

Glendale Unified School District

High School

April 19, 2022

Department: Visual and Performing Arts

Course Title: Chamber Choir Honors (Charismatics Chamber Choir)

Course Code: 2630D/2631D

Grade Level(s): 10-12

School(s)
Course Offered: Crescenta Valley High School

UC/CSU Approved
(Y/N, Subject): Visual & Performing Arts (F)

Course Credits: 10

Prerequisite: N/A

Recommended
Textbook: Music Theory for Choirs – Volume 1 & 2
Laurel Larsen – Masterworks Press

Habits of a Successful Choral Musician – Student Edition
Eric Wilkinson, Scott Rush – GIA Publications

Progressive Sight Singing, 3e
Carol Krueger – Oxford University Press

Sight Reading Factory
www.sightreadingfactory.com

Bach, Beethoven, and the Boys: Music History As It Ought To Be Taught
David W. Barber – Indent Publishing

Teach Yourself Music History
L.C. Harnsberger, Donny Trieu – Alfred Music Publishing

Foundations of Choral Tone

Alan Zabriskie – Usingers Publishers

Vocal Technique – 2e

Julia Davids, Stephen LaTour – Waveland Press, Inc.

Course Overview: Charismatics Chamber Choir is an advanced ensemble comprised of select students chosen from a rigorous audition process (see Unit 1). This course is designed to prepare choral music students for the rigor and expectations they will encounter at the collegiate level. Areas of study include entrance auditions for vocal music ensembles, proficiency exams for placement in music theory, and admittance into a college of music. Areas of topical study include aural skills (sight singing), music theory, critical listening, vocal technique, and music history.

Through the study and performance of quality repertoire, students will examine a wealth of choral works chosen from multiple styles and genres, encompassing musical time periods from the Medieval to the 21st century. Students will perform a cappella and accompanied repertoire in four, six, and eight-part divisi, sung in multiple languages such as Latin, German, French, Italian, Swahili, Haitian Creole, and others. Students enrolled in Charismatics Chamber Choir will learn how to realize the complex technical and artistic demands of a piece of choral literature by addressing musical components such as balance, blend, phrasing, expression, texture, intonation, dynamics, interpretation, and style. Because Charismatics is a performance-based course, students will engage in fifteen to twenty performances per year via concerts, festivals, and community events. This course promotes critical thinking through musical analysis, the exploration of poetic texts, as well as the investigation of the historical and social context of each piece. Additionally, students will apply advanced vocal technique include the appropriate posture, breath support, tone production, diction, articulation, resonance, and vowel production necessary for any given genre.

Unit 1: Audition and Selection Process

The Audition and Selection Process is a two-step process, which includes an individual audition and a group call-back audition. This process begins at the end of the previous school year.

During the individual audition, the director checks and notes each student's vocal range using descending five-note scales. The student then sings "My Country 'Tis of Thee" a cappella in a key

appropriate for their range. This serves to show the director the timbre of the student's voice as well as give a basic indication of the training level of the singer. The director then tests the student's tonal recall by playing five-note patterns on the piano and having the student sing them back. Finally, the student is asked to sight sing a melody which the director has downloaded from sightreadingfactory.com.

During the call-back audition, students are given 24 hours to learn an English part song or madrigal given to them by the director. They may use whatever means they have at their disposal but may not receive help from the director. The next day, all call-back students perform the song for the director who listens to the preparation, vocal technique, and accuracy of the singing. The director may listen to small groups, individual singers, or the whole group to determine the most advantageous group for the following year's class. Based on the information learned in these two auditions, students are either placed in the class or in another choral ensemble.

Assignments: Students are given accounts on sightreadingfactory.com which they can use to prepare for the sight singing portion of the audition. They are also given the call-back song to learn one day before the call-backs.

Unit 2: Vocal Technique

This unit introduces the core vocal techniques used by the choral program. The wide range of vocal technique concepts will be taught in a year-long progression that will be paced according to the choir's mastery of each skill and by the necessity shown through the assessment of the choir's performance level. Students will demonstrate, model, discuss, and analyze expert performances of exercises that will include the following topics, the anatomy of singing, posture, breathing, tone production, intonation, resonance, projection, pronunciation, dynamics, articulation, balance, and blend, and consistency.

Assignments: The teacher will teach a series of lessons on vocal technique, using the textbook *Foundations of Choral Tone*. Lesson topics include Posture, Breath, Resonance, Chiaroscuro, and Blend.

Posture

Students will devise exercises and stretches for improving posture for singing and demonstrate these to the class.

Breathing

Students will follow the director through a number of breathing exercises designed to improve breath control. As homework, students will research and find breathing exercises to share with the class. As a class, students will discuss the relative effectiveness of the exercises.

