Bernards High School
Choral Music Department

Choral Foundations: Lower Voice (A)

Mr. Matthew J. LaPine, *director*

Welcome to Choral Foundations: Lower Voice (A), and congratulations on choosing to be a member of the Choral Music Department at Bernards High School! You should be proud to be a member of the Bernards Choirs as BHS has a strong and long-standing tradition of choral excellence. Choral Foundations is the entry-level choral ensemble at Bernards, and membership to Choral Foundations: Lower Voice is open to all students with lower voices (tenor and bass) without an audition. The ensemble performs as its own independent ensemble under the name "Forte Voce" which is an Italian term that roughly translates to "Strong Voice". I am excited that you have decided to join *Forte Voce*, and I look forward to making music with you!

Goals
In the beginning of the school year, we will set goals, both long and short-term, that we would like to attain throughout the year. It is expected that all of us (including me!) will do our very best each and every day to attain our goals.

Daily Expectations
- Please don't be late for class. Out of respect for your peers and teacher, you should be on time every day.
- In order to be creative with riser placement and unique singing configurations, please don't bring your backpacks and non-choir materials up to the risers with you. Backpacks should be placed behind the risers.
- Cell phones, personal laptops, smart watches, and all other internet enabled devices must be turned off and kept away for the duration of the school day.
- Always be prepared for class and work to achieve the ensemble goals to the best of your ability.
- Be sure that all of your actions are intended to help us to achieve our ensemble goals.

Materials
- Pencils – You must keep at least one pencil in your folder at all times.
- Folder – Folders are provided by the school. Your folder is property of Bernards High School and must be kept in excellent condition; if it is damaged, you will be responsible for replacing it at your own expense (roughly $30).

- Music – Your music is kept in your choir folder. If you are bringing your music home to practice, just bring your folder home to keep the music safe. Music is property of Bernards High School and must be kept in excellent condition; if any piece is lost or damaged, you will be responsible for replacing it at your own expense (cost of replacement varies for each individual piece of music). You may not keep your music.

Website
The Bernards Choirs have a website where we will keep the most up-to-date information including the rehearsal and performance calendar, repertoire list and learning track links, the syllabus and other course-related materials, and so much more. The website will be updated with new content regularly, so please be sure to bookmark the page! The website is simple to remember: bernardschoir.org.

Google Classroom
You are required to check the Forte Voce (Choral Foundations: Lower Voice) Google Classroom page regularly. To subscribe, enter the following code: **ukjt4dpw**

The page will be updated throughout the year with practice files, articles, recordings, links, and other important content. You are responsible for all material posted to the Google Classroom page.

Social Media
The Bernards Choirs are on social media! Students, parents, friends, and family are all encouraged to "Like," follow, or subscribe to the choir's pages. Facebook will be used periodically throughout the year to give updates, tips, and advice pertaining to the Bernards Choirs. Please post photos of choir events on our Facebook page! YouTube houses many of our BHS choral performances. To find the pages, please search:

Facebook – facebook.com/BernardsChoir

YouTube – youtube.com/BernardsHSChoir

Periodically, pictures and video from Bernards Choir events will be posted on the above pages. Your child's name will not accompany any photograph or video used. ***Please be sure to complete the school's media release form so that your child can be included in these group pictures.***

Fundraising
Throughout the year, students will be asked to participate in fundraising events. A portion of each student's fundraising efforts will go directly into their own Bernards Choir account. From this account, students will have the opportunity to apply their funds toward the cost of concert attire ordered through the school, field trips, and other Bernards Choir related expenses. ***These funds will carry-over from one school year to the next, but they cannot be transferred to another student or used for non-Bernards Choir expenses (including band or orchestra, sports, or other school expenses)***. All fundraising accounts are kept in a spreadsheet, and Mr. LaPine can let you know your personal account balance at any time. If you have any creative, new ideas for fundraising opportunities, please contact Mr. LaPine at mlapine@shsd.org.

Parent Volunteers
There are times when it is necessary to have parent volunteers assist with events. These duties will range from chaperoning trips, baking for a concert reception, to assisting with social choral events. Before an event, an email will be sent to all families requesting volunteers. If you are available to volunteer, please reply to the email with the information that is requested. It is important to have many parents volunteer so that we are not relying on the same parents to

assist with every event. Parents should plan to assist in some capacity for at least one event each year.

