



# MARCE HERZ

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

BEGINNING, INTERMEDIATE, AND ADVANCED

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Kevin Ames, Orchestra Director

Last syllabus edit: August 13, 2020

kames@washoeschools.net

[www.washoeschools.net/HerzOrchestra](http://www.washoeschools.net/HerzOrchestra)

## **The Courses**

**Beginning Orchestra** consists of 6th graders who are usually learning an instrument for the first time. Students will learn the basics of playing the instrument (violin, viola, cello, bass), reading music notation, playing in a group setting, and performing as musicians. **Prerequisite:** None

**Textbook:** Essential Elements for Strings by Michael Allen, Pamela Tellejohn Hayes, and Robert Gillespie

**Intermediate Orchestra** is open to 7th graders playing their primary instruments (whether returning or beginning) and 8th graders playing either their primary or secondary instrument. 8th graders wishing to play a secondary instrument must discuss their plans with Mr. Ames at the end of their 7th grade year. **Prerequisite:** None

**Textbook:** Sound Innovations Book 1 by Bob Phillips, Peter Boonshaft, and Robert Sheldon

**Advanced Orchestra** is open to 8th graders playing their primary instruments.

**Prerequisite:** Successful completion of Intermediate Orchestra, equivalent, or permission from Mr. Ames based on audition.

**Textbook:** Sound Innovations Book 2 by Bob Phillips, Peter Boonshaft, and Robert Sheldon

## **Classroom Rules & Consequence**

All Herz MS rules apply at all times in the orchestra room. The specific orchestra rules are:

1. Absolutely NO TALKING or PLAYING when the teacher is working.
2. All music making stops INSTANTLY when the teacher gives the signal.
3. Remain seated at all times.
4. Only touch what is yours.
5. No electronics, food, drinks, or gum.

Consequences will follow Herz MS behavior plan guidelines. The orchestra classroom and rehearsal is a place of mutual respect, and cannot succeed without prioritizing this idea. Depending on the rule broken and severity, students' learning responsibility grade will be reduced, parents will be contacted, and administration will be notified and involved in resolving issues. My goal is to lead rehearsals and treat students as fellow musicians—with respect and cooperation in mind.

## **Communication**

Infinite Campus is the primary mode of communication used by Mr. Ames throughout the year. Please make sure your contact information is correct in Infinite Campus and your settings indicate you can receive emails from Herz MS teachers.

Teacher email is checked daily, and is the best means of contact for parents to reach Mr. Ames. Email: [kames@washoeschools.net](mailto:kames@washoeschools.net)

## **Covid Precautions**

Teaching orchestra during Covid-19 does bring some necessary precautions to our classroom. We will be following all school rules during this time to ensure safety. This includes distanced chairs in our classroom setup, masks being required at all times, and easy access to hand sanitizer, soap and wash station (in the room). The teacher will not be walking around the room to assist students. Tuning instruments (touching each instrument in the class) will not happen, so students will be taught to tune their own instrument as early as possible. At times that the teacher does have to help the student, we will follow a procedure to be sanitary and clean, washing hands before and after touching the instrument.

## **Orchestra Academic Grades**

**Playing Tests** – You will perform most playing quizzes/tests in front of the class. This is a Nevada Fine Arts Standard so there will be no exceptions. If you refuse to play, your grade will be 0% for that quiz/test.

**Reading Tests** – These will test a variety of aspects of basic music theory. This includes identifying pitch, writing music notation, and rhythmic ideas. Reading tests can be redone for full credit, but only within the grading quarter of the assignment. These will sometimes be timed tests, as musicians must be able to be fluent in these ideas. If the student's name is not on the assignment, it will not be graded.

**Concert/Rehearsal Attendance** – Part of your grade will be based on your attendance and participation in all orchestra concerts/performances and after school rehearsals. Some performances may require an after-school rehearsal, mostly depending on combined ensembles as part of a performance. Concert grades are based on whether or not you signed and were wearing the appropriate concert uniform. If you forget to sign in, you will need to see Mr. Ames during office hours to complete an alternate assignment proving you attended the concert. Pictures and videos of you at the concert do not qualify as the alternate assignment. If you need to miss a concert, you must submit the "Herz Music Department Excused Absence & Alternate Assignment Request Form" two weeks prior to the concert.

**Participation**—this means that you quickly set up your chair and music stand (including music, pencil, and planner), had your instrument, tuned it, warmed up, and played when you were supposed to play.

