

martin middle school chorus  
**Handbook**



2018 - 2019

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# MARTIN MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORUS HANDBOOK

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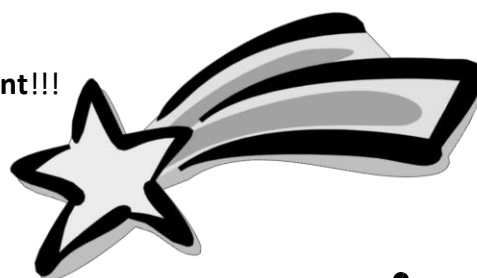
**!!! WELCOME!!!**

You are now a part of an amazing group of musicians, students and friends!

You are now a part of a rich musical heritage and a bright new beginning!

You are now a part of the

**Martin Middle School Choral Department!!!**



## **INTRODUCTION**



The Martin Middle School Choral Department (MMSCD) is committed to excellence in music, academics and service. Through daily classes that are both rigorous and fun, students gain in-depth knowledge of musical skills and concepts. Students will learn the value of teamwork, creative thinking and giving it your all!

Consisting of four different ensembles, Choral Ensemble, Men's Ensemble, Women's Ensemble and Honors Chorus, the Martin Middle School Choral Department provides opportunities for singers to share and develop their gifts and talents.



## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Martin Middle School Choral Department is to prepare young musicians to become lifelong music makers. To this end, students will rehearse and perform quality choral literature that will provide meaningful musical experiences and teach important musical concepts. Also, the MMSCD will provide concerts that will both entertain and educate. Music for these concerts will range from the Renaissance to the music of today.

Instructional curriculum is designed to develop age appropriate and healthy vocal production as well as sight-reading skills, knowledge of music theory and performance and rehearsal etiquette.

Chorus classes here at Martin offer opportunities for all students to grow into talented musicians and gifted performers in a safe, positive and encouraging environment.

## **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

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### **Ms. Allison Thomas**

Ms. Allison Wrenn Thomas, mezzo-soprano, is originally from NC, though much of her childhood was spent in the Eastern European countries of Kosovo and Albania. She is a magna cum laude graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received a B.M. degree in Music Education and Italian Language. While a student at UNC she studied voice with Ms. Andrea Moore, and choral conducting with Dr. Dan Huff and Dr. Susan Klebanow.

While at UNC Ms. Thomas performed as a vocalist with UNC Opera Theater, Carolina Choir and the UNC Chamber Singers. She sang the role of Sesto, her first lead, in "La Clemenza di Tito", La Ciesca in "Gianni Schicchi" and "Buoso's Ghost", and the role of Martha in UNC Opera's production of "Dream Lovers". In opera scenes she sang various roles in Ned Rorem's "Fables", Orfeo in "Orfeo ed Euridice", Iolanthe in "Iolanthe", Hansel in "Hansel und Gretel", and both Meg Page and Alice Ford in "Falstaff".

Ms. Thomas has been featured on masterclasses with Frederica von Stade, Donna Roll and Darryl Taylor. Her upbringing in Albania has widened her interest in non-western music and languages, leading her to participate in masterclasses focused on Chinese and Russian repertoire, and to include a set of Albanian folk songs on her 2013 recital.

Ms. Thomas served as an administrator with the 2018/2012 UNC Music Workshop, as the music director of Kidshine Performing Arts Camp in 2013, and taught with Student U in 2014.

This is Ms. Thomas's 5th year as an educator. Before coming to Martin, she was the choral director at Lucas Middle School in Durham. Ms. Thomas's choirs consistently receive Superior ratings at State Adjudications and Festivals.

Ms. Thomas is excited to be in Raleigh directing the choral program at Martin GT Magnet Middle School. She looks forward to continuing a strong music program with her students at Martin in the coming years.



