
Preface

It has taken many years for jazz to win a place for itself in the school curriculum and academic society. This only original American art form has gradually become accredited and elevated to a plateau of extreme popularity among parents, students, audiences and some faculty. The contribution this music has made to the culture of American society is unrefuted. The road to recognition and acceptance has been a long and rocky one pioneered by leading institutions such as North Texas State University, Berklee College of Music, New England Conservatory, Eastman School of Music and the University of Miami. Their faculty along with other institutions have fought hard to validate the need, market, artistic and academic worth of jazz studies programs in college and public school curriculums. The battle has been won through the efforts of the International Association of Jazz Educators and educational leaders such as Matt Betton, Gene Hall and Leon Breeden, however, we must not rest on their past accomplishments. The academic community, whether it be in a university or public school environment, must remain receptive to new information, teaching techniques, trends and styles and must constantly strive for improved standards in teaching and learning. These idealistic principles are particularly difficult to maintain by the public school music teacher who is frequently required to be "jack of all trades." For example, managing a high school jazz program may be difficult for the teacher whose college concentration was in vocal music, string pedagogy, orchestral flute performance, or some other non-jazz related field. The teacher may have never even performed in a school jazz band and therefore lacks first hand experience. This job situation is more the rule rather than the exception even though data shows marked increases in public school and university enrollments through the late 1980s and early 1990s. Budget cuts have run parallel to enrollment growths in many areas of the country which indicates that diversity will still be important for the public school music educator in the next century. Many colleges have responded to this problem by offering methods and materials courses in jazz techniques. Unfortunately not all institutions have provided or mandated this solution.

The Jazz Ensemble Director's Manual will provide much of the fundamental information needed to become comfortable in the area of instrumental jazz education. It will serve as a text for the education of future teachers enrolled in college level methods classes and as a practical reference for the public school or college instructor. The information has been class-tested by undergraduate students at The University of Northern Iowa and graduate students at The University of Texas at Austin. No book may claim to answer all questions and solve all problems particularly when dealing with the broad scope of materials which should be at the fingertips of the music educator. This author has, however, based many of the suggested problem solving techniques, teaching methods, and general information on personal experiences as a public school and college teacher. Particular attention has been paid to those areas which, after years of festival adjudications, this author deems to be the "Achilles' heel" of a majority of educators and their students. Other texts have been recommended for more indepth study of specific topics.

It is hoped that this text will benefit the advancement of jazz education and stimulate its readers to learn more about this important, personalized art form.

Acknowledgements

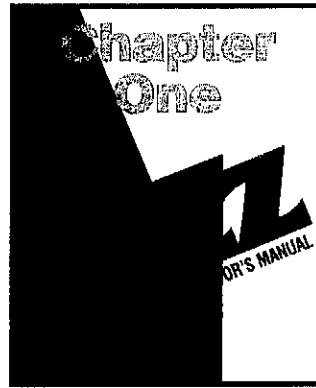
My sincere appreciation and gratitude is extended to those friends and associates who provided the motivation, encouragement, guidance, and input necessary to realize the completion of this book.

Susan Lawn
Ray Wright, Eastment School of Music
Bill Dobbins, Eastman School of Music
Matt Betton, Executive Director of National Association of Jazz Educators
Tom Barry, recording engineer
Susan Holland, art work
Doug Toft, guitar consultant
University of Northern Iowa
University of Texas at Austin
U.N.I. student musicians:
Dave Stittsworth, trumpet
Doug Johns, tenor sax
Jeff Hellmer, piano
Hilliard Greene, bass
Pete Simonson, drums