**Home practice** In order to be successful on orchestra assessments, you must practice your instrument at home. Consider home practice your orchestra homework. All the things covered in class should be practiced at home. This might take you 15 minutes or 30 minutes depending on how focused you are in your practice. Here are the expectations:

- 6th Grade – 15 minutes daily
- 7th grade – 20 minutes daily
- 8th grade – 25 minutes daily

**Instrument Policy**—if you forget your instrument for class, you will lose participation points for that day. You can make this up by practicing in the orchestra room, during lunch or after school (schedule with Mr. Ames). If your instrument is in the repair shop for more than one class period, you will need to make up class time in the same way. Tell the store you need your instrument fixed as soon as possible so your grade is not impacted.

## **Instruments**

School Instrument Rentals are available for a \$50 per year rental fee to families. Every effort will be made to ensure ALL 6th grade students receive a school instrument as music is a WCSD mandated class for 6th grade. Only 7th-8th grade students who qualify according to financial need will receive a school instrument. If there are any instruments left after distribution to these families, they will be available to other families. All bass players will receive a school instrument rental.

Instrument rentals will include instrument, bow, case, and rosin.

Violins/Violas will be able to put their instruments on their assigned shelves during the school day. Violins/violas must take their instruments home every day. No instruments are to be left in the orchestra room overnight.

Cellos will be assigned a school instrument to use during class. Personal cellos are to be kept at home for practice. Home cellos must be brought to school no later than the Monday morning of a concert week and taken home immediately after concert. You will earn a lower grade if you do not bring your home cello to school on the required Mondays.

Basses will be assigned a school instrument to use during class and one for home practice. Home basses must be brought to school no later than the Monday morning of a concert week and taken home immediately after concert. You will earn a lower grade if you do not bring your home bass to school on the required Mondays.

Your name should be on EVERY item you own. Herz is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal instruments/supplies.

During Covid-19, distance learners will be allowed to rent school instruments. A brief appointment will have to be made to meet with Mr. Ames to understand basic care, procedures, and tuning. More info will be on our website.

## **Purchasing/Renting**

Quality student instruments run between \$400-\$2000 (Violin/Viola \$400-\$900, Cello \$600-\$1500), Bass \$1200-\$2000). A quality instrument will prepare you for success. Cheap instruments are substandard, need expensive repairs, and are often simply unplayable even when brand new. Cheap instruments set you up for frustration and failure. Beware of buying an instrument online, especially if it seems like a bargain.

NEVER purchase an instrument from Amazon, ebay, Craig's List, Walmart or an online store that has not been vetted by the teacher. You will have to visit the repair shop. If you are lucky, they will be able to get it in playing condition. If not, you'll have to get a different instrument.

- If the price seems too good to be true, IT IS. More money will be spent on repairs than if a better quality more expensive instrument was purchased in the first place.
- • Electronic instruments, instruments that are painted (pink, purple, black, green, etc.) or any color other than a wood stain, or instruments with a plastic neck are not acceptable for orchestra class.
- Do not purchase Cecilio or Mendini instruments. These are low quality factory brands. You will need to spend a minimum of \$50-\$100 to get the instrument playable.
- Do not purchase an instrument that does not have a label visible inside the sound holes. These can often be defect instruments.

Purchasing or renting can be done at multiple reputable music stores both online and in town.

### **Internet Music Stores**

Shar Music	<a href="http://www.sharmusic.com">www.sharmusic.com</a>	<i>*teacher recommended</i>
Music and Arts	<a href="http://www.musicarts.com">www.musicarts.com</a>	
Johnson's Violins	<a href="http://www.johnsonstring.com">www.johnsonstring.com</a>	
Southwest Strings	<a href="http://www.swstrings.com">www.swstrings.com</a>	

### **Music Stores in Reno/Sparks**

Blue Note B's	<a href="http://www.bnbinstruments.com">www.bnbinstruments.com</a>
Muzic Fuze	<a href="http://www.muzicfuze.com">www.muzicfuze.com</a>
Dodd Violins at Blue Note B's	<a href="http://www.doddviolins.com">www.doddviolins.com</a>
McBeth Violins	<a href="http://squareup.com/market/bruce-mcbeth">squareup.com/market/bruce-mcbeth</a>
Terry Scott Strings	<a href="http://www.terryscottallstringrepair.com/">www.terryscottallstringrepair.com/</a>
Absolute Music	<a href="http://www.absolutemusiconline.com">www.absolutemusiconline.com</a>
Carpenter's Music	<a href="http://www.carpentersmusic.com">www.carpentersmusic.com</a>
JamPro Music Factory	<a href="http://www.jampromusicfactory.com">www.jampromusicfactory.com</a>