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## CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

- I. **All students are to show respect.**
  - a. Respect yourself
  - b. Respect each other
  - c. Respect your director
  - d. Respect the music
- II. **All students are to equally contribute to our success**
  - a. Do your best at all times
  - b. Ask for help when needed
  - c. Complaints and excuses do not belong in the chorus room
  - d. You are a musician – Be a musician at all times
- III. **All students must seek to make a positive impact on our chorus, our school and our world on a daily basis.**
  - a. Find ways to make others smile daily
  - b. Encourage the creative efforts of others
  - c. Always leave the chorus room in better shape than you found it
  - d. Negativity has no place in anyone’s life and certainly not in the chorus room

## ROOM POLICIES



### Tardies:

Class begins at the late bell. You are expected to be on time to every class. Being on time means being seated, having all your materials (music folder, paper, pencil) ready at the beginning of class. If you are tardy, you must have a pass from either the teacher who detained you or the attendance office. If you are late, you must sign the “Tardy Sheet.” Being tardy automatically lowers your grade to a “C” for that day unless an acceptable pass is provided.

### Restroom Passes

Instructional time is very valuable! When you are not in class, you are missing crucial rehearsal moments that cannot be duplicated. Therefore, time out of the classroom should be kept to a minimum. However, emergencies do happen. For this reason, when you have to go grab the bathroom pass from the stand and go. Please be responsible with your bathroom privilege. Students who are out of class excessively for bathroom issues will have points taken off of their daily grade. Also, remember that you are responsible for any work or music missed while out of the room.

### **Chorus Room Equipment**

Students should not use any equipment in the chorus room without the permission of Ms. Thomas. This includes pianos, computers, TV's, Ms. Thomas' personal belongings, etc. Failure to get permission before touching equipment will result in a lunch detention.

### **Gum, Candy, Food, & Non-Water Beverages**

All gum, candy, and non-water beverages are to be placed in the trash can immediately upon entering the chorus room. Water bottles are permitted, encouraged and are one of the required materials for chorus.

### **Cell Phones, iPods, & Other Electronic Devices**

Personal electronic devices are great learning tools and can be quite helpful in learning music. But they can also be distracting, thus devices are not permitted without permission from Ms. Thomas. These items will be confiscated for the remainder of the school day if they are being used without permission. If a parent needs to reach you or you them, please have them contact the school's front office.

### **Storage Room, Practice Room & Office**

These rooms are not to be used without permission.



**PROCEDURES**

### **When you enter the class...**

Go immediately to your assigned seat with your chorus folder and a pencil

Look at the board and get started on the Beginning of Class Assignment (BOCA)

Once the BOCA is complete, place your work in your folder

Begin reviewing notes in your music from the last rehearsal

### **If you are tardy...**

Bring your pass to Ms. Thomas

If you do not have a pass sign the Tardy Sheet

Get started on the BOCA

If you do not complete the BOCA within the allotted time, then it is to be completed for homework to be turned in the next day.

### **If you are absent...**

Ask Ms. Thomas for the assignment that you missed. Complete it at home and bring it in when you return to school or, at the latest, by the second day that you return to school.

If you know ahead of time that you will be absent, ask a friend to record your part of the music that we are covering.

Being absent is not an excuse to fall behind

### **When warm-ups begin...**

All work is to be put away – whatever is not completed becomes homework to be turned in the next day.

Music should be placed in the rehearsal order posted on the board.

You should be fully engaged in warming up and nothing else.

### **When we stop singing...**

STOP!

Hear the issue being addressed and how to fix it.

Make note of it in your music with a ***pencil*** (pens are not to be used at all in chorus)

Hold all questions, comments and ideas until the issue has been fixed (so that the rehearsal flow is not interrupted).

### **At the end of class**

When the bell rings, stay seated until you have been dismissed by Ms. Thomas

Getting up without being dismissed will result in lunch detention

### **What if I need to get tissue or go to the trash can or something like that?**

Plan ahead! – Try to take care of these issues before class begins

If you must get up and move around during rehearsal, please do so quietly (Distractions greatly hinder the rehearsal process. We will keep all distractions to a minimum.).

Distracting the rehearsal process will take points off of your daily grade.

