

**REDLANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
HIGH SCHOOL COURSE APPROVAL REQUEST FORM
GRADES 9-12**

THIS SECTION IS TO BE COMPLETED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE:

School Submitting Information

School: Redlands High School Department Performing Arts
(course offerings will be made available for all schools)

Contact Information

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Course Information

Course Title: Vocal Fundamentals & Techniques Transcript Name (15 Max): Vocal Tech

Length of course: One Year Course Amount of Units: 1
(one semester, two semesters, or one-year course)

Area of Credit: Elective - arts
(How will this course satisfy graduation requirements? Math, English, Elective, etc. Will it roll to a secondary credit if any?)

Teacher Requirements

Credential Required: Yes Additional Training: Credential in Music

Department Review Date: 11/4/24 Dept. Signature: Jesse Diaz
Digitally signed by Jesse Diaz
Date: 2024.11.11 09:49:43 -08'00'

Site Administrator Signature: [Signature] 11/14/24

THIS SECTION IS RESERVED FOR DISTRICT USE:

Assigned Reviewer Section

Reviewed by: Mark Blum Date reviewed: 11/12/2024

- ☐ District section of this form is appropriately completed
- ☐ All required attachments are affixed and appropriate
- ☐ Site signatures current and appropriate

Recommendation: ☒ Approve ☐ Do Not Approve Signature: [Signature]

Course Approval Curriculum Committee

Approved by: majority decision Date approved: 11/20/2024

Date approval/disapproval notification letter sent: 12/3/2024

Signature: [Signature]

Board Submission Date: _____ Board Approved Date: _____

New Course Request: Vocal Fundamentals & Techniques

Jesse Diaz
Director of Choirs
Redlands High School
jesse_diaz@redlands.k12.ca.us

Grades: 9,10,11,12

Length: Full Year

Environment: Classroom-based

Honors: None

Subject: Visual & Performing Arts (F)

Discipline: Vocal Music

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will introduce students to the voice as a musical instrument, emphasizing the development of performance techniques, basic music theory, and ear training. Students will learn to approach singing from a technical perspective that not only enhances their performance abilities but also promotes vocal health by addressing potential issues related to poor technique. Through this course, students will have the opportunity to discover their unique voice while improving breath control, vocal range, tone, belting ability, vocal clarity, and pitch accuracy. The class will be structured to allow students to enroll for multiple years if desired.

PREREQUISITES & CO-REQUISITES & TARGETED STUDENT POPULATION

This class is open to all students, with no prerequisites—just an interest in singing and a desire to learn the fundamentals of producing quality vocal sound. It's particularly suited for students in the performing arts who want to develop additional skills beyond what they might gain in typical choir, band, or drama classes. The course also provides foundational skills that are valuable for students who plan to pursue music or performing arts studies in college. Students may take the class multiple years if they choose. For those wishing to join mid-year in the spring semester, a recommendation from a performing arts department member is required.

COURSE CONTENT

Ear Training (a focus for the entire school year):

Description of topics: Throughout the year the student will develop skills in Ear Training which helps singers to identify pitch, rhythm, melodic structures, and other basic elements in music. The student will learn to sing solfege exercises, helping to strengthen their awareness of how pitch relates to the tonic (or root note) within different scale types or modes. With rhythmic conducting exercises, the student will improve their awareness of beat, time signature and mixed meters, which is an essential part of musical performance in a group setting. With dictation exercises, the student will develop their listening skills by identifying rhythmic patterns and pitch within melodic structures or chords. This is an essential skill for singers which supports performance accuracy in pitch and awareness of key.

What students will produce: The student will learn and perform solfege exercises going back and forth between major, minor, and various scale modes. As a result, the student will strengthen their ability to sing and differentiate major and minor 3rd, 6th, and 7th interval combinations within a scale. Through dictation exercises, the student will develop their ability to hear intervals in relation to the tonic and rhythmic patterns in multiple time signatures.

Unit 1: Voice Pedagogy

Description of topics: In this unit the student will be introduced to the concept of improving vocal tone, stamina, power and understanding basic functions of voice anatomy in music performance through the study of voice. The student will learn to identify each component of the human anatomy used in the singing process such as breath, vocal chord vibration and articulation with the tongue and mouth. The student will acquire an understanding and develop a vocabulary to describe the voice as a musical instrument that is capable to produce a wide range of expression. The student will learn to improve their technique and avoid bad singing habits that can be hazardous to vocal health by learning healthy practice routines for maintaining and strengthening their voice.

