

Ballard High School Orchestra 2018-2019 Handbook

*Music doesn't lie. If there is something to be changed
in this world, then it can only happen through music.
- Jimi Hendrix*



September 5, 2018

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the Ballard High School Orchestra Program! I look forward to working with all of you as we continue to build the strong tradition of orchestral music at BHS.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a guide and insight into the orchestra program. In it you will find ORCHESTRA DESCRIPTIONS, an explanation of the orchestra GRADING SYSTEM AND OBJECTIVES, a listing of REHEARSAL PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS, the POLICY ON PERFORMANCE ABSENCES, a detailed PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE, other GENERAL INFORMATION you may find useful, and an ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM. Please read over all its contents and refer to it throughout the year.

I strongly encourage each family to become involved in the Ballard High School Performing Arts Boosters, which has been created to provide a better musical experience for every student in our program. In the process, you will have the opportunity to interact with dedicated and motivated parents and guardians who, like you, want the best possible experiences for their children.

Music is an art. It is my goal as a string music educator to shape, foster, and bring to life the artist within you. I am committed to helping you develop needed instrumental technique, attentive ears, and creative minds. Students in the orchestra program are challenged to see themselves as artists. They are expected to respect their director, their fellow musicians, the music they perform, and the work each of us must do to make music together. Students are also expected to show responsibility for their individual contribution by giving their best effort at all rehearsals and performances, and practicing at home.

I am so excited to join the Ballard Performing Arts team! I live here in Ballard, and I know how vibrant and cool this community is. It is an absolute honor to be here, to get to work with you, and to take you along with me on creative envelope pushing musical adventures. Buckle up!!

I can't wait to get started!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Fortune
Director of Orchestras
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ORCHESTRA DESCRIPTIONS

Symphonic Orchestra

A string orchestra comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, or bass. All incoming freshmen begin in this group unless they choose to audition for Chamber Orchestra. This group performs a wide array of string orchestra literature, ranging from Baroque to contemporary. Symphonic Orchestra combines with members of the band and choir for a winter masterwork performance, collaborates in a spring concerto concert with full orchestra, and completes a chamber unit each year. Symphonic Orchestra members attend the fall retreat, compete at regional festivals, and perform at school concerts. Seating and section leader auditions take place at the beginning of each school year.

Chamber Orchestra

An auditioned chamber orchestra comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, or bass. This is a highly selective and motivated group of string players. Chamber Orchestra performs a rigorous array of string orchestra literature ranging from Baroque to contemporary. Chamber Orchestra combines with members of the band and choir for a winter masterwork performance as well as collaborates in a spring concerto concert with full orchestra. Over the course of the year, students will form small ensembles (trios, quartets, etc.) for various gig and performance opportunities. Chamber Orchestra attends the fall retreat, competes at regional festivals, performs at school concerts, and takes out-of-state trips. Seating and section leader auditions take place at the beginning of each school year.

Extracurricular—Fiddle Ensemble

This ensemble is comprised of students who play violin, viola, cello, bass, guitar, mandolin etc. Fiddle ensemble members work to refine their improvisational skills, learn music in an aural tradition, and perform authentic American roots music by arranging traditional tunes of the American Roots and Jazz repertoire. The Fiddle Ensemble performs at school concerts and special events, and is available for private performances throughout the year.

“Live your truth. Express your love. Share your enthusiasm. Take action towards your dreams. Walk your talk. Dance and sing to your music. Embrace your blessings. Make today worth remembering.” — Steve Maraboli

GRADING SYSTEM AND OBJECTIVES

The depth of coverage of material in this course requires active student engagement and participation. The failure to attend class prevents active student engagement. Because active student engagement is a necessary component of this class, attendance, tardiness, and class participation will be considered as a basis for grading in this course.

Each student is given 5 points for Daily Participation. Doing work for other classes or work not assigned to be done during class, sleeping, social talking, being tardy or leaving class early without an excuse are all circumstances that may result in loss of your daily participation points. Students will receive no participation points for days on which they have unexcused absences.

Student grades will be based on the following:

- **Daily Participation** – Students earn 5 points each day and can lose points for the following reasons:
 - Excessive Socializing or Talking.
 - Our primary goal in orchestra is to make music. It is my goal to ensure that rehearsals are run in a fun but efficient and effective manner at all times. This should be the goal of the musicians as well. It is easy to become distracted in a room full of students. I will always try to keep you on task but it is your job to accept the responsibility for your actions. The single most disruptive element to a rehearsal is excessive talking. Please come to orchestra and **BE READY TO PLAY YOUR INSTRUMENT**. That is why we are here.
 - Gum, Candy, Food, or Soda.
 - You can endanger your instrument or another person's instrument if you are consuming food, drinks, or chewing gum in class. Please work to keep our shared spaces clean!
 - Materials not brought to or being used in class.
 - Always have your instrument, folder, and a pencil and mark your music.
 - Poor Posture and Alignment.
 - This inhibits proper playing.
 - Unauthorized use of cell phones or other electronic devices.
 - If you are texting or otherwise distracted by your phone, you are not on task and are not contributing positively to the group.
 - Disruptive Behavior.
 - Not staying in the seating chart.
 - Leaving before dismissed.
 - Rough housing.
 - Disrespectful behavior towards classmates or teachers.