Contents

Preface	ii
1 Starting a Jazz Ensemble Program	1
2 Jazz Ensemble Instrumentation	5
3 The Jazz Combo.....	14
4 Selecting the Music.....	17
5 Ensemble Set-Up	22
6 The Jazz Ensemble Conductor.....	28
7 Rehearsal Psychology and Techniques	32
8 Phrasing and Articulation	39
9 Contest and Concert Preparation	48
10 Sound Reinforcement	54
11 Understanding Chord Notation	57
12 Don't Avoid the Rhythm Section	61
13 Teaching Basic Jazz Improvisation Techniques	74
14 Computers, Technology and Jazz Education	88
Appendix	
Common Jazz Scales and Chord Relationships.....	92
Neighbor Tone Chord Exercises	94
The Diminished and Inverted Diminished Scales	95
Mouthpiece Setup Charts	96
Suggested Activities For Improvisation Classes	98
Class Assignment Key for Chapter 8	99
Blues Repertoire	100
Blues Play Along Recordings	101
Reference Recordings	102
Modal Repertoire.....	103
Aebersold Play Along Recordings.....	104

**Note: A reference recording supplementing
Chapters 8 and 12 is also included.**



Starting a Jazz Ensemble Program

During the past twenty five years, jazz has fought for a permanent status in the music curriculum and for valid reasons. It is unfortunate that some administrators and music educators have worked not to encourage its development, but to undermine the growth and advancement of one of America's few native art forms. These efforts, for the most part, have been thwarted by those honest disciples of jazz education. Their arguments in support of jazz education are valid and difficult to combat.

It is the feeling of most music educators that all students should be given every opportunity for exposure to and involvement in all styles of music. In particular, those students who show exceptional musical talent should be provided an outlet to further develop their capabilities in a practical, realistic musical field. Jazz is a valid art form and offers a marketable vocation for many.

There is no substitute for the creativity, sensitivity, originality, and emotional involvement provided by jazz the improvisation experience. For years it was felt that the ability to improvise was a gift and could not be taught. The fact that many college graduates of jazz programs have occupied chairs in big bands such as Woody Herman and Maynard Ferguson disproves this theory.

Administrators and music teachers who argue against jazz curriculums fear that such a program may grow to become out of hand due to the overwhelming public and student appeal. They fear the end result will be the demise of serious music programs (orchestra, wind ensemble, etc.). This potential does exist if the program is overemphasized, however, many jazz programs throughout the country have proven to be a jewel in the music department's crown and an asset to the entire music program. A jazz band and other related courses will provide a well rounded and attractive total program. Students who are members of a jazz band usually develop a stronger sense of individuality, independence, and responsibility which is carried through to their membership in other ensembles. Students who participate in a jazz band gain strong reinforcement in the areas of sight reading, rhythmic understanding, intonation, leadership through part independence, balance and blend. It seems logical to presume that these attributes would only benefit the other phases of any music program.

Debating the validity and inclusion of a jazz program in the daily schedule with an administrator can be frustrating. Many school administrators are sports oriented and certain nonmusical arguments may benefit your cause. It is a proven fact that a jazz band is capable of attracting more community, parent, and student excitement than most traditional band and orchestral organizations aside from those musical organizations associated with athletic events. Valuable promotion for the school is often the result of winning contest and festival performances. Some administrators may be more concerned with trophies and public image than educational programming. This approach may therefore be effective in debating the need for a jazz program and the extra funding for its support.

"Multiculturalism" or cultural diversity has become an important issue and these buzz words have emerged from the vocabulary and attitudes of the 1990s. There is little doubt that education will continue to adjust to and be influenced by these concepts as we move closer to the next century. The demographics of the United States have changed dramatically since the 1950s and minority populations have grown significantly to the point of reshaping educational directives. Since its inception, jazz has been primarily an African American art form and I can think of no better way to provide students with a better understanding of our cultural diversity than through closer contact with this music and its history.

Whether you decide to call your organization a jazz band, jazz ensemble or jazz/rock ensemble is insignificant. The growing interest in this areas has stimulated many directors to form studio orchestras by combining their jazz band and orchestra. This avenue provides an opportunity for even more student exposure to American music. The best music programs, on close examination, are usually the most diverse.

Of all the arguments in support of a jazz curriculum, the sheer enjoyment provided for audiences and students is possibly the most valid.

