**Music Production Classes (MPC)**

**Course description:** *Combining traditional composition, arranging, and orchestration techniques with digital audio workstations (DAWs – Digital Audio Workstations: software programs that allow for recording, editing, and mixing sound).*

**The curriculum:** Students are asked to produce a variety of audio files/projects ranging from independent song writing to event based music including: TV programs, Video presentations, morning show announcements, visual art showings, as well as providing additional music for live performing groups (backing tracks). Students are also asked to learn about music’s promotional aspects including web design, posting music on collaborative sights: Spotify/SoundCloud/Reverb Nation, etc.

**Level 1** Students are introduced to basic windows/screen sets as well as basic music theories (melody, harmony, and rhythm. Simple projects involve beat and chord construction, using microphones and an audio interface for recording (Learning set up, adjusting recording levels and basic mixing), and software functions/editing (understanding various windows: main arrangement window, midi editor, and mixer, using preset key commands, score view/piano roll, mixing view, etc. As well as lining up midi and audio information, adding basic effects, quantization, adjusting midi based data). Students will produce several complete 3-10 minute files of audio/music each quarter marking period. Students are required to properly bounce/mix down files to wave, AIFF, MP3 and MP4. **File sharing: All final mixes are sent in for evaluation via Microsoft One Drive,** [**www.dropbox.com**](http://www.dropbox.com) **google drive, or any other cloud based file sharing app.**

**Level 2** In addition to level one requirements, students are asked to use more advanced editing and mixing tools/functions (velocity, automation of :volume, panning and effects controls, etc.) as well as correctly use mixing functions such as send/return, bussing, etc. Song writing skills included knowledge of basic song forms, phrasing, meter/time signature. Basic arranging skills: voicing, instrument ranges, scoring, and orchestration. Students are asked to begin posting music via cloud based apps. Students are required to properly bounce/mix down files to wave, AIFF, MP3 and MP4. **File sharing: All final mixes are sent in for evaluation via Microsoft One Drive,** [**www.dropbox.com**](http://www.dropbox.com) **google drive, or any other cloud based file sharing app.**

**Level 3** Tracks 1 (media/film scoring) and 2 (music producer/song writer) All music production skills from levels 1 and 2 in coordination with video/media production programs - creating original audio recordings and syncing them to video projects both with a small production team and individually. In addition students will be required to take one of their compositions and score it for one of the NFHS performing ensembles – Symphonic, Concert, Jazz, or marching – band. Students will be introduced to music software programs finale/Sibelius.

**Level 4** Students are looking to create a professional based portfolio that highlights knowledge of both song writing/arranging/orchestration along with high level mixing/mastering and sound construction (manipulation and effecting of basic sign, square, and saw waves). These projects will be put on a flash drive as well as posted to a personal/school website so that they may be included with college applications – some students may wish to include other national based websites like soundcloud or bandcamp to share their music.

**Project 1 Beats 1:** Create an original beat using 1 to 4 tracks of sampled/midi data. **No Loops allowed.**- Looping can be helpful when under time constraints or while demoing songs but constructing beats that sound unique and that closely fit a particular song structure is crucial to understanding song creation and developing a unique and noticeable sound. Making a 2 - 4 measure drum beat before letting it simply repeat is also a requirement. Learn how traditional kick, snare, and hi-hat sounds are mixed with newer electronic sounds, world, and ambient samples fits in nicely with industry standards.

**Project 2 Chords 1:** Chord progressions are used in all styles of music. Knowledge of how chords are constructed as well as how a progression of chords can be used in music is essential for creating an original sounding film score, pop song, or other style of composition. For this project no beats are allowed. The movement, direction, mood, and energy must be created by harmonic tension and resolution along with orchestration (choosing what sounds you want).

**Project 3 Bass line 1:** Creating a bass line that fits both the harmony and the rhythm (including drum beats) can add a lot of depth to a song or “beat” (this term is sometimes used to describe the entire accompaniment in hip/hop, rap, and electric dance music (EDM). Making an 8 measure bass line with chord progression and drum beat will show a knowledge of simple phrasing and cadence, consistent meter, and could be used as a section of a song on further projects.

**Project 4** **Melody/Lead line**: Most often used in EDM, classical/instrumental, and some pop music. An instrumental lead will most often be the memorable, noticeable, and attractive part of a song - the part that you can sing or hum out loud. This project does not require a vocal lead at this time. Instead the focus is on creating a unique sounding lead line that will fit over either a bass line with drums or chords or both.

**Project 5 audio recording/editing**. Recording live voice over another audio track: understanding concepts and tools like volume and panning, clipping, head room, and other recording basics as well as using audio editing tools (cut/move/copy and paste/loop/and other commonly used editing tools.

**Project 6 Style/genre 1.** Recreating a basic blues progression with swing beat. More advanced Quantizing is required. Understanding of song form, melodic use of the blues scale and dominant seventh chords is taught/required.

**Project 7 Style/genre 2.** String quartet. Reproducing Pachelbel’s Cannon – understanding the often used chord progression, instrumentation of violin, viola, cello, and bass (ranges, orchestration)

**Project 8 synching audio to video**: taking an existing video and writing/bouncing/and merging an original audio track to it to create a new complete media file. (**Assignments:** animation videos, black and white videos, speeches, nature scenes, sports highlights)

**Project 9 Beat construction 2**: creating a mixed meter (example 7/8, 9/8, 5/4, ) along with changing subdivisions (quantizing examples: 32 note triplets or 64 notes etc…) to form modern and advanced sounding beats.

**Project 10 mastering 101:** taking an existing file and finding ways to add strength, clarity, richness, and fullness to an existing audio file using remixing tools such as compression, equalization, and reverb.

**Project 10 film scoring:** Writing music for film: developing Leitmotif and cues, action sequences, composing with sound effects, ambience, mood, and other establishments. Taking a Look at ADR (Automated Dialog Replacement) using a cue sheet.