

Instrumental Music Handbook

2008 - 2009

Course Descriptions and Goals

The members of the Bethany Christian Schools instrumental music program have elected to participate in the ensembles. By choosing to participate, the student makes the commitment to demonstrate behavior, attitude, and skills that contribute to the continued excellence of the group, as well as his/her personal growth. Students are expected to put forth their best effort each day, because they have made a commitment to the development of the group and themselves.

Instrumental Ensembles

Beginning Instruments

The Beginning Instruments course is for all students in grade 6 wanting to learn to play a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument. Students are introduced to the range of instruments available for study. After acquiring an instrument, the course begins with the learning how to put together the instrument and produce a sound. It continues to develop skills in a sequential fashion. The course focuses on playing the instrument and basic skills in music literacy. Students are encouraged to develop individual playing skills alongside their ensemble participation.

Middle School Orchestra

The Middle School Orchestra program is for students who have had at least one year of experience with their instrument. Middle School Orchestra combines strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion instruments into a performance ensemble. Students explore a variety of musical styles. The ensemble demonstrates course outcomes through specific pieces performed at the fall, Christmas, and spring concerts. Course content is concentrated around string Orchestra and wind band performance with some combined material.

High School Orchestra

The High School Orchestra is a performance-based ensemble comprised of string, woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. Students in grades 9-12 rehearse and perform various styles and levels of music. The Orchestra rehearses in a "sectional" format with winds and percussion meeting once a week, strings meeting once a week, and the full Orchestra meeting twice a week. In addition to school concerts in the fall, at Christmas and in the spring, the Orchestra participates in the Midwest Regional Mennonite Orchestra Festival each spring.

Chamber Ensemble

The *Chamber Ensemble* consists of students who are dedicated to instrumental music. Admission is by audition (held in late August). The group has the highest expectations and standards for excellence. Members will participate in church itineration (at least two times this year), perform at school music programs, represent the Orchestra at school functions (as requested) and represent the school at community functions (as requested). The ensemble will also compete in District Solo/Ensemble contest at the Group I level and potentially at the State contest.

The ensemble will rehearse Wednesday mornings 7:00 – 7:40 and Friday afternoons 3:23 – 4:00. Depending on qualified instrumentalists, there may be more than one type of chamber ensemble (for example, a strings ensemble, a woodwind ensemble, etc.). Students in Chamber Ensemble are required to study privately, to participate in Full Orchestra and to maintain good leadership behaviors and qualities within the Orchestra. They are also required to maintain a 2.0 grade average with no D's. Orchestra and Chamber Ensemble are expected to be a high priority for Chamber Ensemble members, and they may be requested to reduce other commitments or resign from the Ensemble if it becomes clear that the Ensemble is not high priority. The class is 0.25 credits per semester and is a graded course.

Bruin Jazz

Jazz Ensemble (*Bruin Jazz*) introduces students to a uniquely American style of music. Students are given opportunities to experiment with various forms of jazz music including ragtime, Dixieland, big band, swing, bebop, cool jazz and Latin jazz styles. Opportunities will be presented for written and improvisational solos. Bruin Jazz also participates in the Orchestra festival each spring.

Students in Bruin Jazz are required to participate in Full Orchestra and to maintain good leadership behaviors and qualities within the Orchestra. Exceptions to the participation rule may include guitarists, bass guitar and pianists who can be admitted upon approval of the teacher.

The ensemble rehearses on Tuesday and Friday mornings at 7:00 – 7:40.

Goals of the Orchestra Program

The Orchestra program is open to all students demonstrating the desire, ability, and proper attitude to be a member of the group.

1. Students will understand music as a gift of God and be able to use musical experiences in ways that honor God, both in worship and in performance.
2. Students will participate in the performance of music and learn the skills of playing an instrument, which will result in a sense of accomplishment.
3. Students will attain a mastery of the instrument and feel the satisfaction of achieving something worthwhile through concentrated effort.
4. Students will sense their natural creative abilities and be provided an avenue of self-expression.
5. Students will learn to identify and authentically perform the musical styles that developed throughout history and in different cultures.
6. Students will develop attitudes and abilities that will enable them to continue participating in musical experiences throughout life.

Grading Policies

MS Orchestra Grading

- 20% Practice/Preparation**
 - Complete practices as outlined below
 - Playing tests and day-to-day performance
 - Mastery of notes, rhythms, and composer's markings

- 40% Daily Participation**
 - Attendance, participation, level of engagement

- 30% Public Performance**
 - Professional attitude in presenting course content

- 10% Homework**
 - Thoughtful completion of written assignments

Practice/Preparation grade:

It is understood that Orchestra students may also be involved in athletics and/or dramas. Therefore, students may earn a top practice grade by adjusting their own schedules accordingly. It is far better to practice a little every day when possible!

