

Lyrica and Bella Voce Students and Parents,

The following packet contains an explanation of the grading policy, class rules, expected rehearsal behavior policy, and the choir fee. Additional materials include the calendar, commitment agreement, field trip forms, some information on scrip, and a Music Booster membership flyer. The rest of this letter will expand on some of the points found in these documents.

This year, mandatory choir trips will be more extensive, and there will not be a voluntary choir tour. Rather than paying for each trip individually, students will pay one fee of \$100 to cover all trips and class expenses. Please see the page "The Choir Fee" for a breakdown of these expenses, as well as payment plan and financial aid information.

Each student is assigned a number for music, and s/he is financially responsible for that music. See Dr. Morton immediately if you have damaged or lost your music.

In the first few weeks of school we will order concert apparel for new singers. Ladies' Dresses cost \$80. A 'dress exchange' sheet is posted in the choir room for past singers to advertise their dresses for sale at a reduced rate. Guys suits are \$110. If a male singer already has a black suit, he must bring it to school and show it to Dr. Morton before Friday September 12th to get it approved for use. New singers ordering concert attire will need to pay by September 12th.

Any singer who does not yet have a choir T-shirt or sweatshirt needs to get one. We will wear these traveling to Fresno, in the warm-up for exchange concerts, and in performances by the holiday choir for those singers who choose to participate in that. T-shirts are \$10 and sweatshirts are \$25.

To offset the cost of concert apparel and trips, students can accumulate money in their account with the music boosters. Money can be earned for this account using scrip or other fundraising activities. An information sheet on scrip and an order form are included.

The calendar and general information will be posted on School Loop once the district sets it up, and at the choir website: <http://www.homesteadchoir.info>. The latter will generally be more comprehensive and up to date. School Loop will have information to direct you to the Homestead choir web page if you have any difficulties.

The field trip permission form, field trip behavior agreement, and medical information form are required for any off campus activity such as the retreat and festivals. Please mark your calendar at home with the events listed. These forms, along with the choir fee and the signed commitment agreement, are to be given to Dr. Morton by Friday, September 5th.

Please feel free to contact me by email or phone. I look forward to meeting you and would gladly block out some time if you would like to schedule a meeting to discuss the program or simply to meet me.

Sincerely,

Jeff Morton
Choir Director
Homestead High School
408-522-2554 (office)
jeff_morton@fuhsd.org

FORMS TO RETURN
by Friday September 5th

field trip permission
field trip behavior agreement
medical information form
commitment agreement
\$100 choir fee or first payment

New Concert Attire Fee
due by September 12th

Choir Grade
2008-2009

The choir grade uses a total point system. Below are details on some of the categories and assignments.

Readiness check – 5pts. At the beginning of each class and after breaks, Dr. Morton will check to see that each student is in his or her seat/riser location with binder and a pencil, and that any other materials are stored against a wall. Should a student have difficulties maintaining any of these during the class period, they will lose points: for example, if they change seats/position without permission, or take out an electronic device.

Theory worksheets and lyric worksheets – 5pts per sheet. There will be many assignments to systematically improve your music reading ability and general music literacy. Students must keep all work, even if already assessed, and turn in the entire grading period packet during the last week of the 6 weeks.

Written quizzes – 5-10 pts. Quizzes will be given most class periods, and can cover anything that has been mastered thus far in class including lyrics of memorized songs, theory material covered in the packets, and in some cases, theory applied to music we are learning.

Performance quizzes – 5-20 pts. Students will demonstrate their progress in performance quizzes. Depending upon the quiz, students may be asked to perform individually, in small groups, in mixed groups, or as an entire section. Students who are unhappy with their performance may try again on their own time and possibly in a modified group configuration at the discretion of Dr. Morton.

Papers and Projects – 10-50pts. Students will also have several written assignments such as research papers on pieces, emotion/image charts for songs, reflections on the meaning of pieces that we sing, and observation reports of performances by ourselves or other groups.

Theory Unit Tests – 20-100 pts. At the end of units, students will take written and performance tests over material covered in the theory worksheets. Each singer will develop at his or her own speed, however, some minimal standards will be required.

Concerts and events– 20-100pts. Attendance is mandatory. Non-attendance will result in a zero except in cases of sudden and extreme illness or previous arrangement with Dr. Morton. Students who miss concerts or events for an excused reason will have to do alternative assignments, such as ear-training work, recording their part for the entire concert and turning in the recording, or assisting the music program with a concert in which you do not perform. The concert schedule is attached, so let Dr. Morton know of any conflicts within the first 3 weeks of school.

Mandatory tutorials – 10pts. Students can miss 1 tutorial in every 6 that are mandatory. Missing more will deduct 5 points to a maximum of 10. Students may do make-up work for excused tutorial absences upon arrangement with Dr. Morton. Concert warm-up counts as a tutorial in this regard.

