

Suzuki Orchestra Curriculum

MacPhail Center For Music

2016-2017

Reading Class

All students learn music reading in their studio lesson before entering the theory class we call “Reading.”

Violin students are usually around grade 3-4 and book 2-3. Students in 2nd grade are usually too young for Reading Class and should continue appropriate reading material in their lessons for another year. If a teacher wants to recommend a 2nd grade student for Reading Class they must get the consent of the Reading Class teacher in the spring/summer when groups are being planned. Considerations include not just the maturity of the student, but also the size of the class and the average age of other students. (A mature and independent 2nd grader might do well in a class of 3rd graders, but will not thrive in a class of 4th and 5th graders.)

Age guideline

Typical students are in grades 3-4.

Typical violin students are in Books 2–3.

Viola and cello students have a Reading Class only when there are enough students at the same level to make a class. In other years, viola and cello students cover the material in lessons and group.

Prerequisites

Before beginning Reading Class, students should have

- a solid instrumental technique
- many polished pieces
- experience in playing on all strings in all finger patterns
- experience in reading language
- at least one year’s experience reading pitches and rhythms in “big note” books such as Joanne Martin’s *I Can Read Music* and completed the first book of Faith Farris *Foundations for Music Reading* sequence by the beginning of the course.
- See also, “Notereading Readiness” points of consideration, page 3.

Goals

During Reading Class, students will develop:

conceptual abilities to name notes:

- on the staff
- on the fingerboard

conceptual abilities to identify:

- note values (half, quarter)
- note value relationships
- time signatures
- flats and sharps
- whole and half steps
- key signatures

performing abilities to

- to clap and count basic rhythms
- read music in basic finger patterns on all strings

Experiences

The material for Reading Class is Faith Farr's *Foundations for Music Reading* series. It includes:

- worksheets to involve the students in writing as well as reading and playing
- skill sheets for individual performance
- music for reading in group performance
- the use of supplemental books including:
 - *Quick Steps to Notereading volumes I & 2*
 - Phil Perkins *Logical Approach to Rhythmic Notation*
 - Etling *Workbook for Strings*

Parent Role

Parents attend every class with their child, listen attentively, take notes, participate as appropriate (e.g. clapping, pointing to music), and act as home teacher.

NOTEREADING READINESS

Points of consideration in the year prior to placing students in Notereading class.

- Students' eyes can track notes and rests across the page, recognizing "higher/lower/skip/step/same" relationships.
- Students can name notes on the fingerboard including sharps and flats, according to the key signature.
- Students know the difference between half and whole steps: playing, reading, and marking the music.
- Students have some exposure to fingerboard maps.
- Students can name notes on the staff from the lowest note on their instrument to the highest in first position.
- Students understand simple rhythms that involve whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth and thirty-second values in notes and rests. The students understand rhythmic terminology and can clap and count basic rhythm patterns in common and three-quarter time.
- Students can read simple tunes using all the notes in first position on all the strings—primarily in 2³, 1² finger patterns for violin and viola, and in 1-3⁴ and 1²-4 patterns for cello.
- Students know basic terminologies such as "staff", "clef", "key signature", "time signature", "bar line", "measure", "repeat sign", etc. plus symbols and markings found in Book One.
- Student has had a year of weekly reading experience in the private studio, completing Joanne Martin's I Can Read Music Vol. I, Suzanne Schreck's Sight Reading Skills Vol. I., or equivalent.
- Student should complete the first book of Faith Farr's *Foundations for Music Reading* series with their studio teacher before the start of the class.
- Violin students are in a minimum of third grade and studying Suzuki Book 2 or 3 during the year he/she enrolls in the note-reading class. A good formula for violinists indicating both age and technical readiness is:
Grade level and Book level should add up to 5.
- Students should have classroom skills (maturity) & and experience with handwritten homework.
- Students are encouraged to plan on 45-minute lessons to allow for balance between repertoire work and Notereading work. (30/15 ratio = suggested.)

Da Capo Orchestra

Age guideline

Typical students are in grades 4-5-6 and stay in Da Capo for at least 2 years.