Once the need and justification for a jazz program has been realized and rationally dealt with, we must take the first steps necessary to initiate the program. Finding students interested in auditioning should not present a real problem. Due to the attractiveness of this medium, many students will be interested in participating. You may even discover a more intense form of student competition for chairs in this ensemble than any other musical organization. Student members of the other active school ensembles should be notified of the audition dates and procedures. A frequent problem area in the recruiting process concerns the rhythm section. It may be necessary to look outside the music department for students, bassists, pianists and guitarists in particular. Many rhythm players who have gotten their experience outside the classroom in local rock bands are eager to have the opportunity to play in a school jazz ensemble. These players may be weak in the fundamentals of reading written parts and chord symbols creating the need for special tutoring at first. (See Chapter 12) It is wise to use posters, campus newspapers and daily PA announcements to inform all students of the formation of a new jazz ensemble. This kind of mass publicity will help to fill potential holes in the rhythm section by informing those students not already involved in some facet of the music program. The audition procedure may present the only other hurdle to overcome in forming the new ensemble. By what means does a director arrive at the best possible personnel without scaring off potential talent?

The Audition

Do you remember those seeming endless waits in a practice room or long corridor while your hands became cold and clammy and your nerves jangled at about — 280mm? Your heart was beating in an up tempo 7/4 and you thought “What will Mom, Dad, and my friends think if I don’t make it?”

These apprehensions and reservations are universal and certainly not limited to the jazz band experience. It is important to consider the many scenarios encountered by students and directors, the latter who, once or twice a year must play God and make the all-knowing, infallible judgments which often affect the lives and egos of their students. For most directors who possess even the faintest streak of humanism, the audition process presents many potentially difficult and soul-searching hours.

It is best to publicize an informational meeting prior to the audition date(s). This may avoid prematurely scaring away some of the players who might be wary of the audition process. All audition times, requirements procedures and rehearsal times should be outlined at this time. It is most important that each auditionee be made aware of the requirements of the ensemble prior to the audition. The director, or panel of adjudicators, must believe that every auditionee has made a commitment to membership regardless of the results. Frequently, a student will audition with only a half-hearted commitment and may withdraw if he or she does not gain the chair or ensemble placement desired. This is the easiest way for a student to cope with a bruised ego. It is a good idea to post, prior to the audition, the weekly rehearsal schedule, attendance policy, criteria for grading, ensembles objectives, extra rehearsal policy, concert schedule and challenge policy should seating warrant change. The students should also be informed of the audition content and the weight of each element of the audition on final decisions. (See audition criteria/rating chart at the end of this section.) Directors may also wish to notify the students of the exact instrumentation requirements of the ensemble; i.e. we will accept 5 trumpets, 5 trombones, 5 saxes and 4 rhythm.

Instrumentation brings up an often debated issue among educators and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Should the audition process yield the best possible ensemble comprised of select musicians, or should one attempt to provide a broad experience to as many students as possible? Many directors solve this dilemma by selecting the cream of the crop for the top ensemble and offering a second or third ensemble for those less experience players. This situation of course is a nirvana which is more likely attainable in collegiate situations because of scheduling flexibility. The public school director, however, may not have the assistance or time in the daily schedule to organize more than one jazz group. In this instance should one use more than the number of players necessary to cover the parts? Does this more open policy make for a better educational environment or does it defeat the whole process of auditions and create an unrealistic environment? There is no right or wrong answer to these questions since often the solutions must be based on individual cases. The solutions may also vary according to the age group in question since the responsibility of the public school director to provide as broad an experience to as many students as possible may be greater than the college director's. Compromises may also be possible. Directors often platoon players, alternating personnel from selection to selection. This is a logical solution as it does provide more students with a jazz experience while still remaining faithful to the one on a part jazz ensemble philosophy. Excessive doubling of parts frequently leads to an unwieldy ensemble which suffers from poor intonation, and a host of other problems including balance, phrasing, articulation and time. Only each director can examine the priorities to determine if the audition process should yield the best possible band, or involve and educate the greatest number of students.

