

**Class Title:**

Orchestra 7,8 Honors

**Grade Levels:**

12

**UC Honors?**

Yes

**Course Overview**

Orchestra 7,8 Honors is the culmination of the musical education of the advanced orchestra student, as it not only connects their performance skills with their ability to investigate and solve musical challenges, but additionally requires deeper subject research, more analytical thinking, and new complex interactions with music. Students will demonstrate independent performing alone and in small groups, making appropriate personal choices of tone, interpretation, and musicality. They will study diverse repertoire with foci on multi-movement works, 20th century notation, and the music of the Americas. They will develop an expanded knowledge of advanced techniques and vocabulary, including enharmonics, scales, and cadences. Students will create multi-part compositions, and evaluate musical performances at an advanced level. They will study instrument development, analyze the role of form in works from different backgrounds, and identify the process of composing for film. Final written and performance projects in both semesters cover research, music selection, analysis of musical challenges, and an individual recital capstone.

**Pre-requisites**

Orchestra 1,2

Orchestra 3,4

Orchestra 5,6

And teacher recommendation

## **UNIT 1: Music Foundations**

In this unit, students will focus on the Artistic Perception and Creative Expression categories of the California State Music Standards and the Perform category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will perform with advanced string technique. They will modify tone, dynamics, and style based on the style or genre of the work, and independently make appropriate choices for expression, phrasing, and blend. Students will develop comfort performing alone and in small ensembles, as well as performing and sight-reading in multiple parts. Students will be exposed to advanced string techniques and continue to develop left-hand vibrato.

Students will expand their understanding to encompass any new terminology relating to dynamics, tempo, articulation, technique, or notation, including enharmonics, the whole-tone scale, and other scales/modes not previously covered. They will recognize all key signatures, and study fugues and multi-movement compositional forms (e.g. concerto, mass). They will expand their knowledge of intervals and begin to consider harmonic tuning.

Students will study the notation for and pitch patterns of melodic minor scales, and demonstrate understanding of the three different types of minor scales. Students will play major and minor scales in at least nine keys, plus the chromatic scale, using different arrangements of rhythmic values, tempos, articulations, and dynamics. Increased ranges, a variety of articulation styles, and multiple tempi will be used at teacher discretion.

**Key assignment:** Students will individually perform a representative selection of major, minor (harmonic/natural/melodic), and chromatic scales in representative keys. The assessment may be live or recorded, and will be evaluated by the teacher using a rubric that includes accuracy of pitch, consistency of rhythm/tempo, quality of tone, and articulation.

## **UNIT 2: Music Transcription**

In this unit, students will focus on the Creative Expression and Artistic Perception categories of the California State Music Standards and the Create category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will develop aural skills by transcribing more complex series of pitches and rhythms at an advanced level. Dictation examples will be more difficult in range, complexity, and length.

Key assignment: Students will create a transcription of both the pitches and the rhythms used in a advanced two-measure example. The written responses will be compared to an answer key.

## **UNIT 3: Aural Skills**

In this unit, students will focus on the Artistic Perception category of the California State Music Standards and the Perform category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will study more complex modulations and cadences. Students will be able to identify a subtle modulation in an aural example. In addition to perfect authentic and half cadences, they will recognize plagal, deceptive, and imperfect authentic cadences in aural examples.

Key assignment: Students will identify subtle modulations and all five types of cadences in aural examples on a written test. The responses will be compared to an answer key.

## **UNIT 4: Musical Instruments**

In this unit, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Aesthetic Valuing strands of the California State Music Standards and both the Respond and Connect categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will compare and contrast the use of instruments in a given piece of repertoire. Students will determine the historical or cultural reasons for their use (e.g. why use harpsichord instead of piano?) and compare them to previous iterations of those instruments (e.g. limitations of the Baroque violin). A wide variety of instruments from various cultures and historical periods should be discussed, and research may be necessary.

Key assignment: Students will describe the use of instruments and their ancestors/relatives within the context of a given work. Students will be assessed individually or in small groups either by verbal or written means. The task will be measured by depth and insightfulness of student response as determined by the teacher.

## **UNIT 5: Music of North and South America**

In this unit, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Aesthetic Valuing strands of the California State Music Standards and both the Respond and Connect categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will compare and contrast at least two musical styles or genres from North America and South America, that have been influenced by at least two cultures. Examples include music of the United States (e.g. ragtime, jazz, popular music), music of Latin America (e.g. music of Haiti or Puerto Rico), and various appropriated/Americanized music (e.g. tango, calypso, raga rock, music of Hawaii). Students will also identify the purpose for that style/genre, and how the intended audience would respond (e.g. call and response, jazz).