As much of the work in choir is a collaborative effort, all attendance is critical. Students with unexcused absences will not be able to make up missed work. Students with excused absences will be required to do extra work on their own time to make up any missed points, especially readiness checks and performance quizzes. Readiness checks are, in part, participation records.

CHOIR CLASSROOM RULES

1. Be on time.
2. Have all class materials.
3. NO electronic devices or materials for other classes.
4. NO Food and drink, other than water.

When the bell rings, students are to be in their assigned seats with their binder and a pencil. Backpacks and other items must be against a wall. Binders must contain all music and class materials. Non-choir materials, such as electronic devices or materials for other classes, must be against the wall. All of these should remain true throughout the class period.

Consequences.

Most classes will begin with a 5 point READINESS CHECK which involves being in your seat or riser spot with a pencil and class materials and no other materials. Generally, missing any 1 component is 3 points off, any 2 is all points off.

Non-choir materials will be confiscated 1) for a class period the first time 2) for 24 hours the second time, and 3) for parent pickup subsequent times.

TARDY POLICY

At the bell, and at the end of any class break, the door will be closed and students must sit in the hall until Dr. Morton determines a time when it will be the least disruptive to let them in. If unexcused, students will receive no credit for the readiness check or missed graded work. Any makeup for missed graded work will be on the student's own time at Dr. Morton's discretion.

Dr. Morton will follow the school discipline policy regarding tardies and unexcused absences. At the first tardy or unexcused absence, Dr. Morton will meet with the student and call his/her parent. At the second and third tardy, the student will serve a teacher detention. After the third tardy, the student will be referred to the dean, receive a school detention, and may be removed from the class if tardies continue to be a problem. Unexcused absence will be referred to the deans who quickly involve truant officers.

BATHROOM POLICY

Time spent out of class to use the restroom will be recorded. Students have to put in an equivalent amount of their own time doing choir room chores, such as at lunch, after school, or before school. Students who fail to make up such time within a week will be referred to the deans for a school detention.

If an official class break is taken, students may go to the bathroom but must return to the choir room by the specified time. At the specified time, Dr. Morton will lock the door and late students are to remain seated outside the door until Dr. Morton determines an undistruptive time to let them in. Such time will be treated the same as bathroom time, though excessive lateness from breaks may result in post-break readiness checks or quizzes, or elimination of future class breaks altogether.

EXPECTED REHEARSAL BEHAVIOR

If effective rehearsal procedures are mastered, students can learn music faster and more thoroughly, resulting in a deeper aesthetic experience. Without it, the results are tainted because we know that we fell short of our potential. Rehearsing a passage of music involves the following process:

- 1) Select 1-3 aesthetic goals for the passage
- 2) applying a specific strategy to meet those goals, sing the passage
- 3) evaluate the result
- 4) repeat as needed, adjusting the strategy as needed
- 5) address any other aesthetic goals that may arise, or move on to another passage

This process has to flow quickly and uninterrupted. While the specific class rules help frame rehearsal behavior, there is far more involved. There are thousands of things that students can do to disrupt rehearsal procedure. Upon disruption, we will stop singing, even if it sounds really good, and focus on HOW TO REHEARSE. Students who frequently disrupt rehearsals will be addressed individually, will lose participation points, and may be subjected to further discipline actions.

Rehearsing is hard work. Dr. Morton will divide up class time so that students are not taxed for 90 minutes straight. Part of learning to rehearse is learning how to recognize different types of breaks from rehearsing, and then learning to shift between behaviors required at different times. Full breaks last between 5 and 10 minutes, and students should act in ways that allow them to refocus at the end of the break. Between songs, we have small breaks- up to 2 minutes long, where students can talk with their neighbor. Worksheet time and other activities, while requiring focused behavior, is different than rehearsing and thereby gives students a break from the hard work of rehearsing.

At some points, Dr. Morton will focus on another section. You are still accountable to not disrupt the rehearsal. At these times, you may 1) practice your own part in your head (perhaps just focusing on words and rhythm or memorizing); 2) imagine your part against the part being rehearsed so that you know how they fit together; 3) learn the other part, without singing aloud; 4) passively absorb the other part while you take a mental break.

Effective rehearsing will happen naturally if student follow this guideline:

NEVER

interfere with the learning of others

AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

engage in learning yourself

Bella Voce and Lyrica Schedule 2008-2009

Required Events

9/12 (Fri) – LYRICA ONLY : Team-building retreat at Steven’s Creek County Park-
afternoon through dinner.

9/19 (Fri) – BELLA VOCE ONLY : Team-building retreat at Steven’s Creek County Park-
afternoon through dinner.

10/1 (Weds) – “In House” concert at HHS. From 3:30-4:30, the 4 homestead choirs will
perform for each other and guests.