- Five practices per week – 10 minutes each (total of 50 minutes per week)
- Four practice sessions per week – 15 minutes each (total of 60 minutes per week)
- Three practice sessions per week – 25 minutes each (total of 75 minutes per week)
- Two practice sessions per week – 45 minutes each (total of 90 minutes per week)

HS Grading

- Weekly Musicianship Assessment – 40% (playing tests, rehearsal preparation, participation, pop quizzes, sight-reading drills)
- Written Assignments – 25% (written class work, homework assignments, written quizzes, forms/permission slips)
- Performances – 25% (student performance, assigned solos, following logistical directions)
- Life Skills – 10% (being on time, respectful, proper rehearsal behavior)

Classroom Expectations

Class behavior

Orchestra is a fun class. We have time to interact with each other and to make music together. However, if we do not have a few simple rules, we will not be able to function as a useful class. The classroom rules are as follows:

1. Play **only** your own instrument.
2. Do not talk while the teacher is on the podium.
3. Raise your hand to speak to the teacher.
4. No gum chewing.
5. Be respectful of others.

Athletic conflicts

We encourage students to participate in both Orchestra and athletics. Students may be excused early from Orchestra for athletic contests when pre-arranged by the coach. Students should not request early dismissal without prior arrangements. If a student needs to leave early for an athletic event and there is no prearrangement, it will count as a tardy.

At certain times of the year, particularly during the spring sports seasons, many athletic contests require early departure. All students, regardless of size of rehearsal group, should come to class fully engaged and prepared to work hard in order to keep our Orchestra performing at a high level in preparation for Orchestra Festival, Orchestra Contest, Spring Concert and Commencement.

Classroom Discipline

Attendance Policy

Students receive 10 points per week for participation. An unexcused absence from class results in a 5 point deduction *in addition to the school's required drop in grade by 1/3 of a letter grade.*

Students who forget music, instrument, pencil or other required equipment will have a 3 point reduction in grade for each incident.

Tardy Policy

Students are given an extra 2 minutes in addition to the regular passing period. After the bell rings, 2 minutes can be used to get your instrument out and put together. Students must be **in their seat**, not just in the room, in order to avoid a tardy. Each student will receive 8 Orchestra passes to be used during the semester for excusing tardies, retrieval of music, pencil, rosin, bathroom, drink, etc.

Unexcused tardies will result in a 2-point deduction per week for each occurrence during the week.

Supplies

Instruments and Accessories

- Instrument in good playing condition
- Cleaning cloth
- Instrument care kit (you can purchase these at Blessings or Woodwind & Brasswind)
- Pocket folder
- Pencil with eraser

Optional items are:

- Mute
- Electronic tuner
- Metronome (for personal practice)
- Folding music stand (for home practice)

School Instruments

There are a few school instruments available for use. These are larger or more expensive instruments. Students may **not** use a school-owned instrument without prior approval of the teacher. We do not rent our school instruments.

Use and Care of Music

Printed music is the textbook of the Orchestra program. It is also a major expense for the school. A five-minute composition averages in cost between \$40 - \$100 each. Lengthier compositions and rented music can be even more costly. All sheet music is provided to students free of charge. However, if music is lost or is damaged, there will be a charge to replace the music. To avoid charges for lost or damaged music, students must take care of all assigned music.

- Do not fold, tear or otherwise mutilate music.
- Do not make excessive marks on music.
- Do not draw pictures or write notes on music.
- Use **only** black lead pencil on music.

Uniform and Dress Code

The Orchestra has adopted a standardized uniform. No individual musician should stand out from the other musicians or distract the audience's attention away from the music. Musicians who appear on stage out of dress code create distractions.

It is a matter of group support, which is pertinent and integral towards successful Orchestral performances, for musicians to present themselves in a manner of professionalism, unity and dignity. For this reason, and out of the respect for each other, the audience and, when applicable, performance adjudicators, the Orchestra dress code for performance will include the following:

Men: White long-sleeved, collared shirt or white tuxedo shirt, dark tie, black dress pants, black socks, single-tone black hard-soled dress shoes.

Women: Black dress blouse, long or short sleeved (no sleeveless), black dress slacks or long black skirt (below knee length), black hose or socks, closed black hard-soled dress shoes. A black dress is also acceptable, provided it has sleeves (long or short) and is below knee length.

