

WELCOME TO THE 9TH GRADE ORCHESTRA

We are looking forward to an exciting year in the 9th Grade Orchestra. Having the 9th grade at the High School, and in a group by themselves, has worked very well to prepare students for the more challenging music played at the High School level.

Concert Dates

Tuesday, October 11

Tuesday, December 13

Tuesday, March 6

Tuesday, May 8

All concerts will be in the ORHS Auditorium, and all will start at 7:00 pm. I will send a note home before the concert as a reminder, but please note these dates now, and plan to attend. If you cannot attend for an excused reason (such as a school sponsored sports event) you will be required to do an alternative activity to receive credit for the concert. These make up activities can be one of the following:

1. Write a 2 page report on a composer.
2. Perform for me a portion of the concert music.
3. Attend a classical music concert and discuss pieces performed.

If your absence from the concert was unexcused, you may not make it up, and your grade will be lowered.

Violin and Viola lockers

We have the luxury of having violin and viola lockers at ORHS that are in the hallway in front of the orchestra room. Each locker is provided with a combination lock. Each player will be assigned a locker and given the combination to their lock. Please do not share these! Also, students are required to lock their combination locks at the end of class. Many students chose to leave their locks open, or kept them inside the locker and we had a violin stolen last year! Please be sure to keep the locker secured at all times! If a lock is lost there will be a \$10 replacement charge.

Concert Dress

Please note that students in 9th grade are now asked to wear all black for the orchestra concerts. Boys can wear a black suit with white shirt and tie and black shoes and socks. They may wear a black shirt and black pants if it is not possible to have a suit. Girls wear either a black dress, which should be below the knees in length, or black dress pants with a black blouse, and black shoes.

Grades

Your grade in orchestra depends upon the following factors:

1. **Book and Folder check:** 10% of your grade. At the end of each 9 weeks we will have a book and folder check. You will be given a folder to keep music in. When music is handed out you need to put your copy in your folder. If concert pieces are missing from your folder your grade will be lowered. You may not share your folder with your stand partner. You also need to have your own copy of Essential Elements III – the green book, with your name in it. Later in the year we will switch to Advanced Techniques book – Book 4 in the series. If you need to buy a book, go ahead and buy the Advanced Techniques book.
2. **Concert Participation:** 10% of your grade. Each nine weeks has one required concert. See information above.

3. **Class participation** counts 80% of your grade. Class participation has the following criteria in mind:
 1. The student should fully participate in each orchestra rehearsal. This means minimal talking and no reading or doing homework from other subject areas during rehearsal.
 2. Students should play with good posture. If you have a problem with your playing posture, I will make you aware of it and offer help and suggestions to improve. If there is no improvement, you will receive a lower grade.
 3. Effort should be made to master the techniques set forth in the Essential Techniques book. We will spend part of each class working in the book. This book teaches shifting and using positions other than 1st on your instrument and this is essential to playing your instrument. I need to be able to see that you are following the correct fingerings and able to play in position. We will offer help to those students who are struggling with these concepts, but you need to practice these techniques at home until they are mastered.
 4. We do not ask students to perform passages alone in front of the group. However, we can see on your fingering while you are playing with others, whether or not you can play the music. You need to be able to play the music well by the time it is performed!

At the end of the year, all 9th grade students will play individually for me as a Final Exam. This will count as 1/5th of your year's grade. You will play a major and a minor 3 octave scale and a piece of assigned music.

School Instruments

If you would like to use a school instrument this year, please see me for a contract to be signed by students and parents. The charge is \$30 for the year and covers costs of replacing strings, repairs, and maintenance of the instrument and bow. If you are unable to pay this fee, please e-mail me at jvantol@ortn.edu and we can arrange for partial payment, or for the fee to be waived.

Junior Orchestra Clinic

Students in the 7th, 8th and 9th grades are eligible to participate in the regional Junior Orchestra Clinic, which takes place each fall. Students from Oak Ridge, Knoxville and Maryville audition for seats in one of two orchestras. A college level orchestral clinician will rehearse with the students for 2 days and present a concert at the end of that time. The date for the auditions will be **Saturday, November 5 at Cedar Bluff Middle School**. I will send a letter home about this in September. The **dates for Jr. Clinic will be November 18 and 19**, and it will take place at Beardon High School. This is always a musically rewarding experience, and prepares students to audition for and participate in the Senior Clinic for grades 10 - 12, which involves a 3 day stay at the Park Vista Hotel in Gatlinburg, and possible eligibility for the All State Orchestra in Nashville. We encourage students to attend, especially if they are thinking of taking Honors Orchestra next year in 10th grade.

Trip to Competition

The Oak Ridge High School Orchestra will take a trip this year to go to a competition. **The projected date for this trip will be March 28 – April 1**. I will send home more

information as it becomes available. We will be doing several fundraisers this year to raise money for the trip. The first one will take place from Sept. 1 - 7, the second one from November 4 - 14. If you sell products at these fundraisers, 90% of your profit will be credited towards your trip. The trips usually cost \$400 - \$450, so this is a good way for you to bring down the cost.

We have an active **Orchestra Booster Club** at ORHS and would encourage 9th grade parents to become involved. We meet 4 – 5 times during the school year and have projects to raise money for the trip. Parents also help out with ticket sales and refreshments at concerts. We will also have a T- and Sweatshirt sale this fall to raise money. We will be asking students for parent e-mail addresses so we can get important information home to you. Also, please check out our website at www.orhsorchestra.org. Letters and concert dates are posted here.

We are looking forward to a great year with this 9th grade class.

Jenifer van Tol