

McEachern High School

Orchestra

Manual

2010-2011

ORGANIZATION

The McEachern High School Orchestra consists of qualified students who are willing to put forth extra time and effort such as extra after-school rehearsals and concerts. Some orchestra events are:

- 1. Community programs*
- 2. Annual Fall Concert*
- 3. Annual Winter Concert*
- 4. GMEA District 12 Large Orchestra Festival in February)*
- 5. GMEA District 12 Solo and Small Ensemble Festival (Fall)*
- 6. Annual Spring Concert*
- 7. All-State and Honors Orchestras (when qualified)*

The McEachern Orchestra performs music from all musical eras and performs occasionally as a full orchestra as well as a string orchestra. Students are assigned to Chamber Orchestra, Advanced Orchestra, and Intermediate/9th Grade orchestra. Students and parents should expect one afternoon rehearsal before the Winter Concert and one afternoon rehearsal before the Large Ensemble Festival in February. Deaths in the family or a doctor's note for an illness are the only excused absences considered valid. Students and parents should ALWAYS consult with the director before a conflict arises so that it can be resolved.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF ALL MHS ORCHESTRA MEMBERS

Demonstrate the following:

1. *Proper classroom behavior.*
2. *Proper posture.*
3. *Proper rehearsal procedure and discipline.*
4. *Responsibility and dependability.*
5. *Cooperation and respect for teacher, students, school facilities, materials, and equipment.*
6. *Proper care and maintenance of instrument, music folder, and equipment (including a spare set of strings for all violins, violas, and celli).*
7. *Proper left hand and finger placement.*
8. *Proper tuning of all strings when given the pitch "A" 440.*
9. *Count and play in various time signatures.*
10. *Play Level III - VI Orchestra parts; be able to count, clap, and play rhythms.*
11. *Select appropriate fingerings for your music parts.*
12. *Proper bow pressure, speed, placement and bow strokes for various styles and dynamics.*
13. *Playing musical phrases.*
14. *Playing dynamics pp to ff and expression marks indicated in the music.*
15. *Correcting pitch while playing.*
16. *Recognizing slight variations in volume, tempo, and rhythms.*
17. *Proper response to conductor's hand and baton directions.*
18. *Ability to follow the rhythmic impulse of the ensemble.*
19. *Ability to play with good blend and balance with section and full ensemble.*

ORCHESTRA RULES FOR EFFECTIVE REHEARSALS

1. *Be in your place a few minutes before rehearsal.*
2. *Careful tuning is essential for good performance. Needless playing is unfair to others who are trying to tune carefully.*
3. *Place your music stand at the best height for maintaining eye contact with the conductor.*
4. *Stop playing when the conductor stops, and listen carefully to what he/she says.*
5. *As the rehearsal progresses, mark your parts for fingerings, bowings, articulations, changes in tempo and dynamics, etc. (with pencil only). If more than one player is on a stand, the inside player marks parts and turns pages. If you are using your stand partner's music, make sure these markings get on your part!*
6. *Observe all markings above and below the staff. Exaggerate dynamics and keep your eye on the conductor for tempo changes.*
7. *Listen to the whole orchestra. All parts are important, but if you have an accompanying figure, keep it subdued to let the primary line sound forth.*
8. *Listen for various rhythms --including the inner rhythms.*
9. *Keep your case out of heavy traffic areas.*
10. *KEEP TRACK OF ALLOTTED BREAKS, and be back in your chair ready to play on schedule.*
11. *Never stare or comment when someone makes a mistake. This is discourteous to the player and distracting for everyone --and you could be next! Refrain from vulgar or loud language during class, and KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF!!*
12. *Practice your parts at home. Plan your practice, isolating problems in advance so you can concentrate on them. Indicate your practice on your sheets and have your parents sign them.*

PERFORMANCE DATES

A Calendar of performances and activities will be given to the students and parents on the first day of school. Students will be notified of pending performances or changes at the beginning of each six- weeks grading period. At times, students will be selected to perform in a small group for special occasions. Students are expected to perform at all school assemblies (in other words, check for any possible obstacles such as doctor's appointments, meetings with parole officers, etc.) in which the Orchestra has been invited to play. The instructor will indicate dress for those assemblies sufficiently in advance. ALWAYS consult with the director if you think there will be a conflict. These conflicts can easily be resolved most of the time. Per parental request, students missing any performance have the opportunity to take a make-up test in order to retrieve some of the missing points; their grade on the exam will be averaged into the performance requirement (50%) of their final six weeks grade. They may use this option ONLY ONCE (NOT for LGPE Festival!) in a school year.

