

Piano Studies

Course Description

Students enrolled in Piano have the opportunity to develop individual music skills through the study of piano performance. The study and execution of playing music through the piano requires a disciplined, step by step process, where skills and understandings are layered and built on the fundamentals and principles of music. Students explore a variety of music genres and styles, representing different time periods and difficulty levels. Frequent and relevant feedback is essential to the development of individual skills, and students are challenged to refine their individual execution and performance, thereby developing technique. Emphasis is given to progress, with students actively engaging in the development of their musicianship through planning, preparing, practicing, refining, evaluating, and connecting through the repertoire. Coursework emphasizes the importance of personal wellness, creativity, and feeding the soul and spirit through artistic endeavors. In alignment with the school's *Portrait of the Crusader*, students are taught and encouraged to take personal initiative, responsibility, and show resilience with a collaborative spirit. Being actively engaged in the pursuit of music with others fosters relationships with loyalty, compassion, and empathy that will extend beyond their classroom experiences.

Essential Questions for the Course

- How do musicians improve the quality of their creative work?
- What individual foundational skills and musicianship are needed to effectively present and communicate a variety of musical works?
- How do musicians make meaningful connections in creating, performing, and responding?
- How does understanding the structure and context of the music influence a response?
- How do musicians accurately and effectively evaluate and critique their own performance and the performance of others?
- How does the process of creating and performing music contribute to personal wellness and fulfillment?

Curriculum Framework

Quarter 1 - Unit 1: Approaching the Piano

Focus Questions:

- What are the foundational understandings required to begin the process of learning a musical instrument?
- How do performers make informed and accurate evaluations about their own technique and execution?
- How do musicians set goals and plan for enduring progress and improvement?

Concepts - Students will know:

- Common terms and descriptions for posture and technique
- Foundations of music notation terms and their meanings
- Common practices and steps to learning new music

Skills - Students will:

- Demonstrate proper posture and hand position at the piano
- Navigate the keyboard - connect the physical keys to notation on the staff; identify where notes are found on the instrument
- Define fundamental music terms and symbols
- Identify the parts of the staff - clefs, rhythm and pitch notation
- Read, interpret, and play/execute simple exercises (hands separate)
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.

Assessments:

- Notation Review Task
- Canvas and MusicFirst Digital Classroom platform login information and basic guide
- Progress Check-In
- Practice/Rehearsing Process Checklist and Reflection
- Practical Evaluation #1

Quarter 1 - Unit 2: Putting It All Together

Focus Questions:

- How do performers learn new repertoire?
- What musical habits and routines are essential to success at the piano?
- How do musicians set goals and plan for enduring progress and improvement?

Concepts - Students will know:

- Common terms and descriptions rhythm and meter
- Foundations of rhythmic/meter notation terms and their meanings
- Common practices and steps to learning new music using both hands

Skills - Students will:

- Continually improve proper posture and hand position at the piano
- Identify and demonstrate key habits and factors necessary for musical success and progress
- Define new fundamental music terms and symbols, including rhythmic variety
- Execute finger technique and hand coordination required to successfully play assigned exercises and repertoire (varied levels according to individual skills and development)
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.

Assessments:

- MusicTheory.net notation assessments
- Progress Check-Ins
- Practice/Rehearsing Process Checklist and Reflections
- Practical Evaluation #2

Quarter 2 - Unit 3: Developing Musicianship

Focus Questions:

- How do performers learn challenging repertoire?
- What are the structures of major and minor scales, and how do they function within music?
- How do musicians communicate mood, emotion, and expressive characteristics of music?

Concepts - Students will know:

- Common terms and descriptions of scales and patterns
- Foundations and structures of major and minor scales, notations and key signatures (Key of C, F, and G; includes relative minor keys)
- Fundamental expression symbols

Skills - Students will:

- Engage in learning more challenging repertoire
- Continue to demonstrate key habits and factors necessary for musical success and progress
- Execute more challenging finger technique and hand coordination required to successfully play assigned 1-octave major and minor scale patterns
- Define and execute new fundamental music terms and symbols related to expression and dynamics
- Execute more challenging finger technique and hand coordination required to successfully play assigned exercises and repertoire (varied levels according to individual skills and development)
- Identify expressive characteristics of shared music examples, responding and discussing through active listening
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.

Assessments:

- Major and Minor scale tasks (Key of C, F, and G; Am, Dm, and Em)
- Listening/Responding tasks - Canvas Discussion Boards
- Progress Check-Ins
- Practice/Rehearsing Process Checklist and Reflections
- Practical Evaluation #3 - perform repertoire, hands together, of at least 16 measures in length
- Recording project #1

Quarter 3 - Unit 4: Chords and Pop Music

Focus Questions:

- What role do chords play in modern/pop music styles?
- How does understanding the structure and context of musical works inform performance?
- How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?