Student Leadership Roles
Students will have the opportunity to fill various leadership positions during the school year. Positions may include, but are not limited to, Ensemble Leaders, Social Event Coordinators, Music Librarian, and Fundraising Assistants. Students involved in these positions will meet as necessary in the planning and implementation of their duties. Some positions will be open to students in any ensemble while others will be restricted to members of specific ensembles.

Home Practice
Just as you are expected to complete homework assignments in other classes, you are expected to practice your music regularly at home. As a member of Forte Voce, you will be guided by Mr. LaPine in learning your music; however, you will be expected to complete all assigned work. As the year progresses, you will begin to learn some of the music on your own. Practice files (learning tracks) will often be posted on the class webpage, and you are expected to use them to your advantage. You may take your music and folder home on any night; however, you are required to have your folder and your music during every class period. Any assignment that you are given must be completed on time for full credit. **Make-up assignments or bonus points are never given.**

Hearings (Music Testing)
Being part of a high school choral ensemble requires you to learn your music quickly and efficiently. Any section of music that was learned in class can be tested at any time. A "Hearing" is an opportunity for Mr. LaPine to "hear" you in performance of the selected repertoire. Typically, you will receive plenty of notice before a Hearing will take place; however, a Hearing can happen at any time. Hearings may be memorized or un-memorized, and all Hearings will be performed and graded live during class.

Dress Rehearsals and Performances
You are **required** to attend and be a **positive participant** in every dress rehearsal and performance. As a positive participant **you will be on time, focused on the task at hand, work to the best of your ability, be fully prepared, and do everything that is asked of you.** You should *never distract* from the rehearsal or performance. Your participation should have a *positive impact* on the musicians around you and the rehearsal or performance as a whole. All dress rehearsals and performances are mandatory, graded events (see section on Grading), and you are expected to make them a top priority in your personal schedule. There are no excuses for missing a dress rehearsal or performance. If you miss one for any reason, except in the event of a true emergency, you will receive a "0" grade – no exceptions.

Afternoon/Evening Rehearsals
There may be occasional evening rehearsals in preparation for concerts. This is our chance to work as an entire ensemble with an accompanist for a dedicated amount of time. For Forte Voce, this time is very limited. Plenty of notice will be given for each rehearsal, and you will be notified as soon as any rehearsals are scheduled. This will typically occur during the first few weeks of school. *You are expected to attend all additional evening rehearsals*. If there is an extenuating circumstance (as determined by Mr. LaPine) for which you cannot attend an evening rehearsal, a written note from your parent or guardian is required *well in advance*, typically immediately when you are notified of the rehearsal but at least one month before the rehearsal. Students will not be excused from an evening rehearsal without sufficient notice except in the event of a true emergency. If there is a sudden emergency, it is your responsibility to bring a written note from your parent or guardian to Mr. LaPine the *first day that you are back in school*. If this is not done, you will receive a "0" grade for the rehearsal – no exceptions.

Performance Attire
You are required to wear the appropriate Forte Voce performance attire at every performance, unless otherwise noted. If there is no mention of attire for a performance, you can assume that you will be wearing your Forte Voce performance attire. If you need to purchase the appropriate Forte Voce attire, you will have an opportunity to do so in the beginning of the school year. If you are not in the correct attire for a performance you will not perform, and your grade will reflect this as a missed performance.

When performing as a member of Forte Voce, it is expected that all long hair will be up and/or back and away from your face. There should be no visible jewelry, including, but not limited to, visible bracelets (this includes all bracelets), rings, necklaces, and large earrings (small, tasteful earrings may be worn). Any borrowed attire must be professionally dry cleaned and returned immediately following the final performance of the school year.