Key assignment: Students will research two musical styles of genres of North America and South America that show influences of two cultures, and create a chart comparing the two genres, identifying their purpose, and describing the audience's response. Students will be assessed individually or in small groups, and a rubric will be provided to the students to illustrate how they will be assessed.

## **UNIT 6: Music in Film/Media**

In this unit, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Aesthetic Valuing strands of the California State Music Standards and both the Respond and Connect categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will analyze the steps taken to compose or arrange music for film/media. Students will work through the composer's process, such as using a visual as inspiration for a musical work, developing themes, trying to match a director's vision, following a strict time schedule, and making sure that aural cues are timed to the visual cues.

Key assignment: Students will create a timeline of steps taken when producing music that must line up with video in order to explain how music is composed/arranged for film, television, or media. Students will use their previous years' studies of careers in media and research (where appropriate). Students will be assessed individually or in small groups, and the task will be measured by depth and insightfulness of student product as determined by the teacher, and using a checklist of the minimum number of steps in the timeline.

## **UNIT 7: 20th Century Music**

In this unit, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Aesthetic Valuing strands of the California State Music Standards and both the Respond and Connect categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will identify use of modern/non-standard notation, techniques, musical elements, and form as used in one representative 20th century piece. Sample elements include graphic notation, harmonics, ornamentation, portamento, and jazz notation (e.g. scoops, bends), depending on the exact piece of study. Kurt Stone's "Music Notation in the Twentieth Century" may be referenced.

Key assignment: Students will describe the unique methods of notation, techniques, elements, and form in a representative 20th century piece. Students will be assessed individually or in small groups either by verbal or written means. The teacher will assess the validity of the student response based on a list of 20th century elements found in that piece.

## **UNIT 8: Music Analysis**

In this unit, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Aesthetic Valuing strands of the California State Music Standards and both the Respond and Connect categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will analyze two pieces of music of different backgrounds (e.g. Classical vs. 20th century). They will identify the form of each piece, note musical elements that are representative of its historical or cultural context, and justify how the context impacts the audience's response. Then they will describe the social purpose of each form and evaluate the effectiveness of choosing that form based on how the audience would respond.

Key assignment: Students will analyze in writing the style and structure of two pieces from different backgrounds. After a period of study and/or listening, students will first describe the context of the piece, including how the audience was expected to respond. Then they will describe the form (including the compositional devices) and its link to the context of the piece. Finally, they will identify the social purpose of the piece and evaluate the effectiveness of using that form based on the audience's response. The assignment will be based on a prompt, graphic organizer, or guided questions. The task will be measured by depth and insightfulness of student response as determined by the teacher.

## **UNIT 9: Composition**

In this unit, students will focus on the Creative Expression and Artistic Perception categories of the California State Music Standards and the Create category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will have the opportunity to create their own music and/or their own arrangements of previously written music using the style or characteristics of a specific culture (e.g. instrumentation, techniques, ornamentation) and for a variety of purposes. Students will use their knowledge of notation, such as their ability to place combinations of rhythms, rests dynamics, articulations, and pitches to design music in a specific culture. Compositions or arrangements at this level will include tempo markings, dynamic markings, and more than one part (i.e. harmony).

Key assignment: Students will create an advanced-level composition of at least eight measures, incorporating combinations of rhythms, rests, pitches, and dynamics in at least two parts that use the style or characteristics of a specific culture and for a variety of purposes within parameters set by the teacher. The composition will be assessed through a checklist of musical elements used and whether they were used appropriately. Students will then modify their composition based on the feedback from a variety of sources, including the provided checklist, self-evaluation, peer feedback, and/or teacher feedback. Students will share their composition or arrangement with a peer at least once during the process.

## **UNIT 10: Improvisation**

In this unit, students will focus on the Creative Expression and Artistic Perception categories of the California State Music Standards and the Create category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will explore advanced-level improvisation by making more complex personal choices about dynamics, rhythm/rest values, pitches, or articulations using the style or characteristics of a specific culture and for a variety of purposes. Improvisations at this level will combinations of elements in a variety of keys, showing diversity of dynamics, tempo, rhythms, rests, and articulations.

Key assignment: Students will create an advanced-level improvisation by making spontaneous choices to change or modify combinations of musical elements using the style or characteristics of a specific culture and for a variety of purposes within parameters set by the teacher. The improvisation will be assessed by determining whether the students have made a creative choice while remaining within the parameters of the assignment. Students will evaluate their own improvisation using a checklist of more complex musical elements to identify whether they met the parameters of the assignment. Students will have multiple opportunities to improvise using the same existing composition in order to refine their improvisation, and will share their improvisation with at least one other person.

