

August 16, 2013

Dear Eighth Graders:



In Music Appreciation this year we will be studying four periods of Music History (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Twentieth Century). The most important part of our work for the year is the music itself. I could talk about it all year and you could read about it all year, but unless you spend some time listening to the music, much of what we do in class would be wasted. In view of that, the majority of your homework will be listening to music. ***You will be assigned to listen to 30-40 minutes of music a week for each week we spend on a unit.*** The listening should be done in a fairly quiet place where the music is the main source of concentration. (You may not do your listening while you are watching television or playing computer/video games.) For each unit I will give you a list of compositions and composers that you may listen to. I will also specify certain composers or pieces that **MUST** be included in your listening choices. Any minutes you have left to complete after you have listened to the required pieces may be selected from any composer on the list. Any composition or composer not listed must be approved by me before it will be counted. For each unit you will also turn in a listening evaluation of certain of the required listening pieces.

Since the purpose of the listening is to acquaint you with the sound and the style of a particular period of music, I would ask that you listen to professional recordings (not your little sister--or even you--practicing 30 minutes of Bach on the piano!) I would also request that you not choose performances such as "Switched on Bach" or "The Classical Jukebox" or other such "updated" or "nature sounds added" versions of the compositions. While these may be enjoyable to listen to, in the context of our lessons they will confuse your ear. You would be listening to arrangements and electronic sounds not representative of the period of time we are studying. There will be a listening section on the test at the end of each unit and the more "authentic" your listening examples have been, the better you will be able to recognize the style of the musical period we are studying.

By now you are wondering how you are going to complete the assignments. (1) You may use recordings available at home. (2) You may check out items from the public library. (Greenville County Library has a good selection and the branch libraries can usually get recordings from the other libraries within a few days.) (3) There are a limited number of CDs available for you to check out of the Junior High library. (4) A family member with a Bob Jones University ID can use the Music Library in the Gustafson Fine Arts Center to check out CDs for you. (5) I will be presenting in class an approved online way to get your listening done. (6) If none of the above options will work for you, please see me.

Do not listen to music you find on the internet or music loaded onto an iPod or other listening device if you are unable to find the information needed to fill out the listening sheet (name of piece, composer, performing group and length of piece). We will talk more about this in class.

For all of your listening and your evaluations you will fill out a form which I will give you in class. Extra forms are always available in the classroom or online on the class page. For each composition you will write down the name of the piece, the composer, the performing group, and the length of time you listened to the piece. Do not confuse the **length of the piece** with the **length of time you listened to it**--especially if you listened to only half of the

piece. Be honest. If you left the room for 20 minutes, do not count that in the amount of time you listened! If you find something you like, you may listen to it twice and count it as listening twice. **Please do not list any piece more than twice.** Try to get some variety by listening to pieces you have heard before and some that are brand new to you. You may discover something you really like. Just a word of warning – there are recordings available that take one song (Canon in D by Pachelbel, for example) and create an hour-long CD from various “arrangements” of the same piece sometimes adding nature sounds that obviously were not in the original composition. (The CD called “Forever by the Sea” is all variations of Canon in D.) If you turn in an hour of listening for a piece that is only about 5 minutes in length, I will not count it. Be aware of what you are listening to. While you may listen to any piece twice and count it for your listening, you may not count fifteen different arrangements of the same piece as fifteen different songs. Notice that the CD may list different names for each of the variations leading you to believe you are listening to different songs. (I happen to know that Pachelbel never wrote a song called “In a Protected Cove” as is listed on the CD “Forever by the Sea.”) If you have any questions, please ask.

For class you will need a 1-inch three-ring notebook for all of your music papers. You will also need a folder with brads and a front pocket for your listening homework. You will turn in the folder every time your listening is due. You will be expected to keep all of your music papers (notes, worksheets, quizzes, etc.) in the three-ring notebook. Your grade for each unit will be based on the notebook (or class notes), tests, quizzes, and listening, with the tests and the listening each being approximately one-third of your grade. I will accept more than the required amount of listening and will count it as extra credit up to a specified amount for each unit. I will not count any listening as extra credit, **if the extra credit comes in late.** The only way extra listening will count as extra credit is if it comes in on time.

You may also earn extra credit points by attending concerts and musical Artist Series programs. Performing in a concert or recital does not earn you extra points because you are fulfilling the requirements of another class for that performance. Please keep the printed program from the performance you attend, have your parents sign it or write a note indicating that you attended, and turn in the signed program/note to me. I reserve the right to decide if the performance is worthy of points and how many points it earns.

In addition, you will be given a CD of **excerpts** from pieces we will be studying in class. These examples, each less than a minute in length, will appear on listening tests at the end of each unit. You should become familiar with the name and composer of each composition. At the end of the first unit you will be responsible for the Baroque examples only, but on each test thereafter, the units become cumulative. The Baroque and Classical examples will appear on the test at the end of the second unit and so forth. **Listening to this CD does not count toward your listening homework.** This is solely to help you prepare for the listening section of the test. You may take the CD home and leave it there. You do not need to bring it to class.

You will have Music Appreciation on Wednesday and Friday. Your grades will be posted online at least once a week. If you have any questions about your grade at any time, please see me. I'm sure you will find that the listening will become an enjoyable assignment in which all of your family can participate.

Looking forward to a great year,
Mrs. Jantz