of your peers in the ensemble. Attendance at all rehearsals and concerts on the calendar is expected and critical to individual success, as well as success of the ensemble.

Finally, you must participate in class fully and in good faith. This is key to your success, as well as the success of those around you. It’s like getting into a swimming pool—it seems cold if you put only your foot in—you have to jump in all the way. Trust me—you’ll be glad you did.

Class Rules and Expectations
Concert / Rehearsal Attendance
Attendance at every performance or rehearsal outside of school hours is mandatory. Part of learning the business of performing arts is learning to balance a busy performing schedule with the other needs of life that still need to be met. Being a member of this ensemble means that you must make necessary transportation arrangements ahead of time when we meet outside of the school day, and make up any missed schoolwork impacted by our rehearsals/performances. To assist you with these matters, we give you a calendar of all known choir responsibilities for the year. Write them down in your agenda and plan ahead. Communicate these to parents, guardians, coaches, bosses, teachers and people who give you rides immediately. In the event of an emergency or a genuinely irresolvable conflict, communicate directly with the director (talk, call, email, Remind) as soon as possible so that we can work out a solution. If transportation is an issue, your choir-mates may be often able to assist.

Show Choir Specific Information
Even though the Studio Singers are a chamber-size ensemble, Studio Singers is primarily a show choir and is almost entirely performance focused. Above and beyond the standard performing expectations of a regular choir (the use of good vocal technique and musicianship, keeping good ensemble stewardship, and becoming musically literate across many different types of vocal music) we also expect that students learn to engage the audience as dynamic performers while incorporating movement, staging and choreography, solo performance, and instrumental work. This is strenuous work, and it’s not uncommon for students to leave a good rehearsal in a sweat. PE credit is granted for the class. We refine our music and dance to a high degree of precision by “practicing until we can’t get it wrong”. It is the expectation that individuals will be able to comfortably and confidently dance, sing and perform by during the season through the application of consistent daily practice in and outside of class (and by taking good care of the most priceless and irreplaceable instrument students own...themselves.) Proper vocal technique and healthy habits are critical topics addressed in this class.

Parent/Guardian Involvement
Classes in the Fine and Performing Arts demand a great deal of additional collective planning and teamwork behind the scenes. The Northwest PBO is a group of parents, community members and alumni dedicated to making activities and fine arts at Northwest shine! Volunteers are not obligated to assist in every event PBO is a part of, but rather can participate on an as-needed basis. Volunteers may assist with events, help with fundraising, chaperoning students and providing specialized skills in order to ensure our students are successful. Volunteers may also choose to work directly with the music department if they so choose. Contact Mr. Getty or PBO president Suzi Busby at Sheri.Yokley-Busby@ops.org.

Performances and Outside-of-Class Events
A complete and up-to-date online calendar can be found at http://bit.ly/northwestchoral. Here, you can check our dates in real time (and even sync our Google Calendar to yours if you want)! In addition to our already listed events, our elected choir officers will also plan optional social events from time to time that will be added to the calendar. These socials are optional, but they greatly enhance the team dynamic.

Communication
What I teach is a form of communication, and I take that to heart. I expect students, parents and guardians to do the same. I’ve provided my contact information in order that it is used. If you have questions or concerns, we should talk! Our webpage is at http://bit.ly/northwestchoral.

And—here’s my contact info.
Email – georg.getty@ops.org / Ph. 402-557-3544
Twitter – @OPSNWChoral
Remind – students AND parents can both subscribe and are encouraged to do so, which you can do so by texting our tags to the number 81010 from your phone. Our tags are @nwchoir (Concert Choir) and @nwshow (Studio Singers). Contact me directly if you need assistance. Please do register; we send files and updates this way frequently.

Finally, we are looking forward to a great year! I look forward to working with you!