Concepts - Students will know:

- Common terms and descriptions of chords and progressions
- Foundations of chord notation terms and their meanings
- Chord structure and application

Skills - Students will:

- Engage in learning more challenging repertoire; includes 3 and 4 chord progressions/patterns
- Continue to demonstrate established habits and factors necessary for musical success and progress
- Demonstrate understanding of fundamental triad/chords structures
- Execute performance of selected modern/pop music lead-sheets
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.

Assessments:

- MusicTheory.net notation assessments
- Listening/Responding tasks - Canvas Discussion Boards
- Progress Check-Ins
- Practice/Rehearsing Process Checklist and Reflections
- Practical Evaluation #4 - perform repertoire, hands together, of at least 16 measures in length; modern/pop song lead-sheet chord progression
- Recording project #2

Quarter 4 - Unit 5: Performance Portfolio

Focus Questions:

- How do performers interpret and communicate their understanding of varied musical works?
- How does understanding the structure and context of musical works inform performance?
- How do musicians demonstrate progress and improve the quality of their performance?

Concepts - Students will know:

- Characteristics of varied styles and techniques/practices for piano performance
- Foundations and historical/cultural contexts of selected repertoire
- Identifying factors of Intermediate/Advanced technique and repertoire

Skills - Students will:

- Engage in learning more challenging repertoire; includes 3-5 selections that represent the variety of skills and techniques developed through the year
- Demonstrate further development through a variety of stylistic techniques and practices.
- Make informed choices in creating a personalized portfolio of repertoire mastered
- Identify the significance of selected repertoire and styles
- Apply evaluative criteria in responding to their own work and the work of others.

Assessments:

- Listening/Responding tasks - Canvas Discussion Boards
- Progress Check-Ins
- Practice/Rehearsing Process Checklist and Reflections
- Practical Evaluation #5 - Recorded Performance Portfolio

Resources

The Classic Piano Course - Books 1, 2, and 3 (Barratt)

Hanon Exercises - The Virtuoso Pianist

MusicTheory.net

MusicFirst Classroom

Grading

Performances/Content Mastery 50%

Engagement/Rehearsals 20%

Growth/Development 30%

Please see the next page for the Performance Criteria Rubric.

Holy Cross High School Music Department
Performance Criteria - Individual

*Within the Music Department at Holy Cross, we recognize the importance of individual students developing their musicianship and skills through a wide range of musical opportunities. We give priority to the progress and personal development of our student musicians. This, in conjunction with the principles of our school's **Portrait of a Crusader**, is the foundation for all that we do in Music and Performing Arts at Holy Cross. To help support that endeavor, student progress is continually evaluated based on the following:*

Level		Description
V ADVANCED		Excellent in all respects; command of required technique is evident. An accurate performance in terms of rhythm and pitch, secure intonation. Convincing, fluent, and expressive. The performance shows the individual's command and understanding of the style; interpretation of the piece is insightful, with attention to dynamics, expression, phrasing, and character, and tone. Demonstrates the highest standard of musical communication and interpretation.
IV PROFICIENT		The performance shows confidence and preparation, fluid and solid in general. Overall, accurate in pitch and rhythm, with few errors; overall intonation is acceptable. Technique is proficient and consistent to the demands of the difficulty level. Musical details are evident throughout the performance with attempts at phrasing, expression, and articulation. The performance displays the student's understanding of the style demands, and is successful in some areas and stylistic characteristics in general.
III DEVELOPING		Presents a coherent, fluent performance. Some successful attempts at expression and interpretation. Inaccuracies include multiple errors in rhythm and pitch. Phrasing, expression, and articulation are evident at times. Intonation is weak. The performance demonstrates some understanding of the characteristics and stylistic demands of the selection(s). Proper technique is evident in select passages.
II BEGINNING/ DEVELOPING		Performance shows some recognition of musical details; however, there are frequent errors, lacks fluency, and is disjunct throughout. The performance demonstrates some understanding of musical technique and demands of the selection(s), but does not meet those challenges. Concepts and connections between pitch, rhythm, phrasing, tempo, expression and style are very limited, but shows some development of technique and understanding.
I LIMITED/ BEGINNING		The performance shows numerous errors throughout. Does not demonstrate understanding of musical ideas and technique. An attempt is made but lacks any cohesion. Musical ideas and concepts are incoherent.
N/A		The performance is not coherent in any respect ;unable to evaluate this performance.