Towson University – Department of Music

Proficiency Levels for Applied Lessons

Discipline: JAZZ/COMMERCIAL PIANO

General Information:

• The stated proficiencies below apply to all students taking lessons in the particular discipline.

• Level of difficulty for specific repertoire will be adjusted based upon the student’s degree program.

• These proficiencies are the minimums for a passing grade in the discipline.

• Any student wishing to take 300-level applied lessons must successfully pass an upper division jury demonstrating the proficiencies as articulated below.

Proficiencies for a 1-credit lesson

Freshman Level

➢ All major and minor scales, 4 part harmonization of a standard
➢ ii-V-I linear and harmonic progressions in all keys
➢ Basic 3-note left hand rootless voicings for standard chord symbols
➢ Memorization of basic standard tunes and jazz compositions
➢ Improvise over blues progression

Sophomore Level

➢ All seven diatonic modes in all keys
➢ Advanced left hand rootless voicings for standard chord symbols
➢ Linear transcription of a piano solo from the late swing or bebop period
➢ Rootless harmonization of standard tunes and jazz compositions
➢ Memorization of standards and jazz compositions
Upper Division Jury (end of 2nd semester sophomore lessons)
➢ Proficiency in all material assigned in the first two years

Junior Level
➢ Modes of melodic minor, diminished, pentatonic modes in all keys
➢ Linear transcription of modal or atonal piano or other instrumental solo
➢ Advanced harmonization and re-harmonization of standards
➢ Full solo transcription (both hands) of Bill Evans or another pianist of similar difficulty
➢ Junior recital (required based upon degree program)

Senior Level
➢ Demonstrate use of the diminished scale in linear improvisation and harmonization
➢ Demonstrate motivic development in linear improvisation
➢ Linear transcription of Herbie Hancock or pianists of similar difficulty
➢ Sight-read published transcriptions of piano or other instrumental solos
➢ Solo piano arrangement of a standard
➢ Senior Recital (required based upon degree program)

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Proficiencies for a 2-credit lesson

Freshman Level
➢ All major and minor scales
➢ Four part harmonization of a standard
➢ Linear transcription of a piano solo from the late swing or bebop period
➢ ii-V-I linear and harmonic progressions in all keys
➢ Basic 3-note left hand rootless voicings for standard chord symbols
➢ Memorization of basic standard tunes and jazz compositions
➢ Improvise over blues progression

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**Sophomore Level**
- All seven diatonic modes in all keys
- Advanced left hand rootless voicings for standard chord symbols
- Rootless harmonization of standard tunes and jazz compositions
- Linear transcription of a piano solo from the bebop or post-bop period
- Memorization of standards and jazz compositions

**Upper Division Jury (end of 2nd semester sophomore lessons)**
- Proficiency in all material assigned in the first two years

**Junior Level**
- Modes of melodic minor, diminished, pentatonic modes in all keys
- Linear transcription of modal or atonal piano or other instrumental solo
- Advanced harmonization and re-harmonization of standards
- Comping patterns for Latin rhythms (Afro-Cuban and Brazilian)
- Piano comping transcription
- Full solo transcription (both hands) of Bill Evans or another pianist of similar difficulty
- Junior recital (*required based upon degree program*)

**Senior Level**
- Demonstrate us of diminished, 9-note and other symmetrical scales in linear improvisation and harmonization
- Full solo transcription (both hands) of McCoy Tyner, Keith Jarrett or another pianist of similar difficulty
- Demonstrate compositional techniques discussed in lessons in solo piano arrangement
- Sight-read published transcriptions of piano or other instrumental solos
- Solo piano arrangement of a standard utilizing compositional techniques discussed in lessons
- Senior Recital (*required based upon degree program*)