

Keyboard Studies at State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota

A Handbook for Students and Faculty

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Introduction

Learning to play a keyboard instrument is an important part of every musician's training. At State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota we are dedicated to help every student become successful in reaching the goal of learning to play keyboard instruments—whether as a keyboard principal/major or not.

This handbook is designed to help facilitate communication between the keyboard faculty and music students. Do not hesitate to contact Mr. Don Bryn, Coordinator of Keyboard Studies, should you need further clarification on any of these items or other related issues. All music pre-majors who declare piano or organ as their principal instrument should make an appointment with Mr. Bryn to review their degree plan before registering each semester.

Faculty

Dr. Warren Apple, Piano and Organ (Venice)
Don Bryn, Coordinator of Keyboard Studies
Sung-I Choe, Piano
Laura Spaulding, Piano
Aza Torshkoeva, Piano
Dwight Thomas, Organ

Options for Study

Classifications of keyboard study

Piano or Organ Major: students who declare piano or organ as their principal instrument and intend to pursue a Bachelor of Music degree in Applied Piano or Applied Organ

Piano or Organ Principal: students who declare piano or organ as their principal instrument, but intend to pursue a non-performance music degree such as Bachelor of Music Education or Bachelor of Music Therapy

Piano Secondary: students who intend to pursue an undergraduate degree in music with an instrument other than piano or voice as their principal instrument

Non music pre-major: students who are seeking an A.A. or A.S. degree other than music who study piano or organ as an elective

Applied Piano and Applied Organ

Applied Piano and Applied Organ is available to any degree-seeking student (both music pre-majors and non pre-majors) enrolled in at least six credit hours at SCF. High school students may also enroll in Applied Preparatory Piano/Organ I and/or II as college enrichment classes. All other students should contact Mr. Bryn (752-5582) or the Music Office (752-5351) for information about piano lessons through the Center for Corporate and Community Development (CCD).

The following levels of Applied Piano/Organ are available for study:

Applied Preparatory Piano/Organ I (MVK 1011A/1013A)

Applied Preparatory Piano/Organ II (MVK 1011B/1013B)

Applied Piano/Organ I (MVK 1311/1313)

Applied Piano/Organ IB (MVK 1311B/1313B)

Applied Piano/Organ II (MVK 2321/2323)

Applied Piano/Organ IIB (MVK 2321B/2323B)

MVK 1311/1313, MVK 1311B/1313B, MVK 2321/2323, and MVK 2321B/2323B are repeatable courses; each one may be taken a total of two times for credit. MVK 1011A/1013A and MVK 1011B/1013B are not repeatable courses. All levels of Applied Piano/Organ count as two credit hours.

Initial placement

Students with no prior keyboard instruction should enroll in MVK 1011A. All other students should contact Mr. Bryn to arrange for an audition to determine the appropriate level.

Class Piano

All music pre-majors who declare an instrument other than piano or organ as their principal instrument are required to take four semesters of Class Piano (MVK 1111A, MVK 1111B, MVK 2121A and MVK 2121B). Students with prior training in piano may exempt one or more semesters of Class Piano by auditioning for Mr. Bryn.

Because Class Piano includes instruction in music theory at the keyboard, it is highly recommended that students coordinate their schedules so they take Class Piano I the same semester as Music Theory I, Class Piano II the same semester as Music Theory II and so forth.

Two special sections of Class Piano are made available when enrollment allows:

Class Piano I for non-music pre-majors

Class Piano IV for piano/organ principals and majors

Piano Proficiency

All students who intend to transfer to an upper-level institution as music majors should be prepared to pass a piano proficiency examination at that school. The Class Piano curriculum is designed to prepare students for these proficiency exams. Although it is impossible to predict the contents of each exam at every school, most schools have similar expectations, as listed below.

Two-octave scales, all major and minor keys (harmonic and melodic form) with proper fingering

Two-octave arpeggios, all major and minor keys with proper fingering

Chord progressions, all major and minor keys

Two intermediate level solos from contrasting style periods from the standard classical repertoire, memorized

Harmonization of a melody at sight, using secondary dominants

Transposition

Improvisation

Sight playing

Open score reading

Accompanying

Since the curriculum for Applied Piano/Organ does not include instruction in all of these skills, it is highly recommended that keyboard principals and majors enroll in the special section of Class Piano IV when it is offered.

Jury requirements

All students enrolled in Applied I or II are required to complete a jury examination for the keyboard faculty during final exam week; exact dates and sign-up sheets are posted near the end of each term. Students enrolled in Applied Preparatory II are required to perform a jury as a prerequisite to enrolling in Applied I; all other students in Applied Preparatory I or II perform their final examination one-on-one for their applied teacher. The jury requirement may be waived for Applied II students who perform a sophomore recital at the discretion of the applied teacher.

Contents for jury examinations for Applied Piano (other than Jazz) are as follows.

Scales

Arpeggios

Chord progressions

Etude

Repertoire

Students in Applied I should prepare four-octave major, harmonic and melodic minor scales; Applied II students prepare four-octave major, minor, major-minor 7th and diminished 7th arpeggios. Applied I students should complete scales in all keys by the end of the second semester of study. Each teacher may determine the order in which keys are studied—thus, any keys not prepared in the first semester must be prepared during the second semester. This same procedure should be followed with arpeggios for Applied II students.

