



## Second Study / Piano Minor/ Double Majors

The Conservatorium High has long held the sound music-educational view that it is highly desirable for students of this school to play two contrasting instruments. For many decades school policy has encouraged students who play only the piano to take up either a string, woodwind or brass instrument in order to afford them more opportunities of developing ensemble skills.

The school firmly believes that all musicians should acquire a command of the piano sufficient to enable them to use it as a 'functional' or study tool. Functional Keyboard, the class currently taken by students in Years 7 & 8 in the keyboard lab aims to provide an introduction to these skills.

In negotiating an agreement with the Open Academy of the Faculty of Music, University of Sydney, for the provision of instrumental tuition, the school was keen to include in the arrangements an opportunity for all Con High students to acquire proficiency on the piano sufficient to realize the above-stated goal. To this end, we are subsuming the study of these (hitherto discrete) functional keyboard skills under Minor Study (Piano) and entrusting the teaching of these skills to piano tutors. Minor Study is part of the music program 'package deal' for which parents pay a set rate.

The precise nature of the functional piano skills can be seen in the document entitled *Functional Piano Test [FPT]* which is appended to this letter (also available on the school's web site). The school expects all students to have passed the *FPT* by the end of Year 9.

Students in the senior school (Years 10-12) who know that their piano skills are insufficient to be able to pass the *FPT* are strongly advised – but not obliged – to remedy that situation by taking functional piano as their Minor Study. In time, all students will be required to pass this test. In 2015, while the requirement is being phased in, it will apply only to students in the junior school, Years 7-9.

Students in the junior school have a variety of options regarding their Minor Study once they have acquitted themselves of the Functional Piano requirement. The *Test* will be conducted at the beginning of the school year.

### Junior Vocal Stream

The arrangement for students in the Junior Vocal Stream differs from that outlined above because tuition in their Major Study takes the form of group vocal coaching not individual one-hour lessons. Accordingly, they are accredited an hour per week for the study of one or more instruments. Double-reed and mid-range to low brass instruments are particularly encouraged.

JVS students who cannot pass the *FPT* must include weekly piano lessons (half-hour minimum) as part of the Music Program until they can pass it. Thereafter they may choose a different instrument.

### Double Majors

Students who receive two one-hour lessons per week, who play two instruments or voice and instrument, are referred to as Double Majors. They pay a surcharge on their annual Music Program fees for the additional half-hour that is over and above the standard ninety minutes of individual instrumental tuition (one-hour Major Study; half-hour Minor Study) included in the Music Program package deal.

Double Major students in the junior school who cannot pass the *FPT* have two options with respect to piano lessons. If one of their instruments is piano they should draw their teacher's attention to the requirement to pass the *FPT*. If neither of their instruments is piano, they can either

- (a) convert one of their two weekly (Major) hour-lessons into two half-hour (Minor) lessons for the purpose of taking up piano while maintaining their chosen second instrument; OR
- (b) maintain the current double-major arrangement on condition that piano lessons of at least one half-hour's duration a week are undertaken privately and address the requirement for passing the *F*