

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT
Saturday, May 17, 2025 at BSU Morrison Center
General Information for Teachers and Families

PURPOSE:

1. To provide a systematic and comprehensive plan to develop the following skills:
 - Performance
 - Technique
 - Theory and Ear Training (Aural Skills)
 - Sight-Reading
2. To develop practical goals to help students maintain steady and focused progression in their musical studies.
3. To encourage students to strive for musical excellence.
4. To provide students with a truthful and rigorous evaluation of their work.

OVERVIEW:

Certificate of Achievement is the gold standard when it comes to piano exams in Idaho. Students who are enrolled in Certificate of Achievement participate in an annual evaluation in the spring. Experienced evaluators will hear students perform selected literature, technical elements, and sight-reading. Students will also complete a written theory exam that includes an ear-training component. Each student will receive a comprehensive assessment of progress that will be printed out by their teacher. Each student will also receive a certificate for successfully completing all four areas of the examination.

Students can earn up to 4 points per year for successful completion of each area of the examination:

- 1 point: Repertoire (average score 6 or higher),
- 1 point: Theory/Ear Training (70% or higher),
- 1 point: Sight-Reading (6 or higher), and
- 1 point: Technique (6 or higher).

When students have achieved a combined 12 points (approx. every 3 years), they will be awarded a trophy.

COST:

The fees for participation range from \$35 to \$60, depending on the level of enrollment.

Young Beginner—\$35

Prep-Level 2—\$40

Level 3-Level 5—\$45

Level 6-Level 8—\$55

Level 9-Advanced—\$60

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT
Saturday, May 17, 2025 at BSU Morrison Center
Detailed Information for Teachers

IMPORTANT EVENT DATES

February 1-February 28, 2025 at 11:59pm--COA Phase I--To Register/Edit Student

March 1-14, 2025--COA Phase II--To Enter Student Repertoire

April 12, 2025--COA Student Schedules Available

April 12-19, 2025--COA Phase III--To Enter Volunteers

May 17, 2025--Certificate of Achievement, BSU Morrison Center

REPERTOIRE LEVEL REQUIREMENTS:

(1 trophy point is earned if the average of performance pieces is 6 or higher)

1. Repertoire Requirements:

Young Beginner: two pieces by memory, 12 measures minimum each

Level Preparatory-Level 2: two pieces by memory

Levels 3-5: three pieces, two of which must be memorized

Levels 6-9: four pieces, two of which must be memorized

Level 10: four pieces, two of which must be memorized plus a memorized etude

2. Teachers will select the level and the repertoire based on varying styles and techniques. No folk songs, arrangements or hymns are allowed, but challenging hymn arrangements are allowed at Levels 6 and above.

3. Different composers for each piece must be selected. You may use the "Suggested Repertoire" list on the certificateofachievement.org website as a guideline for leveling. Other resources include Magrath's "Pianists Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature", available for purchase online, the RCM Syllabus, a free online reference list, the California Certificate of Merit Syllabus, or the Keith Snell Repertoire books – by level.

4. All pieces selected for each student must be 'at or above' the levels represented in this list.

5. Each level will have a set time limit with the judges, and students may be asked to stop playing if they go longer than the allotted time.

Young Beginner-Level 2: max 5 minutes

Level 3-5: max 10 minutes

Level 6-7: max 20 minutes

Level 8-9: max 25 minutes

Level 10: max 35 minutes including Etude

6. Students may repeat a level or skip levels at the teacher's discretion.

REPERTOIRE SELECTION:

Students most benefit when repertoire is chosen from different time periods and demonstrates different styles, technique and interpretive demands. This should be a teacher's goal when choosing to participate in this program, although it is understood that on rare occasions a teacher may choose to work outside these parameters. Differing time periods is not an enforced rule. Again, no folk songs, arrangements or hymns (advanced hymn arrangements acceptable at upper levels as long as they are of appropriate difficulty). The 5 different time periods we use at TVMTA are as follows:

1. Baroque

2. Classical

3. Romantic
4. 20-21st Century Classical (Bartok, Prokofiev, etc.)
5. 20-21st Century Popular (Joplin, pedagogical composers, Jon Schmidt, advanced hymn arrangements by Tonioli, Kevernien or others, jazz compositions, Kapustin, etc.)

If you are not sure which time period a composer belongs to, here is a valuable resource provided by MTNA: <https://www.mtna.org/downloads/Engage/ComposerClassifications.pdf>

Feel free to reach out to the Chairman with questions.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

(1 trophy point is earned if the score is 6 or higher)

Please email the Chairman for this year's Technical Requirements. We will not be using the Technical Requirements on certificateofachievement.org. Technical requirements, including the Etude on Level 10 must be memorized.

