

## Description of Middle School Trimester Electives

### MUSIC

#### Performance-Music

**Concert Band:** This is a two-trimester class (trimester I and II) for brass and percussion musicians (flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone) who have at least one year of instrumental lessons or have completed the SMA emerging-musicians class. Students learn music theory and a little about the history of jazz. Classical, rock and jazz band tunes are prepared and performed in a culminating formal performance.

**Orchestra:** This is a two-trimester class (trimester II and III) for musicians of stringed instruments (violin, viola, bass, cello) who have at least one year of lessons or have completed the SMA emerging-musicians class. Students develop more sophisticated knowledge of music theory and how to play in concert. Classical orchestra music is prepared and performed in a culminating formal trimester performances. Field trips to hear professional musicians and to play for the elderly occur each year.

**Hand Bells:** Bells of various size and timber are played with a mix of techniques. No prior music experience is necessary. Students learn rhythm, counting and the basics of note reading. One formal performance culminates the trimester with less formal performances possibly occurring during prayer services. Ten to twelve ringers make up the hand bell group.

**Show Choir:** The trimester course is for male and female students of any grade. The choir learns a variety of classical and pop songs while studying basic music theory and ear training. Enthusiasm for singing is the prerequisite; therefore, auditions are not required. There is one formal concert per trimester. Occasionally we sing for Mass, Prayer Services or Community Service Events.

**Honor Show Choir:** This is a one-trimester elective with two prerequisites: 1) previous enrollment in Middle School show choir or audition with the choir teacher, and 2) a strong motivation to delve more deeply into performance techniques such as vocal strength and music theory. The group sings at prayer services as well as performing in two formal concerts during the trimester.

**Boys Choir:** This elective focuses on developing the voice and performance skills of MS boys in a group. Exploring rhythm, vocal dynamics, breath control and projection, boys learn to call and respond to military cadence chants and a cappella arrangements of songs and raps.

*(Note: Seventh and eighth grade students enrolled in any trimester of choir are eligible to prepare and audition for the Colorado All State Middle School Choir and should contact Mrs. Hamilton-Griggs as soon as possible in the fall. Preparation begins before the end of the first trimester for choir students in any of the three trimesters of choir.)*

## **Informal Performance-Music**

**Rock Band:** This third trimester elective is open to students with intermediate skill playing guitar (electric or acoustic), bass, keyboard, brass instruments or drums. Basic understanding of music theory and the capacity to read notes are recommended skills. The student enrolling in the class provides his/her own instrument with the exception of keyboard and drum set, which is provided by SMA. Vocal musicians with musical performance experience are welcome to enroll as well.

## **No Performance-Music**

**Beginning Guitar:** The guitar is introduced to students who have had little or no experience with the guitar. The fundamentals of music are presented as well as basic note reading and music notation. Students are taught basic guitar techniques such as strumming, note reading, tablature, chording, and melodic playing, and they are introduced to music-recording software. Textbook selections are learned from a textbook, pop binder, and Internet.

**Advanced Guitar:** This course is designed for advancing students who have previous guitar experience including the beginning guitar elective. Students will be expected to complete advanced textbook selections, more difficult popular song samples, and to learn new techniques such as finger picking and improvising. Students will have the opportunity to record their own songs using the computer-recording stations.

## **Emerging Musicians:**

**Orchestra Option:** This elective offers the opportunity to start at the beginning to learn violin, viola, cello, or bass, or to refresh your skill. No previous experience is required. You will learn to read music and play the instrument in a small group or individually allowing the chance to join SMA's full Middle School orchestra.

**Concert Band Option:** This class is offered for those students who have never played a band instrument or need a refresher on their current band instrument. Instrument choices include: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone horn and percussion. Students will receive individual and small group instruction with the choice to perhaps join the Concert Band.