ORCHESTRA UNIFORM

There are two forms of dress for the McEachern Orchestra: formal and informal. Formal dress for the women is black dress, etc. Formal dress for the boys is tuxedo and all accessories. Informal dress includes the Orchestra shirt.

Men will be measured for tuxedos during August. They are responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of their tuxedos. Any alterations made during the year are to be made without cutting or defacing the uniform. Ladies will be measured for their dresses during the first two weeks of school. Rental (cleaning fee) for the tux/dress this year is \$20, payable on being measured for the tux or dress. These tuxes and dresses are the school's property. Fundraisers for Orchestra or the summer camp fee do NOT cover this expense. You MUST let us know if this causes you financial difficulty at that time; payment plans can be organized or the student can transfer to another elective subject. All tuxes and dresses must be ordered by the end of August so that the Orchestra can take its formal photo.

Informal sweatshirts and tshirts will be ordered and paid for in September and November.. They come in small, medium, large, extra large, XXL and 3XL. The tshirts cost \$5 and the sweatshirts cost \$25 and can be purchased through the instructor.

ALL-STATE

Students are encouraged to audition for the Georgia All-State Orchestra. Ninth and Tenth graders audition for one High All-State Orchestra, the rest for the Senior High All-State Orchestra. Scales and etudes will be posted in the Orchestra Room for each year. All scales will be performed by memory. Copies of the etudes may be obtained from the instructor. Deadline for All-State monies is on the Friday of the last week in August; the school deadline is two days before the state due date.

CODA HONORS ORCHESTRA

Students are encouraged to audition for our Cobb County High School Honors Orchestra. The audition fee (\$15) is due by Monday of the last week in August. In addition to prepared excerpts and sight-reading, students must perform the following scales and arpeggios by memory:

*Violin - G and A major scales, 3 octaves
Viola - C and D major scales, 3 octaves
Cello - C and D major scales, 3 octaves
Bass - F and G major scales, 2 octaves
Violin - G and A melodic minor scales, 3 octaves
Viola - C and D melodic minor scales, 3 octaves
Cello - C and D melodic minor scales, 3 octaves
Bass - F and G melodic minor scales, 2 octaves.*

AWARDS

LETTERS - *Letters will be awarded for one year of participation. During this time a student must maintain a B average in orchestra, attend EVERY concert, and receive a satisfactory in conduct. For every year after you have received your letter, you will receive a bar, fulfilling the same requirements for a letter.*

DIRECTOR'S AWARD – *This award will be given by the instructor and is based on leadership, musical ability, and service to the orchestra. This student must also attend all extra rehearsals and concerts and audition for all county and state honors groups.*

NATIONAL SCHOOL ORCHESTRA AWARD – *This student must maintain a B average in Orchestra; attend all extra rehearsals and concerts, and audition /perform in all the various county and state honors groups. This award is based on leadership, musical ability, and service to the orchestra.*

MOST OUTSTANDING AWARD – A male and female orchestra member in each class will be selected by the director using the following criteria:

- 1. One award will be given to the outstanding male and female orchestra member in each class if merited.***
- 2. The student has been a member of the orchestra for one entire school year.***
- 3. The student has been a member of the orchestra in good standing, demonstrating good behavior, responsibility, and dependability.***
- 4. The student has been in orchestra for each class level.***
- 5. The student has maintained a B average in the class.***
- 6. The student has attended all extra rehearsals and concerts and has auditioned/performed in the various county and state honors groups.***

MOST IMPROVED PLAYERS - Selection will be made by the orchestra director and will be based on improved playing performance for the current year.

TRANSFER AND NEW STUDENTS - Orchestra membership at a previous school may count as your total number of semesters enrolled in orchestra.

ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA - Students will receive a plaque for participation in the Georgia All-State Orchestras.

ASTA-NSOA CHAPTER SERVICE AWARDS – When funds allow, students will receive financial scholarships at the end of the school year from the Guild for service points earned. A list of these service projects and student names will be kept in a prominent place in the Orchestra Room. Scholarships may be used for summer music study at camps or with local private teachers.

PRIVATE LESSONS

All students are encouraged to participate in private instruction. The benefits are unquestionable to both the individual student and the orchestra. Private instructors are available at our school for after school instruction as well as in class instruction when requested. Students will receive information when it is available. The director will tutor any students on a sporadic (before school) basis or during summer office hours. Contact the director for more information on this.

