Percussion Ensemble 2020-2021
Burlington High School
2nd Period, Band Room and Google Meet
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I. Course Overview
Monday (68 minutes) - 7 students in-person, 4 students at-home
Wednesday (30 minutes) - 11 students at home
Thursday (68 minutes) - 3 students in-person, 8 students at-home

Monday/Thursday (68 minute class period)
Because the live-stream on Google Meet will take place synchronously, students from both cohorts will be able to attend class on both class meetings.

On the day when the primary cohort (in person) is in the building, students in that cohort will receive more individualized attention on those days. Full-time remote students will receive more individual attention on a day with a smaller in-person cohort (Thursdays). It is vital that the non-primary cohort participates on their remote days. This will allow students to have at least 2 full block periods per week where they are playing their instrument and developing the necessary muscle memory and coordination to progress on their instrument.

These block class periods will resemble a traditional rehearsal structure. Time will be spent on instrument fundamentals, musicianship building exercises, and repertoire that includes solo and small ensemble playing.

The curriculum for the school year will loosely follow this structure:
One month (~8 block classes) on rhythm/snare.
One month (~8 block classes) on melody and harmony/mallets.
Alternate back and forth throughout the year, building on skills, technique, and theory each time. Auxiliary percussion can be sprinkled in (especially during rhythm/snare) to provide variety.

Wednesday (30 minute class period)

Due to the short timeframe of this period, the focus of Wednesday classes will be on a non-performance component of instrumental music, specifically music listening. Students will use the knowledge and skills developed on Wednesday’s to help supplement their understanding of music.

Full Remote Flexibility - A positive aspect of this plan is that it allows all of the different cohorts to continue to meet as a complete class. This is vital as our percussion ensemble would be able to stay together as a group, despite the circumstances. Because the class would have a Google Meet live-stream, all BHS students who have opted for full-remote courses this school year
would still be able to fully participate in these classes. If COVID-19 conditions change and the school moves to a full remote model, we will do our best to make sure there is enough equipment - specifically, mallet percussion - available for all students to continue playing at home.

II. Successful Learning
Through the experience of performance through music, band members will cultivate skills and philosophies, such as leadership, goal-setting, teamwork, dedication, and organization, that will prepare them to maximize their potential in life. Therefore, successful learning in Band is dictated by the student’s growth and development through the process, just as much (if not more) than the musical product that is achieved.

III. Student Learning Expectations and Expected Outcomes
The band curriculum is intended to be a comprehensive and progressive program of study in individual and ensemble technique and musicianship. While the success of specific outcomes depend on the student’s age and ability level, all students will be able to make significant growth on their instrument in all of the topics listed in Section IV.

IV. Topics/Content
The musical concepts that will covered throughout the curriculum include (but are certainly not limited to):
- Tone, Timing, Tuning, Dynamics, Phrasing, Musicianship, Articulation (staccato, marcato, legato, slurred, accents), Rhythm, Balance, Blend, Attacks, Releases, Duration, Range, Endurance, Technique, and Tone Color.

V. Assessing Progress
Percussion Ensemble will be graded using the following weighted system:

Music Performance (25%) - The biggest change here will be the reduction of performances that the program traditionally does throughout the school year. At the moment, there is still a plan to have a “major concert” during Quarters 2, 3, and 4. Performance grades for those three concerts would come from the successful completion of an audio/video file to contribute to 1 “virtual percussion ensemble” piece:

Percussion Ensemble literature as an entire class (all cohorts). Options include:
- Start the year with group improvisations and focus on soundscapes/production.
- Move towards minimalist repertoire such as Music for Pieces of Wood or Glassworks.
- Ensemble rep with 5-6 parts and we could double up on parts. That way someone else (likely at home) also has the same part.
- Have something custom written by Gabby/Nick that would work for our ensemble.
- For All Performances:
  - Cohort A could record it in person.
  - Cohort B could record their parts individually (in-school).
  - Cohort C could record their parts individually (at-home).
(We will not follow the wind classes that will be doing concert band repertoire in some capacity.)

