

La Habra High School – HiARTS

Choral Handbook

(REVISED 8-14-24)



Chamber Singers  *Concert Choir*

Barbershop Quartet Singing  *Ukulele Ensemble*

Course Information and Guidelines

VOCAL MUSIC PROGRAM:

LHHS – Room 370, Music Building
(562) 266-5073 24-Hour voice mail

ON THE WEB:

www.LaHabraHighSchoolChoir.com

*Please check often for CALENDAR UPDATES, and all information about our choir program.
You may choose to follow the Google calendar of events to have the latest choir information
in your own electronic device!*

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Instagram: @lhhschoir

ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES:

<https://sites.google.com/fjuhsd.org/montoyas-legendary-listening/home>

www.MusicTheory.net

MUSIC FACULTY:

Mr. David V. Montoya, Director (562) 266-5073 – dmontoya@fjuhsd.org
Mr. Tom Nichols, Barbershop Coach (714) 343-0845 – tsnichols@sbcglobal.net
Nathan Campbell, Uke Coach – doritohair07@gmail.com
Mr. David Edwards, HiARTS Dept. Head – dedwards@fjuhsd.org
Mr. Phillip Wightman, HiARTS Dept. Head – pwightman@fjuhsd.org

CHOIR EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Alyse Gutierrez, President
Brody Jurado, Vice-President of Business
Mia Sena, Vice-President of Publicity
Isabel Pinedo-Reza, Secretary

CHOIR COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Santiago Aceves, Student Assistant Musical Director
Arydai Reynoso, Choir Attire Manager
Eris Gray & Kaydee Schmidt, LHHS Co-Librarians
Jayden Garcia & Alejandro Torres, LHHS Garden Keepers
ALL CLASS SECTIONLEADERS (listed on the Choir website)

THE ENSEMBLES AND CLUBS:

The choirs, clubs and soloists are a source of pride for La Habra High School. The choirs present many outstanding programs and events throughout the year. All students in our programs are encouraged to make singing a lifetime choice and to continue their musical lives after high school. They are also encouraged to develop strong music literacy skills, to develop leadership skills, to set goals that will help them to move up within the choir program, and to achieve a great level of musical satisfaction in life.

BARBERSHOP SINGING – Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30pm (full group), 4:30 to 5:30pm (quartets)

Both young men and women are invited to study the true barbershop style with our own Mr. Tom Nichols. Mr. Nichols sings with the Orange Empire Chorus of Fullerton and graciously gives of his time to students who want to learn this uniquely American style of singing. Find three friends with the proper voice types, and you may find yourself performing in a barbershop quartet for very appreciative audiences! Every other year, the OEC has sponsored a group of students to compete in the Barbershop Harmony Society's Mid-Winter Convention. Our district-wide honor choir, the OC Student Union, competed in Reno, Nevada in January of 2016!

CONCERT CHOIR – Period 1

This is a mixed chorus that offers students the opportunity to explore choral studies. Students in grades 9-12 are accepted without audition. No experience is necessary, but advanced singers are welcome. Students will learn the basics of choral singing and will also learn vocal technique, music theory and appreciation, performance practices of various styles of music, and most importantly, THE VALUE OF TEAMWORK! Students are expected to participate in all performances for the full year. This is a non-touring class, but there may be smaller opportunities for travel.

CHAMBER SINGERS – Period 4

Chamber Singers is a choir of balanced men's and women's voices, grades 9-12, who are specifically chosen for vocal tone color, blend, musicianship, and the ability to WORK AS A TEAM. Students are also expected to have skills in sight singing and musicianship. They will advance those skills as members of this class. Audition is required, and upon doing so students make a 1-year commitment to the choir. The Chamber Singers perform numerous times throughout the year in assemblies, concerts, community events and festivals. It is often the first group called upon to represent the LHHS choir to the greater La Habra community. Class content includes music literature in many languages and styles, music theory, and music appreciation. All students are expected to tour with the choir in the Spring. This class meets all A-G requirements.

