

ELKRIDGE LANDING MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

COURSE 6th Grade Chorus; Concert Chorus; Chamber Chorus
MU-110/210/310

INSTRUCTOR Mr. Ritzes rritzes@hcpss.org

Course Description

The Elkridge Landing Middle School Chorus provides a performance-based curriculum for all learners, focusing on the development of expressive and artistic musical experiences through student driven work. It is important to note that we will not merely be singing in this course, but rather learning the language of music *through* performance. As such, a significant portion of your work in this course will be devoted to refining your performance skills, increasing your ability to read new music at sight, and exploring what it means to be an all-encompassing musician.

Materials

Students must bring the following to class every day:

1. a 3-ring binder, 1 inch (a little bigger or smaller is fine; I just recommend one inch)
2. a sharpened pencil

Concerts (Required and graded. See HCPSS Policy 8090 on Non-School Hour Curricular Programs.) *Note: Scheduling this year has been extra difficult for many reasons. I hope to have these dates ASAP, and I will share them the moment I get them.*

Winter Concert: Mon, Dec. 14th at ELMS

Concert with Elem. Schools: TBD

HCPSS Chorus Assessments: Friday, April 2nd. School day field trip.

Spring Concert: Tues, May 18th at ELMS

Concert attire

As musicians, when we perform we wear a uniform. This helps us to look unified and professional, and makes it easier for the audience to focus on our music and facial expressions. That uniform is referred to as "concert black," which means all solid black attire from shoulders to toes. It allows the flexibility for self-expression while also maintaining the uniformity of wearing the same color. At performances, students will be graded partially for their adherence to concert dress (grading standard Mus s4, Procedures and Practices).

Required as part of Concert Black	Optional	Do NOT bring
Solid black dress shirt, blouse, or polo Solid black pants or long skirt/dress Solid black socks Solid black shoes	Solid black tie Solid black suit jacket Solid black cardigan Solid black face mask	Anything that is not solid black Sweatshirts, hoodies, sweatpants Hats/headwear (except religious or medical) Bling/big jewelry Anything sparkly Phones Crocs Anything that will distract you, your peers, your teacher, or the audience

Daily Expectations

1. **Respect** each other, Mr. Ritzes, yourself, classroom materials, the learning process, and the classroom. The Cambridge Dictionary defines "respect" as: to treat something or someone with kindness and care; to accept the importance of someone's rights or customs and to do nothing that would harm them or cause offense.
2. **Listen to, read, and follow instructions.** We have rules and instructions so that learning can take place without obstacles. If you do not follow reasonable instructions, then you are stopping learning from taking place.
3. **Sing.** If you do not sing, I cannot assess your performance and growth or give you quality feedback. Stand up when everyone is standing together; when you are seated or slouching, your vocal tract is not properly aligned and you could injure your vocal folds. Unless you have a documented medical accommodation, you are expected to stand with the chorus. Screaming is harmful to your vocal folds, harmful to my ears, and is never appropriate in the classroom.

Accountability

My job is to teach you, and your job is to learn. The above expectations are put into place so that learning can happen and happen well. If you choose to not meet those expectations, thus disrupting the classroom environment, any and all of the following may occur:

1. Verbal warning.
2. Phone call to your caregiver.
3. Lunch detention.
4. Incident Report.
5. Face to face conference with caregiver.
6. Referral to administration.
7. Loss of privileges such as attending the Hersheypark field trip.

Grading

All grades will fall under the categories of Short-Term Assignments (50%), Summative Tasks (40%), and Homework (10%). Work that earns an unsatisfactory grade may be reattempted before the end of the quarter for a higher grade up to 100%. Assignments that are submitted late will automatically receive a 5% deduction off the original potential points for each day it is late. If a student has an excused absence from school, they need to ask Mr. Ritzes for any make-up work. It is a student's responsibility to advocate for themselves and ask Mr. Ritzes for the work; Mr. Ritzes has a lot of students and it is hard to keep track of who is absent and which day. **Parents and students have 24/7 access to Canvas, where all grades and assignments call their home. If you don't have access, please contact ELMS.**

Academic Integrity

From the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct: "Academic Dishonesty can take many forms including plagiarism and/or cheating. Plagiarism, using the work or ideas of others, may also include the use of Artificial Intelligence writing programs without proper acknowledgment, giving the false impression of original authorship. Cheating may include forgery, such as faking a signature of a teacher or parent/guardian; or copying the work of another person digitally or in person. Furthermore, supplying work to be copied is the facilitation of cheating."

