**Seaholm High School**

**Orchestra Handbook**

2018-2019



**Mission Statement:**

*The Seaholm Orchestra Program aims to cultivate a rich and comprehensive music education through excellence and innovation in student-driven music thinking, creating, and performing.*

Nicholas Karpinsky, Director of Orchestras

NKarpinsky@birmingham.k12.mi.us

**NEW/UPDATED POLICIES**

**Personal Technology/Cell Phones**

In order to maximize student learning and engagement during our rehearsals, no cell phones or tech devices will be permitted during class instructional time. If there is a personal matter that requires serious attention, please speak with Mr. Karpinsky **before** rehearsal. Parents – please do not expect your student to respond to text messages DURING instructional time.

Students have the first five minutes and/or passing time to access their phones. It is an expectation that when we begin rehearsal, all distractions such as cell phones, food, board games, lava lamps, skateboards, and anything else you can think of be put away. I will honor that expectation as well.

**“The First Five Minutes”**

Students have the first five minutes of every rehearsal to warm-up on their instrument, use the restroom, get a drink of water/fill water bottle, and get their instrument ready for rehearsal. Students who are not in their seat with their instrument fully unpacked by the start of rehearsal will be marked tardy. This policy follows the expectations of professional orchestral rehearsals and has been established to maximize our limited rehearsal time together.

**Professional Musicianship**

Students will be expected to have their own personal copies of music (as provided by the teacher), a pencil, and either a folder OR orchestra-specific three ring binders to organize all music. Students will be expected to have their own personal copies of music for every rehearsal, for the purpose of marking fingerings, bowings, and other musical markings. Students will be expected to have their own pencil and personal copy of music on their stand and actively participate in marking their own music, just as professional musicians do. **Material check quizzes will be conducted at the discretion of the director, announced or unannounced.**

**Sectionals**

Throughout the course of each concert cycle, students will have opportunities to break off into sectional groups to study, rehearse, and work on music together. Students must bring their own music/materials to a sectional.

At the discretion of the director, technology or cell phones may be used for metronome, listening, or recording purposes. The director will pre-appoint specific students who have permission to access this technology.

**Performance Ensembles**

**Concert Orchestra**

This is the intermediate ensemble that feeds into Symphony Orchestra. This ensemble is for freshman and/or students who need more time to develop the necessary string pedagogy needed to succeed in Symphony Orchestra. This class will focus on the individual development of skills including scales (major and minor), vibrato, shifting, sight-reading skills, ear training, and music theory.

**Symphony Orchestra**

**Audition-Only Ensemble**. Consists primarily of juniors and seniors who demonstrate mastery of the basics, thrive on challenge, have a strong sense of musicianship, have established for themselves a successful practice routine, understand how to problem solve in their individualized practice sessions, and have excellence as a goal.

**Full Symphony Orchestra**

Students in Symphony Orchestra will have an opportunity to perform full orchestra repertoire with Seaholm brass, wind, and percussion students at the graduation commencement ceremony.

**Seaholm Electric Ensemble**

**Audition-Only Ensemble**. This smaller chamber ensemble represents the top players amongst each section of the string orchestra that have a strong interest in learning and performing contemporary pop, rock, and alternative music on electric string instruments. The ensemble has a limited instrumentation, but does allow other instruments such as guitar and drum set to join. Students will be provided with electric string instruments to rehearse and perform on (instruments MUST be kept at school). Rehearsals are scheduled at the director’s discretion.

**Pit Orchestra**

This ensemble is open to any member of orchestra who wishes to perform in the spring musical, if there is a part available for their specific instrument to play. Repertoire for spring musicals is challenging; it is strongly encouraged that students have a mastery of shifting, vibrato, and other basic skills necessary in order to perform professional pit orchestra repertoire.

**Chamber Ensembles/String Quartets**

Individual ensembles are formed by students to provide experience in chamber ensemble playing. All students will have the opportunity to perform in groups during the school year. These ensembles will have an opportunity to participate at District and State MSBOA Solo and Ensemble Festivals and other performance venues.

***Enrollment in orchestra is sequential and it is expected that students take all 3 terms. If a serious course conflict occurs, please contact Mr. Karpinsky.***

**General Expectations**

**Equipment**

Students must bring their instrument, music, rosin, and pencil to every rehearsal. **Students will need a 1 inch three-ring BLACK binder or folder for all music**. Please note that Seaholm High School cannot be responsible for theft or damaged student-owned instruments (please check your home owners policy for coverage options). Make sure that your instrument is clearly labeled and that you are able to identify your instrument by serial number.

**Home Practice Expectations**

PRACTICING occurs at home. REHEARSAL involves those tasks which you cannot accomplish yourself on your own time. Therefore, it is expected that musicians of the orchestra spend the necessary amount of time at home learning their individual part. The length of time needed for practice will vary amongst each student, but all students should make a personal goal to incorporate daily home practice into their schedules.