EXECUTIVE BOARD – Wednesdays from 3:45 to 4:30p

The leadership team for the choir is chosen in April of the previous year. They meet weekly to steer the choir program and are an invaluable part of the organization.

UKULELE ENSEMBLE – Tuesdays & Thursdays during Zero Period

Uke Class focuses on musicianship, ensemble playing, vocal training and song writing. The Ukulele Ensemble performs at each choir concert and even does performances of their own. The focus is on repertoire, memorization and performance. Students in Zero Period Uke Class may audition into this group by learning the three audition songs posted at www.MontoyasGreatListening.weebly.com.

POLICIES AND INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE – All choir students are expected to be in class EVERYDAY. **If a student reaches 10 choir class absences (excused or unexcused), a parent conference by phone will result, as well a referral to the Dean of Attendance.** If the student continues to be absent from class, an attendance contract will be put in place. Students who are continually absent from choir may be dropped at the semester. Attendance at all choir concerts is mandatory, not optional.

ATTIRE – Formal concert wear requirements are listed in the *Choir Outfits* section of this handbook. In addition, all choir students will receive a black choir T-shirt for informal performances and choir spirit days. Extra choir shirts are available for \$10.00. Choir sweatshirts may be available as a strictly optional purchase. (See *OUTFITS*)

BARBERSHOP SINGING – Our combined vocal music program offers barbershop-style singing to all students for FREE! We are fortunate to have an excellent barbershop coach, Mr. Tom Nichols, who will help students to form performance quartets. He will rehearse with them once a week and help them to prepare for concerts and even competitions. For students who want to learn about the barbershop style, there are two days in February when we send a group of students to learn from and perform an evening of barbershop harmony in a choral setting. At these, the Men’s Harmony Festival and Diva Day, students will sing a concert with international champion barbershop singers!

BATTLE OF THE SECTIONS (BOTS) – As the year progresses, each section of the choir will compete for the title of “Section of the Year.” Various events will be assigned BOTS points (not part of the class grade) and every section will have the chance to earn them. By the final concert of the year, the Section of the Year will be announced and their picture will be proudly displayed in the Choir Room.

BIG EARS – A regular feature of Mr. Montoya’s choir classes is the “Big Ears” Listening activity. Students will hear new music, write about it, and discuss it in class. This is generally a Friday activity. Each week’s “Big Ears” paper should be kept neatly in a student’s choir portfolio and will be given credit for completeness at the end of the semester. Students who are absent on Friday are still responsible for the activity and should go to www.MontoyasGreatMusicListening.weebly.com to hear the music and write about it from home.

CALENDAR – The Choir Calendar of Events is exclusively online in the form of a Google calendar. Students are responsible for making sure that they are at every event that applies to them. If there are conflicts that cannot be avoided, the student should give a note IN WRITING OR BY EMAIL, at least one day IN ADVANCE of the date. Updates to the calendar will be posted in the choir room monthly, but parents/guardians are asked to utilize the CHOIR WEBSITE as much as possible to stay in touch with the latest updates to the calendar of events. (Look in the description of each calendar event.) It is the responsibility of each choir student to know what is happening all year, and to help communicate those happenings to their parents and guardians in a timely fashion.

TO FIND THE CHOIR CALENDAR ONLINE please go to
www.LaHabraHighSchoolChoir.com

Please check often for CALENDAR UPDATES, a copy of this handbook, and other choir info. You may choose to follow the Choir Google Calendar of Events into your device to have the latest choir information and updates!

CALIFORNIA CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (CCDA) – As a member of CCDA, Mr. Montoya can offer special opportunities for his choral students such as All-State Honor Choir in March. Find out more about CCDA at www.calcda.org.

CHOIR ROOM RULES – There are four basic rules for the Choir Room. Please follow them in order to keep our room and learning environment in the best possible condition. THANKS! ☺

1. NO food, drinks, or gum during class. (Water is fine.)
2. NO cosmetics as defined by Mr. Montoya. (These include make up, brushes, combs, lotions mirrors, etc.)
3. NO cell phones, earbuds, or other electronic devices **MAY BE ON OR OUT** during class, except for Chromebooks when being used for classroom activities. Students should put their phones in a designated pocket for the duration of class. Students should put their phones in their designated pouch at the front door when entering the room.
CHOIR ROOM IS A NO-PHONE ZONE!
4. **DRESS CODE!** All students are expected to follow the school policies regarding dress code.
Please respect our learning environment and dress appropriately.

