September 3, 2012

Dear 7th & 8th Grade String Ensemble Families:

Let me extend to each of you a warm welcome to the 2012-2013 Xenia Christian Middle School 7TH & 8TH Grade String Ensemble. These students are very special to me, in that they are committing themselves to the almost daily routine of practicing an instrument at home, and then giving up some of their study hall time at school to work on concert music together. To ensure that our instrumental ministry is characterized by excellence, *please* take time to read *all* of the important information contained in this letter.

**Mission.** Our String Ensemble has three purposes: (1) to uplift the name of Jesus Christ to our audiences, young and old; (2) to teach responsibility; and (3) to grow as musicians, both in our ability to play well and also in our familiarity with music of various styles.

**Is String Ensemble for me? In keeping with purposes #1 & #2,** please read the attached schedule and sign and return the Response Sheet indicating your student’s commitment to perform in each of these concerts. Unless you are also in Choir, we are asking you to come for **only two concerts** outside of the school day. These two concerts serve as your final exam for each semester. If you are not able to commit to both of the required dates, it *may* not be realistic for your student to be a String Ensemble member this year. If that is your situation, let’s talk about it and then make a decision together.

**In keeping with purpose #3,** we may perform in a variety of styles, ranging from historical music (“classical” music) through contemporary Christian music. Students need to be willing to cheerfully participate in learning and performing music that may be new to them. This is part of their education. If you have any doctrinal reservations about your student performing music in certain styles, or in worship traditions other than your own, please contact me in the next two weeks and I will show you what I have planned.

**Folders and music.** Each student will be issued his/her own music folder with a set of sheet music. Occasionally the folder may include a CD for the student to listen to. This folder and its contents remain the property of Xenia Christian Middle School and must be treated with respect, just as would be the case with textbooks and library books. It must be returned to Mr. Colaner in good condition at the conclusion of the school year. If not, the student must pay to replace both folder and sheet music. The folders cost $1.00 each. Sheet music is additional and the cost is usually $2 - $3 per title.

**Concert Attire and Concert Schedule.** The required concert attire and our schedule for the year may be found at the end of this letter. There will be some optional events for which you will receive information in a later communique.

**Grades.** Students receive grades based upon the criteria below. All students have an “A” in each category unless deductions must be made.

1. **Bringing to school** instruments, music, and completed Practice Charts *including parent initials where applicable* = **one test grade for all rehearsal days combined.**

2. **In-school concerts (Chapel Concerts) =** **two test grades**. Deductions may be made for tardiness to the warm-up room or failure to abide by the concert dress code. Deductions will be made for students who arrive without instruments or music. Students who fail to attend will receive “F’s” for their concert grade unless they are absent from school

3. **After-school concerts (Evening Concerts) = three test grades**. Grades determined as in #2 above.

4. **Quarterly Playing Tests** (not to be confused with optional *weekly* playing tests for advanced students who wish to be excused from practicing) = **one test grade.**Despite the cautionary tone of this letter, nearly all students will be able to earn an “A” for the year. They will also have a growing experience as they reach out in Jesus’ name to many in our community. You should also take note that all of my written communication is available on my website. You can even download the Response Sheets. (Checking all of the teacher websites once or twice per week is a really good habit.)

My email address is rcolaner@xeniachristian.com.

My website is <http://MusicBySpecialArrangement.com/>.

Let’s rejoice in the Lord together this year, and praise Him before all those who will be hearing us!

Because of Calvary,

Robert L. Colaner, Director

7/8th Grade Orchestral String Ensemble

**Concert Attire for Xenia Christian Middle School Performing Groups:**

Boys wear black pants (navy pants are acceptable for 6th grade General Music performances) and white dress shirts with neckties (not bowties or bolo ties). Shirts must be tucked in. Shoes and socks are to be navy, brown, or black.

Girls wear loose-fitting black pants (navy pants are acceptable for 6th grade General Music performances) and white tops. Tops may not be sleeveless or have straps, but must have at least a short sleeve. Tops must have high necklines. Shoes are to be navy, brown, or black.

**Concert Dates for Xenia Christian Middle School Performing Groups (High school groups will also perform in these concerts):**

Christmas Instrumental Chapel and Evening Concerts: Thu Dec 6, 2012
Christmas Choir Chapel and Evening Concerts: Thu Dec 13, 2012
Spring Instrumental Chapel and Evening Concerts: Fri May 17, 2013
Spring Choir Chapel and Evening Concerts: Tue May 21, 2013

**RESPONSE SHEET
for 9/03/12 letter**

**This Response Sheet must be returned to Mr. Colaner during our strings period
on Thursday, September 6, 2012.**

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Print student’s name

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Parent’s signature

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Student’s signature

Parent’s phone number[s] & email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Best times to reach you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENTS THAT ARE TRUE FOR YOUR FAMILY.**

**\_\_\_\_\_** We have seen the **letter** and the **schedule**.

We will abide by the dress code as described under “Concert Attire.”

We will put all of the concert dates on our calendar and will protect them, explaining to coaches and club leaders of our ***prior commitment*** to these required school events for which our student receives a grade. (Exceptions will be made for personal illness or family emergency. Lack of transportation does not constitute an emergency unless your vehicle breaks down ***on the way*** to a concert.)

We understand that students must have their instruments, method books & sheet music, and a completed Practice Chart at each rehearsal and concert to receive credit toward their String Ensemble grade.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_** We have seen te **letter** and the **schedule**.

We will abide by the dress code as described under “Concert Attire.”

We will put all of the concert dates on our calendar and will protect them -- *except those noted below for which our family cannot make a commitment* -- explaining to coaches and club leaders of our ***prior commitment*** to these required school events for which our student receives a grade. (Exceptions will be made for personal illness or family emergency. Lack of transportation does not constitute an emergency unless your vehicle breaks down ***on the way*** to a concert.)

We understand that students must have their instruments, method books & sheet music, and a completed Practice Chart at each rehearsal and concert to receive credit toward their String Ensemble grade.

 **(Write problem dates here.)** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_\_\_** I have a question. Please contact me using the information above.