SIGHTREADING:

(1 trophy point is earned if the score is 6 or higher)

Students will be given 2 minutes to study the example without playing it, and will then be evaluated on one performance of the example. Please see the Sightreading Rubric available on this website for more specific grading information.

Sightreading examples for each level can be found on the certificateofachievement.org website.

Other suggested resources to help students prepare:

- Piano Adventures Sightreading Books (from middle Prep level and up)
- Paul Harris "Improve your Sight-Reading!"
- Four Star Sight Reading and Ear Tests
- Minnesota MTA: Sightplaying Books (excellent) levels Prep-6

It is suggested that teachers begin a "dry run" of the sightreading exam starting the beginning of every lesson from Jan-April. Give a new example to the student, 2 min. to study, and then state a probable score to the student for feedback.

THEORY REQUIREMENTS:

(1 trophy point is earned if the combined theory/ear training score is 70% or higher)

Theory requirements can be found on certificateofachievement.org under the syllabus for each level.

It is strongly suggested that teachers choose one of the following workbooks to help adequately prepare students for the theory exams:

- Keith Snell "Fundamentals of Piano Theory" books levels P-10
- Julie Johnson "Basics of Keyboard Theory" books levels P-AP

For Young Beginner Level Students (age limitations at teacher discretion), students should prepare to:

1. Name and write notes on the grand staff from bass C to treble C,
2. Identify line and space notes
3. Identify notes as higher or lower in a pair
4. Identify whole steps and half steps on a keyboard
5. 5 finger patterns on CGDAF, and a and d minor, as well as those triads blocked in root position (same as technical requirements)
6. 4/4 and 3/4 time signatures,
7. Note and rest values of whole, half, dotted half, and quarter
8. Identify finger numbers on a picture of a hand

EAR TRAINING:

Students will listen and answer questions individually in a piano lab setting with headphones for each student. Some examples are played quickly and students are allowed to repeat an example if needed. Ear training scores (about 10 total points) are combined with the Theory Exam score (from 60-100 points) for an aggregate total score.

For extra practice, suggested resources include:

Julie Johnson "Ear Training Basics" (half of the material needs to be done in the lesson with the teacher, includes a CD, does not include the answer key)

Alfred's "Ear Training Book" up to Level 6

Gilson Schachnik's "Beginning Ear Training" (uses solfege)

RCM online ear training (includes melodic dictation feature)

Various online websites and apps can be used

TROPHIES:

1st Level Trophy = 12 cumulative points

2nd Level Trophy = 24 cumulative points

3rd Level Trophy = 36 cumulative points

Advanced/Level 10 = Advanced Trophy

IMPORTANT EVENT DATES

February 1-February 28, 2025 at 11:59pm--COA Phase I--To Register/Edit Student

March 2-14, 2025--COA Phase II--To Enter Student Repertoire

April 12, 2025--COA Student Schedules Available

April 12-19, 2025--COA Phase III--To Enter Volunteers

May 17, 2025--Certificate of Achievement, BSU Morrison Center

REGISTRATION

Certificate of Achievement will be exclusively online registration with payments through Paypal or via a check to our Treasurer. No late registrations will be accepted. There are no refunds for cancellations.

2025 PARTICIPATION OPTIONS:

Students will have 3 options this year for participation:

1. **Traditional option:** Live, in person adjudication with a judge at BSU Morrison Center for repertoire, technique and sight-reading; theory and ear training exams are administered in the same building.

2. **Virtual option:** videos will be submitted for adjudication for repertoire, technique and sight-reading by May 10th; theory and ear training exams administered in the teacher's studio.

A. Teachers are to instruct student families to record technical requirements separately, and then to record each piece either separately or combined. NOTE: it can be difficult to upload long recordings on YouTube, so advanced students especially - consider individual links for each piece.

B. Teachers are not to use their own youtube accounts so videos must be made by the student. Be sure links are not marked "Private", but rather "Unlisted" (those with a link can view).

C. Log into your account on the online portal, and select "My Students". Click "Edit" and scroll down to "Video Performance Link". Paste the student's youtube links in this space and save changes.

D. Links must be ready and viewable by May 10th, one week before the event. Please double check that your student's links work!!

E. Corrected Theory and Ear Training exam scores are due to the COA Chair on or before May 17th.

3. Home Judge and Theory option: teacher hires judge for playing repertoire, technique and sight-reading for adjudication in their studio; teacher administers theory and ear training exam. The teacher provides the judge lunch as well as their own volunteers, COA pays the judge.

4. Home Theory only option: Teachers will administer the theory and ear training exam. Corrected Theory and Ear Training exam scores are due to the COA Chair on or before May 17th.

If there are any comments, questions, or concerns after fully reading the above information, please contact....

Rebecca Wren
Certificate of Achievement Chair 2025
Rebeccawren1@gmail.com