Bass Proficiency Levels

The following outlines minimum expectations of Towson University Bass Performance Majors.

This document was prepared by Joshua Davis and Victor Dvoskin, November 2002.

Towson University Bass Performance Majors are required to achieve professional proficiency in both electric bass and double bass. Department policy requires that you take at least 8 credits of both electric bass and acoustic bass. However, we recommend that you complete 16 credits on your primary instrument and 8 on the other. If you so choose, it is possible to take 16 credits on each. Regardless, it is understood and expected that one will be chosen as the primary instrument.

A minimum of musical and technical requirements must be met on both instruments.

Electric Bass and Double Bass

The requirements listed here are for all bassists, both acoustic and electric players. See below for additional instrument specific requirements.

Freshman Year, Electric Bass and Double Bass

All major, minor (aeolian), dorian, mixolydian, chromatic and blues scales not higher than the 6th position, arco and pizzicato, quarter notes mm=144.

Arpeggios—all major and minor triads through the first 6 positions, quarter notes mm=120.

Walking bass line fundamentals. Demonstrate within this category at mm=100. While sight-reading, walk through a standard with predominantly II V I changes. Walk through I VI II V, III VI II V progressions in all keys. Basic jazz blues progression in F, Bb, Eb, C and G.

Sophomore Year, Electric Bass and Double Bass

All modes of major scale harmony and diminished scale harmony, 2 octaves, arco and pizzicato, scales and arpeggios, quarter notes mm=144.

One octave major and minor (aeolian) scales in alternating thirds, fourths, fifth, sixths, sevenths, eighths and tenths.

Junior Year, Electric Bass and Double Bass
All modes of melodic minor scale harmony and whole tone scale harmony, 2 octaves, arco and pizzicato, scales and arpeggios, quarter notes mm=144.

Understanding and use of basic reharmonization possibilities including tritone and neighbor harmony substitution.

Dvoskin II V I patterns

Davis pentatonic patterns

Dvoskin pentatonic patterns

Perform the melody and harmony of 6 jazz standards (not blues) from memory.

Student must transcribe and memorize two 2 minute improvisation excerpts and five 1 minute walking line excerpts.

Junior Recital. (45 minutes)

Five minute solo performance of student’s transcribed virtuosic bass performance as approved by the primary instructor. Forty minutes of performance in a small ensemble setting. All material selected must be approved by the instructor and the Coordinator of Jazz Studies. The repertoire should include a variety of styles and tempos. It is the student’s responsibility to secure a recital date with the Department’s Concert Hall Manager and line up and adequately rehearse all necessary accompanying personnel.

Senior Year, Electric Bass and Double Bass

Shaping non-chordal II V I phrases in all keys.

Perform the melody and harmony of 6 jazz standards (not blues) from memory.

SENIOR RECITAL (60 minutes)

Five minute solo performance of student’s transcribed virtuosic bass performance as approved by the primary instructor. Fifty-five minutes of performance in a small ensemble setting. All material selected must be approved by the instructor and the Coordinator of Jazz Studies. The repertoire should include a variety of styles and tempos. It is the student’s responsibility to secure a recital date with the Department’s Concert Hall Manager and line up and adequately rehearse all necessary accompanying personnel.
**Double Bass**

Orchestral Excerpts

Students must consult with their primary instructor and choose one common major orchestral excerpt to prepare each semester enrolled in Double Bass Lesson.

Solo Literature

Students must consult with their primary instructor and choose one work from the list below each semester enrolled in Double Bass Lesson.

- Dragonetti 4 Waltzes
- Gliere Prelude
- Gliere Scherzo
- Gliere Tarantella
- Gliere Intermezzo
- Bottesini Concerto #1
- Bottesini Concerto #2
- Koussevitsky Concerto
- Hindemith Sonata
- J.S. Bach Sonata for Violoncello Solo in G Major, Minuet I & II
- J.S. Bach Sonata for Violoncello Solo in D Minor, Minuet I & II
- J.S. Bach Sonata for Violoncello Solo in G Major, Gigue
- J.S. Bach Sonata for Violoncello Solo in D Minor, Gigue
- J.S. Bach Sonata for Violoncello Solo in G Major, Prelude
- Wilder Sonata for Bass and Piano
- Dohnanyi Sonata for Violoncello in Bb
Leitermeyer 12 Essays

In every semester enrolled, portions of at least one of the following method books will be assigned at the primary instructor’s discretion:

Simandl New Method for Double Bass

Streicher My Way of Playing the Double Bass

Nanny Etudes

Simandl Gradus Ad Parnassum Book I

Simandl Gradus Ad Parnassum Book II

Findeisen Etudes

Montanari Kayser Etudes

Storch, 57 Studies

Storch, 110 Etudes

In every semester enrolled, portions of at least one of the following may be assigned at the primary instructor’s discretion:

Coolman, The Bass Tradition,

Coolman, The Bottom Line,

Reid, The Evolving Bassist

Stinnett, Arcology- The Music of Paul Chambers

Stephen, Ron Carter Bass Lines (Jamey Aebersold)

Freshman Year, Double Bass

(or Semesters 1 & 2 as a Bass Performance Major)

Left hand fluency in the first 6 positions and basic arco ability as demonstrated by the year’s etudes, two orchestral excerpt choices and two solo literature choices as listed above.
Transcribe and memorize 4 choruses of blues walking lines and 2 choruses of bass solos as assigned by the primary instructor.

Perform the melody and harmony of 6 jazz standards (not blues) from memory.

Sophomore Year, Double Bass

Prepare at least one example from each of the following etude/exercise systems:

Sevcik Theme and Variations 1,2,4,5

Zimmerman Bowing

Starker Finger Position exercise

Tartielier Finger Placement in Thumb Position

Progressive Scales

Three Pedals/Double Stops Page

Memorize rhythm changes in all keys and 4 rhythm changes melodies in Bb.

Transcribe and memorize 4 choruses of rhythm changes walking lines and 2 choruses of bass solos as assigned by the primary instructor.

Perform the melody and harmony of 6 jazz standards (not blues) from memory.

Junior Year, Double Bass

Student must transcribe and memorize two 2 minute improvisation excerpts and five 1 minute walking line excerpts.

Junior Recital. (45 minutes)

Five minute solo performance of student’s transcribed virtuosic bass performance as approved by the primary instructor. Forty minutes of performance in a small ensemble setting. All material selected must be approved by the instructor and the Coordinator of Jazz Studies. The repertoire should include a variety of styles and tempos. It is the student’s responsibility to secure a recital date with the Department’s Concert Hall Manager and line up and adequately rehearse all necessary accompanying personnel.

Senior Year, Double Bass
Shaping non-chordal II V I phrases in all keys.

Perform the melody and harmony of 6 jazz standards (not blues) from memory.

SENIOR RECITAL (60 minutes)

Five minute solo performance of student’s transcribed virtuosic bass performance as approved by the primary instructor. Fifty-five minutes of performance in a small ensemble setting. All material selected must be approved by the instructor and the Coordinator of Jazz Studies. The repertoire should include a variety of styles and tempos. It is the student’s responsibility to secure a recital date with the Department’s Concert Hall Manager and line up and adequately rehearse all necessary accompanying personnel.

**Electric Bass**

**Contemporary Repertoire**

Students must consult with their primary instructor and choose three core commercial gig pop tunes to prepare and memorize in their entirety each semester.

**Solo Literature**

Each semester, students must consult with their primary instructor and choose one work from the list below or from an instructor-approved substitute.

- John Patitucci - Bass Solo on "Giant Steps"
- Dominique Di Piazza - Bass Solo on "Marie"
- Steve Swallow - Bass Solo on "Let's Eat"
- Jaco Pastorius - Melody and Bass Solo on "Donna Lee"
- Jaco Pastorius - "Blackbird"
- Victor Wooten - “Send One Your Love”

**Groove Excerpts**

Students must consult with their primary instructor and choose two excerpts from the list below to prepare and memorize in their entirety each semester.
MeShell NdegéOcello - Various Grooves
Rocco Prestia - Bass Line on "Squib Cakes"
Rocco Prestia - Bass Line on "What Is Hip"
Alphonso Johnson - Various Grooves
Bootsy Collins - Various Grooves
Kai Eckhardt - grooves on “Melting Pot,” “Pasha’s Love,” and “Kathak”
Jaco Pastorius, grooves on “Kuru,” “Port of Entry,” and “Liberty City”
Jaco Pastorius - Bass Line and Solo on "God Must Be A Boogie Man"
Jaco Pastorius - Bass Line on "Come On, Come Over"
Jaco Pastorius - Bass Line on "Dry Cleaner from Des Moines"
Jaco Pastorius - Bass Line on "Palladium"

Technique

Students must consult with their primary instructor and choose materials from at least least one of the following sources each semester:

John Patitucci on DCI
Jaco Pastorius on DCI
Abe Laboriel Method