## **REHEARSALS & CONCERTS**



By its very nature, chorus is a performance-based class. Every day spent in rehearsal, every musical concept that is learned all serves to assist in presenting the best concerts possible. As a result, attendance and participation in all chorus concerts are REQUIRED unless otherwise stated by Ms. Thomas.

It takes all of us to make up the Martin Middle School Choral Department. Whenever we perform, we always want to look and sound like the Martin Middle School Choral Department.

When students are missing, we do not look the same, nor do we sound the same, thus the quality of our performance is diminished. Therefore, if there is an emergency and a concert must be missed, Ms. Thomas must be notified in writing at least two-weeks before the missed performance (not the day of or the day after). Failure to do so will impact the student's grade. Even with written notification, a student who misses a required performance will be given an alternate assignment that must be completed before the end of the academic quarter.

You will be notified about required concerts at least 2 months in advance of the performance date. Any concert that is added with less than a 2-month notification will not be required. Please see the calendar of events for all dates that are scheduled so far.

For some of our major concerts that require two or more ensembles to perform together, there may be an after-school rehearsal scheduled. Again, you will be given notification at least 2 months in advance. These rehearsals will be crucial to the success of the performance and so if they must be missed please let Ms. Thomas know in writing at least two days in advance.



Chorus is a graded class. This grade will be based on much more than simply showing up and being a warm body in the room. There will be tests (written tests and singing tests), quizzes, projects, and homework. This is how your chorus grade will be broken down:

**Major Summative** **50%**

Concerts  
Tests  
Projects

**Minor Summative** **40%**

BOCA  
Quizzes  
Classwork & Class Preparedness  
Concert Preparedness

**Homework** **10%**

*Things that can lower your grade:*

Missed Concerts  
Excessive Absences  
Not knowing your music  
Being unprepared for class  
Failure to turn in assignments

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**



Listed below are the things that you will need to bring with you to class every day. Please be sure that you have these things no later than the second week of classes.

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|----------------------------|--|
| <b>2-pocket folder:</b>    | This will be used to hold loose-leaf papers, repertoire, music glossary, rhythm charts, sight-singing examples, etc. |
| <b>2 sharpened pencils</b> | Pencils should be used on all chorus assignments unless otherwise specified  |





## SPECIAL PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

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### **NC Middle School Honors Chorus**

Every year, the Middle School Honors Chorus is held in November, performing at the North Carolina Music Educator's In-Service Conference. This chorus provides an opportunity for the very best singers from across the state (grade 6, 7 and 8) to come together and work with a nationally acclaimed choral conductor.

### **All State Chorus**

The NC All-State Chorus is a group of singers chosen by middle school choral directors from across the state. The concert usually takes place in April at the Greensboro Coliseum. More information will be given in January.

### **Choral MPAs**

This performance provides opportunities for our chorus to perform in front of a group of regionally known choral directors and receive a rating. This performance will take place in March. More information will be coming soon.

### **All-Carolina Festival**

The All-Carolina Invitational Male Choral Festival was started in 2004 to provide an opportunity for about 150 male singers to interact with, learn from and share musical experiences with older singers, to build morale, excitement and participation of male singers in NC high school choruses and to provide an opportunity for teachers and students at all levels to share their accomplishments, concerns and skills with each other. The Festival is a "come-as-you-are" event in which the music is taught and learned over the course of the day and a half long event and culminates in a Finale Concert in which the singers and their parents also hear a guest male ensemble.

### **UNC Music Workshop**

The UNC Music Workshop is intended for pianists and singers who are rising 9th graders through rising college freshmen. In addition, the Workshop offers topic driven sessions for adult participants as well as the opportunity to make music at a high level. For HS age participants, the Workshop offers:

- Private lessons in voice or piano included with registration
- Theory classes and an optional video/movie composition class
- Daily individual performance opportunities in studio classes and solo recitals
- Coached Cabaret showcasing students with interests and skills in any kind of less formal performance, including comedy, original song writing, small groups, dance, or solo performance
- Large choral and staged singing opportunities