What students produce: The student will demonstrate the singing process with song and their mastery of warmup techniques with notated exercises given to by the teacher. During this process the student will exemplify the use of breath, tongue, and mouth to affect dynamics, tone, and articulation.

Unit 2: Breath Control

Description of topics: In this unit the student will learn techniques that help to improve breath control during the singing process. The student will learn to adjust their posture to maximize lung capacity, airflow and pitch control while studying the respiratory mechanism and throat muscle functions. Through the process of comparing vocalization with poor posture vs. good posture, the student can feel the effects of restricted singing function for themselves. The

student will learn strengthening exercises for singers that support breath control and coordination for improved vocal performance. Exercises in breath observation, abdominal coordination and extending breath will help to support the student's singing ability. The student will also learn to differentiate the support and expansion of the chest area vs. the abdominal area for maximized air intake.

What students produce: The student will demonstrate how singing with poor posture restricts air flow, alters pitch control, and produces muscle tension. Following the demonstration of poor posture, the student will adjust their posture to show improved lung capacity and released muscle tension, producing longer sustained delivery, improved pitch, and overall sound. Through this process the student will feel the benefits of proper alignment, becoming more familiar with adjusting for the strengthening and execution of good vocal technique.

Unit 3: The Voice Box

Description of topics: This unit covers the functions of the larynx during the singing process. It is during this unit where the student will learn to differentiate phonation from the articulation of vowels consonants using the mouth and tongue. The student will discover the anatomical parts, such as the vocal folds and supporting muscle groups, that control or manipulate volume and vocal pitch. Furthermore, the student will discover techniques to initiate tone by controlling the passage of air through the larynx with the closing and opening of the vocal folds. By learning how to produce a "glottal attack", "breathy onsets" and "coordinated onsets", the student will not only learn to avoid strain on the larynx, but also learn various ways to initiate tone.

What students produce: Through vocal performance, the student will demonstrate different ways to initiate vocal tone through glottal attack and breathy onsets. The student will demonstrate use of the letter H sound placed before words as an example of a breathy onset or coordinated onset. The student will showcase their mastery of coordinated onsets, performing music of a chosen vocal melody.

Unit 4: Vocal Tone

Description of topics: In this unit the student will observe and learn how the larynx, mouth, chest, and nasal cavity all work together in contributing to vocal tone during the singing process. By changing the shape and tongue placement, the student will learn to control vocal tone with the mouth. As an extension of Unit 3, the student will learn to combine the manipulation of the larynx with the mouth and resonant chambers to produce vocal tone. The student will discover and learn to develop their resonant tone, which is a characteristic of their natural resonant chambers in the chest, throat, mouth, and nasal cavity. The student will also learn to observe and control tone placement, which directs resonance of the voice to specific areas of the chest, throat, and nasal cavities.

What the students produce: Through a series of notated vocal exercises, the student will demonstrate the difference in tone placement, going from the back of the throat to the front of

the mouth, by singing “Mee-yah” for each pitch on the musical staff. The student will describe tone placement in their own words, because of changing shape and position of the mouth, tongue and other muscles used during the singing process. Through this process, the student will become more familiar with their resonant tone and their ability to manipulate vocal tone and resonant placement.

Unit 5: Vocal Register, Range and Blending

Description of topics: This unit covers the singer’s ability to produce pitch across multiple octaves and create smooth transitions between the use of different muscle group functions, otherwise known as “chest” and “head” voice. The student will learn to discover their own natural vocal register, which is the ability to sing a consecutive series of notes with similar tone and muscle action. The student will learn to differentiate natural vocal register and ways to increase their range of vocal pitch. The student will learn to differentiate “chest” and “head” voice and explain the use of different muscle groups used during the singing process to produce certain high or low notes. With practice exercises, the student will learn “passaggio” blending techniques used to smoothen the transition of chest to head voice when attempting to sing melodic phrases that span multiple octaves. As a result, the student will improve their vocal range in pitch and develop a more consistent and controlled sound.

What students will produce: The student will demonstrate the ability to perform vocal exercises that expand their range by singing a series of arpeggiated chords or scales that gradually increase (or decrease) on the starting pitch by a whole step each time. This is like stretching muscle to become more flexible; in this case, the voice becomes stronger and vocal range gradually improves.

Unit 6: Singing Diction

Description of topics: In this unit the student will develop techniques to improve the enunciation of words during the singing process. The student will learn to modify their enunciation to compensate for sustained notes and musical accents, which are absent in non-musical dialogue. Singing diction sometimes requires the modification of vowels to sustain notes in a high register improve delivery of pitch and rhythm. This unit will cover the difference between formal and informal diction, connecting the applications to contemporary and traditional or classical singing styles. With the study of formal diction in classical music, the student will learn to roll and flip the pronunciation of R’s. The student will observe how microphone design and technique affect singing diction, which is essential to developing microphone technique and performance skills.

