

Overview of Music Class in Birchwood

The music program at Birchwood School presents the essence of knowledge and performance of music from a broad rich perspective yet in a simple and interesting way. Students will enjoy music through professional methods and training in order to perform with pride.

A modern music class does not just offer a setting for “teaching music”, but provide a very free and open environment to motivate and cultivate the creative and carefree spirit and imagination of innocent inmate humanity in young hearts, in a various combination of rhythm and sound and body language by different ways of speaking, singing, performing, movement, dance and drama.

General Music

Birchwood offers music class from 1st to 6th grades. A typical music class, in principle, includes five key sections. First, an opening singing. Students learn to sing significant songs which inspire the joy, virtue, positive thinking and potential of their soul. Second, music appreciation. Students listen to various styles of music and do projects based on biographies of the composers and their musical styles.. Third, musical activity. All the music learning comes with playing instruments, various movements, and dances.

Besides, the upper graders (4th to 6th grades) or advanced students will be exposed in advanced music theory and composition. Overall, Birchwood fulfills the elements of National Standard of Music Education.

The learning process involved in Birchwood music class is very comprehensive and solid. The students study the fundamental theories and techniques. They listen to and analyze the composition (music) of great composers. They do projects to explore characters and musical styles and techniques of great composers and compare the difference between different composers and their music works. At the same time, the students are encouraged to develop their own ideas and create their original works alone or cooperatively, and then share their works with the class and learn from each other.

Instrumental Ensembles

Birchwood offers mixed ensembles, including string, wind and percussion (piano, xylophones, guitars and drums) ensembles from 5th to 8th grades. We encourage and guide the students to participate and develop their level in the ensembles from basic and then intermediate until advanced level through the years by constant class practices, rehearsals, master classes, and in-school performances and regional competitions and auditions. All participants are expected to take private lessons with professional instrumental musicians to sharpen their skills on the instrumental pieces and elevate their performing levels.

Choral Ensemble

Birchwood offers choral ensemble from 5th to 8th grades to incite the students' passion for harmonic singing and to provide constant training and practice for them to exploring vocal skills. Based on this solid foundation the students will become familiar with and be immersed with world cultures by a rich choral repertoire selected from diverse periods and civilizations through the human history.

Recorder Ensemble

They play on the full range of recorders based on their interest and recorder skills. The ensemble studies and explores the early medieval and Renaissance music and some Celtic jazz and folk music.

STRENGTHS FOR MUSIC CLASS

1. Learn Orff process for creative activities and key Kodaly methods for reading notes.
2. Teach music according to students' talents and levels and interests and give students opportunities for creating their own music.
3. Give students opportunities to perform at class and to participate in related activities such as School Open House, Fine Art Night, Spanish Day, Graduation and Senior Center performance.
4. Provide the students after school music program of individual and group instrumental lessons for strengthening their ensemble practice and performing.
5. Attend the Greater Cleveland Solo and Ensemble Contest -- setting up goals for upgrading the students to different levels and motivating the students to practice up to professional standard.