

# Chamber Choir

## Course Description

In Chamber Choir, students collaborate as musicians in a performance ensemble. They explore a variety of music genres and styles that represent different time periods and difficulty levels, and they receive feedback to develop individual skills, refine their performance within the ensemble, and develop their vocal technique. Students actively engage in the development of their musicianship through planning, practicing, refining, evaluating, and preparing for performances. Performance opportunities include two or three school performances throughout the year and may also include auditions, honors festivals, trips/performance festivals. In alignment with the school's *Portrait of the Crusader*, vocal students at Holy Cross regularly support the spiritual life of the school community and, as such, explore and affirm their faith through music. Coursework emphasizes the importance of personal wellness, creativity, and feeding the soul and spirit through artistic endeavors. Being actively engaged in the pursuit of music with others also fosters relationships based upon loyalty, compassion, and empathy that extend beyond the classroom experience.

## Essential Questions

- How do musicians improve the quality of their creative work?
- What individual foundational skills and musicianship are needed to effectively present and communicate a variety of musical works?
- How do musicians make meaningful connections in creating, performing, and responding?
- How does understanding the structure and context of the music influence a response?
- How do musicians accurately and effectively evaluate and critique their own performance and the performance of others?
- How does the process of creating and performing music contribute to personal wellness and fulfillment?

## Course Curriculum

### Unit 1: Music Performance Foundations (Quarter 1)

Focus Questions:

- What are the foundational understandings required to begin the process of learning new repertoire?
- How do performers make informed decisions to select repertoire?
- How do we judge the quality of musical work(s) and performance(s)?

Concepts - Students will:

- Demonstrate appropriate posture both seated and standing for creating a clear vocal tone
- Articulate understanding of the parts of the vocal mechanism
- Define musical ideas, terms, and characteristics associated with creating a consistent vocal tone
- Identify their vocal part/line and common notation and music practices.

Skills - Students will:

- Create a clear vocal tone
- Demonstrate proper posture for supported singing
- Sing simple warm-up exercises to prepare for singing.
- Identify parts of the vocal mechanism.
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.

Assessments:

- Notation/vocal part identification review Task
- Canvas and MusicFirst Digital Classroom platform login information and basic guide
- Progress Check-In
- Practice/Rehearsing Process Checklist and Reflection
- Recording Task #1
- Practical Evaluation #1

## **Unit 2: Developing Musicianship (Quarter 2)**

Focus Questions

- How do performers select repertoire?
- How do we judge the quality of musical work(s) and performance(s)?
- How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?

Concepts - Students will:

- Recognize and explain concepts from previous unit's materials and exercises.
- Explore new unit exercises and repertoire. Identify challenging areas within the repertoire.
- Explain and apply the use of a metronome in establishing beneficial practice habits.
- Continue vocal development and flexibility – patterns, scales, vocalises.
- Rehearse and refine independently and in collaboration with the teacher (students are given time to work individually and in small groups, practice materials, connect to specific challenges for their vocal part).
- Review their work for this unit and present examples of songs/exercises completed for this unit of study.

Skills - Students will:

- Sing consistently in unison, 2, and 3 part harmony
- Accurately sing/execute assigned exercises/repertoire; demonstrate progress with their specific vocal part.
- Identify commonly used music notation and expression symbols.
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.

Assessments:

- Progress Check-In
- Practice/Rehearsing Process Checklist and Reflection

- Summative Assessment - Concert Performance #1
- Student Reflection and Ensemble Performance Critique

### **Unit 3: Deeper Musical Connections (Quarter 3)**

#### Focus Questions

- How do performers interpret musical works?
- How does understanding the structure and context of musical works inform performance?
- How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?

#### Concepts - Students will:

- Sight-read and make initial interpretation and analysis of newly introduced exercises and repertoire.
- Identify and express common and less-common rhythmic motifs/examples.
- Explore new exercises and repertoire – focus on analysis of rhythmic relationships and values.
- Practice active listening: meter and pulse identification; time signatures and their identifiable characteristics; simple vs compound meter.
- Rehearse and refine. Focus on continual improvement and respond to feedback.
- Review and evaluate their individual progress and work for this unit. Present examples of songs/exercises completed for this unit of study with an emphasis on individual interpretation and style.