GRADING POLICY

Six Week's Grade consists of: class work, concerts (when applicable) and playing/chair tests. Playing tests follow a standard rubric (scales/arpeggios/musical excerpt) equaling 100 points. They are usually taped and always judged anonymously. End of Semester playing tests will be done "live" as well as taped. Concerts are mandatory and are usually scheduled at 5:30 P.M. so that students can get home at a reasonable time. Students are allowed to stay in the Orchestra Room after school on those days. Concert wear is usually required for performance on those days. Chamber Orchestra students are required to participate in one of the following: Solo and Ensemble, All County Orchestra auditions, or All State auditions. They are responsible for all participation fees for those events.

MATERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All students must keep their instruments maintained and in playing order. VIOLIN and VIOLA students should have their OWN INSTRUMENTS. All violin, viola, and cellos students should have an extra set of strings at school in case they break a string. A soft cloth should be in the student's case to wipe the bow and instrument after each playing. Strings, rosin, shoulder rests and rock stops can be purchased at any local music store or ordered through the mail. See the instructor for information concerning this. It is greatly appreciated if all cellists who own their instrument would bring it to school on performance days. All students will be provided a three-ring binder for all sheet music, music theory papers and handouts, as should have a pencil at all times. Folders will be checked and graded at the end of every six- week period. STUDENTS WHO OWN THEIR OWN VIOLIN OR VIOLA SHOULD BRING THEM TO SCHOOL ON ORCHESTRA DAYS!

MCEACHERN ORCHESTRA GUILD

All orchestra parents are automatically members of the Guild. The Guild meets

periodically throughout the school year and summer to plan fundraisers and trips for the students. Officers are elected at the October meeting. Please make every effort to support the Guild as it works diligently to provide a quality musical and educational experience for the students. By-laws are available to parents on request.

ASTA-NSOA STUDENT CHAPTER

McEachern is one of only 50 high school student chapters of the American String Teachers Association/National School Orchestra Association. The purpose of the group is to foster a love for music and string playing in the local community. Students must maintain a 3.0 grade average and participate in service projects, orchestra fundraising efforts, and audition or participate in honors groups or Solo and Ensemble Festival throughout the year. The members sponsor a Middle School and High School String Camp for the county in the summer as well as various enrichment activities throughout the year.

ORCHESTRA WEBSITE

Parents and students can access the website through the McEachern website (go to Activities/Fine Arts/Orchestra). It is updated frequently and should be consulted by parents and students, especially at fundraising time, festival time, etc. Information on the teacher's blog (Harmony for Humanity) is found there as well.

ORCHESTRA FUNDRAISING

Students will be asked two times during the school year, usually in the Fall Semester, to raise money for the Orchestra's needs and a possible Spring Trip. Accounts will be kept for individual student fundraising credits; students who graduate or withdraw from Orchestra forfeit any credit. Parents are responsible for ALL BOUNCED CHECKS. ALL students are strongly encouraged to participate, especially those who used larger school instruments. Money raised through these efforts, approved by the school administration, helps to defray the cost of excessive repair bills as well as fund professional teachers who come to tutor the students on a regular basis during the school year.

PERMISSION FORM 2010-2011

This form is to be returned to the instructor signed on or before Friday, August 27, 2010. FAILURE to do so results in removal from Orchestra Class. This form will be kept on file for the entire 2010-2011 school year. Advanced notice will be given to parents as activities/field trips occur. I understand that there is a \$20 uniform cleaning fee and a \$50 Orchestra participation fee due each school year. Signatures confirm that the parents have read the Manual and understand the grading policies of the instructor and the material requirements for Orchestra.

I hereby give my permission and approval as parent or guardian for _____ to attend any and all functions of the McEachern H.S. Orchestra as long as he/she is a member in good standing of the orchestra.

I hereby give my permission as parent or guardian for _____ to receive medical treatment from a qualified physician in case of emergency. I understand that I will be contacted in an emergency as soon as a problem occurs.

Signature _____

Address _____

Home phone _____ *Work phone* _____

Email address: _____

The McEachern Orchestra cannot assume responsibility for medical bills incurred should anyone need hospital care during an orchestra function. Students must expect to be responsible through their own insurance company for any medical expenses incurred. It will expedite matters greatly if you will list your insurance company and policy number.

Insurance Company _____

Policy Number _____

