



July 30, 2025

To Whom it May Concern:

I have worked with Mr. Holm professionally for over two years and academically for one and a half years. At our first performance together in March of 2023, I was immediately impressed by his performance level. Soon after that initial performance, I asked Max to give a masterclass (on jazz performance) at the Oklahoma State University Stillwater campus. As OSU had long been in need of a jazz piano professor, it was an “easy sell” to administration to bring him onboard to teach jazz applied piano as well as a jazz combo. Mr. Holm was also asked to teach Jazz Arranging & Composition I and Jazz Class Piano.

In his Jazz Arranging & Composition course, students create original compositions and arrangements using MuseScore. Jazz harmony skills are taught including strategies for harmonizing chord tones and non-chord tones in melodic lines. Towards the end of the semester, Mr. Holm took the initiative to set up a live band (rhythm section + five saxophones) to record the students’ projects. Recordings such as these are valuable for students’ professional portfolios.

I have witnessed a higher level of piano performance in the jazz area, which is no doubt the result of Mr. Holm’s applied studio. From big bands to combos to jazz juries, applied jazz piano students are learning to perform a variety of songs in a variety of ensemble formats under Mr. Holm’s guidance.

In all of his courses, Mr. Holm pays great attention to syllabi details. His courses receive positive reviews. Through his Jazz Class Piano course and applied lessons, I have witnessed students with limited jazz experience quickly improve to the point where they can successfully play in a jazz combo. This is the result of clearly stated goals coupled with well-sequenced instruction.

Mr. Holm has been an important colleague in our jazz area. He has performed at countless jazz forums with students and faculty. He performs regularly with our faculty jazz combo and has toured, as guest soloist, with our top big band (OSU Jazz Orchestra) to perform at the 2024 Jazz Education Network Conference in New Orleans, LA. He has adjudicated the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) All State Jazz piano auditions for the last two years. He was recently honored by the OSU Edmond Lowe Library for his recent print publication, *Ace Your Sight-Reading Audition!* Due to recent budget cuts impacting Oklahoma State University, we were forced to eliminate many faculty positions, including Mr. Holm’s adjunct jazz piano role. I would not hesitate to bring him back in the future should the budget allow. I give Mr. Holm my highest recommendation and wish him luck in his future endeavors. Please feel free to contact me at [tommy.poole@okstate.edu](mailto:tommy.poole@okstate.edu) if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tommy Poole'.

Thomas “Tommy” Poole, D.M.A.  
Director of Jazz Studies and Professor of Music