

Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District

Course Title: Advanced Chamber Choir with Honors A/B

Grade Level(s): 10-12

Length of Course: Two semesters or equivalent term

Credit: 10 units (may be repeated for credit)

Prerequisite: Minimum of two semesters of *Developing Treble Choir* or *Developing Tenor/Bass Choir*, audition, and instructor approval

Co-requisite: None

Course Overview:

*Advanced Chamber Choir with Honors* is an advanced choir class for choral students, of all voice types, who desire to obtain an in-depth study of choral music. This course is intended to serve as a Level 3 (of 3) ensemble within a choral program. Students will receive advanced instruction in vocal development and technique, advanced sight-reading, and music theory. The choral literature of *Advanced Chamber Choir with Honors* represents a wide variety of cultures, countries, languages, and time periods. Students will learn stylistic interpretation, performance, practice, critical analysis and observation techniques, aesthetic sensitivity, and assume advanced leadership responsibilities. Students will also learn advanced ear training, pitch discrimination, and vocal blend to perfect the total sound of the group. Members of this class will participate in solo, ensemble, and increasingly independent singing. Students will learn how to work as a cohesive unit while contributing individually to the success of the group. Performance is a major component of this class. Material and literature are directly related to performance, and attendance at all performances is mandatory. This class tours yearly and participates in music festivals and competitions, which are graded and rated. This choir performs in at least two mandatory major concerts per semester. Additionally, in order to differentiate this course from the non-honors choir classes and meet an honors level of curriculum, students will be expected to complete a series of in-class and after-school requirements as described below.

Schools Offering: Del Valle High School  
Granada High School  
Livermore High School  
Vineyard High School

Meets University of California  
Entrance Requirements:

Seeking “ f” approval

Board Approval:

*Pending Board Approval*

Course Materials:

Choral repertoire octavos (sheet music),  
[www.musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net) (theory lessons and exercises)  
[www.noteflight.com](http://www.noteflight.com) (web-based notation software)

Supplemental Materials:

The Choral Warm-Up: Method, Procedures, and  
Core Vocal Exercises;  
Jordan, James;  
GIA Publications, 2005  
ISBN: 978-1579993894

Your Voice: An Inside View, 2nd Edition;  
McCoy, Scott;  
Inside View Press, 2012  
ISBN: 978-0975530788

The School Choral Program: Philosophy,  
Planning, Organizing, and Teaching;  
Holt, Michele and James Jordan  
GIA Publications, 2008  
ISBN: 978-1-57999-679-6

## ADVANCED CHAMBER CHOIR WITH HONORS A/B

### COURSE CONTENT:

#### **Unit One: Literacy**

In this unit, students will expand their understanding of the importance of musical independence, and will practice the higher-level skills necessary to reach full independence.

Guiding questions for student learning will include:

- How can we become musically independent?
- How can literacy in Western notation help us achieve the goal of musical independence?

These questions will guide the content goals for this unit, which focus on decoding and encoding in solfege, identifying symbols on the staff, and sight reading choral repertoire. Students will utilize advanced literacy skills to work independently and in small groups on challenging repertoire. Students will sight-sing familiar and unfamiliar melodies, and will sight-sing Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass (SATB) choral repertoire.

#### *Summary of Key Assignments, Labs and/or Activities*

Throughout the course, students will continue to work through a series of musicianship assignments of increasing difficulty in the categories of ear training, staff identification, and keyboard identification. Students will utilize classroom repertoire as exercises for enhancing literacy through consistent pitch and rhythmic analysis.