## **THEATRE AND DANCE**

**Drama/Theatre:** This one-trimester drama classes explore improvisational exercises, acting techniques and voice-and-body awareness as well as technical theatre. The actors employ original scripts developed from everyday experiences, movies or classical literature. This class is appropriately designed for boys and girls to participate together. All curriculum and performance opportunities are determined according to the make-up of the class, but often, this class culminates in a mid-day workshop performance.

**Musical Theatre:** Musical Theatre class teaches vocal technique, dance styles, acting elements, the history of musical theatre and technical theatre such as lighting and sound, and is appropriately designed for boys and girls to participate together. All curriculum and performance opportunities are determined according to the make-up of the class. Often, this class culminates in a mid-day workshop performance.

**Dance:** Students learn to create, perform, respond and connect the dance experience to other contexts of meaning and knowledge. They are exposed to movement vocabulary from different historical and cultural dance genres. Each unit is taught and experienced through the dance elective website that includes photographs, YouTube videos and descriptions of the genres.

## **VISUAL AND DESIGN ART**

**Explorations in Art:** Visual arts provides students with opportunities to explore color, form and shape with a variety of art media and processes that include painting, drawing, printmaking, and working with clay. Students are exposed to art history and cutting-edge art movements in the context of their own artistic creations.

**3D and Digital Design:** Students employ a variety of materials to design and construct three-dimensional art forms. Digital tools enhance the creative process and product. iPad technology, dslr camera platforms and digital design apps with green screen and lighting technique are a few of the tools.

**Geo Designs:** Geo-designs of two and three-dimensions will be explored and created in this fine arts class. Students will see how geometry and art are related. They will engage and explore patterns, color and form using a variety of mediums. Some of the mathematical artistic aesthetics include freehand Zentangle pattern drawings, Notan paper cutting using symmetry, tin-foil relief using geometric figures, op art cubes, 1-point perspective geometrical media collage, C-D Mandalas, and non-objective geometric abstract art paintings.

**Publications:** For seventh and eighth grade students only, publications class designs the student yearbook and creates an annual year-in-review video. Skills learned include page design, aesthetics and layout and how to optimally shoot and edit photos.

## **EXPLORATORY**

**Astronomy:** Mr. Sniegowski, sponsor of the high school Astronomy Club will teach this course. This elective is meant to acquaint students with the history of astronomy as well as providing an understanding of the apparent motion of the sun, moon, stars and planets. We will learn what the cosmos is made of and how it came to be what we see today. With access to solar and nighttime telescope, observing and recording observations will be part of the class.

Extensive knowledge of math and science are not necessary to enjoy this class or the wonders of the cosmos.

**Creative Writing:** Students explore different genres of writing with the main goal of inspiring ideas and writing original pieces. This course includes writing exercises to spark creativity. Students write every day in class, and have the opportunity to write fiction, mystery, poetry, fantasy and even horror stories.

**Mathematical Fun:** **FunMath4U** will use arithmetic, geometry, problem solving, logic, spatial reasoning and novel games and manipulatives. Besides developing these skills, a key goal of the program is to increase the students' level of interest in mathematics. Math will come to life in a unique and fun way. There will be chess and draughts [checkers] tournaments. We will enter teams in MathCounts and AMC math competitions. **FunMath4U** will be highly interactive. It is committed to enriching the mathematics education experience of all children who participate. Please check out our site: [www.FunMath4U.com](http://www.FunMath4U.com)

**Patterns of the Past:** Students enter the fascinating world of paleontology to learn about dinosaurs as small as chickens, flying reptiles as big as airplanes and elephants that lived in back yards. They put together bone puzzles, sculpt clay sabre tooth cats, interpret ancient animal tracks and make fossil beds out of Plaster of Paris.

**Robotic Design:** This trimester elective offers hands on Lego creations and challenges with brand new EV3 *Mindstorm* technology. The experience seeks to challenge and inspire innovative designs in a fun and encouraging environment. Students develop engineering and programming skills and enter into friendly competitions.