EXECUTIVE BOARD – Leadership in the LHHS Choir is based upon student and parental involvement. The Choir Executive Board is appointed by an application and interview process in April of the previous school year. These students are essential in the efficient functioning of the choir. They make important decisions for the choir and plan events. A more comprehensive list of duties will be given with the application form in the spring. Executive Board members are always willing to accept your concerns about choir and your suggestions for the improvement of our organization.

The positions on the Executive Board are as follows:

1. President
2. Vice-President of Business
3. Vice-President of Publicity
4. Secretary

In addition, a Student Assistant Musical Director will be auditioned from the choirs each year. Other roles in choir leadership include: Choir Attire Manager, Librarian, Choir Tech and Choir Garden Keeper. All of these leadership roles, including Section Leaders and Assistant Section leaders comprise the Choir Council.

EXTRA CREDIT POLICY – Students may earn extra credit class points by:

1. Turning in a ONE-PAGE type-written report about ANY ARTS PERFORMANCE that they attend during that semester. This must be a program that students are NOT REQUIRED TO ATTEND. The report should be a critical review of the performance attended. Students may earn up to 15 points for one assignment. If a student is unsure if a certain performance is eligible for an extra credit review, they should consult with Mr. Montoya BEFORE they attend.

2. Complete a Tiny Desk concert, ONE AND ½ PAGE report after listening to any performance posted at <https://www.npr.org/series/tiny-desk-concerts/>. Please be aware that some of these concerts contain mature themes depending on the artists chosen. If something seems offensive to you, please stop the concert and choose another.

FIELD TRIPS – Students are expected to attend all field trips that are planned for the choir. These will range from Disneyland trips to choir festivals to community service performances. Since this requires time out of class, it is expected that students will strive to keep their grades in good standing. Also, students must communicate with teachers to assure that their homework/classwork does not suffer. A Permission Slip, is required for each off-campus trip. A Waiver-of-Liability form is required once each year. These forms may be downloaded from the choir website. No student will be allowed to perform until these forms are signed and turned in, and they will lose class points if they do not perform. **STUDENTS WHO HAVE A GRADE POINT AVERAGE THAT FALLS BELOW A 2.0 FOR ANY QUARTER, WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND NON-GRADED CHOIR EVENTS, DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL HOURS, UNTIL THEIR NEXT GRADE REPORT SHOWS IMPROVEMENT.**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – It is the policy of the LHHS Choir that no student shall be kept from participating in choir events for financial reasons. Please consider making a donation so that we can support all students who wish to learn music. **WE ARE A TEAM AND WE ARE HAPPY TO HELP EACH OTHER**, so please be generous. *Also, students who are signed up for free and reduced lunch may choose to receive complementary concert tickets for various choir concerts. Please see Mr. Montoya privately for more information.*

FUND RAISING – There will be many opportunities for students to help raise money for the choir organization. Please help us to keep our program strong by helping with our fund raising efforts. We will be doing a SNAPRAISE campaign in the fall, and we will have various other fund raisers throughout the year. Some fundraising activities include See's Candy, cookie dough, and attendance at TV tapings such as America's Funniest Home Videos where we get paid for being in the audience! Also, if you have a great idea to help us raise money, please feel free to share it with the Executive Board.

GOALS FOR ALL CHOIR MEMBERS – The goals for each and every choir member are as follows:

- ~ to build their confidence and their voice which produces competency and enjoyment in musical practice and performance,
- ~ to develop professionalism in practice and performance
- ~ to learn about music theory and music history
- ~ to learn how to sight sing in order to become reading musicians, which will improve the musical impact of the entire choir,
- ~ to be open to new musical ideas and styles,
- ~ to learn to work together with others in a “team effort” and to realize the importance of group goals, even over individual personal goals,
- ~ to be dedicated members of a team,
- ~ to share in the passionate and intelligent making of beautiful music,
- ~ to represent La Habra High School with pride and to enjoy the opportunity and responsibility of representing LHHS in the community,
- ~ to discover the joy that comes out of the musical excellence that we achieve *together*.

