

## Orchestra

Dear Musicians of the WSMA Middle Level State Honors Orchestra,

Congratulations on your acceptance into this honor group! I trust this will be a wonderful experience as you make great music and new friends. I love honor groups because of the focused time creating music and memories with incredible talent from around the whole state. Because our rehearsal time is short, it is crucial that you know your music in advance. You prepared well to earn a position in the group, and it is equally important that you prepare your music for the first rehearsal in a similar manner. The better you know your part individually, the more fun we will all have digging out the meaning and the expression of each piece. The best rehearsals focus on details, nuance, expression and connection, more than notes and rhythms. Here are some tips for learning your parts:

1. **Practice Scales and Arpeggios** in the keys of our pieces. Play these both with long tones and with faster patterns to get the correct intervals in your ear and in your fingers.
2. **Start slowly**- We often like to jump into things head first. Sometimes that is ok, but taking tempos slow in the beginning establishes an accurate foundation that you can build upon. If you go too fast too early, you may develop technical inconsistencies or poor habits that are hard to break.
3. **Practice in small chunks**- Don't just start at the beginning and play through everything. Find the hard spots and isolate those segments. For faster technical passages, break them down into small bits. Make each small segment accurate before you move to the next one or add them together.
4. **Listen to recordings**- Listen to the original recordings as well as the arrangements that we will be performing to get a sense of the whole piece. I have provided some links below. When listening to our specific arrangements, have your sheet music in hand and follow along as you listen.
5. **Ask for help from your teachers**- If you are having trouble with a spot or if you just want some more advice on how to practice something specific, reach out for help. Teachers love it when students are practicing, so I'm sure they will be glad to help!

Our concert program will be:

Sleeping Beauty Waltz from the Ballet – Tchaikovsky/ arr. Isaac

Allegretto from Symphony No. 7 – Beethoven/ arr. Longfield (strings only)

Prelude from Act I of La Traviata – Verdi/ arr. Jack Bullock

Danza Final from Estancia – Ginastera / arr. Longfield / young edition (strings and perc. only)

First Symphony, Fourth Movement – Brahms / arr. Vernon Leidig

### Sleeping Beauty Waltz from the Ballet – Tchaikovsky/ arr. Isaac

Children and adults alike through the years have enjoyed stories of fantasy and enchantment as evidenced through both modern movies and older ballets and operas. The story of Sleeping Beauty from Charles Perrault (and also taken up by the Brothers Grimm) was set to music and dance so masterfully by the Russian composer, Tchaikovsky in the late 1800s. After a rousing introduction, this full orchestra piece launches into a beautiful waltz melody. As you listen to the recordings, I encourage to create in your mind your own visual picture of who is dancing and what might be happening on stage or on a screen. Tchaikovsky's gift for melodic line and musical drama should bring many images to mind.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5VFWbus\\_p4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5VFWbus_p4)

Actual arrangement recording

<https://www.jwpepper.com/Sleeping-Beauty-Waltz/2143618.item#/>

### Allegretto from Symphony No. 7 – Beethoven/ arr. Longfield

By 1811 Ludwig van Beethoven was almost completely deaf, and his concerto performance career was over. However, that did not stop the flow of musical ideas from this genius mind. Wagner referred to Beethoven's seventh symphony as the "Apotheosis of the dance." Other composers from Berlioz to Bernstein have frequently applied different dance labels to each movement giving light to Beethoven's propelling use of rhythm throughout. The Allegretto movement is the slowest of the four, and its rhythmic motive on one pitch may be even more distinct and memorable than the melodies. Between two unstable chords that open and close the work, this two-measure rhythmic figure underscores the many different variations of this movement.

Carlos Kleiber with the Wiener Philharmoniker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDpDwZZA248>

Actual arrangement link

<https://www.jwpepper.com/Allegretto/10284930.item#/submit>

### Prelude from Act I of La Traviata – Verdi/ arr. Jack Bullock

In our modern world of cinema dominated entertainment, opera receives less recognition and understanding from the general public. However, in Giuseppe Verdi's time in 19<sup>th</sup> century Italy, opera was the equivalent of going to the movies. With over 30 operas, Verdi was Italy's greatest opera composer. When just listening to the music, we hear beautiful melodies. However, if you understand or translate the text and learn of the synopsis of his operas, you will find important and often difficult topics that are still relevant today. *La Traviata* (the fallen woman) would likely be a rated R movie today because of its sexually controversial topic.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_WomiJqiPOY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WomiJqiPOY)

Actual arrangement link

<https://www.jwpepper.com/Prelude/10015088.item#/submit>

Danza Final from Estancia – Ginastera / arr. Longfield / young edition

Ginastera's *Estancia* is a ballet about ranch life of Argentine gauchos (cowboys). In the ballet, a city boy falls in love with the rancher's daughter. She is less than impressed when compared to the other tough cowboys. However, through a competitive Malambo demonstrating agility and machismo, the city boy outlasts the other cowboys in this vigorous dance of clapping and stamping to win her heart. Like many South American musical styles, alternating patters of six-eight and three-four time signatures create rhythmic drive in this movement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfGbTG2wuaM>

Actual arrangement link

<https://www.halleonard.com/product/48030031/danza-final-young-edition?subsiteid=6>

First Symphony, Fourth Movement – Brahms / arr. Vernon Leidig

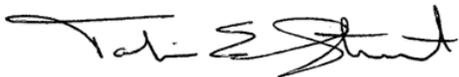
By the time Johannes Brahms turned forty-three, he had established himself as leading composer in Austria and Germany, but he had not yet completed a symphony. Being a perfectionist and harsh self-critic, he not only destroyed or reworked many of his pieces, but he also feared entering the symphonic world after the great accomplishments of Beethoven's nine symphonies. In his mind, Beethoven had defined the limits of symphonic writing. Brahms stated at one point, "You have no idea what it's like to hear the footsteps of a giant like that (Beethoven) behind you." After wrestling with his first symphony for fourteen years, Brahms finally brought a masterpiece in this genre to the world. The last movement begins with a horn call of the shepherds in the mountains before launching into a simple but stunningly beautiful main theme.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWuVEFwT5fw>

Actual arrangement link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biycmuY3xgY>

I look forward to meeting you all and making great music together in October!



Dr. Tobin Stewart

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