- **Performance Points** – Students earn up to 100 points for participation in each required concert.
 - Attendance for the entire concert is required. We must all support each other’s portion of the concert.
 - Students may also be required to attend dress rehearsals or extra rehearsals as deemed necessary.
- **Test Scores** – Several quizzes, worth a variety of points, may be administered throughout the year to test student’s musical comprehension and growth.
 - These tests may be playing tests, or written tests. Students must be prepared to play alone for these tests in the classroom.

NEW CELL PHONE EXPECTATIONS

Studies have shown that the brain can take up to 10 minutes to reengage after responding to a cell-phone distraction. A ‘ding’ or ‘buzz’ from a phone or the illumination of a screen can distract even the best of students let alone those around him or her. Cell phones, while important tools for communication and even research, offer very little to the classroom setting in a music ensemble. College and professional musicians do not use cell phones during rehearsals and performances. Therefore, cell phones will not be allowed during Ballard band and percussion rehearsals. To help allay the temptation to have a phone on a music stand or to pull one out of a pocket, students will be requested to place their cell phone in the numbered cell phone holder near the front of the room when they enter class. This holder is in plain sight of all students so that they can keep an eye on their phone throughout the class period if they feel the need. After music rehearsal, students can pick up their phones on the way out of class. Many other Ballard teachers use a similar routine in their classes and the feedback on student focus and information retention has been amazing.

ORCHESTRA MUSICAL OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

1. Recognize notes and note values.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of time signatures.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of key signatures.
4. Play major, minor, and chromatic scales.
5. Read treble, alto and bass clef.
6. Perform basic rhythmic patterns using all note values and rests.
7. Demonstrate proper posture for playing.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of bow hold and right-hand technique.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of left hand technique.
10. Perform with proper tone.
11. Perform in a variety of playing positions.

My goal is an “A” for everyone! Can you do it?



REHEARSAL PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Be in your assigned seat with your instrument, shared stand, folder and a pencil at the start of class.
2. You will be expected to participate fully every day that you are in attendance. I realize that there will be some days you will not feel like it. However, if you are well enough to be in class, you will need to participate to the best of your ability. If, you have some type of injury that would prevent you from playing properly, you need to speak with me before class so that I can evaluate your situation and we can come up with a plan for your participation.
3. Please do not chew gum, eat, or drink anything in this class.
4. Listen and pay attention at all times during rehearsal. Even if only one section is rehearsing, everyone else should be following along in the music. Plan to talk very little and play a great deal when you come to rehearsal!
5. Play with “musician’s posture” at all times. Make great alignment a habit, rather than something you save for performances.
6. Mark your music IN PENCIL during rehearsals.
7. Willingly try everything you are asked to do. I will never ask you to do something that will not help you to grow as a musician.
8. Do not write on the white board.
9. Do not play the grand piano or drum set. These are extremely expensive instruments!
10. Keep cell phones put away. Consider this your first and only warning. Your cell phone will be confiscated for the period if it is out. Please see our new cell phone policy above.
11. Conflicts with the performance schedule and other personal business should ALWAYS be discussed OUTSIDE OF CLASS and on a one-on-one basis with the director.

12. String music is an art that occurs in the moment. If you're not in class during rehearsals then you miss something that can't be made up or created on your own. If you need to use the bathroom in an emergency situation, wait for an appropriate interval and then leave quietly.
13. A respectful attitude toward your classmates and the director must be maintained at all times. There will be challenging times in this class, but there will be many more good times. I want you to enjoy orchestra and a positive atmosphere will make that possible.

*“Always rehearse your performance
because you will perform your rehearsal.”*

POLICY ON PERFORMANCE ABSENCES

As a member of the Ballard High School Orchestras, you are required to be at all dress rehearsals, performances, and festivals. Important musical factors such as balance and blend are affected by the absence of even a single performer! You accept the responsibility to be at required concerts when you join a musical group. Your grade will reflect how well you meet this responsibility.

- Look over the calendar carefully NOW. Note the performances which are required as a member of your orchestra.
- Decide which optional activities you might want to be involved in.
- Write appropriate dates on your family's activity calendar NOW.
- Absences from required concerts will result in loss of points with the exception of:
 - **Illness** – Students claiming illness but having attended school the day of the concert and the day following the concert will not be excused.
 - **Death in the immediate family**
 - **Planned absence** – This means that the director has been notified several weeks (if not months) in advance, and that every attempt has been made to rectify the conflict.
- Absences from required concerts due to the following reasons will not be excused:
 - **I had to work.** Students are given the performance schedule on the first day of school so that they can avoid conflicts with work schedules. Employers told far in advance of a specific date will most likely avoid it.
 - **I couldn't find a ride.** There are many other students in the orchestra program that will gladly help you get to and from the concert. In addition, we have a wonderful public transportation system. If you are having trouble finding a way to get here, please speak to the director.