GRADING – Each event or activity, inside and outside of classroom time, will be assigned a number of points. The student's point percentage will be determined and will show a letter grade on a scale of 100-90% = A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59 and below=F. Grades and attendance are posted online on Aeries. Students and parents should check grades frequently.

Choir is a dynamic art. There has to be interaction between all of the members of the group for it to be alive and most musically effective. For this reason, students who are absent from class or a performance, *even with a valid excuse* must do make-up work. Each student is vitally important to the

choir, and their presence is missed, even when they are gone for a really good reason. Students may always earn extra credit to offset the points lost from missing a performance, rehearsal, class period, etc. It is the student's responsibility to check for class work or home work on the day after an absence.

Point values are as follows, but are subject to change:

- 3 Daily participation, with folder and pencil in hand.
- 60 Major concert
- 30 Minor performance
- 30 Dress rehearsal before a concert
- 15 Written assignments
- 60 Final semester portfolio
- 10 Sectional rehearsal (outside of class)
- 20-30 Extra rehearsal
- 15 Extra credit reports (if well-written, typed with a ticket stub or program attached.)

HONOR CHOIRS – All choral music students are encouraged to apply for various honors choirs that are presented outside of school. Southern California Honor Choir is in November with auditions taking place in September/October. All-State Honor Choir is in February or March and students must have performed in the So Cal Honor Choir to be eligible. Students who audition in to the honor choir **MUST** follow through with their commitment or the entire school may be penalized the following year. Please be sure that you can commit to this event if you are going to try out. Sometimes the Orange Empire Chorus sponsors an all-District Barbershop Honor Choir with an overnight stay in various locations. See Mr. Montoya for more information about these amazing opportunities. (*See SCVA and CCDA*)

MUSIC, MATERIALS AND FOLDERS – Each student is expected to have a three-ring **PLASTIC-COVERED BLACK BINDER** (1-inch ring, minimum) with 5 dividers for the organized storage of their sheet music and class notes. Students will use their folder as a portfolio of their year in choir, keeping **ALL** scores, tests, listening assignments, concert programs, flyers. . .in other words **EVERYTHING!** Students must have a pencil attached to their binders at all times in order to make appropriate markings in their music. For a musician, **A PENCIL IS ESSENTIAL** and should be in hand every time we sing with music in hand! Portfolio folders will be graded at the end of the each semester. (*See Grading Policy.*) Students are expected to have folders and all scores at all times. They should put their names in ink on every page in their folder. Students who cannot get a folder will have a folder provided for them. (*See Portfolios and Grading*)

OUTFITS – In general, men wear choir-issued black tuxedos with black shoes and black socks and women wear choir-issued black concert gowns with black, low-heeled (2-inch max) shoes. But any student can request to wear either the tux or dress as best suits them. These outfits should be kept in a labeled garment bag and must be ready for the first performance in the fall. (*See ATTIRE*)

For **TUXEDOS**, please keep a container or plastic bag with your shirt studs, bow tie, and cuff links inside your garment bag or on the hanger. Students may wear their own tux if they already own one. **BLACK SOCKS** are a must, and black dress shoes also. Please let Mr. Montoya know early if you need a pair of shoes or socks.

For **CONCERT GOWNS**, black character-like shoes (1-inch heel, closed-toe black pump) are best. Concert shoes are for uniformity, and fashion, and should be closed toe and plain black in color. If you plan to wear nylons, then please wear **SKIN TONE** nylons only. Please do not wear extra jewelry with your outfit as this is distracting on stage and takes away from our unified image. You may wear one

ring per hand and one set of small stud earrings if earrings are not bought by the choir as a matching set. (All choices are at the discretion of Mr. Montoya, the Choir Attire Manager, and the Executive Board.) All dresses must be *hemmed at the ankle bone* in order to show your shoes. If your dress is not hemmed to your appropriate height when you receive it, we ask that you donate the price of the hemming. If you cannot, the choir will reimburse you for your expense. Please bring us the receipt.

