Songwriters' Workshop Course Expectations

Course title: Songwriters' Workshop
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PVPA Charter Public School

Course Description: How do you write an amazing song? What are the basic tools you need to be a songwriter? Building basic music theory, lyric-writing, and analytical listening skills, students will write songs in different genres. Students will learn by writing and also by editing their work and that of their peers, and by workshopping their creations throughout the semester. Students will study arranging techniques, will perform their own songs as well as those by other students, and will study some of the great songwriters as well and will leave the class with a portfolio of finished songs.

Materials: 3-ring Binder (1-inch is big enough), blank notebook paper, pencil - students might choose to have a journal for lyric and song ideas. Plain paper is fine but journals sometimes help to keep ideas organized.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, students are expected to:
- I can use level-appropriate musical vocabulary to describe and critique songwriting techniques, melodic and harmonic conventions, and song form in music I hear and create
- I can demonstrate level-appropriate mastery of songwriting techniques, melodic and harmonic conventions, and song form to create my own complete original work
- I can demonstrate level-appropriate music theory mastery by describing music I hear using standard music theory terminology, and by writing and following music using standard notation, roman numerals, or lead sheet notation
- I can identify and illustrate common principles, shared vocabulary, and connections between music, music of different genres, the arts and other disciplines (history, ELA, science & math)

Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs): Students in this course should adhere to the following school-wide expectations:
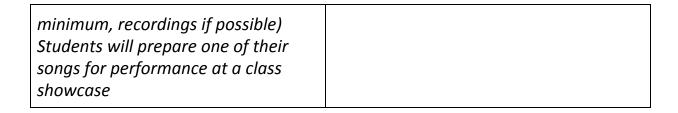- <u>Preparation</u>: I am prepared for class and arrive on time with organized

materials and any needed attire.
- Participation: I participate in my learning by engaging actively, contributing productively, and collaborating respectfully and safely.
- Personal Responsibility: I manage my school work by monitoring my assignment completion, meeting deadlines for assigned work and revisions, and/or successfully navigating the extension process if necessary.

Units and Assessments: The course will be divided into the following units:

UNIT	ASSIGNMENTS
1. Team building, introductions, in-depth music theory review *Students will establish a safe space for learning, experimenting, and performing* *Students will listen to songs they know to begin an intensive review/building of basic music theory needed for the course* *Students will develop confidence hearing, naming, and writing using I, IV, and V chords, major and minor modes, notating pitches, and identifying basic pop song structures* *Students will begin writing songs, and will workshop them with peers*	Write your own chord progressions Write songs given various parameters related to our music theory learning Write your own song using the new tools you've acquired
UNIT	ASSIGNMENTS
2. Melodic structure: What makes a catchy melody? *Students will deepen their comfort with notation, notes, and intervals through study of melody* *Students will collaborate to create a list of qualities that make melodies appealing to them* *Students will write their own*	Notation exercises in class Write your own melody to given chord changes Workshop a peer's melody, giving feedback using musical vocabulary

melodies to various chord structures and will workshop them with peers *Students will deepen their familiarity with rhythmic and pitch notation*	
3. Non-pop song forms: Blues, sonata, rondo *Students will listen to and write songs using blues, rondo, and sonata song forms* *Students will write their own lead sheets including chord changes and fully-notated melodies*	Write and workshop your own Blues Write and workshop your own Rondo Write and workshop your own Sonata
4. Lyrics: connection to song form, poetry and rhythm in words *Students will work independently to develop a list of qualities that make lyrics appealing to them* *Students will study Iambic Pentameter and write melodies using existing poems written in IP* *Students will spend extensive time doing free-lyric writing in journals* *Students will experiment with lyric-writing using rhyming patterns and excluding rhymes* *Students will write their own songs using an existing poem of their choice*	In-class free-writing Write a song using an existing poem of your choice
5. Completing a Songwriting Portfolio; Editing and polishing work *Students will spend time polishing existing songs and completing a portfolio that includes 4 songs or more meeting several criteria (portfolios will include sheet music at*	Edited material Completed portfolio

minimum, recordings if possible) *Students will prepare one of their songs for performance at a class showcase*	

Extensions: <u>Extensions will only be granted to students in good standing in the course</u> (i.e. students who have consistently met the expectations outlined in the school-wide HOWLs). If a student cannot complete an assignment in time due to illness or another valid conflict, they must provide a written note from a parent/guardian and make arrangements with the course instructor in a timely fashion. If an assignment is handed in late without a student having been granted an extension, the assignment cannot earn a grade of Exemplary. Extensions cannot be granted for performances. **See Missing Rehearsal Form.**

Revisions: <u>Revisions will only be accepted if a student is has turned in a good-faith effort on a project by the assigned deadline and is in good standing in the course</u> (i.e. students who have consistently met the expectations outlined in the school-wide HOWLs). Revisions must be completed and turned in by the assigned deadline. Revisions will not be accepted after the end of the term unless the student and the instructor have made different previous arrangements. <u>Revisions will be required of works that receive a "beginning" grade, and highly recommended to "developing" projects</u>. The final grade for an assignment will be representative of the revised, final draft that a student turns in, and of the progress made since earlier drafts of the work.

Participation: Almost all of the work for this class can be done within the classroom, which means that being present for class is vitally important. Students who are routinely late or absent will miss key instruction but also will lose out on valuable time to workshop and edit material with their peers. Grades for this course will be based on mastery of all of the objectives, many of which require evidence of teamwork and editing, and therefore cannot be completed without being present in class.

Missing Rehearsal or Performance Form

If you know you are unable to attend an after-school rehearsal or performance for the vocal music department, please fill out this form, have it signed by someone at home, and hand it to Mara (hard copies only!) **at least 1 week before a rehearsal,** or **3 weeks before a performance**.

Name_____

Date of Rehearsal or Performance:_____

Reason for missing rehearsal or performance (acceptable reasons include major events that happen once and cannot be moved or difficult-to-schedule appointments, but do NOT include work obligations that can be moved with notice):

_____

_____

Missing rehearsal: I understand that by missing this rehearsal, I am creating more work for all of the other members of my ensemble, and I will take responsibility for learning the material and information that I missed. I will ensure that missing an important rehearsal is something that happens seldom so that I can be a contributing member to the work of my ensemble.

Missing Performance: I understand that by missing this performance I am missing the culminating experience designed for my class and I am altering the ensemble that our class has worked to build. I do not take this lightly and I will continue to be a productive participant in class through the performance. I will take responsibility to complete an alternate assignment that demonstrates my mastery of the skills we learned in class to the same degree a performance would have.

_____   _____
Student Name   Student Signature

_____   _____
Parent/Guardian Name   Parent/Guardian Signature