#### **Unit Two: Repertoire**

Specific repertoire choices will change each semester. However, several enduring understandings will guide the selection and teaching of repertoire. Students will progress from four-part SATB music to SATB divisi by the end of the semester. Through the process of rehearsing repertoire, students will understand the importance of authenticity in performance by performing music from a variety of styles, genres, and time periods. Students will also gain an appreciation for the flexibility and versatility of the human voice, and will build a foundation of the technical skills and concepts that allow for the creation of different vocal sounds, colors, and styles. Students will gain an understanding of the way music interacts with culture, and develop the skills necessary to critically explore the impact of culture on music, and the impact of music on culture. The study of diverse repertoire will also allow students to experience the importance of community, and develop the interpersonal skills necessary to build and maintain that community. Students in *Advanced Chamber Choir with Honors* will study repertoire that prepares them for advancement to collegiate level ensembles. This repertoire will range from music in different languages, varying historical time periods, and a wide variety of genres including contemporary popular music.

#### *Summary of Key Assignments, Labs and/or Activities*

Students will demonstrate the musical skills they have learned throughout the semester in a formal public performance. Repertoire for *Advanced Chamber Choir with Honors* represents a wide range of languages, cultures, time periods, and choral traditions. *Advanced Chamber Choir with Honors* will perform an a cappella, highly advanced repertoire. Skills from units 1, 3, and 4 will all inform the performance so that it is musically expressive, founded in healthy vocal

technique, and stylistically authentic. After performing, students will listen to a recording of the performance. Students will evaluate their own performance, the performance of the group as a whole, discuss specific musical elements that went well in the performance, and offer suggestions for further improvement.

### **Unit Three: Vocal Technique & Health**

In this unit, students will focus on the development of their physiological and perceptive knowledge about the structure and function of the human voice.

Guiding questions will include:

- How can the human voice be manipulated?
- How can we achieve authentic performance through that manipulation?
- How can we explore a variety of styles while maintaining good vocal health?

Students will gain an appreciation for the flexibility and versatility of the human voice, and will build a foundation of the technical skills and concepts that allow for the creation of different vocal sounds, colors, and styles. Basic knowledge of vocal anatomy will be expanded, and students will continue to explore the physical sensations of beautiful and healthy singing. Students will utilize techniques primarily based on the Italian bel canto style, but will also explore vocal techniques from around the world. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) will be utilized as a tool to teach diction in a variety of languages.

#### *Summary of Key Assignments, Labs and/or Activities*

Student progress in improving vocal technique will be monitored daily, with consistent feedback to ensure healthy and aligned vocal production. Should individual vocal assessments be necessary to ensure timely learning of repertoire, students will be assessed in groups of 2 or 3.

### **Unit Four: Music in Culture, Culture in Music**

In this unit, students will focus on the critical analysis of music as it relates to culture. Students will gain an understanding of the way music interacts with culture, and will build the skills necessary to critically explore the impact of culture on music, as well as the impact of music on culture. Students will experience the importance of community, and foster the interpersonal skills necessary to develop and maintain that community. In order for students to understand and experience music at a deeper level, listening and analysis skills will be practiced. Students will understand how to better listen to and describe music that is familiar to them through the use of descriptive words for the various musical elements. Students will also discuss the many different cultural purposes music can play in their current lives. Students will apply these skills in order to better listen to and describe music that is unfamiliar to them through the use of descriptive words for the various musical elements. Students will understand that music serves many different purposes in different cultures and settings around the world. Students will also explore issues of authenticity in music, and be able to describe how different styles of music have different parameters for authenticity.

#### *Summary of Key Assignments, Labs and/or Activities*

Students will be asked to research repertoire selections from each concert, and find out more

about the background of the piece(s) and composer(s). Using descriptive words for specific musical elements, students will describe the style of the piece. Students will use criteria for authenticity to describe whether or not the piece is true to its original form, and whether or not the piece is intended to represent a particular style in its truest form. Students will discuss the cultural purpose of the piece and whether or not the composer, arranger, original audience, or original performers had differing views on that purpose.

**California Arts Standards for Public Schools - Prekindergarten Through Grade Twelve**  
**The California Arts Standards for Music - Ensembles**

*Creating*

Acc.MU:E.Cr1      Compose and improvise ideas for arrangements, sections, and short compositions for specific purposes that reflect characteristic(s) of music from a variety of cultures studied in rehearsal.

