

PERFORMING ARTS FOR GRADES 7-8

In this class, students begin a more formal academic study of the performing arts of theater and vocal music. They move from fine arts at the Elementary basic level toward an Intermediate level of knowledge, experience, skills, and participation.

Introduction to Theater – Semester I

We explore our shared human experience that is found in all plays – comedy, drama, tragedy - and we learn the basic design and technical elements of theater. We begin our studies in Ancient Greece and finish in the 21st Century.

Students are introduced to theater arts in the following way.

- We examine theater through a historical and cultural perspective.
- We read, study, analyze, and discuss great plays, focusing on the universal themes of family, love, human behavior, social issues, and problem solving.
- We learn and practice elements of theatrical design for each play we discuss in class. These are set design, lighting, sound, music, properties, script writing, acting, costumes, makeup.
- We learn basic performance techniques as appropriate for each genre of play: storytelling, masks, puppets, voicing, accents, character, physicality.

We study plays, appropriate for Middle School students, from among the following list:

Antigone, Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Matchmaker, Sorry Wrong Number, Our Town, The Miracle Worker, Arsenic and Old Lace, Hamilton, The Odd Couple, The Marriage Proposal, Twelve Angry Men.

Students will participate in the GMR Winter Concert.

Introduction to Choir – Semester II

In this semester, Junior High students are introduced to the basic foundations of music literacy, singing, and musicianship appropriate to their age, grade, and development. This class prepares them for more advanced studies in High School.

Students are introduced to music in the following way.

- Artistic Foundations (Music Literacy) - Students learn to read, explain, and write music notation and understand the basic elements of music theory, rhythm, dynamics, melody, harmony, tone color, texture, form, style, genre.
- Creating Music - Students read, interpret and use the symbolic language of music notation and the structures, materials and techniques of the discipline to learn their songs and sing as an ensemble.

- Singing – Students use their maturing voice to learn to sing in a modified *bel canto* style that is appropriate to their age and development. The sound is deliberate, elegant, refined, and sweet-toned. It emphasizes diction, sound placement, and voice health. In this style, their natural voice and sound is deliberately controlled, chosen, and shaped, new vocal technique is learned and applied, and the anatomy of the entire body is used to create, produce, and sustain beautiful sound.
- Responding to Music - Students learn and demonstrate their ability to interpret, perceive and respond with understanding when they describe, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and manage their own music and the music of others.
- Performing Music - Students sing alone, and with others, a varied repertoire of music, applying basic skills in singing, reading music, and playing instruments, to interpret and share the music they are learning and creating.
- Connecting Music to Other Things – With their new knowledge and confidence, students demonstrate an understanding of our shared artistic heritage through discussions of the history and cultural contexts of the music they are singing. They apply their knowledge from music in the study of other disciplines, including math, science, social studies, culture, literature.

Students participate in the GMR Spring Concert and Graduation. They will sing as an ensemble and with the High School Choir. Middle School Choirs are considered a Junior Varsity activity under MSHSL rules and are not eligible to participate in the MSHSL Large Ensemble Music Festival.