Prerequisites

- Before beginning Da Capo Orchestra, students should have:
 - Graduated from the note-reading course.
- In order to begin Da Capo Orchestra, students should be able to:
 - name notes on the staff in first position
 - name notes on the fingerboard in first position
 - distinguish F sharp and F natural in music and on the fingerboard
 - distinguish C sharp and C natural in music and on the fingerboard
 - name note and rest values on the staff (half, quarter, etc.)
 - demonstrate understanding of the basic note/rest relationships
 - play easy 1-octave scales and the 2-octave scale from the lowest open string

Goals

During Da Capo Orchestra, students will develop:

orchestral posture, including ability to:

- sit on a chair properly with their instrument
- sit well and face a music stand without changing posture
- sit with a stand partner and be able to read 2-on-a-stand

rehearsal skills to:

- mark their part at the conductor's direction
- begin at any specified place including bar numbers, rehearsal letters, repeat signs, first or second endings, coda

rhythmic abilities to:

- play in mixed instrument ensemble
- count short rests
- follow the conductor's beat
- hear/sense the pulse of the ensemble
- play rhythmically when different parts have different rhythms
- accurately change from one note value to another
- read rhythms that start out predictably, but end with a surprise

pitch abilities to:

- hear/sense the pitch center of the ensemble
- blend with the group
- hear/sense harmonies
- play in tune with the group

independence to:

- practice alone by note reading
- learn a harmony part at home (including pitches, rests, rhythms, fingering, bowing)
- sight read simple rhythms in first position

Experiences

The music chosen for Da Capo Orchestra will include:

- unison playing to develop intonation and rhythmic accuracy
- ensemble playing to develop independence of parts
- experience in keys through 2 sharps and 2 flats

Parent Role

Parents attend every rehearsal, listen attentively, take notes, help students come prepared with appropriate materials, facilitate home practice as directed by the teacher. Parents have the responsibility of making wise family choices for other activities so that students can attend orchestra regularly.

Orchestra Auditions

The remaining three orchestras (Camerata, Sinfonia, and Chamber) require an audition for membership. Auditions are held each May for the following fall. The purpose of the audition is for placement in an orchestra and information for the conductors on strengths and weaknesses of each player.

Seating will be rotated so that students have a chance to experience the various responsibilities related to the section. Conductors make seating placements based on the strengths of students in the ensemble and to enhance the leadership and ensemble skills of all participants. Seating is rotated throughout the year. At each orchestra level all students will be developing ensemble and leadership qualities. Leadership qualities include:

Good communication with the conductor

- Ability to watch a conductor

- Ability to move/play in response to the conductors' gesture

Ability to communicate with fellow members

- Use body language to signal the section

- Notice bowing inconsistencies within the section

- Watch the bowings in other sections for consistency

Responsible rehearsal engagement

- Repertoire preparation

- Consistent attendance

- Attentive to notes from the conductor.

Some concerts may have special opportunities for solos etc, for interested players.

Camerata Orchestra

Audition eligibility

Students must meet criteria below to be eligible to **audition** for Camerata. Please note that this is not a guarantee of placement. Studio teachers must sign an audition form confirming that a student has met the prerequisites listed below. Placement in the orchestra is determined by the audition process.

For violins:

A student's grade and Suzuki book level must equal the number 9 with a minimum age of 5th grade (e.g. a 5th grader in book 4 would be eligible).

For violas:

A student must be in a minimum of 5th grade and playing in Suzuki book 3 or higher to be eligible.

For cellos:

A student must be in a minimum of 4th grade and playing in Suzuki book 3 or higher to be eligible.

Prerequisites

- Unless a student has recently transferred into the program, he/she must have completed at least one year in Da Capo Orchestra. (The majority of students stay in DaCapo for at least two years).
- In order to begin Camerata Orchestra, students should have:

ability to:

- easily perform music from Da Capo Orchestra
- play in first position with all finger patterns with ease and facility
- play 2-octave major scales: C, G, D, A, F, Bb, Eb (Viola – C,G,D,F, Eb) and 2-octave minor scales (teacher can choose which form): A, G, B and D (Viola – G,C and D) at a metronome setting of 92 using single bows (one quarter note per bow.)

practical theory abilities to:

- name notes on the staff and the fingerboard in first position including all sharps and flats
- distinguish F sharp/F natural, C sharp/C natural, G sharp/G natural, B flat/B natural, E flat/E natural in music and on the fingerboard

ensemble abilities to:

- Eyes can track and player can continue on in the music even when a mistake is made

playing experience that includes:

- playing in position
- some experience with 6/8

reading experience that includes:

- some reading music in position *with* help (3rd position for violin and viola; 4th and 2nd position for cello)

independence to:

- learn both the notes and the bowings of a piece in first position.

