

Friends School Haverford

Music Curriculum Overview

The Friends School Haverford Music Curriculum is designed to encourage students to become skillful, enthusiastic music makers. Nursery rhymes, poetry, children's literature, folksongs, and multicultural music are at the core of musical experiences throughout the grades. Music in different tonalities and meters are explored through a variety of activities such as singing, dancing, listening and playing instruments. Material relating to other subjects is also sometimes incorporated into the classes. Each week, a musical composer is chosen and classes begin and end with quiet music listening time.

Pre-School, Pre-Kindergarten

Preschoolers and Pre-kindergartners have two 30-minute music classes each week in their classrooms. The basic elements of each class include the following: experimenting with different vocal sounds, vocal imitation and improvisation, singing simple songs and chanting simple chants or rhymes, awareness of their bodies and the different ways they can move, steady beat with and without un-pitched percussion instruments, and finger plays.

Kindergarten

Kindergartners have two 30-minute music classes each week in the music room. Students continue exploring vocal sounds, movement elements, steady beat, singing, chanting, and playing un-pitched and pitched instruments. They learn to pick out letters to spell out the names of famous composers and the first experiences of reading and writing musical notation are also introduced.

First Grade

First graders have two 30-minute music classes each week in the music room. Students are encouraged to begin associating symbols with sounds and to differentiate tonal relationships in order to sing in tune. Percussion instruments provide the opportunity to create music spontaneously in Pentatonic scales without fear of playing "wrong notes". First graders are also introduced to the many different instruments of the orchestra.

Second Grade

Second graders have two 30-minute music classes each week in the music room. The repertoire of folk music and rounds is extended as students are introduced to singing songs of many verses by following simple vocal sheet music. Students learn rhythm patterns through a simple system of syllables assigned to note values and they begin sight-singing simple melodies based on melodic patterns. Second grade students also review the instruments of the orchestra.

Third Grade

Third graders have two 30-minute music classes each week in the music room. Students learn to play the soprano recorder by ear and by traditional note reading. Music reading and writing skills continue to be developed both melodically and rhythmically. They continue creative movement activities, folk dancing, and sight-singing. Third graders also learn "Fifty Nifty United States" for their State Float Parade.

Fourth Grade

Fourth graders have two 40-minute classes each week in the music room. Students continue developing their music literacy through composition, reading music, and melodic and rhythmic dictation. Students continue to build on their sight-singing skills by learning to recognize melodic intervals and rhythmic values. Fourth graders will be learning many folk songs, particularly songs from Pennsylvania and the Pine Barrens.

Fifth Grade

Fifth graders have two 40-minute classes each week in the music room. Skill building to assure musical independence and composition is the most important work for fifth graders. Students will continue being able to recognize familiar patterns in music in different keys and meters. Creative movement and folk dances with more complex patterns are introduced. Music history also takes a more important role.

Sixth Grade

Sixth graders have two 40-minute classes each week in the music room. Students continue with music history and honing their skills to assure musical independence. Basic musical concepts are taught through more challenging material. Creating music and movement in small groups and through various means of performance is especially valuable at this level. Sixth graders will be performing with Tone Chimes this year and will be learning about music and instruments from the Silk Road. They will also be creating a timeline of composers in the classroom and writing a children's book to teach music concepts to young children.

Chorus

Fourth, Fifth and Sixth graders will meet once a week for chorus. Chorus will always begin with a vocal and body warm up. Students will build on their sight-singing skills and ability to recognize melodic intervals and rhythmic values. Special attention will also be drawn to diction. Students will learn a few selections to be performed at the Spring Concert.

Music Methods/Theories Used

Edwin E. Gordon – Gordon believes that music is learned in the same way that a language is learned. Children interact with language first by listening and experimenting with it with no expectation for correctness. Eventually, children develop solid listening and, eventually, speaking vocabularies. Only after they can already understand spoken language and speak themselves do they learn to read and write. He believes music learning should parallel this learning process.

Rudolf Laban – Laban believed that every time we move we exert effort in interacting combination of Time, Weight, Space, and Flow. Time exists as sustained or quick durations; weight as strong or gentle sensations, space as direct or indirect in focus; and flow as free or bound bodily tension.

Phyllis Weikart – Weikart is one of the country's leading authorities on movement-based active learning and recreational folk dance. She is a researcher, curriculum developer, workshop leader, choreographer, and promoter of high-quality international folk dance recordings.

Carl Orff – Orff believed that teaching music involved four media: "singing, saying, dancing and playing". Playing often refers to both the playing of instruments and also the "fun/safe" atmosphere of creating and sharing generally associated with an Orff classroom.

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