What students will produce: Through the study and observation of classically trained vocalists and contemporary crossover, the student will point out the use of rolled and flipped R’s in vocal performance. The student will demonstrate vocal diction with their knowledge of rolled and flipped R’s, with performance in a musical setting.

Unit 7: Belting

Description of topics: In this unit the student will learn to sing loud and long sustained notes, known as vocal belting. It is important for the student to be informed of proper belting techniques early in the development of their singing voice. This helps to avoid vocal damage when attempting to sing an emotionally charged song or mimic an artist the student is inspired by. Singers who study proper belting technique learn to avoid vocal damage by reducing strain on the throat muscles, control the release of air, place the voice forward in the mask and develop stamina. The student will learn to differentiate high note reaching, shouting, and other short vocal bursts from the relaxed, open, and sustained sound of belting. The student will observe and learn to belt with and without vibrato.

What students will produce: The student will showcase their ability to sing in the mask, which is an essential part of learning proper belting technique. With notated vocal exercises using the word "Nay", the student will demonstrate vocal placement. With proper vocal placement, relaxed vocal muscles and good posture, the student will demonstrate their ability to belt.

COURSE MATERIALS

Proposed Textbooks:

1. The Contemporary Singer: Elements of Vocal Technique, Peckman, Berlee, 2010
2. Anatomy of the Voice: An Illustrated Guide for Singers, Vocal Coaches, and Speech Therapists, Theodore Dimon Jr., North Atlantic Books, 2018

Online Lessons/Subscription from: <https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/>

- Newline and 1 to 1 Chromebooks would be used to access this learning tool

Description of how this course will emphasize application, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills:

The course emphasizes higher order thinking through hands-on application of vocal techniques, ear training, and music theory concepts. Students engage in problem-solving as they learn to identify and correct vocal issues, such as improving breath control, vocal range, and tone. Higher-order thinking is also promoted through units that require students to analyze and apply anatomical knowledge (e.g., how the vocal folds function) to enhance vocal performance while avoiding strain. Ear training and solfege exercises support application skills by helping students learn pitch and rhythm recognition, critical for adapting to various musical contexts.

Description of instructional strategies to address diverse learner needs:

Instructional strategies in this course include varied, incremental exercises that allow students to progress at their own pace and revisit core techniques as needed. For example, posture and breathing exercises are tailored to meet individual student needs, allowing for personalized adjustments. Instructional scaffolding—such as gradual progression in complexity with solfege exercises—enables students of different levels to succeed. For diverse learners, hands-on demonstrations, peer feedback, and individualized teacher support are incorporated to accommodate different learning styles.

Description or examples of assessments appropriate for this course:

Assessments include performance-based tasks that measure student mastery of vocal techniques and music theory, culminating in a recital at the end of each semester to showcase their progress and skills learned in class. Throughout the semester, students engage in solfege and rhythmic dictation exercises to demonstrate their understanding of pitch and rhythm. Other assessments involve demonstrations of breathing control and tone placement, where students showcase their ability to adjust posture, vocal tone, and pitch. Formative assessments also include ongoing teacher feedback on posture, vocal tone, and vocal placement, helping students make improvements leading up to the semester-end recital.

Description or examples of hands-on activities or labs:

Activities in this course include exercises for voice and breath control, such as “Mee-yah” vocal tone placement and explorations of the larynx's function. Students participate in posture comparison exercises, where they physically experience the differences between restricted and unrestricted airflow to understand its impact on vocal quality. They also work on diction through practice in enunciating with sustained notes and experimenting with different vocal registers, allowing them to explore both formal and informal singing styles. Each semester culminates in a recital, providing students with an opportunity to apply these techniques in a performance setting and showcase the vocal skills and musical concepts they've developed.

Multi-year course differentiation:

If students wish to take the course a second, third, or even fourth time to continue building their knowledge of advanced vocal techniques, each year will allow for a deepening of skills. In the first year, the emphasis is on establishing the basics of vocal health, breath control, and tonal accuracy. In subsequent years, students' progress to more advanced techniques, such as mastering complex rhythmic patterns and expanding their vocal range. Each year would introduce new challenges in ear training, diction, and vocal placement, enabling students to build on their prior knowledge and achieve a progressively sophisticated mastery of vocal techniques.