Grading
All grades are weighted using the following percentages:

Grading Category	Weight
Daily Demonstration of Skills *Performance grade with weekly grading system (students receive one point per day)*	40%
Hearings *Based on 20-point rubric*	25%
Dress Rehearsals and Performances* *Based on a 7-point rubric*	20%
Musicianship (Music Theory and Sight-Singing) *Based on rubric or actual given grade*	15%

**If there are no performances in a given marking period, the 20% weight of that category will be equally distributed.*

Performances and Events
Mr. LaPine will give you a list of all performances and events in the beginning of the school year. At times, other performing opportunities may be afforded to our ensemble. Since you are in Forte Voce, you can expect that your ensemble will be performing at our annual Winter Concert, PopsNight, Spring Concert, and the Choral Department field trip. You will be notified *immediately* when any performing engagement or rehearsal is added or modified. All additions or modifications to the performance and rehearsal schedule will be posted on Google Classroom and announced in class. It is your responsibility to make note of any changes to the schedule.

Communication
Besides in-person communication, the primary means for communication will be via e-mail. If you need to contact Mr. LaPine for any reason, you may e-mail him at mlapine@shsd.org. If you would like to talk via phone, it is best to send an e-mail with the best phone number where you can be reached. Mr. LaPine will send regular correspondences to families via the e-mail address provided to the school and is in Genesis.

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Hearings Grading Rubric

	Accuracy	Intonation	Tone Quality	Musicianship
5	Student performed the selection with excellent pitch and rhythmic accuracy: no pitch or rhythmic mistakes were made. Demonstrates mastery of the material.	Student performed the selection with excellent intonation: all notes were in tune. Demonstrates mastery of the intonation.	Student performed the selection with excellent tone quality using superior vocal technique. Demonstrates mastery of vocal technique.	Student performed the selection with excellent musicianship: all musical elements were evident (dynamics, phrasing, etc.). Demonstrates mastery of musicianship.
4	Student performed the selection with good pitch and rhythmic accuracy: 1-2 pitch or rhythmic mistakes were made. Demonstrates emerging mastery of the material.	Student performed the selection with good intonation: 1-2 notes were not in tune. Demonstrates emerging mastery of intonation.	Student performed the selection with good tone quality using good vocal technique. Demonstrates emerging mastery of vocal technique.	Student performed the selection with good musicianship: most musical elements were evident (dynamics, phrasing, etc.). Demonstrates emerging mastery of musicianship.
3	Student performed the selection with average pitch and rhythmic accuracy: 3-5 pitch or rhythmic mistakes were made. Demonstrates average understanding of the material.	Student performed the selection with average intonation: 3-5 notes were not in tune. Demonstrates average understanding of intonation.	Student performed the selection with average tone quality using average vocal technique. Demonstrates average understanding of vocal technique.	Student performed the selection with average musicianship: some musical elements were evident (dynamics, phrasing, etc.). Demonstrates average understanding of musicianship.
2	Student performed the selection with poor pitch and rhythmic accuracy: 6-8 pitch or rhythmic mistakes. Demonstrates a lack of preparation and understanding.	Students performed the selection with poor intonation: 6-8 notes were not in tune. Demonstrates a lack of preparation and understanding of intonation.	Student performed the selection with poor tone quality using poor vocal technique. Demonstrates a lack of preparation and understanding of vocal technique.	Student performed the selection with poor musicianship: few musical elements were evident (dynamics, phrasing, etc.). Demonstrates a lack of preparation and understanding of musicianship.
1	Student performed the selection with unacceptable pitch and rhythmic accuracy: more than 8 pitch or rhythmic mistakes were made. Demonstrates little to no preparation or understanding.	Student performed the selection with unacceptable intonation: more than 8 notes were not in tune. Demonstrates little to no preparation or understanding of intonation.	Student performed the selection with unacceptable tone quality using unacceptable vocal technique. Demonstrates little to no preparation or understanding of vocal technique.	Student performed the selection with unacceptable musicianship: no musical elements were evident (dynamics, phrasing, etc.). Demonstrates little to no preparation or understanding of musicianship.

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Dress Rehearsal and Performance Grading Rubric

Grading is based on the following 7-point rubric:

Dress/Evening Rehearsal	
Present at Dress/Evening Rehearsal for duration of rehearsal ***(1 point)***	Positive Preparedness and Achievement in Dress Rehearsal or Evening Rehearsal ***(2 points)***
(3-points total)	

Performance		
Present at Performance ***(1 point)***	Wearing Proper Concert Attire ***(1 point)***	Positive Preparedness and Achievement in Performance ***(2 points)***
(4-points total)		