

Music Program



In the early childhood years, music is an important component of the Waldorf experience. Children sing simple songs daily and learn rhythmic speech with movements. As they move to the grade school, they continue to develop their musical abilities under the guidance of their class teacher, and the music teacher. In Grades 1 and 2, the class teacher teaches pentatonic flute and singing, with an emphasis on the training of the ear. In grade 3, the diatonic flute is introduced, while daily singing continues.

Grade Four

Musical education as a special subject begins in grade 4. Students sing a wide variety of songs, as individuals and with a group, continuing to improve the ability to use their singing voice, to sing well in tune, in unison, with attention to diction, pitch, attack, release, tone quality, breathing, posture, phrasing, and sustaining vowels. Students are able to sing simple rounds and canons, as well as descants as prelude to part singing.

Students learn the names of notes, melodic and rhythmic notation. Vocabulary words include: treble, cleff, steps, whole and half steps, skips, staff lines, spaces, as well as solfeggio syllables for the letter name notes. Students become familiar with the families of instruments and the effect of instrumentation on mood, melody, harmony, and dynamics, as well as the elements of music—mood, rhythm, pitch, tempo, form, harmony, dynamic contrast. Students use advanced basic rhythms and movements in different combinations, and add accompaniments to songs and dances. They are able to differentiate between meters: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, and 6/8 meters.

Beginning in January of grade 4, students transfer their musical skills to the violin. They learn basic string

technique, left hand position and right hand bowing. Children will also be familiar with the piano keyboard and how the notes correspond to the notes of the violin. Music selections support key themes for the grade 4 curriculum: Norse mythology and sagas; local geography, Washington State history, study of the animal kingdom, and fractions. The class teacher teaches flute or recorder and singing, while students have music class with the music teacher twice per week.

Grade Five

In grade 5, students continue to sing as a group and as individuals, giving artistic interpretation to a wide variety of songs. They continue to read music independently, sing rounds, canons, and descants, and develop the ability to sing two-part harmony. They are able to interpret a wide range of musical symbols as a tool to interpret music notation. Children attend live performances of musical works (and in special cases, sound recordings). Children increasingly become aware of beauty of tone, recognizing musical instruments alone or in a group and appreciating the range of musical styles and genres from around the world, as well as great composers of Western art music and their works. They use advanced basic rhythmic patterns in combinations to accompany rhythmic selections, and use melody, rhythm, and chording instruments as another avenue of participation in music. Students create original tunes and continue to develop a feeling for harmony. Students resume string instruments in January, when they develop string technique and build repertoire. The class teacher continues to teach recorder and singing, while students have music class with the music teacher twice per week.

continued on next page

Grade Six

In grade 6, students continue singing as individuals and in a group, using some rote songs and a greater number of scores for reading. Children begin three-part rounds and songs, singing chords with emphasis on expression and sensing mood. Students increase awareness of beauty of tone, melody, form, rhythm, tempo, harmony, mode, and instrumentation. They become familiar with the composers from medieval times and the evolution of Western Art music. They understand the science of sound concepts – generation, transmission, reception, and interpretation – as they pertain to the voice and the various families of instruments (aerophones, idiophones, chordophones, membranophones). By January of grade 6, students resume their work on string instruments – developing feeling for harmony and rhythm, creating tunes and descants, performing in instrumental group and as soloists, and building experience on the piano keyboard.

Students understand musical terms: tonic and dominant in relation to keys and chords, the difference between major and minor, the use of triplets and syncopation. They understand the chord progression using I, IV, V chords, interpret the use of ties, slurs, and dynamic markings, increase practice in sight-reading. The students choose a string or wind instrument. The class teacher continues to teach recorder (alto, tenor and bass might be introduced) and singing, while the students have music classes with the music teacher twice per week.

Grades Seven and Eight

In grades 7 and 8, students are able to gather information from diverse sources, develop ideas and techniques, organize arts elements, forms and principles into a creative work, reflect for the purpose of elaboration and self-evaluation, refine their work,

and share their music with the greater community. The year begins with an assessment of the students' current skills and knowledge levels, and a determination of their need for additional musical tools and improvement. Students sing in groups and as individuals before resuming work on their instruments in January, at the latest.

Students are able to analyze the structure and background of a musical work, analyze and interpret the music, rehearse, adjust and refine through evaluation and problem solving.

Students in the middle school are expected to take initiative and responsibility for their learning process with the teacher as guide, and to present their musical work to others, reflect and evaluate their process and performance. Students are able to describe a musical work, analyze the elements used to create the work, interpret based on descriptive properties (what was the composer trying to communicate?) and evaluate using evidence and criteria including sense perceptions (what did they like or not like). They understand the ways in which music communicates ideas and feelings, as well as make connections within and across the arts (theater, dance, visual arts) and other disciplines, life, cultures, and the world of work. Students begin to perform string repertoire from the standard string/orchestral literature as well as folk traditions from around the world. The class teacher continues to teach recorder (alto, tenor and bass might be introduced) and singing, while the students have music classes with the music teacher twice per week.

In addition to instrumental music classes, students in grades 6, 7, and 8 meet once or twice a week for the middle school choir.