Resonance

Through director-guided exercises, students will be able to: feel resonant vibrations in the nasopharynx, create resonant space within the oro-pharynx and laryngopharynx, and create sensations of vibration in the nasopharynx. Once they have a basic understanding of the concepts and sensations, students will research exercises to help enhance their singing and share them with the class.

Chiaroscuro

Follow director-led exercises, students will be able to: feel the sensation of the “chiaro” (bright and nasal) tone quality, feel the sensation of the “oscuro” (hooty and warm), and learn to combine the two in a balanced “chiaroscuro” tone quality. As before, students will research or invent their own exercises that help demonstrate and develop their abilities.

Blend

Students will be able to: recognize when vowels are unified, modify vowels in the upper register as needed, unify and properly time diphthongs, and achieve proper chiaroscuro resonance on all sung vowels. Students will research or invent their own exercises that help demonstrate and develop their abilities.

Unit 3: Music Theory and Sight-Singing

Unit Summary: In this unit, students will develop their ability to sight-sing music, listen actively and critique their own performances, and compose simple melodies for an SATB choir. This unit will be taught throughout the entire school year in the form of short lessons taught immediately after the day’s warm-up.

Assignments

Music Theory

Due to the varying level of private music instruction students may have received, the director will administer a pre-test to determine students’ level of music theory knowledge and skill. Based on the results, the teacher will design a music theory packet for each student to complete to “fill

in the gaps” in their knowledge. Students with “no gaps” will be given more challenging material on a case-by-case basis.

Sight Singing

The class will start the year using the *One-Minute Sight Singing* books. Once the class has completed the books, the class will use sightreadingfactory.com to generate daily sight singing melodies. Periodic group and individual sight-singing quizzes will occur as needed to confirm progress.

Unit 4: Music History

As a class, students will read biographies of important choral music composers and overviews of historical musical periods. Composers from the different historical periods of music such as Hildegard von Bingen, Thomas Luis de Victoria, Gabriel Faure, Eric Whitacre, Morten Lauridsen, Sydney Guillaume (to name a few) will be introduced as well as their music observed and analyzed.

Vocal ensembles such as the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Polyphony, Voces8, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Pentatonix, and The Real Group will also be introduced and studied. Honor choirs of the current year from All-State Conferences, ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) Western and National Divisions will also be introduced as a means of developing not only an appreciation for the diverse choral groups but also for the purpose of developing the musical ears of the students.

Assignments

Choral Performance Analysis

Students will attend a choral concert by a university or professional chorus in the Los Angeles area. They will write a 500-750-word concert review that draws on their knowledge of choral and vocal technique as outlined above.

Classical Singers Analysis

In this assignment, students will review YouTube videos of three classical singers and will create a qualitative analysis of each singer using a guided response question form. The students will be asked questions regarding choices made by each singer in the following areas: breathing, phrasing, timbre, tone production, dynamics, acting, diction, and style. The assignment’s aim is to make students aware of the layers of choices that musicians make during a performance and to transfer that awareness into their own performance. Students will begin to appreciate the hard

work that goes into perfecting musical performance skills and developing a musical ear along the way.

Unit 5: Performance

In this unit, the main purpose of the class, students will develop their musicality through the process of learning music for the purpose of performance. They will transfer all the skills built in the other units in order to create the highest level of musicianship for their performances. Specific challenges that each piece of music will bring will be used to develop the student's understanding of music even further. The students will receive music from different time periods, different regions of the world, different languages, and many different styles to develop a more educated and well-rounded performer. There will be a number of ways in which students will demonstrate their progress in learning their music, such as recorded individual performances, in-class quartets and octets, concerts, festivals, and community events.

Assignments: Performances, the driving force behind this course, are graded activities in which every student is expected not only to attend but to come prepared both mentally and musically. Major choral performances throughout the year include the three main concerts that incorporate the entire Crescenta Valley High School Choral Music Program (Feast of Lights Holiday Concert, Spring Concert, and Pops Concert), as well as several adjudicated festivals. In addition to the featured concerts and festivals, multiple off-campus opportunities are scheduled specifically for Charismatics each year for community events and celebrations. Examples of these events include performing for elementary schools, middle schools, churches, nursing homes, school board meetings, prayer breakfasts, police and fire department award ceremonies, sports events, and fundraisers. Each musical performance is the culmination of all the other work done in class and is graded as heavily as a unit test. While every performance is different, basic expectations of each student are consistent and include punctuality, professional stage presence, working knowledge of all repertoire to be performed, and having materials needed such as music, folders, and any instruments (such as percussion instruments).

In order to evaluate the progress of each student's knowledge of the concert repertoire and their level of autonomy, quartet and/or octet vocal quizzes will be administered several times per semester. A sung final exam will be given at the end of each semester. This will consist of individual students singing portions of their repertoire for the director in private.