How frequently should auditions be held? Should they be held at the beginning of each semester or merely once a year? Should challenges be used in lieu of bi-yearly auditions? Should spring term auditions be held only for those chairs vacated by matriculation, students with course conflicts etc.? It is best for the director to be flexible depending upon the restraints and situations unique to his institution. In general, smaller institutions (particularly colleges/universities) experience fewer problems of scheduling and matriculation from fall to spring semester. Under the best conditions, during four years at a college or small university, student teaching assignments for seniors may create the only vacancies from fall to spring. Large universities seem to experience more continuity problems stemming from a steady influx of transfers (often in January), more stringent academic pressures and degree requirements, and scheduling problems. These problems can cause one to reevaluate past audition procedures and adjust them to fit the problems unique to the given situation. Sometimes it may be healthy to audition the entire roster, including all bands, every semester. One advantage is the increased sense of competition among students. No one can get lazy! It also provides an opportunity for those students entering school at midyear.

Will any audition material be distributed in advance? Will sight reading be a major or minor emphasis in the audition? Will saxophonists be required to demonstrate proficiency on flute and clarinet or will this be an option? Will improvisation be mandatory or an option and what percentage will count toward the final results? The answers to all these questions are again subject to the particular set of circumstances and level of students. It is often beneficial to distribute an excerpt in advance or to request each student to prepare a jazz etude or solo transcription of their choice for the audition. This requirement provides a more accurate picture of the student's ability, and can fuel motivation if preparation time is allowed. Preparing a selection is particularly helpful in evaluating a new student whose talents are unfamiliar to the director. The more mature college musician knows best how to select an excerpt which will show off their strengths. The freedom of choice also allows the director to make a quick and usually accurate evaluation of the student's musical tastes and background. It is highly recommended for public school situations that the director choose the material that is to be prepared in advance.

Sight-reading must be an important and heavily weighted audition element. If sight-reading is not stressed, the director can be forced to spend an entire semester learning three selections for competition. This approach is not only unrewarding and unrealistic, but also promotes boredom in rehearsals. The adjudicator(s) should be prepared with several pieces of various styles (swing/bop, Latin, rock, ballad, etc.) and difficulty, taking into account that a brass player might be an excellent sight reader and have a beautiful sound but may lack upper range.

Improvisation ideally should be a requirement of the collegiate audition. At the public school level this should probably be an option for those interested in a solo chair. At this level, chord changes should be provided in advance and probably should be a simple blues, modal or song form progression. Play-along records, such as those from the Jamey Aebersold or Ray Ricker series may be used to provide rhythm section accompaniment for wind player auditions. These recordings might also be useful in collegiate auditions, however, ideally these students should be required to improvise with a live rhythm section on a standard jazz form such as rhythm changes (OLEO, I'VE GOT RHYTHM) or blues.

One can decide to conduct individual auditions of like instruments in consecutive time blocks. It is difficult for any adjudicator to maintain a consistent level of accuracy and uniformity hearing one trumpet at 10:00 a.m. and another at 1:00 p.m. Another option is to audition by sections. Since scheduling sectional auditions during the day may not be practical as students may have conflicts, it might be necessary to schedule them during evening hours over several days. Sectional auditions can be successful for they allow the adjudicator to gain an accurate picture of the potential sound of each section through the rotation of players from part to part during the audition process. For some students the section audition may be trying as it forces them to audition under the pressure of peer observation.

One audition technique can work beautifully and efficiently in one situation and fail miserably under other conditions. Occasionally reality may cause compromises that are less than ideal. In some instances the conductor may have to conduct auditions during the first few scheduled rehearsals. However, auditioning during rehearsal time may drag out the process, particularly if the group rehearses only once or twice a week. Psychologically the conductor also suffers to see the precious rehearsal time lost. At times it may even be necessary to audition wind players individually during a three to four day period, at random, but this procedure is agonizingly difficult.