#### Skills - Students will:

- Sing consistently in unison, 2, 3, and 4 part harmony
- Accurately sing harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic patterns with appropriate tone, style, and intonation.
- Demonstrate progress in singing assigned exercises/repertoire
- Identify commonly used choral music notation and rhythmic symbols.
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.

#### Assessments:

- Progress Check-In
- Summative Assessment - Practical Evaluation #2
- Practice/Rehearsing Process Checklist and Reflection
- Student Reflection and Individual Performance Critique
- Recording Task #2

### **Unit 4: Critique and Analysis (Quarter 4)**

#### Focus Questions:

- How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?
- When is a performance judged to be ready?
- How do context and the manner in which a musical work is presented influence audience response?

Concepts - Students will:

- Explore and connect ideas within a guided analysis of selected repertoire, identifying key musical characteristics within the given style/form/structure.
- Practice active listening; focus on the *'Elements of Music'* and their use within the selected repertoire.
- Rehearse and refine as in previous units.
- Review and evaluate their individual progress and work for this unit. Present examples of songs/exercises they completed for this unit of study.

Skills - Student will:

- Sing/execute assigned exercises/repertoire; demonstrate progress.
- Identify commonly used music notation and rhythmic symbols; accurately identify characteristics of the various *'Elements of Music'* within selected repertoire.
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.
- Perform expressively, with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context.
- Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretations, and established criteria

Assessments:

- Summative Assessment - Concert Performance #2
- Student Reflection and Ensemble Performance Critique
- Cumulative Repertoire Analysis Task

Resources

- *Selected repertoire of varying styles and levels*
- *MusicTheory.net*
- *Holy Cross MusicFirst Classroom*
- *Selected sight-singing methods materials (variety of materials specific to selected instrument)*
- *Individual Performance Criteria (\*see attached/below)*

Grading Policy

Performances/Content Mastery	50%
Engagement/Rehearsals	20%
Growth/Development	30%

**PLEASE SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

Holy Cross High School Music Department  
**Performance Criteria - Individual**

*Within the Music Department at Holy Cross, we recognize the importance of individual students developing their musicianship and skills through a wide range of musical opportunities. We give priority to the progress and personal development of our student musicians. This, in conjunction with the principles of our school's **Portrait of a Crusader**, is the foundation for all that we do in Music and Performing Arts at Holy Cross. To help support that endeavor, student progress is continually evaluated based on the following:*

Level		Description
V <b>ADVANCED</b>		Excellent in all respects; command of required technique is evident. An accurate performance in terms of rhythm and pitch, secure intonation. Convincing, fluent, and expressive. The performance shows the individual's command and understanding of the style; interpretation of the piece is insightful, with attention to dynamics, expression, phrasing, and character, and tone. Demonstrates the highest standard of musical communication and interpretation.
IV <b>PROFICIENT</b>		The performance shows confidence and preparation, fluid and solid in general. Overall, accurate in pitch and rhythm, with few errors; overall intonation is acceptable. Technique is proficient and consistent to the demands of the difficulty level. Musical details are evident throughout the performance with attempts at phrasing, expression, and articulation. The performance displays the student's understanding of the style demands, and is successful in some areas and stylistic characteristics in general.
III <b>DEVELOPING</b>		Presents a coherent, fluent performance. Some successful attempts at expression and interpretation. Inaccuracies include multiple errors in rhythm and pitch. Phrasing, expression, and articulation are evident at times. Intonation is weak. The performance demonstrates some understanding of the characteristics and stylistic demands of the selection(s). Proper technique is evident in select passages.
II <b>BEGINNING/ DEVELOPING</b>		Performance shows some recognition of musical details; however, there are frequent errors, lacks fluency, and is disjunct throughout. The performance demonstrates some understanding of musical technique and demands of the selection(s), but does not meet those challenges. Concepts and connections between pitch, rhythm, phrasing, tempo, expression and style are very limited, but shows some development of technique and understanding.
I <b>LIMITED/ BEGINNING</b>		The performance shows numerous errors throughout. Does not demonstrate understanding of musical ideas and technique. An attempt is made but lacks any cohesion. Musical ideas and concepts are incoherent.
N/A		The performance is not coherent in any respect ;unable to evaluate this performance.