Goals

During Camerata Orchestra, students will develop:

practical theory abilities to:

- know all notes on the fingerboard on all strings from open through the harmonic
- read and play in position *across the string*
- read easy music in positions *without* help (3rd position for violin; 4th and 2nd position for cello)
- read more complex music in position with help (5th position for violin; all positions 1/2 through 4th for cello)

rhythmic abilities to:

- read dots, ties, eighth note syncopations, a variety of 16th note patterns
- sense, read and play in compound time (6/8, 9/8, 12/8)
- listen to another part to fit into the rhythmic pattern

pitch abilities to:

- play in keys through 4 sharps and 4 flats
- distinguish major and minor
- read half steps with ease and facility for increased accuracy of intonation
- listen to another part to match and blend pitches

ensemble abilities to:

- follow conductor's expressive cues
- mark the part quickly and efficiently when directed
- begin to mark the part without being asked
- begin to learn leadership – give and receive cues; be the section leader
- perform with appropriate stylistic bowings (what part of the bow; bow direction)

independence to:

- read expressive markings, not just the notes
- practice efficiently – mark the hard spots during rehearsal for focused practice at home

Experiences

The music chosen for Camerata Orchestra will include:

- unison playing in keys through 4 sharps and 4 flats to develop shifting and intonation
- unison playing in minor keys to develop familiarity with modes
- ensemble pieces in simple and compound time

Parent Role

Parents attend every rehearsal, monitor the notes that students take about practice spots, and support practice at home. Students in Camerata Orchestra are expected to be doing some independent practice, but will need parent's help in scheduling practice, and in allocating appropriate time to different assignments. Parents should guide their children to make wise choices for other activities so that students can attend orchestra regularly.

Sinfonia Orchestra

Audition eligibility

Students must meet the criteria below in order to be eligible to **audition** for Sinfonia Orchestra. Please note that this is not a guarantee of placement. Studio teachers must sign an audition form confirming a student has met the prerequisites listed below. Placement in the orchestra is determined by the audition process.

For violins:

A student's grade and Suzuki book level must equal the number 12 with the minimum age being 6th grade (e.g. a 6th grader in book 6 is eligible).

For violas:

A student must be in a minimum of 6th grade and studying in Suzuki book 4 or higher in order to be eligible.

For cellos:

A student must be in a minimum of 6th grade and studying in Suzuki book 4 or higher in order to be eligible.

Prerequisites

- Unless a student has recently transferred into the program, he/she must have completed at least one year in Camerata Orchestra (the majority of students stay in Camerata Orchestra for at least two years).
- In order to begin Sinfonia Orchestra, students should have:

ability to:

- sight-read music from Da Capo Orchestra
- easily perform music from Camerata Orchestra
- play 2-octave major scales: G, Ab, A, Bb, B, C, D, Eb, E, F at a metronome setting of 60 slurring one beat (two notes per bow.) Plus two octave arpeggios in G, A C, D, (Bb violins E for Cello and Violas),
- Play 2-octave minor scales: G, A, B, C, C#, D, E, F, F# at a metronome setting of 60 slurring one beat (two notes) per bow. Private teacher may choose which minor form.
- play 3-octave scales in at least two keys at a metronome setting of 80 using single bows (one quarter note per bow.)

ease and facility in practical theory abilities to:

- name notes on the staff and fingerboard including all sharps and flats from open through harmonic
- notice and respond to key signatures and accidentals

rhythmic abilities to:

- read rhythms with ease and facility
- decipher any sixteenth note rhythm pattern
- sense and respond to the pulse, meter and phrasing of the music

reading abilities to:

- figure out music in any position from open string through the harmonic
- learn long eighth note runs and play with speed and accuracy

independence to:

- learn notes, bowings, articulations and dynamics marked in the part

Goals

During Sinfonia Orchestra, students will develop the abilities necessary to play standard repertoire from any period of music including:

pitch abilities to:

- read easy pieces in upper positions (5th–7th) without help
- decipher high or chromatic passages across the string with help

style abilities to:

