TOWER HILL SCHOOL
Upper School Academic Program
Music Department

Electives Graduation Requirements

Students must earn a minimum 4 credit units (CU) from approved courses in art, computer, drama, music, and/or yearbook.

Music Course Offerings

**Band**  (2 CU) The concert band is a performing group comprised of wind and percussion instruments. The group performs music from a wide variety of styles and historical periods, from classical to contemporary, from show music to popular music. The group performs in formal concerts, assemblies, and local festivals throughout the year. Attendance is required at all scheduled events.

**Stage Band**  (1 CU, open to members of Band only, with permission of the Department Chair) Students explore the music of stage band literature from early swing through bebop to modern arrangements. Performances are scheduled for audiences during the year.

**Chorus**  (2 CU) In this course, designed for those who enjoy singing, students study choral music from madrigals to pop music. Attendance is required at concerts given throughout the year.

**Vocal Ensemble**  (1 CU, open to members of Chorus only, with permission of the Department Chair) This group of vocal musicians is chosen from the Upper School Chorus by the choral director. Chamber vocal compositions which require clarity for a few voices will comprise the repertoire.

**String Ensemble**  (1 CU, with permission of the Department Chair) Students explore various string ensemble literature appropriate to the instrumentation of the group. Students must have a string instrument in the violin family and have had three years experience or more. Performances will be scheduled during the year.

**Guitar**  (1 CU) This beginning course is structured to teach note reading, music theory and guitar technique. Lessons incorporate both chord formations and strum patterns along with melody and picking techniques.
History of Western Music (2 CU, open to students in grades 10-12) This course is a survey of the dominant trends in the development of the western classical music tradition. The course begins with the philosophical and theoretical foundations laid down in ancient Greek and Roman cultures, and then traces the history of music through the major stylistic periods from medieval to modern. Emphasis will be on the characteristic styles and genres of each period in addition to the contributions of significant musicians and their works.

With The Beatles (1 CU, open to students in grades 10-12) This course is going to examine the music of The Beatles from their early days as The Quarry Men until their break-up in 1970. As time permits, the course will proceed into the post-Beatles solo careers. Though the emphasis will be on the music itself, other topics such as influence, social impact, and biography will be incorporated. While musical analysis will be a part of the course, the course is intended for both musicians and non-musicians. Materials will include The Beatles as Musicians: The Quarry Men through Rubber Soul and The Beatles as Musicians: Revolver through the Anthology by Walter Everett. The course work will include regular reading and listening assignments, musical and textual analysis, unit tests and quizzes, and a short research paper in place of a final exam.

Music Theory* (4 CU, open to students in grades 11-12 who are in Band or Chorus, with permission of the Department Chair) The course is divided into the following units of study:

1. Basic Harmonic Theory: intervals, scales, diatonic triads, root motion, inversions, four-part harmony, figured bass, linear harmonic continuity, non-harmonic tones, major and minor mode.
2. Ear training: development of basic ear training through singing and dictation studies.
3. Conducting: techniques of the fundamental beat patterns, discussion and study of terminology, problems of tempo, phrasing and articulation.
4. Listening: form analysis and recognition for major forms through melodic and harmonic analysis.
5. Arranging: principles of transposition techniques, ranges of instruments, scoring for each instrument family and arranging a piece for an entire band, jazz band, chorus or orchestra.

Students will have the option of preparing for the AP Music Theory exam in May.