## **UNIT 11: Music Selection**

In this unit, students will focus on the Aesthetic Valuing category of the California State Music Standards and the Perform category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will think critically about music choice and repertoire selection. They will look at a variety of pieces to compare level of difficulty and instrumentation, and select two contrasting pieces of music to prepare and perform as part of the capstone recital. The pieces may be solos within large works (e.g. concerto), as solo repertoire forms (e.g. sonata), and/or as chamber music (one person per part). They will consider the impact of performance purpose, event type (e.g. festival), or audience expectations when selecting new repertoire. They will consider strategies for addressing musical problems and evaluate their effectiveness.

Key assignment: Students will choose two contrasting pieces of music that are appropriate to their own level or that of their ensemble (optional), based on a variety of criteria including expressive challenges. Students will explain in writing (e.g. an essay, program notes) why they chose their pieces, using research as support. They will also analyze two musical problems, identifying strategies they implemented that addressed each challenge, and reflecting on which strategies worked. The task will be measured by a checklist of criteria as well as depth and insightfulness of student response as determined by the teacher using a rubric.

## **UNIT 12: Performance**

In this unit, students will focus on the Artistic Perception and Creative Expression categories of the California State Music Standards and the Perform category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will demonstrate advanced rehearsal and performance etiquette, and be able to adjust to new performance settings, venues, and audiences. They will perform advanced-level pieces from a variety of cultures and historical periods, and with contrasting elements, styles, moods, musical periods, and expanded forms, including multi-movement works where possible. Works studied will demonstrate attention to composer's intent, expressive qualities, and understanding of style, genre, and mood. Sample repertoire includes:

- Adagio for Strings (Barber)
- Serenade for Strings (Dvorak)
- Dives and Lazarus (Vaughan Williams)
- Symphony No. 5 Adagietto (Mahler)
- Hoe Down from Rodeo (Copland)

Students will also play advanced pieces utilizing non-Western and 20th century music notation. Sample repertoire using non-standard notation includes:

- Fünf Stücke (Hindemith)
- Introit for Strings (Persichetti)
- Langsamer Satz (Webern)
- Divertimento (Bartok)
- Symphony for Strings No.8 Op.110 (Shostakovich)

Key assignment: Students will present a formal performance, either live or recorded, performed by the individual, a small group, and/or the entire ensemble. The performance will include at least two contrasting pieces demonstrating proficiency of Orchestra 7,8 Honors musical skills and techniques in a variety of styles.



## **UNIT 13: Performance Evaluation and Critique**

In this unit, students will focus on the Aesthetic Valuing categories of the California State Music Standards and the Respond category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will critically assess and evaluate larger works (e.g. entire programs or full performance sets) using advanced-level analysis, terminology, and research (where needed). Students will provide feedback on their own performances and those of others, incorporating analysis of the interpretation based on the composer's intent and/or performance practice. They will defend their choices of why a certain musical interpretation should be chosen/used based on a variety of research.

Key assignment: Students will use an adjudication rubric that includes an “interpretation” category to describe the strengths and weaknesses of a performance of a larger work (e.g. an entire program or full performance set), either live or recorded, of an individual (self or other) or ensemble. They will identify a certain musical interpretation and use a variety of research to defend their opinion on why that interpretation should be chosen/used. This task will be assessed by determining whether the students have made valid judgments of the performance and provided commentary, feedback, or evidence that defends their opinion.

## **SEMESTER 1 - FINAL PROJECT**

In this capstone, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Artistic Perception categories of the California State Music Standards and the Perform and Respond categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will research a selected piece of repertoire being performed in their ensemble and write about the historical context as well as describe the musical features. Writing should be informative/explanatory, in the style of either program notes or a pre-concert lecture, and may require research into the appropriate organization and style for this task/audience (integrating Common Core Writing Standards for the 11-12th grades). Students will then interact with and respond to audience members through either presentation of the pre-concert lecture, a question-answer session, or other form of interaction.

Key assignment: Students will choose a piece of concert repertoire to research. They will write in-depth program notes or a pre-concert lecture for that one piece, and be prepared to respond to questions from peers, the teacher, and/or audience members.

## **SEMESTER 2 - COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT**

In this capstone, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context, Artistic Perception, and Aesthetic Valuing categories of the California State Music Standards and the Perform and Respond categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

As part of Unit 11 (Music Selection), students will have selected two contrasting pieces appropriate to the level of an individual or ensemble, based on musical characteristics, expressive challenges, and performance purpose, to study and perform as solos within large works (e.g. concerto), as solo repertoire forms (e.g. sonata), and/or as chamber music (one person per part).

Key assignment: Students will present a formal recital performance, either live or recorded, performed by the individual, a small group, and/or the entire ensemble of their two selected contrasting pieces. The task will be measured by evaluations made by teacher, peer, and self based on a rubric.