All hair must be worn up and out of your face. If your hair is now up and out of your face, it will be fixed for you, with pins, hairspray, etc. If you don't want us to mess with your hair, then make sure to style it properly before you arrive to the concert.

Please wear deodorant, but **NO COLOGNE, NO PERFURME and NO SCENTED LOTIONS.** These items make it difficult for singers around you with allergies.

PARENT SUPPORT – Please consider helping out as a parent volunteer. Besides financial support, we are always looking for parents to help with various things such as:

- Concert Assistance
- Ticket Sales
- Fund Raisers
- Silent Auctions
- Field Trip Chaperoning
- Construction/repair projects in the choir room

Please notify Mr. Montoya at dmontoya@fjuhsd.org if you would like to help!

PERFORMANCES – Each performance is literally a test of all that we have worked on and learned in class. A live performance is always a once-in-a-lifetime event. . .no two are ever exactly alike and once they are over, they can never be repeated. Therefore, performances are very important to ALL choir members. **EVERYONE COUNTS!** You deserve the right to enjoy a good performance after you have worked so hard, and this can only happen when every person is in their proper place and doing their job to the best of their ability. Attendance at all performances is **MANDATORY**. Any absences from major and minor events should be communicated **IN WRITING**, signed by a parent, and given to Mr. Montoya, no later than **THE DAY BEFORE** the event or rehearsal (but, the earlier the better!) E-mails to Mr. Montoya are also acceptable. (Don't tell me and expect me to remember. Please put it in writing.)

When a student has an **UNEXCUSED OR EXCUSED** absence, they will need to make up the points missed with an alternate assignment. (See *Extra Credit Policy*) In the event of a last-minute emergency, please call the choir office (24-hour voice mail) at (562) 266-5073. The student will *still* need to do extra credit to make up the points missed. Remember, **RESPONSIBILITY** and **COMMUNICATION** are of greatest importance!

PORTFOLIOS – Final semester portfolios will be graded on a basis of completeness. (See *Grading*) They should contain the following categories, in order, labeled with tabs:

1. *Class/Concert Info* - Classroom handouts, etc.
2. *Scores* - ALL music that has been handed out, in alphabetical order, with MANY intelligent musical pencil markings, to help learn the music better.
3. *Note Notes* - All class notes about music notes. This includes sight singing papers, handwritten notes, handouts, tests, etc. It is my goal that every student should learn musicianship and know how to sight sing. (Imagine taking an English class without knowing how to read English!)
4. *Big Ears* - Listening with big inner ears is essential for any musician. We will have music listening examples in class. Students will listen and react to it in writing and

discussion. The goal is to expand our listening skills. Students may suggest listening examples by giving me a good copy to listen to, along with any written info about the music and enough time for me to review it. It is the responsibility of each student who is absent from class on any Big Ears day to go to www.MontoyasGreatListening.weebly.com

to hear and write about the musical example that was missed. Therefore, this section in your portfolio should be 100% complete.

5. Miscellaneous - This section includes everything from extra credit reports and festival adjudication sheets, to concert programs, concert flyers and programs, and notebook and musical staff paper.

REHEARSALS (OUT OF CLASS) – There will be times when students from all choirs will need combined rehearsal time in order to make performances most effective. These rehearsals will take place after school, evening, or sometimes on weekends or holidays, with plenty of advanced notice so that students may make necessary arrangements in their schedules. These rehearsals are mandatory and will count in a student’s choir class grade. (*See CALENDAR for info. regarding missing rehearsals.*)

SECTIONAL REHEARSALS – From time to time, all members of the choirs may be required to attend various sectional rehearsals with their choir section *outside of class time*. These rehearsals will help assure the correct knowledge of parts for ALL section members (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). These sectionals may be assigned class grade points. Section leaders should give their members at least a 3-day notice for an upcoming sectional and will report attendance to Mr. Montoya. (*See Grading*)

SECTION LEADERS (and Assistant Section Leaders) – These leaders are chosen from the choir to make sure that students in their section are prepared, well-organized, have all of their materials, return all necessary forms, and learn their music well. For Chamber Singers (Vocal Ensemble) section leaders are chosen by Mr. Montoya during the April auditions. They must be 10th grade or higher, with at least one semester of experience in Mr. Montoya’s choir program. For Concert Choir, section leaders should have at least one semester of experience in Mr. Montoya’s choir. They are picked by their section in the fall.