The repertoire presented at the jury should include three solos from contrasting style periods. Applied Piano I students should perform at least two of these solos from memory; Applied Piano II students should perform all solos from memory. Memorization is optional for Applied Organ.

More details as well as specific guidelines for appropriate repertoire at each level are listed in the respective syllabi. Guidelines for Applied Jazz Piano and for Applied Organ are also listed in the appropriate syllabus.

Repertory class

Mr. Bryn offers a weekly repertory class for all applied piano students. This class is not a credit course; it is offered as a supplement to applied lessons in order to practice performance skills. The class also provides an opportunity to work on piano duets and duos and other class projects.

All students receiving a keyboard scholarship are required to attend all repertory classes. The majority of these classes are held in Neel Performing Arts Center; room 11-189 is used when Neel auditorium is not available.

Practice expectations

Success in learning to play any musical instrument is directly related to both the quantity and quality of practice time spent at that instrument. Both aspects are important: two equally talented students may spend an equal amount of time practicing yet achieve very different results due to the ability of one student to utilize that practice time with maximum efficiency.

Nevertheless, it may be helpful to consult the following rough guide as to the amount of time students are expected to practice, depending on the classification of study.

| Classification | Minimum Practice Time |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Class Piano I | 30-45 minutes per day |
| Class Piano II, III and IV | 45-60 minutes per day |
| Applied Piano/Organ, non-major | One-two hours per day |
| Applied Piano/Organ principal | Two-three hours per day |
| Applied Piano/Organ major | Three-four hours per day |

Practice rooms

Practice rooms with keyboard instruments are available in both building 9A and building 11. Vertical pianos are in most of these rooms, but one contains a practice organ (9A, module C). Students may not practice in Neel PAC without a member of the SCF staff being present.

Any student enrolled in keyboard instruction at SCF may use the practice rooms whenever they are available. However, in order to ensure their availability when you want to use it, it is always best to reserve the room. Speak to the departmental secretary in the Music Office after the second week of classes to reserve practice rooms.

All students are expected to treat school-owned instruments with respect. Never place any food or beverage on a keyboard instrument. You should also avoid placing textbooks, bags or other items on piano lids or benches, as they can easily scratch the finish. Do not place pencils or pens on the rack of grand pianos, since they can easily fall into the playing action.

Please report any damage or malfunction of practice room instruments or benches to Mr. Bryn or the Music Office immediately.

Music/CD Library

SCF owns an extensive library of piano, organ and harpsichord music which is housed in 9A-117. The library includes solos, concertos, and chamber music. Individual pieces and/or books may be checked out through the Music Office.

Room 11-175 also houses a number of useful items:

Music for sight reading

Musical scores for study

Teaching material (of interest to piano pedagogy students)

CD recordings

Items in room 11-175 may not leave the room. However, since 11-175 is equipped as the SCF Piano/Theory Lab, students may access the room any time during business hours. Use of the lab while classes are being held is permitted as long as due consideration is given to the class that is in session.

Helpful information

Here are a few websites for ordering keyboard music.

<http://www.pianoatpepper.com/>

<http://www.primamusic.com/>

www.sheetmusicplus.com

<http://www.sheetmusicinstock.com/>

It is also possible to order music directly from publishers using their own websites—two examples are Dover and Alfred.

Alfred Music: <http://www.alfred.com/>

Dover Publications: <http://www.doverpublications.com/>

Health at the keyboard

Because playing keyboard instruments involves extensive use of the body, many times for several hours each day, all musicians should be alert to any signs of symptoms of physical problems related to performance. The following page lists some recommended guidelines as a basic way to help prevent these problems.

SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY PRACTICE

Preliminary thoughts: It is estimated that more than half of all musicians will develop a medical disorder that adversely affects performance at some time. Most of these problems are preventable, to a large extent through utilizing practice habits that respect our physiological limitations. Although research is still incomplete, most experts agree on the following guidelines:

1. **Warm ups** - A musical warm up should be preceded by a physiologic warm up to raise the internal temperature of the body. This should include circulation exercises as well as stretching.
2. **Cool downs** - Stretching after practice is equally if not more important. Muscles tend to shorten with repetitive use and must be brought back to optimal resting length; waste products of muscular activity need to be eliminated through efficient circulation.
3. **Breaks** - Practice should be interrupted with breaks every 30 to 45 minutes. The break should at the least include walking to aid circulation. Mental assessment of practicing could be incorporated into breaks, or listening to a tape of oneself. Some stretches could also be used.
4. **Pacing** - It is important to gradually increase practice time over a long period of time rather than abruptly “binging.” This allows the body to build up conditioning.
5. **Alternate activities** - Avoid extensive repetition of the same kinds of passages for long periods of time. Especially awkward passages should be practiced no more than five minutes at a time.
6. **Respect** - Pain is the body's warning that something is wrong. Take note of any pain encountered in practicing and report it at the next lesson. Above all, NEVER PLAY THROUGH PAIN!
7. **Mental practice** - The brain is one muscle that cannot be overused! Learn to become creative in devising ways to practice away from the instrument.

When these basic principles are followed, not only will your practicing be healthier; it will be more enjoyable and efficient.

—Charles Turon

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