- choose and use appropriate part of the bow for style of music
- play with sustained sound necessary to slow pieces

interpretation abilities to:

- discuss and develop an appropriate interpretation for a piece

ensemble abilities to:

- balance their part appropriately by responding to the group as well as to the conductor
- mark the part well without being asked

leadership abilities to:

- use body language effectively to lead entrances, and cue phrases

independence to:

- devise appropriate bowings and fingerings that are not marked in
- practice for tempo (slow and fast)
- practice for phrasing
- learn long sixteenth note runs and play with speed and accuracy
- show consistent and efficient practice — learn hard spots in 2 weeks

Experiences

The music chosen for Sinfonia Orchestra will include:

- Baroque, Classic, Romantic styles and some 20th century styles
- any key, mode, tone center, or tempo

Parent Role:

Parents attend the beginning of every rehearsal to receive handouts and information from the conductor about special events. Parents support home practice by taking an active interest in what the assignments are and how they are improving. Students in Sinfonia are expected to be doing a lot of practicing on their own. Parents should guide their children to make wise choices for other activities so that students can attend orchestra regularly.

Chamber Orchestra

Audition Eligibility

Students must meet the criteria below in order to be eligible to **audition** for Chamber Orchestra. Please note that this is not a guarantee of placement. Studio teachers must sign an audition form confirming a student has met the prerequisites listed below. Placement in the orchestra is determined by the audition process.

For violins: A student's grade and Suzuki book level must equal the number 16 with a minimum age of 8th grade (i.e. an 8th grader needs to be in book 8) in order to be eligible.

For violas: A student must be in a minimum of 8th grade and studying in Suzuki book 5 or higher in order to be eligible.

For cellos: A student must be in a minimum of 8th grade and studying in the end of Suzuki book 5 or higher in order to be eligible.

Prerequisites

- Unless a student has recently transferred into the program, he/she must have completed at least one year of Sinfonia Orchestra (the majority of students stay in Sinfonia at least two years).
- In order to begin Chamber Orchestra, students should be able to a minimum:
 - sight-read music from Da Capo and Camerata Orchestra
 - easily perform music from Sinfonia Orchestra
 - name notes on the staff through the harmonic in all appropriate clefs with ease and facility (cellists need some experience in tenor clef)
 - devise appropriate bowings and fingerings that are not marked in
 - phrase within the section
 - lead entrances and cue phrases
 - play in a style appropriate to the piece without prompting from the conductor
 - practice independently to learn rapid passagework
 - **For Violins and Violas:** play 3-octave major scales through 5 flats and 5 sharps with a metronome setting of 76 slurring two beats (four notes) per bow.
 - play 3-octave minor scales through 5 flats and 5 sharps with a metronome setting of 76 slurring one beat (two notes) per bow for 1st Year Chamber. 76 slurring two beats (four notes) for 2nd-4th year. . Private teacher may choose which minor form.
 - For **Cellos:** play 3-octave major scales in C,G,D,F,E and E flat with 4 note slurs. 2-octave major scales in A, A-flat, B, B-flat with 2 note slurs with a metronome setting of 76
 - play c, d, e, f, g 3-octave minor scales and a, b, c#, f# 2 octave with a metronome setting of 76 slurring one beat (two notes) per bow.

For Violins, Violas and Cellos:

- Arpeggios: 1st Year Chamber: Sinfonia arpeggios + 1 3 octave arpeggio
- 2nd Year Chamber: Sinfonia arpeggios + 3 3 octave arpeggios
- 3rd Year Chamber: All Major 3 octave arpeggios
- 4th Year Chamber All Major and minor 3 octave arpeggios

Goals

During Chamber Orchestra, students will have rewarding, challenging, and satisfying musical and social experiences by playing standard repertoire. Developing skills include:

- ability to lead a section through cueing in performance
- ability to lead a section through demonstration and verbal suggestions in rehearsal
- social support for other orchestra members
- musical support for other orchestra members
- deepening love of the characteristic part their instrument plays in the orchestra
- ability to contribute significantly while sight-reading

Experiences

The music chosen for Chamber Orchestra will include any standard repertoire.

Parent Role:

Students are expected to be self-sufficient in taking notes in rehearsal, practicing appropriate spots at home, and communicating to their families about special events and concerts. Students are expected to manage their schedule of other activities effectively so that they can attend rehearsal regularly.