Acceptable Jewelry: Stud earrings only, fine or thin necklace with a single pendant, only one fine/thin precious metal bracelet. Cuff links for men's shirt is acceptable.

Unacceptable Jewelry: Watches, large dangling or hooped earrings of any size, large flashy jewelry, multiple items of jewelry affixed to a single location, single or multiple plastic tube bracelets, hose or socks with visible holes.

Unacceptable items: Flip flops, two-toned shoes, white socks, sneakers (including black sneakers), combat boots, bright or multi-toned shoestrings, black jeans or corduroy pants. Anything that does not meet normal school dress code standards is also unacceptable.

Performing opportunities

School events (required)

October 28	Fall Instrumental Concert (both MS and HS)
December 11	HS Christmas Concert
December 16	MS Christmas Concert
Feb 20 – 22	HS Orchestra Festival
April 25	HS Orchestra Contest
May 15	HS Spring Concert
May 21	MS Spring Concert
May 31	Commencement (8 – 11 grade students)

Other opportunities

ISSMA Solo & Ensemble Contest

February 7 – District Instrumental Solo/Ensemble Contest
February 21 – State Solo/Ensemble Contest

Youth Honors Orchestra

The "Youth Honors Orchestra" (YHO) is a full Orchestra (strings, winds, brass, percussion) made up of students from area high schools and sponsored by the Elkhart County Symphony Orchestra Association. The Orchestra rehearses at the Goshen College Music Center and Concord High School on Saturdays mornings (generally from 10:00 - noon) and performs in Elkhart venues and the Music Center's Sauder Concert Hall several times during

the year. Tuition is \$50 per term. If you have interest or questions, contact director Brian Wiebe at (574) 849-7173.

Private lessons

Private lessons are strongly encouraged. Many private teachers come to Bethany to give lessons during the school day during study hall or Orchestra class period. Mrs. Slagel has a list of available teachers. Please see her if you are interested in private lessons at school.

Parental Involvement

Benefits

For the student, music participation enhances problem solving, goal-setting, physical coordination, self-confidence and esteem, poise, teamwork, self-expression, memory skills, concentration and much more.

For the family, music participation offers opportunities for shared family experiences, including musical event attendance, family music making, performing for and with family and friends, learning about the lives of composers and the cultural heritage of many civilizations. Music yields a sense of accomplishment and pride for the entire family.

Practice Time

Music achievement requires effort over a period of time. The time in Orchestra rehearsal is limited. New concepts learned at school need daily personal practice time by your child at home in order for these new skills to be developed. A few minutes each day is better than many minutes on one day. Encourage your child to practice at least 15 minutes each day. Grades for practice reflect the importance of daily practice. You can help your child by:

- Providing a quiet place in which to practice
- Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible
- Scheduling a consistent daily time for practice
- Praising your child's efforts and achievements

Support

To give your child the best possible support, you can:

- Remind your child to bring their instrument and music to Orchestra class
- Encourage your child to play for family and friends and in church
- Offer compliments and encouragement regularly
- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts and recitals
- Encourage your child to talk with you about classes
- Make sure your child's instrument is always well maintained
- Listen to your child practice, and acknowledge improvement
- Help your child build a personal music library

- Make certain that your child is on time for all school rehearsals and performances
- Encourage your child to make a commitment to his or her music studies
- If at all possible, obtain private lessons with a qualified instructor

Avoid

- Using practice as a punishment
- Insisting your child play for others when he or she doesn't want to
- Ridiculing or making fun of mistakes of less-than-perfect playing
- Apologizing to others for your child's weak performance

Maintaining your child's interest

Talk to your child if his or her interest begins to decline. Increase your enthusiasm and involvement in your child's playing. Talk to the teacher about your child's declining interest. Consider private lessons to bolster interest.

Financial Obligations

Being a part of Orchestra entails some financial obligations. You are required to rent or purchase an instrument and keep it in good repair. Also, the student family must purchase accessory items and care items. Any damages to a school-owned instrument caused by neglect or misuse are to be paid by the student family.

You will be required to pay for Orchestra Festival, which ranges from \$100 - \$140 per year, depending on a variety of factors (such as location, music purchases, guest director fees, etc.) Being a part of either HS Orchestra or Bruin Jazz in the spring results in the expectation that this fee will be paid and that the student will attend the event. Any exceptions must be cleared with Mrs. Slagel **before** registering for spring semester.

There may be other costs for Orchestra and Bruin Jazz, such as the purchase of class t-shirts or polo shirts. Costs may range from \$10 – 30 depending on quality of shirt.