10/24 (Fri) - CSU-Fresno Choral Festival. This is an all day event. Students will miss all
classes this day. We will take a charter bus to Fresno to participate in the festival, and eat
dinner together on the way home.

--- Exchange concert with Cupertino HS—date TBA

12/10 (Weds) – Winter Concert at HHS. Students show up at 5:45pm, concert begins at 7:30.

2/27 (Fri) – San Jose State University Choral Festival. Students will miss classes after lunch.
We will go to the festival as a group in a bus.

3/5 (Thu) – Major Works Concert at HHS. Call at 5:30, concerts at 6:30 and 8pm.

5/9 (Sat) – CMEA Choir Festival. This event will be at least a half-day and will be held at the
McAfee Auditorium at Saratoga High School. Students must provide their own
transportation.

5/21th (Thurs) –Spring Concert at HHS. Students show up at 5:45pm, concert begins at 7:30.

6/8 (Mon) – Baccalaureate. Both choirs will perform at Baccalaureate this year. Show up at
5:30, ceremony begins at 7.

Optional Events

Honor Choir:

9/8 (Mon) – application to Dr. Morton

9/27 (Sat) - audition at Saratoga HS at your assigned time. (Keep the day available)

11/20-22 (Thurs-Sat) – honor choir in San Francisco.

Winter Holiday Choir:

Ask Dr. Morton for more information and a separate calendar in early November. This group
will learn holiday songs and perform at school and in the community during the holiday
season. Open to all students by audition.

Commitment Agreement
Choir

I understand that I must obtain appropriate concert attire, either purchased through school or by other arrangement. I have marked the required dates in my calendar and have noted any conflicts below. If conflicts arise at a later time, I will notify Dr. Morton at the earliest opportunity; I will attempt to fulfill my choir commitments to the best of my ability; and I understand that if I must miss a required event due to an unavoidable conflict, I must arrange an alternative assignment to replace the zero in my grade.

Student Name (please print): _____

Signature of student: _____ Date _____

Parent Name (please print): _____

Signature of parent: _____ Date _____

List any schedule conflicts here:

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN

BY FRIDAY, September 5TH

**To Dr. Morton or the box marked "MRS. FELTMAN'S FILE BOX"
located in Dr. Morton's Office**

Scrip: How to make money for trips

HHS Music Boosters have a wonderful accounting system. Each student has an account, and money that they raise is placed in that account. It remains there for them to use for music department trips and supplies as long as they are at Homestead. They can even transfer it to younger siblings when they graduate.

SCRIP is an easy way to begin accumulating money in you account. E-Scrip makes money without even trying. Go to <http://www.escrip.com/> and register for Homestead High School Music Booster, which is # 137634941. (it is listed under Sunnyvale, not Cupertino). What happens is that you register your Safeway card, Macy's Card, Credit Card, etc. Then whenever you use those cards, the vendor donates a certain percentage of the purchase to your school account. It is the vendors way of trying to get you to shop with them more. To make even more money, you can purchase scrip cards, often called paper scrip. These look like gift cards and operate the same way- you swipe the magnetic strip and money is deducted; if you buy a \$20 card, you can spend \$20 at that store. The catch is that the vendor gives you money into your scrip account when you do this. Again, it is their way of marketing- getting you into their store, getting you to buy cards and give them to friends etc. For more on scrip or to order scrip cards (paper scrip) email Mary Mansir at mfmansir@sbcglobal.net.

The Choir FEE

Bella Voce and Lyrica will each have the following: a retreat, 4 school concerts, 1 exchange concert, 3 off campus festivals, guest clinicians and/or voice instructors. All of these are required for the class, and many cost money. Rather than paying separately with each event, this year, students are asked to pay \$100 for all events. Payment plans are available, and students in particular need should speak with Dr. Morton to request financial assistance. Please pay by check made out to HHSMB (Homestead High School Music Boosters) and write "choir student fee" in the memo.

The \$100 fee is used as follows:

\$20	3 Festival entry fees
\$20	Food at Oct 1 concert, retreats, and Fresno trip
\$50	Transportation for Fresno and San Jose festivals
\$10	guests (accompanist, voice instructor, clinicians)

In actuality, many of these costs are more than this, and the choir program has further costs such as music and supplies. Other expenses include large purchases such as the stage piano, the sound shells, the risers. Money raised through donations at the concerts, through music boosters, and through other sources provides the remaining needs for our program. You are encouraged to give more by joining the Music Boosters. Membership is voluntary. The basic family membership costs \$40. See the attached flyer for more information.

All students may elect for the following payment plan:

\$25 Friday, September 5th
\$75 Friday, October 17th (before the trip to Fresno).

Students needing a different payment plan or financial assistance should contact Dr. Morton.