While winds may audition individually, the rhythm section should, if at all possible, be auditioned together so that players may be interchanged until the best possible combination is reached. Rhythm players should be required to read arrangements in different tempos, meter signatures and styles. Time may not allow all styles to be thoroughly evaluated, however, this could be overcome by using charts which feature more than one style, tempo or meter signature. Excerpts would also be appropriate since it is time consuming and unnecessary to play through an entire arrangement to make an accurate judgment. It is equally important, particularly at the college level, that bassists, pianists and guitarists be required to read sketchy, chord style charts as well as those specifically notated with exact pitches, voicing and rhythms. Trading fours is a good way to evaluate more experienced rhythm section players during the improvisational phase of the audition. It may be advantageous to audition winds first and

finalize all decisions. This will allow the director to audition the rhythm section with the wind section of the band. The jazz ensemble director must be directly involved in the audition and be solely responsible for the results. Some schools use a panel of adjudicators comprised of faculty members or local professionals. The final decisions, however, rest with the director and are often painful. For instance, how much should seniority be considered, if at all? Should a reliable student who has served successfully in the organization be removed from a chair by a newcomer? At the collegiate level, should a music major have priority over a non-major and if so under what circumstances? Do we owe this experience to our majors?

Sticky issues arise every audition time. A typical scenario involves an incumbent and a newcomer who had improved rapidly during the first semester in school. The incumbent soundly defeats the newcomer in certain aspects of the audition and vice versa. If the students are on friendly terms a compromise can be reached whereby the two agree to share the piano chair in the first and second jazz ensembles. The success of this solution is based entirely on the students' willingness to compromise their daily schedules. Should an incoming freshman who shows real talent and promise be placed in a lower chair in the top ensemble with little responsibility or placed in a leadership chair in a second band? Usually a talented novice placed in a leadership position will profit by the opportunity to develop musical individuality and a sense of responsibility. Such a decision benefits the student more and, in the long run, the success of your top ensemble in future years.

Unfortunately compromises such as those described above are not always attainable and ultimately the director must make the final, and oftentimes stressful decisions. Directors should always remember that students have feelings just as they did during their days as a student. Students are more apt to accept decisions if they are made aware of each step in the audition process and realize the basis on which decisions are made. It has been helpful to post the following statements and philosophies along with the audition results.

"Audition results were carefully considered and in some cases agonized over. Decisions were based on the following considerations not necessarily in this priority:

- 1) Various musical needs of the ensemble.*
- 2) Scheduling problems.*
- 3) Audition success.*
- 4) Experience, year and major at the university.*
- 5) Past membership in jazz ensembles considering musicianship, performance, attitude and dedication.*

For those of you who did not get the chair you had hoped for, please consider the following thoughts:

- 1) School should be a realistic environment that trains you to succeed as well as deal with disappointments.*
- 2) I hope that you auditioned because of your enthusiasm for jazz. I also hope that this enthusiasm will prevail over disappointment and encourage you to succeed in your new assignment.*
- 3) EVERY chair in EVERY ensemble is crucial to the continued growth and success of the jazz studies program.*

The conductor reserves the right to make seating changes within the sections when necessary throughout the semester. We realize that a 10-15 minute audition may not always give us an accurate picture.

Finally, remember we reaudition every semester. We encourage you to try again."

Despite these words there will be bruised egos. How well students can accept audition results will depend on the conductor's sensitivity and continued interest in the development of each individual over the years. Above all, students should sense that regardless of audition outcomes, the camaraderie inspired by the love for jazz music can be experienced by all students at all levels of the jazz studies program.

Rehearsal Obligations

Rehearsals, whether they be during, after, or before school hours, may begin once auditions have been completed. Consistent rehearsal attendance must be stressed since the jazz band is usually based on the one player per part concept. One missing student will cause the entire band to suffer. Jazz band should be an enjoyable and rewarding musical outlet so attendance problems should be minimal. It is important to make students realize how everyone suffers when one is absent from a rehearsal. If it is necessary to send a substitute, every effort should be made to send a sub who is a better musician! It is the director's job to guide and maintain this enthusiasm through the choice of literature and rehearsal techniques.