

University of Utah Jazz Area Master of Music Diagnostic Examination Guidelines For Jazz Improvisation

Each candidate must take a live 30-minute Jazz Improvisation Diagnostic Examination prior to full acceptance into the masters program. If test results are unsatisfactory, the student will be required to take a semester of MUSC 4350, Jazz Improvisation III without degree credit.

✓ Live Performance:

Candidates will perform two prepared jazz standards from memory for the Examination Committee. The University Jazz Department will provide a rhythm section trio of piano/ guitar, bass and drums to accompany you. (If you are auditioning on one of these rhythm section instruments you will play that instrument and be accompanied by the two instruments). Please have a lead sheet ready to distribute to all members of the rhythm section for both tunes. One of the two tunes should be an up-tempo swing, and the second piece should demonstrate a contrasting style such as a Jazz Waltz, Bossa, or Ballad.

At the time of the exam the Examination Committee may elect to choose a third tune from the common jazz repertoire (such as “All The Things You Are”, “Autumn Leaves”, “Straight No Chaser”) for you to perform from memory. Below is a list of commonly used fake books which all include Jazz standards suitable for your two prepared pieces.

The Real Books (Hal Leonard) Volumes 1-3
The New Real Book (Chuck Sher) Volumes 1-3
Bill Evans Fake Book
The Latin Real Book (Chuck Sher)

✓ Scales:

Candidates must be prepared to play the following scales and modes in any key through two octaves:

1. All Major scales and any of its 7 modes (Dorian, Phrygian, etc.).
2. Symmetrical scales: Whole tone and Diminished (both whole/half and half/whole step)
3. Jazz Melodic Minor and its related modes such as Lydian Dominant, Superlocrian (diminished whole tone or altered dominant scale), Lydian Augmented, etc.

✓ Arpeggios:

Candidates should be prepared to play 9th chords in any key:

All major, minor and dominant chords up to the 9th plus typical altered tones (Major 9, Major 6/9, Dom9, 9#5, 9b5, 7#9, 7b9, 7#5#9, 7#5b9, 7b5#9, 7b5b9, Minor 9th, Mi(ma9), mi6/9).

✓ Aural Chord Identification (given from the piano by a committee member):

Candidates will identify by ear Major, Minor and Dominant chords (with altered tensions) up to the 13th.