SENIOR BRICKS/CORDS – LHHS choir seniors who graduate after performing with the choir will have their name included on the Senior Brick Wall in the choir room. 4-year LHHS choir members will have their brick painted in gold. Seniors who have played an outstanding role in the LHHS music program will be awarded a special musical cord to wear at graduation. Music cords are given to students who have at least 2 years in the LHHS Music Program with a grade of C or better, and at least a Satisfactory in citizenship, AND are in a *performance* group in their senior year (choir, band, or uke ensemble).

SOLOS – Students should realize that there are basically two kinds of voices in solo auditions – solo voices and choral voices. Some students have exceptional solo voices, but have a hard time blending with a choir section and need to work on that. Some students do not have the voice of a soloist, but are a tremendous asset to the choir, both in blend and musicianship. Of course, all students are encouraged to build up their skills in both areas. They should give themselves an honest assessment as to their strengths and weaknesses. Solo voices have a strong resonant quality. Regardless of where your voice is currently, auditioning is a great skill for any singer.

Solo opportunities come along for each concert. Soloists are expected to be most informed about concerts and their own personal roles in those concerts. Soloists will audition during class, in front of their peers, and will be judged on: 1. PREPARATION, 2. PROFESSIONALISM, and 3. AUDIENCE

APPEAL. Solos should generally be classical, or folk, or even pop in nature. Each solo will be considered depending on Mr. Montoya's preferences in picking music for a particular show. (They must fit the overall flow of the given show.) Solos may also be instrumental or may include instrumentalists from outside of choir, including adults. This adds variety to our shows! If you do not make it for one concert, you may re-audition your solo for future concerts. **AUDITIONS WITHOUT ACCOMPANIMENT WILL NOT BE HEARD** unless the solo was originally written as such. Students should prepare early for solos, and should include some voice lesson time when preparing for a solo.

Those who earn solos are expected to be responsible, knowledgeable, and memorized early. They should know exactly what is going on during each concert and be aware of their stage cues at all times. Soloists are held to a higher standard over group singers. (*See Voice Lessons*)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA VOCAL ASSOCIATION (SCVA) – SCVA is an organization that presents many “outside of school” vocal opportunities for Southern California high school students. Some events, such as various springtime festivals are attended by our whole choir. Other events such as the Solo Vocal Competition and Southern California Honor Choir are activities that individual students are encouraged to participate in on their own. Go to www.scvachoral.org for more information. (*see Honor Choirs*)

SPRING CONCERT/AWARDS NIGHT – During our final concert in the spring, we recognize choir students for outstanding achievement in the choir program. Director's Awards are given for Teamwork, Musicianship, Most Improved Student, and Outstanding Student. In addition, students are recognized for years of service to the choir with medals for 2, 3 and 4 years. Choir members are able to recognize their peers by filling out a choir survey and then the results are tallied for the Choir Survey Awards. These are presented at an end-of-the-year party, or in class.

TOURING – Good music needs to be shared. Good music will take you to many great places in this world. Tour opportunities come nearly every year and every effort should be made to attend. It is expected that all Chamber Singers (Vocal Ensemble members) will do their very best to attend choir tour. Students will have several opportunities per year to raise money for these trips. (*See Fund Raising*)

VOICE LESSONS – Who should take voice lessons? Any singer from the beginner to the most advanced. All students are encouraged study privately if they want to develop their singing abilities to their fullest potential. A list of area teachers and music studios can be obtained from Mr. Montoya. For students who wish to enter the SCVA Solo Vocal Competition, this is essential. Voice lessons are not attached to a student's class grade in choir. (*See SCVA*)