**Private Lessons**

Private lessons are **HIGHLY** recommended for **ALL** orchestra students and serve as an excellent supplement to daily orchestra rehearsals. Private lessons offer students the opportunity to work on specific solo repertoire, learn advanced positions and technique, and refine and develop playing ability. Students may take private lessons to fulfill the “Individual Project” grade requirement or may choose to count it as extra credit. Please contact Mr. Karpinsky if you have questions or concerns about selecting an appropriate teacher.

**Chair Seating**

Chair seating in the Seaholm Orchestra Program models how professional orchestras function. Every musician is a vital member of the ensemble. Students will perform playing tests on excerpts from concert repertoire. Based on the repertoire and playing test, I will assign seats within each section. Seating is not a numerical order of test scores. I determine the seating by trying to create the correct musical balance for that specific section. Principal seats will be assigned at the director’s discretion. The concertmaster and principal chair musicians will be responsible for writing in bowings/fingerings and leading sectionals.

**Grading**

The majority of the student’s grade will be based on individual playing tests and concert performances. Individual playing tests can be taken as many times as the student desires. Daily participation and being prepared for rehearsals are classroom expectations and can affect a student’s grade if they begin to detract from them having a successful rehearsal.

**Performances**

Most concerts and performances occur in the evening or on weekends, therefore time outside the school day is required. By enrolling in orchestra, you have made a commitment to the organization and have a responsibility to be in attendance at every concert. The orchestra can only perform at its best when all members are present. Missing a performance is a very serious offense in a musical ensemble at any level. A concert/performance is like a test or final examination but cannot be made up.

***Please contact Mr. Karpinsky as soon as possible regarding any schedule conflicts with concerts.***

**Performance Opportunities**

**Pre-Festival Clinic: MANDATORY**

All orchestra students will be expected to attend this event (during class time). Each orchestra will perform all three pieces that are to be performed at festival, in front of a clinician/judge. Immediately following the performance, the clinician will work with each orchestra to improve upon their overall musicality.

**MSBOA District Orchestra Festival**: **MANDATORY**

All orchestra students are required to participate in this festival (please see concert calendar for specific info). The performance requirements for Concert and Symphony Orchestra are the following: Perform three string orchestra selections and sight-read. This festival includes transportation time, warm-up times, and the orchestra’s performance.Parents are welcome and invited to attend this performance.

**MSBOA District Solo and Ensemble Festival**: Optional

Solo and Ensemble Festival is a great opportunity for musicians of all levels. By committing yourself to participate in this festival, you are accepting the challenge that you are a valuable performer who is willing to accept professional criticism and critique in order to further your musical growth. It is through this willingness to excel and challenge yourself that we will continue to grow as a musical organization. A student enters as a member of up to two ensembles. An ensemble may have up to eight members. Students may perform up to two solos only if they perform on two different instruments. Students who receive a “I” at District Solo and Ensemble Festival are eligible for State Festival.

**MSBOA State Solo and Ensemble Festival**: Optional

If you receive a “I” at district festival you become eligible for State level. Here, they will require a solo that will count as 50% of your final grade. You will also be expected to perform scales and sight-reading- each will contribute 25% toward your final score. Piano and harp proficiencies also require a specific etude and have a slightly different scoring system.

If you are actually reading this handbook, you have an extra credit opportunity! Please send me a picture of a dinosaur by the end of the day Monday, September 17th.

**MSBOA State Honors Orchestra/ Youth Arts Festival**: Optional

If a student receives a 1st division at State Solo and Ensemble and at the recommendation of their adjudicator, the student may be nominated to participate in an all-state Honors Orchestra. Scoring is usually required to be in the 90’s for nomination. The all-state Honors Orchestra involves intense rehearsals on a college campus and a concert presented in May during Michigan Youth Arts Festival.

**Concert Uniforms**

**Option 1: Performance Tux**

**Seaholm H.S. provides**: Concert black tuxedo jacket, concert black tuxedo trousers, and black bow tie

**Student must supply**: Black dress socks, black dress shoes, white tux shirt

*Once issued, students may keep their tux uniform until graduation. The uniform can be exchanged for a different size throughout the year if needed. Upon return, the uniform must be dry-cleaned and in good condition. Fines will be charged for missing or damaged clothing.*

**Option 2: Concert Black Apparel**

* Long black dress skirt (**skirt must fall at least 6 inches below the knee**)
* Black DRESS PANTS (**black leggings or skin-tight pants are not permitted**)
* ¾ sleeved black dress top or blouse (black dress cardigan may also be worn)
* Black dress shoes and black nylons (**no sandals, flip-flops, combat boots, etc.**)

**Option 3: Long Black Dress Gown (provided by Seaholm HS)**

*Once issued, student may keep their gown until graduation. The gown can be exchanged for a different size throughout the year if needed. Upon return, the uniform must be dry-cleaned and in good condition. Fines will be charged for missing or damaged clothing.*