

Campolindo Instrumental Music

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Dear Instrumental Music Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! It's a year that promises to be unique in every way, and hopefully also filled with new experiences, skill-building challenges, and important lessons. With AUHSD beginning the year with a distance learning approach, I want to give you an overview of how that learning will look for our Instrumental Music program.

While we know that in-person group playing is more ideal in almost every aspect, we are not without tools and strategies to foster growth in our musicians at a safe distance. In truth, we music educators are already learning that many of the opportunities now available to us will address some of the gaps we have seen through the years that have never quite been addressed.

With that in mind, allow me to outline what I expect to be our blueprint for the early part of the year, perhaps for the entire first semester. This may appear to be very general, but as we move closer to our start date, additional details will be made clear.

VIRTUAL CLASSES — Each of our ensembles will meet online at our scheduled times. Our coursework during this time will consist of performing for each other individually, discussing best practices (practice, technique, artistry), listening to and evaluating professional soloists and groups, listening to guest conductors/artists share their experiences, exploring historical contexts, and improving music reading skills. These classes will include time for breakout rooms* of smaller groups of students.

SOLO ASSIGNMENTS — Each student will be assigned one or two challenging solos to work on individually during the semester. Students will be provided with either a piano accompaniment recording and/or an exemplary recording of each solo. As needed, the student will be coached by myself, one of our professional teachers, or by another student. The solo will need to be recorded for my review, or played live in one of our virtual classes.

SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENTS — Each student will be assigned to a small ensemble of 2-5 players and will learn their part of a piece written for that combination of instruments. In breakout rooms,* members of the ensemble will listen to recordings of their pieces, play their individual parts for each other, play along with recordings when appropriate (on mute with one student playing the recording live). Each student will record their part for review by myself or will play it live in one of our virtual classes. Another option to be explored is that of creating virtual recordings with all parts together (no promises).

TECHNIQUE DEVELOPMENT — Freshmen players in Concert Band and Orchestra will be assigned scales, exercises and other technical drills to ensure they are developing the proper approach to playing their instruments. Similar assignments may be given to upperclassmen as needed. Sightreading will also be addressed in this area of study.

PERFORMANCES — It is critical for our students' motivation that they be heard by their families and by the community at large. We know that we will not be gathering in CPAC in large numbers anytime soon. What we can do is offer a few evening performances online with families and friends gathered to watch solo performances. I'm not ruling out that some of our small ensembles will find a safe way to practice together in person, although I insist that parents be involved in evaluating and setting this up for students. Perhaps we will also find a way to provide small ensemble music for some of our local outdoor events (safely) as we have done in the past.

Student's grades will be determined by their engagement and relative success in these three major areas:

- 1) Virtual Class Attendance
- 2) Solo Performance and Ensemble Participation
- 3) Technique and Sightreading Development

Performances, should we find a way to have them, will not be assessed for a grade.

As appropriate, we will also add individual coaching sessions with myself or our master teachers. As always, students are encouraged to take private lessons to improve their technical skills and overall confidence.

** Breakout rooms are a feature of virtual learning that allow the host to assign participants to small groups for a designated period of time. My hope with this strategy is to provide each player with the opportunity for significant improvement in individual skill while still offering them the chance to have social interaction and bonding time with other players.*

You may be thinking that this sounds like a lot of work. How much of each student's time does this represent? The expectation is very similar to what we expect in a standard school year: class attendance, plus an average of 30 minutes a day of personal practice per week. As we have always known, regular individual practice is critical to a player's success on an instrument, so I encourage everyone to make this minimal commitment.

To facilitate our planning, I would like each student to complete this Google Survey/Registration so that I'm more aware of individual situations and preferences, and to make myself more aware of the technology available to students at home. Please click the link below to complete the survey. There is a place for students to provide additional feedback to me regarding the upcoming year. I also welcome parent feedback.

Link: [Instrumental Music ~ Survey, August 2020](#)

I look forward to seeing everyone soon as we begin this uncommon, and surely memorable, school year.

Most sincerely,



Mr J