

River Trail Middle School

8th Grade: Chamber Orchestra

-Course Syllabus 2019-

www.rtmsorchestra.com

Amos Liu, Orchestra Teacher

Email Contact: liu@fultonschools.org

Orchestra Program Philosophy

- ❖ Develop the mastery of performance skills and techniques on the string instrument,
- ❖ Develop effective ensemble performance skills,
- ❖ Foster a learning environment of support and respect among students of different musical backgrounds, levels, and musical preferences,
- ❖ Cultivate the enjoyment of music performance and develop students into lifelong music performers and supporters.

Course Description

The River Trail Chamber Orchestra is an audition only, year-long course. The music, instrument techniques, and ensemble performance skills students learn in Chamber Orchestra range from advanced middle school to high school level curriculum. Therefore, students are expected to perform at the high school level of focus and awareness towards musical precision, intonation, technique, and expression both as an individual and as an ensemble group. It is essential (and strongly encouraged) that students ask for help either from Mr. Liu or their private lesson teacher. Finally, students must meet mastery performance standards, demonstrate proper classroom behavior, and attend the required rehearsals/performances to maintain their enrollment in the Chamber Orchestra classes during the current school year.

Georgia Performance Standards:

- MMSIO.1.** Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- MMSIO.2.** Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- MMSIO.3.** Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
- MMSIO.4.** Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
- MMSIO.5.** Reading and notating music
- MMSIO.6.** Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- MMSIO.7.** Evaluating music and music performances
- MMSIO.8.** Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
- MMSIO.9.** Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Course Materials

Book: Habits of a Successful Musician (Selby, Rush, & Moon)

Daily Class Materials

- Instrument with bow and all four strings
- Rosin, cleaning cloth, and Rocktop (cello/bass) or Shoulder Rest (violin/viola)
- 3-ring binder with notebook paper
- Class/Ensemble Music with Mechanical Pencil
- School Device with Headphone/Earbuds

Project Day Materials

- items to be announced prior to the project assignment

General Expectations in the Orchestra Classroom

- **Always be prepared on time** including your instrument, music, and all required equipment ready to play (including pencil).
- **Show respect to other students and the music** regardless of performance or skill level.
- **Participate to the best of your ability** in all written and performance activities in class.
- **No GUM in class!**

Unsatisfactory behavior will be handled as follows:

- *1st infraction: Verbal warning and/or conference with teacher. Parents may be notified.*
- *2nd infraction: Private detention/work assignment. Parents notified.*
- *3rd infraction: Public detention assigned. Parents notified.*
- *4th infraction: Office referral.*

Chamber Performances and Rehearsals

All Chamber Orchestra students are required to perform the major concerts: Winter Concert, Performance Evaluations, and Spring Concerts. Students in Chamber Orchestra also perform at other concerts during and outside of school days. Due to the technical and musical complexities of the pieces, it is also essential for Chamber Orchestra students to attend rehearsals regardless of individual performance mastery in the music.

Students and parents will be given advanced notice of required, additional concert performances and rehearsals. It is important that families take into consideration of these regular performance dates and rehearsals when scheduling the many activities students are involved throughout the school year. Please notify Mr. Liu, far in advance, of any significant conflicts.

Grading Policy

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

F any grade 69 and below

The student's grade will be determined by the following

➤ **50% Summative Assessments**

Written Tests, Concert Performances, Playing Tests, Concert Reflection Activities, Projects

➤ **35% Formative Assessments**

In-Class Written and Performance Assignments and Assessments

➤ **15% Homework**

Written and Performance Assignments completed either in class or at home

Assignment Makeup Policy: Upon returning to school following an absence, it is the student's responsibility to obtain make-up work. Make-up work must be completed by the student within the time specified by the teacher. The student will receive the actual grade on the make-up work if the absence was excused.

Late Work: Please be sure to turn-in required assignments on time. Late work may be taken for partial credit however it will not be accepted after the final, due date set by Mr. Liu.

Academic Recovery: A student who has a low (73 or below) or failing **cumulative grade** may ask the teacher for opportunities to improve his/her grade **when all work required to date has been completed** and the student has demonstrated a legitimate effort to meet all course requirements, including attendance.

Academic Honesty: Academic integrity is an essential component of education. If a student is found to have violated the academic honesty policy at RTMS, he/she will be subject to a tiered system of consequences. A full description of the RTMS Academic Honesty policy can be found on page 2 of the student agenda located on the River Trail Middle School website (www.rivertrailmiddleschool.org).

Help Sessions: Mr. Liu believes in the success and enjoyment of music performance for every student, and strongly encourages students to take advantage of help sessions offered. The longer a student struggles, the less enjoyment one will have performing music. Help Sessions are on Wednesdays, from 8:15-8:40AM. Students need to notify Mr. Liu a day in advance if they plan on attending the Wednesday help session. Extra help sessions may be scheduled with Mr. Liu for other days and times.

Major Performance Assessments Retake: Like any skill-based curriculum, reaching mastery learning and performance is essential for students to be successful in orchestra. Any student scoring a low grade on a major assessment may retake major performance assessments for an improved grade. Some retakes may require students to turn a "Retake Worksheet" and there is a limit of retakes students may have for each major assessment.

Orchestra Handbook: The orchestra handbook is on the RTMS orchestra website at: www.rtmsorchestra.com/orchestra-handbook. The handbook goes into greater detail the policies, expectations, instrument information, and other important details specific to the River Trail Middle School Orchestra program. Both parents and students will need to review the handbook and sign the **Orchestra Policy Form** indicating both the student and parent have read and understand the policies and information outlined in the orchestra handbook. A paper copy of the handbook is available upon request.

Payments: All forms for orchestra that require fee payments are made online through the Fulton County "Online School Payment" (OSP) platform. The link may be found at the orchestra website, www.rtmsorchestra.com or www.rivertrailmiddleschool.org.

River Trail Middle School

7th Grade: Chamber Orchestra

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Course Materials

Book: Essential Elements for Strings, Book 2 (Allen/Gillespie/Hayes)
Habits of a Successful Musician (Selby, Rush, & Moon)

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