



Ephrata High School
Course Syllabus

Voice Class
Course #5640



I. Course Description

Voice Class is offered to singers who wish to improve their vocal technique. Concentration is placed on breathing, tone production, proper diction and pronunciation, care of the voice, and performance techniques. Singing in class is required, both alone and with others.

II. Materials & Equipment

Students will utilize the textbook *Basics of Singing*, 4th and 5th editions, by Jan Schmidt, c. 1998 by Simon & Schuster Macmillan. Other handouts will also be shared, in addition to use of various internet sites. Vocal selections will be made available to students for classroom use. In addition, the following materials may be used: *Daily Workout For a Beautiful Voice*, by Charlotte Adams, c. 1991 (video and warm-up sheets), *Adventures in Singing*, 2nd edition, by Clifton Ware, c. 1998 McGraw Hill. The videos *The Living Voice, a Guided Tour of the Human Larynx in Speech and Song*, c. 2000 University of Michigan, *The Human Voice* by Robert Caldwell, c. 2001 Caldwell Publishing Co., and *The Magic Flute*, W.A.Mozart, c. 1983, Philips Video Classics may also be viewed by students.

III. Course Goals & Objectives

- To enable students to identify components of a “good voice”, “good speaking”, “good singing”
- To identify excellent singers and their vocal characteristics
- To enable students to discover their natural vocal abilities
- To develop a singer’s voice to be totally responsive to the intentions of the singer
- To gain knowledge of how the voice works through experience of warm-ups, exercises and vocalises, and preparation of performance pieces both in a group and alone
- To experience a wide spectrum of vocal genres both in study and/or in performance
- To understand and practice good vocal health
- To evaluate and identify specific vocal characteristics such as tone/timbre, range, quality, intonation, projection, breathing/support, diction, posture, and expression
- To utilize a full, descriptive musical vocabulary

IV. Course Topics (Summary Outline)

1. Identifying excellent singers and notable characteristics of their voices
(What defines an excellent singer?)
2. Perceiving your own voice
(What qualities of your own voice do you like? Which ones do you dislike? Why?)
3. Excellent practice habits and what practice means
(What is practice? How is practicing done?)
4. The importance of warm-ups for the voice
(What is the effect of warm-ups on the singing voice?)
5. The Voice “fingerprint”
(How is everyone’s voice unique? What are the qualities that make it so?)

6. Monitoring both your speaking and singing voice
(What problems can occur if bad habits are used in speaking? In singing? What can you do to prevent vocal abuse?)
7. Vocal problems and enemies of your natural voice
(What are some problems that can occur with your voice and what do you do when you identify a vocal problem? How can you keep your voice healthy?)
8. Physiology of the breathing process and of the larynx
(What parts of the body are involved with breathing and singing? Where is the larynx located and what are its functions in the human body?)
9. Posture and eye contact
(How is correct posture demonstrated? What is the importance of eye contact?)
10. Determining registers, ranges, and classifications of human voices
(What is the difference between register and range? How are human adult voices classified?)
11. Diction for singers
(Why is diction importance for singers?)
12. Understanding and using the International Phonetic Alphabet
(What is IPA and how is it used for singers?)
 - Pure vowels and how to form them
 - Diphthongs/triphthongs and how to sing them
 - Consonants
 - Other vowels and exceptions
 - Foreign symbols and their uses
13. Exploring, Learning and Performing songs of different genres, cultures and nationality
(How are different genres of songs performed differently? What is the importance of each style?)
 - Folk songs (English, American, Nicaraguan, Mexican, etc)
 - Movie/Broadway songs
 - Art songs
 - Popular music
 - Classical Opera style
 - Songs in different languages

V. Assignments & Grading

Grades are determined, but not limited to, student participation in the following (points are given):

- Participation in classroom activities
- Assessments of techniques and tones
- Quizzes/Tests
- Vocal performances for the class and evaluation of both self and others' performances
- Completion of class work and homework as assigned
- Researching and presentation of an assigned Vocal Health topic
- Successful completion of various assigned projects
- Daily or regular practice of vocal techniques and repertoire