During class time, we will work on exercises that build skills in both playing and reading. Students will be asked to record (for pad assignments) and/or play live (for mallet assignments). After learning these exercises, they will occasionally be evaluated as elements of the “music performance” grade. **2-4 of these recordings per quarter.**

Music Reading (25%) - SmartMusic “Levels” and assigned repertoire (etudes or solos). THIS IS NEW. In order to help motivate individual student practice, students will be responsible for submitting individual reading assignments. At the beginning of each quarter, students will meet individually with Mr. B to set individual goals based on where they currently are in their music reading abilities on their instrument. **It is IMPORTANT that each student meet with Mr. B to establish a realistic goal that will challenge them but will be attainable primarily with individual practice.**

As a baseline, if a student starts the school year on SmartMusic Level 1, they would be expected to perform and record the 2 exercises in Level 1 with at least 90% accuracy by the end of Quarter 1. If a student wanted to progress at their own speed and complete all 4 levels by the end of the first quarter (assuming that Level 1 was a good starting point), that would satisfy their Music Reading grade for the rest of the school year.

Some students might decide that a more appropriate goal is to complete two levels/quarter or some other modification to their reading abilities. For students auditioning for district bands, they could also substitute their district repertoire for a quarter in the place of a SmartMusic level.

Beyond Level 10, student can do any of the following for their music reading grade:
- “Furthering Exercises”
- Etudes from an Instrument-Specific Etude Book
- Solo Repertoire

Students will have access to mallets on the day that they are in school. When they are not in school, they can practice by 1) listening to the track on SmartMusic, 2) counting rhythms, 3) singing along, 4) practicing on a piano. Students who are fully remote will be issued an instrument that can stay at home.

Music Analysis (25%) - Listening and reflection assignments would become part of the curriculum for Wednesday classes. Students would be expected to submit these via Google Forms. Focus primarily on guided listening (solas, chamber groups, large ensembles) during this time. Students will develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary used to analyze and discuss music. **~8 of these per quarter, students will be allowed to drop 2 and submit at least 6.**

Ensemble Skills (25%) - Our ensemble skills contract would need to be slightly revised and adopted by classes at the start of the school year. After this occurs, the weekly ensemble skills grade can continue as usual. **Ensemble Skills grades will be recorded every two weeks.**
Honors Credit (Changes all percentages to 20%) - Due to COVID-19, the format of the honors credit will change for this school year.

For the research project, this will be our schedule for the year:

Quarter 1 - Select Topic and Outline
Quarter 2 - Completion of Paper and Video Presentation
(No Research Component in Q3 or Q4)

For the jury performances, this will be our schedule for the year:

(No Jury Component in Q1 or Q2)
Quarters 3 and 4 - Hopefully, we will be allowed to play in person by this time. If not, then it would be replaced with a live virtual performance.

VI. Classroom Expectations

Class and Rehearsal Rules/Guidelines
According to DESE guidelines, a class like Percussion Ensemble will be allowed to meet indoors, as long as:

- Students are wearing a mask.
- Students are at least 6 feet apart.
- Students are not sharing equipment.

Percussion Ensemble will take place both in-person and on Google Meet. All students will have an assigned seat/location with a preset/non-shared instrument. In each location, there will be an X on the ground as well as a music stand and chair. All of these locations will be socially distanced from one another. Students will wipe down the stand and chair before they use both and remain in that location for their class period.

Safety Considerations - Percussion Ensemble will be the first class to take place in the Band Room on Monday and Thursday. For the Monday class, the room will not be used over the weekend. For the Thursday class, school will be remote on the Wednesday cleaning day in the building. As is the current policy with all BHS in-person classes, masks will be required throughout the duration of the class period. Wipes for music stands, chairs, and equipment will be available at the start of each class. All doors will be left open at all times to allow air to circulate throughout the music department.

In addition to all school rules, there are three guidelines to behavior in Percussion class:
1. If you would like to talk, raise your hand and get permission first.
2. Stay in your seat/assigned playing area, unless you have permission to move.
3. Only play your instrument when we play together.
Classroom Materials:
All band students need the following materials for class each day:
- Hard, black, three-ring binder with sheet protectors for music
- School-issued iPad or ChromeBook with Google Drive and Classroom
- Tonal Energy Tuner App
- Pencil
- Instrument and accessories
- All music and handouts used in class

All students should have headphones (as required by BHS) that allow them to participate in online rehearsals.

FOR PERCUSSION CLASS: All students in Percussion Ensemble will be required to purchase the Vic Firth EP2 Intermediate Education Pack, which includes a stick bag, drum sticks, and both keyboard and timpani mallets.


Additionally, all students are expected to acquire a Practice Pad (12” is standard) and stand, as well as access to some form of keyboard instrument (piano, digital keyboard, mallet instrument) to practice at home.