Acc.MU:E.Cr2      a. Select and develop arrangements, sections, and short compositions for specific purposes that demonstrate understanding of characteristic(s) of music from a variety of cultures studied in rehearsal.

*Performing*

Prof.MU:E.Pr4.1      Explain the criteria used to select a varied repertoire to study based on an understanding of theoretical and structural characteristics of the music, the technical skill of the individual or ensemble, and the purpose or context of the performance.

Prof.MU:E.Pr4.2      Demonstrate, using music reading skills where appropriate, how compositional devices employed and theoretical and structural aspects of musical works impact and inform prepared or improvised performances.

Adv.MU:E.Pr4.3      Demonstrate how understanding the style, genre, and context of a varied repertoire of music informs prepared and improvised performances as well as performers' technical skill to connect with the audience.

Prof.MU:E.Pr6      a. Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music representing diverse cultures, styles, and genres.

Prof.MU:E.Pr6      b. Demonstrate an understanding of expressive intent by connecting with an audience through prepared and improvised performances

*Responding*

- Prof.MU:E.Re7.1      Apply criteria to select music for specified purposes, supporting choices by citing characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose, and context.
- Prof.MU:E.Re7.2      Explain how the analysis of passages and understanding the way elements of music are manipulated inform the response to music.
- Prof.MU:E.Re8      Explain and support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, (when appropriate) the setting of the text, and personal research.
- Prof.MU:E.Re9      Evaluate works and performances based on personally- or collaboratively-developed criteria, including analysis of the structure and context.

*Connecting*

- Prof.MU:E.Cn10      Connect and demonstrate how personal interests, knowledge, and skills relate to choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music. Prof.MU:E.Cn11 Connect and demonstrate the relationships between music and societal, cultural, and historical contexts when creating, performing, and responding.
- Prof.MU:E.Cn11r      Connect and demonstrate the relationships between music and societal, cultural, and historical contexts when creating, performing, and responding.

**Instructional Methods and/or Strategies**

- Individualized instruction
- Lecture
- Small group discussion
- Large group discussion & debate
- Master-class setting
- Ensemble and sectional rehearsal
- Reading, writing, analysis, listening homework

**Assessment Methods and/or Tools**

- Solfege Practices
- Self-Teaching
- Practice Techniques
- Formal Concerts
- Part Tests
- Program Order Selection

## Honors Courses

In order to differentiate this course from non-Honors choirs, students in *Advanced Chamber Choir with Honors* will engage in a selection of the following curricular activities as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

- Students will be instructed and assessed on theoretical knowledge at an accelerated rate.
- Students will practice advanced sight-reading of music in class on a weekly basis, and will be tested on their proficiency at the end of every semester. When available, this preparation will culminate in their participation in the highest-level sight-reading activities available at local choir festivals.
- Students will review a pre-approved recording of a solo or ensemble performance, analyzing the work for form, style, significant musical events, musical elements that make the work unique, and how the piece compares to other examples from similar genres.
- Students will prepare, rehearse, and perform advanced level ensemble music in four or more parts from various genres, styles, and cultures, with expression, technical accuracy, and tone quality.
- Students will be assigned one 3-page research paper per semester on various musicological topics and will present their findings to the class.
- Students will analyze their solo or small ensemble musical score or manuscript, analyzing the work for the composer's intentions, what musical means are used to create images or evoke feelings, and how the music is used. Students will submit the written analysis on the day of their in-class performance.
- Students will interview one individual whose job/career is related to music, with regard to the various factors that led the professional to pursue a career in music. Students will present their findings to the class in a presentation format.
- Students will prepare a larger scale choral-orchestral work in collaboration with instrumental students.

### *Final Exam or Culminating Project*

Students will prepare, memorize, and perform music that depends upon their independent musicianship. Students will be assigned solo or small group repertoire to perform at the end-of-year concert. This may be in the popular music or classical music style (namely Renaissance madrigals). Students will also demonstrate musical literacy proficiency in a written and/or practical final.