

JAZZ

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The Jazz Department accepts students who have an aptitude and interest in pursuing Jazz music and improvisation. The curriculum covers all styles of Jazz music, including Traditional, Swing, Be-bop, Modal, and Fusion. The program is designed to prepare students for entry to a university program and the professional Jazz scene. Jazz students also study Classical Music Theory and Musicianship.

Admission and Advancement

Audition Expectations: All students must study for at least one full year with a qualified Jazz instructor to have the necessary skills required to pass the NOCCA audition. Students will perform the melody and improvise with the blues scale over a basic 12-bar blues form. Pianists and guitarists should know some basic Jazz chord voicings. Students may choose one of following blues tunes or another similar blues tune: “St. Louis Blues” (F Blues), “Tenor Madness” (Bb), “Blue Monk” (Bb), “Second Line” (Bb Blues), “Sonny Moon for Two” (Bb Blues), or “Now’s the Time” (F Blues), etc. Drummers will be asked to play scales and find notes on the piano by ear. It is strongly recommended that drummers have some experience playing the piano or some other melodic instrument. Students will complete a theory assessment exam at the audition.

Students currently in grades 8-11 are eligible to apply and audition. Accepted students are placed in one of four levels. Advancement into subsequent levels is based on satisfactory completion of a full school year’s study in the current level. Students should maintain a B average GPA to remain in good standing. Any student who fails any class during a quarter is placed on probation. While at NOCCA, students undergo periodic counseling sessions with music faculty to discuss progress and overall assessment. Faculty may request that an individual repeat any level of Applied, Music Theory, Ear Training; all decisions by faculty are final. Students must pass comprehensive exams for all classes including juries at the end of each year to qualify for placement in the next level. Good behavior, attendance, punctuality, preparation, and self-discipline are absolutely critical for continued enrollment at NOCCA.

Common Music Curriculum

The Common Curriculum taken by all Music students at NOCCA is a course of musical study emphasizing the fundamentals of musical language through the study of Music Theory and Musicianship.

Music Theory focuses on the concepts, language, and rules of standard musical practice, instilling an understanding and practice of basic piano fundamentals in relation to these theory concepts. Theory is taught sequentially throughout levels I-IV. Concepts begin with note reading and progress through all major and minor keys/scales, chords, and inversions (including seventh

chords and secondary dominants), figured bass, diatonic harmonic progressions with Roman numeral analysis, functional harmony, four-part voice leading (including non-chord tones), modulations, augmented sixth chords, and an introduction to various twentieth-century compositional practices including Impressionism and twelve-tone serialism.

Musicianship develops the ability to hear and discern musical elements through melodic singing, rhythmic dictation, and oral dictation exercises. Musicianship is taught sequentially throughout levels I-IV. After the course of study, students are able to sing major and minor scales with correct scale degrees and solfege syllables, write dictation of diatonic and chromatic melodies as well as two-part exercises with their correct rhythms, read advanced syncopated rhythms up to and including sixteenth notes, identify intervals and chords (including seventh chords) by ear, aurally identify the sections of musical forms (ABA, rondo, sonata, binary, etc.), hear chord progressions and inversions modulating to closely related keys, and sing modal melodies.

Additional Classes and Requirements

Private Lessons: All students are required to take weekly private lessons. Jazz students must take lessons from current NOCCA Jazz Music faculty unless NOCCA does not have an instructor for a specific instrument, in which case an outside teacher who meets the expectations and requirements of the NOCCA faculty will be recommended. In such cases, students must submit the name of the private instructor to the department chair for approval at the beginning of semester. Students who do not take private lessons at least twice per month will be placed on probation and may be dismissed.

Applied Class: Applied class is organized as a performing ensemble. Individual topics include Minor blues scale, major blues scale, modes of the major scale, modes of the melodic minor scale, synthetic scales, be-bop scales, sequences, chromatic techniques, and the melodic vocabulary of the Jazz masters. Transcriptions of major artists are performed and analyzed. Four compositions are studied in detail each semester, culminating with the jury performance at the end of each semester. NOCCA Jazz faculty assigns additional repertoire at their discretion.

Music Performance Class: Music Performance Class, held every Friday at 4:00 p.m., is mandatory for all students. Students perform with their Applied level or individually. Students are critiqued by NOCCA faculty. These performances are mandatory.

Music Jury Requirement: At the end of each semester, every student appears before a jury of faculty to be evaluated, based on progress in Applied and in their mastery of Theory and Musicianship. Students perform the required repertoire, transcriptions, and curriculum concepts. Jazz students are accompanied by professionals from the community who also assist the faculty with the critique of their jury performance.

Master Classes: Master artists perform and work with the NOCCA Jazz students throughout the year. Invited artists include internationally reknown musicians as well as performers and teachers from the New Orleans Jazz scene.

Certificates in Music

The Music Department awards three levels of certificates.

Certificate of Artistry represents the highest level of attainment for a music student; it is the culmination of three or more years of intensive music study at NOCCA. This level of artistry is demonstrated by the successful retention of specific musical skills acquired through class work, performance, and comprehensive examinations in Music Theory and Ear Training. Students must also perform in a faculty-endorsed senior recital.

Certificate of Performance is conferred upon students who have successfully completed two years of study at NOCCA but have not completed the full musical curriculum. Students must also perform a faculty-endorsed senior recital and pass comprehensive examinations in Theory and Ear Training at their current level.

Certificate of Recognition is granted to students who have attended NOCCA for one or two years but have not presented a senior recital. Students must pass a comprehensive exam at their current level.

In all cases the judgment by the core music faculty regarding the awarding of certificates is final.