- **I had family obligations.** The performance schedule is given out on the first day of class so that students can clear their calendar and avoid personal conflicts.
- **I forgot.** Students are reminded daily for at least one week prior to a concert and are given a performance schedule on the first day of school.
- If after speaking with the director it is determined that you **MUST** miss a performance, you will have the opportunity to do a written make-up assignment:
 - Make-up assignments are eligible for up to 80% of performance points.
 - They are due by the end of the quarter.
 - **Make-up Assignment:** Write a three-page, double-spaced paper on a musical topic of your choice. Ideas include composers, bands, singers, types of music, compositions, musical time periods, musical genres, etc. Please consult and list three scholarly sources when writing the assignment.

PERFORMANCE DRESS CODE

Uniforms

Men's Concert Uniforms

Owned and maintained by the Ballard Performing Arts and is loaned to students for the school year and kept at home.

Tux jacket and pants, bow tie, cummerbund, garment bag and hanger

All men will be measured by a professional during the first full week of school, after school. Dates & times TBD. This is mandatory for all men.

Students must provide:

Black socks, black dress shoes (no tennis shoes), tux shirt, cufflinks, and studs.

Tux shirts, cufflinks and studs are available to purchase from Ted Brown Music, 1006 NE 50th St, 206-622-0171. The tux shirts cost \$19.99.

Women's Concert Uniforms

Owned and maintained by the Ballard Performing Arts and is loaned to students for the school year and kept at home.

Black velvet top, black satin skirt and garment bag and hanger

All returning women will try on their concert clothes on August 30th, returning students from 8:00am-12:00pm and new students from 12:00pm-3:00pm. If you cannot make August 30th, please come August 31st from 8:00am - 12:00pm or contact the Orchestra Family Rep, Eric Sanderson at BPABorchestarep@gmail.com

Student must provide:

Black, low heeled, closed toe dress shoes and black hose.

T-shirt

All orchestra students will have the same t-shirt, which comes included with the annual fee. This shirt is worn on trips and at informal events where formal attire is not required.

As we strive for excellence in our music making, we must do our best to look as professional as we sound. Sloppy looking orchestras make a poor impression upon audiences and judges. Long hair must be pulled off of the face. All jewelry must be taken off with the exception of small stud earrings. Concert attire should be clean and neatly pressed for each performance. Music department attire is to be worn ONLY at music department events. A student who loses or damages a uniform will be charged the fees necessary for replacing it.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Private Lessons

Students in the Ballard Orchestra Program are encouraged to study privately with a professional violin, viola, cello, or bass teacher. Benefits of doing so include:

- Growth of technical ability
- Increased musicianship
- Improved stage presence which benefit:
 - Communication skills
 - Presentation skills
 - Interpersonal skills
- Personal goal setting and achievement skills
- Increased self confidence and stronger contribution to the orchestra team

Students may arrange to take lessons with one of the instructors who teaches lessons at school during class, and can also obtain a referral for a teacher outside of the school day from Ms. Fortune.

Teamwork

Orchestra is a TEAM activity. Please remember that every player is integral to the team. Even those students who do not study privately or choose to participate in extracurricular ensembles are important. The best player, when playing alone, does not an orchestra make.

Varsity Letters

Students in the Ballard High School Orchestras are eligible to earn a Varsity Orchestra Letter. Students do this by meeting a number of criteria that go above and beyond the day to day expectations of choir. Interested students should see the director ASAP.

Financial Assistance

If at any time during the year you experience financial hardship that inhibits paying for a required fee, please call, e-mail, or send a note. You may also talk to me before or after class. WE WILL FIND A WAY TO MAKE IT WORK!!!

Classical AND Non-Classical

There will be a wide variety of music studied in this class. Some of it will require traditional note-reading of parts. Some of it will require playing by ear. Some of it may require playing in a clef you don't know very well. Some of it will require creation of melodies and harmonies. Some of it will be with guest artists that play and sing instruments you are not accustomed to seeing or hearing. Some of it will be outside of the orchestral norm. Some of it will require singing. Some of it may require solos (prepared and improvised). Please enter into this course with an open mind. Please be willing to jump in and have fun!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I acknowledge that I have read the 2018-2019 Ballard High School Orchestra Handbook. I have also looked over the calendar and noted important calendar dates. I understand that being in the music program at Ballard is an important commitment. By signing this form, I pledge to honor that commitment and do my part to help make my orchestra successful.

Student Name (Printed)

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please return by Friday, September 21st, 2018.

Handbook is available electronically both on Schoology and at www.ballardperformingarts.org under the Orchestra tab and Meet the Director page.

-Life is too short for ordinary experiences.-