These materials can be purchased online or through one of our local music stores.

All percussion students will be responsible for the care and maintenance of all school-owned equipment. A list of expectations for the transportation and storage of all equipment will be available through Google Drive.

Lockers - Plan for lockers to be determined.

VII. Homework/Makeup Policy
Aside from specific assignments, the expectation for class homework is:

Students will be responsible for all assigned music; the amount of time required to practice is the amount of time that it takes to be prepared to perform all music accurately during rehearsal.

VIII. Additional Information
Private Lessons and Honor Bands
- Private Lessons are strongly encouraged. The value of one-on-one instruction with a professional on a student's instrument cannot be overstated. Private instruction is key to the advancement of individual skills and integral in achieving students' highest potential.
Current Recommended Online Lesson Teachers:
  - Gabby Tober (gabtober@gmail.com)
  - John Tanzer (johnetanzer@gmail.com)

There is also an excellent Private Lessons Program offered through the Lexington Community Education Program:

- **MMEA All-State Ensembles** – Auditions are held in November each year. Students who qualify will travel to the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Conference in Boston in March. They will rehearse with top students from across the state and present a concert on the last day of the conference.

- **MMEA Northeastern District Ensembles** – Students will have the opportunity to represent Burlington in our district’s ensembles each year. Ensembles include a Concert Band, Jazz Band, Orchestra, and Chorus. Junior District includes students in Grades 7-9, while Senior District includes Grades 9-12.

- **Honor Bands** – Auditions for both local and national Honor Bands will be offered to students throughout the year. Students should check the bulletin board in the band room for updates on Honor Band opportunities.

**Plan for School Year** - 2020-21 Concerts and Repertoire Cycle

**“Formal Concert” (Chamber Recital + Virtual Recordings)**

January
- Solos
- Small Ensemble videos
- Virtual Ensembles (one each for ~6 ensembles)

**Coffeehouse Concert**
1. Early November Coffeehouse
2. December Coffeehouse “Holiday” Themed

**Digital Content/Community Outreach**
1. Pre-recorded holiday 15-20 min. video to share with community (BCAT)
2. If Marching Band happens, content to share at end of season (November)

[STOP WITH PLANNING AT JANUARY]

**Coffee House Performances**
We are pleased to offer a series of “Coffee House” performances that will give students an opportunity to perform as soloists and small ensemble members. These evening performances will be free and open to the public. **Due to COVID-19, these are currently planned for an online format.** These performances will be completely student-planned and student-run, although Mr. Buchsbaum and Mrs. Weller will require an audition and “check-in” in order to be selected to perform.
*Other Considerations for the Band Program* -
Marching Band - Pending the application of the program, all marching band related activities would take place outside of class time. This means that for this school year, any student who wants to participate in the “online marching band curriculum” can do so. Additionally, the online marching band rehearsals would be optional for all students currently enrolled in Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, and Percussion Ensemble.

The basic framework for the 2020 Virtual Marching Band would be:
- Season lasts from whenever approved to November
- Rehearsals would take place online in the early evening for 2 hours.
  - 1 rehearsal each week (Monday) would be for the entire ensemble. It would operate as a traditional rehearsal structure. Similar to Band Camp, each section would rehearse a “product” that would be compiled digitally at the end of the season.
    - Visual Ensemble would include recruitment to Grade 8 students.
  - 1 rehearsal each week (Wednesday) would be an optional workshop session. This would be more like a marching band class than a rehearsal. Examples of classes would be:
    - Basic Drill Design with Scott
    - Advanced Marching Technique with Mr. B
    - Guard Solo and Ensemble Coaching with Staff
    - Percussion Solo and Ensemble Coaching with Staff
    - (For solo and ensemble performances, these would be submitted to the USBands circuit for judging evaluation).

Jazz Band - Also pending the application and acceptance of this program. If marching band is approved, Jazz Band activities would not begin until the decided end to the online marching band season. Jazz Band (along with Winter Guard and possibly Winter Percussion) would take the rehearsal timeframe established by marching band: 2 evenings rehearsals per week.

The curriculum for Jazz Band would be similar to the approach from Spring 2020. The group would meet and continue to develop jazz technique and concepts through ear training, playing standards, and working on improvisation. The biggest difference is that like the Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band, Jazz Band would also submit audio/video recordings of 1 “virtual band” piece for each of our major concerts. As always, Jazz Band is open to all BHS students, including those not in our marching/concert band program.