In Mr. Ritzes's classes, all assignments are AI-Free, which according to the HCPSS Student AI Guide, means: "No AI tools allowed at any stage. Do all work yourself. No brainstorming, writing, or editing with AI." Any AI use in assignments will be considered Academic Dishonesty.



HCPSS Music Grading Standards

Mus s1: Creativity & Composition Develops and applies strategies to generate and express a variety of musical ideas. Students will complete composition assignments to further their understanding of music theory and creative processes.

Mus s2: Musicianship Uses best practices and experiences to inform and develop an authentic voice. Students will complete assignments that explore musical works performed in the class to further their understanding of performance practice. Assignments will include listening to personal, ensemble, and professional recordings and researching musical works to understand cultural and historical context.

Mus s3: Applied Skills & Technical Development Demonstrates skills and strategies appropriate to music-making. Every student will receive graded performance assessments and skills tests throughout the year. These tests are video and/or audio recorded and/or in person.

Mus s4: Procedures & Practices Demonstrates appropriate musical practices in the classroom or rehearsal environment. Students are not just learning to perform on their instruments, but they are also learning to conduct themselves in a large ensemble rehearsal. This class will put the student in the role of a professional choral musician. As such, you will be asked to show your understanding of rehearsal and performance behavior. Students are observed and assessed on their instrumental performance and rehearsal conduct on a daily basis.

Mus s5: Reflection Communicates an understanding of concepts and strategies through the evaluation of music. Students will receive written and/or verbal reflection assignments over the course of the year. Students will evaluate their performances and performances by other groups in the following categories: tone, technique, intonation, musicality, balance, interpretation, musical effect, and other factors.

Howard County Parents for School Music

Howard County Parents for School Music (HCPSM) is a grassroots advocacy group that formed in the winter of 1993 in response to issues surrounding the school system budget and its implications for the music program. HCPSM, consisting of parents, teachers, community members, concerned citizens, and business representatives, was able to show its support for the music education program then, and continues to do so today. HCPSM strives to promote high quality music education programs in all Howard County schools through:

Advocacy: Budget engagement, Board of Education testimony, policy awareness

Visibility & Engagement: Website content, social media updates, sharing information and opportunities

Honoring & Recognition: Music Educator of the Year, teacher appreciation, program recognition

Access & Opportunity: Equity, access to instruments/programs, removing participation barriers

Join us today to help further Music Education! Email: hcpsm3@gmail.com



Howard County Parents of School Music (HCPSM)

1. Check out our Facebook page
2. Website: <https://hcpsm3.wixsite.com/music>
3. Join HCPSM Email List (click "Join HCPSM" on website)
4. Email: hcpsm3@gmail.com

Please sign and return this page to Mr. Ritzes by Friday, August 28th.

Signing below confirms acknowledgement and agreement to the following:

- Both the student and caregiver have read and understood the entire syllabus, which is accessible on Canvas.
- Both the student and caregiver acknowledge that they have access to Canvas, or have contacted the school in order to gain access.
- Caregiver acknowledges that school communications may be sent either way through Synergy, Canvas, TalkingPoints, email, or phone.
- Student will be present for all required events on time and in appropriate attire.
- Student will bring required materials to class every day and follow classroom expectations.
- The student will protect all of the equipment (risers, sheet music, any instruments that may be used) by demonstrating proper care.

Student (print): _____ Date: _____

Student (signature): _____ Date: _____

Caregiver (print): _____ Date: _____

Caregiver (signature): _____ Date: _____