

Swinging the Basics

WMEA Convention-Monona Terrace
Madison, Wisconsin
Thursday, October 29, 2009

How to start?

Have jazz playing when students enter the room. Start with them creating.

Directed listening:

- at first, have students identify when chords change by clapping, then discuss the form of a blues, 12 measures and clap when it begins again. More advanced players can listen for subdivision, solo ideas, how does the rhythm section build, what is the drummer playing in the bass drum, is the guitar player comping or “chunking”, is there vibrato in the saxes, just about anything to get them listening in a way that will apply to the music that you have selected.

If they know we are about to create a riff tune, they may start trying to rip off riffs!

Start with “Everyday I have the Blues”, featuring Joe Williams from “Breakfast, Dance and Barbeque”, Count Basie Orchestra.

Beginning a Rehearsal

Go through a blues – any key is fine (“Everyday” is in Ab!)

Roots

1353

135b7

1235

3-b7

b7-3

Use tonic chord and 3-7th resolutions for the following:

- 123 for I chord (F,G,A)
- 12b3 for IV chord (F,G,Ab)
- 124 for V chord (F,G,Bb)
- 5613 and alter as above

Create a chord using the most important notes of the chord 3rd, 7th and add the 9th

Create an ending

Create a tune

- saxes, bones, trumpets
- couple solos with background second chorus
- end tune

Jazz Ensemble Physical Set up – See sheet

Rhythm Section – Listening and Responsibility – see sheet

1. subdivision
2. directed listening
3. function and basics of Piano, Bass, Guitar and Drums
4. rhythm section resources

Rehearsal Techniques

1. Internalizing **Swing** “feel”
 - a. In chairs, tap heel, not foot and say “do-da-la”
 - i. Careful not to accent “do”, should accent “la”
 1. syncopation creates forward motion – use it!
 - b. Stand up and “bounce the baby” – reinforce the “la”
 - c. Step and clap while saying “do-da-la”
2. Concepts applied to “I let a song go out of my Heart”
 - a. David Berger transcription from “Essentially Ellington”
 - i. www.jalc.org
 - b. play and clean ensemble section of tune
 - i. often four parts – students can listen and identify their group
 - ii. articulation, dynamics, accents, syllables, vibrato etc.

Literature Resources

1. publishers guide
2. some suggested charts
 - don’t forget about our own state list at www.wsmamusic.org
3. Friends, colleagues and alumni are all great resources

Questions???

Thanks for coming and if you would like to contact me, feel free

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Sun Prairie High School
Jazz Students helping us out today

Saxophones

Alto Ryan Carlson
Karissa Kostka
Tenor Nicki Dybevik
Julia Brummel
Bari Sam Troz

Trombones

Cavan Jefferson
Trae Titus
Brian Smith
Brandon Stiefel

Trumpets

Andrew Phillips
Frankie Hanson
Ryan Berman
Kari Edington

Rhythm

Piano Jon Nelson
Bass Jared Dalglish
Drums Will Presser
Matt O'Connor
Guitar Michael Berberet

Physical Set up of the Jazz Ensemble

Build from the rhythm section:

Rhythm Section to the left of the band

- Piano far left
- Guitar at end of keyboard to right of piano player
- Bass in “nook” of Grand Piano and back of instrument in front of bass drum
- Drum set at end of Trombone section with bass drum behind bass

NOTE: this is based off of traditional “Piano Trio” set up allowing rhythm section sight lines of each other, bass drum filling out sound of bass with less amplification necessary.

Winds

- Saxes in front, seated from left to right
 - o Tenor I, Alto II, Alto I, Tenor II, Bari
- Trombones (L-R)
 - o Bone II, Bone I, Bone III, Bone IV
- Trumpets (L-R)
 - o Trumpet II, I, III, IV, (V)

NOTE: this allows most common solo players to be near rhythm section and allows the lead players to line up from back to front (ex. Lead trumpet with lead trombone and lead alto). Good to have soloists come to the front when practical for audio and visual reasons.

Risers – I use 16” high, 4’ x 8’ so that saxes are on the floor, trombones sit at front of riser, and trumpets stand behind the trombones. Seems most flexible as 16” risers are fairly standard and not every place has “stepped” risers.

Finding the Groove in the Rhythm Section Listening and Function

1. Medium Swing – **THE** Backbone of Jazz

a. **Triplet Subdivision and the language of *Swing***. We are our students' guides into the world of jazz. Their culture when they come to us is primarily straight eighth note oriented. We need to introduce them to the triple subdivision of the beat. Everyone should feel, understand and be able to reproduce by singing (see ***Swing Syllable*** sheet) and playing and dancing these rhythms. This internalization of the feel is at the heart of jazz tradition.

b. **Listening for the *Feel***. Once students know what to listen for rhythmically in the music, they must listen, recognize and reproduce. Listening from this new perspective will give the music a new depth that most did not realize existed. Listening can not be overemphasized – music theory gives us a way to organize our thoughts about what it is we hear. What does theory tell us about the rhythm or “feel” of the music? It is important to hear and identify the “feel” of the music **before** the theory is applied - young improvisers often forget this.

Listen to the following examples of tunes in a medium swing groove with a thought towards the triplet sub-division. Sometimes the players will play the subdivision quite clearly and sometimes you can just “feel” it. In the listening process it is also important to get the players listening for **form** as well – their clear understanding of the form allows them to make good decisions as they relate to dynamics and orchestration and can allow them to lead the band through a chart. It will also make memorization of their parts easier which will also elevate their playing. The following examples are on the CD, “Breakfast, Dance and Barbeque” by the Count Basie Orchestra with Eddie Jones on Bass, Sonny Payne – Drums and Freddie Green – guitar, and Basie on piano.

- **“The Deacon”** – Basie – “Breakfast Dance and Barbeque” – ***Intro Only***
 - listen to rhythm section intro and “do da la” conversation between the bass drum and Hi hat
 - listen to the attack of the guitar and how it balances with the attack in the bass – how long are the notes in the bass – is there space?
 - what about the balance in the rhythm section
 - this balance should first be attained acoustically in your rhythm section with maybe minimal amplification in the guitar
 - some nice trombone plunger blues solo

- **“Moten Swing”** – Basie from “Breakfast Dance and Barbeque”
 - same balance with good closed Hi Hat sample in the intro
 - great example of rhythm section **“orchestration”**
 - colors in cymbals, different for piano solo, sax solis, solos, ensemble playing, conversational playing in the drums, etc...

2. Responsibilities and specifics in the Rhythm Section

It is **IMPOSSIBLE** to have a swinging band if the rhythm section doesn't swing. This can be especially difficult to achieve for those of us who are "horn player" band directors. We really need to spend more time learning about what is going on in the rhythm section than any other section in the band. We don't have to be great performers on the instruments but we have to know enough to guide our students. The following section will give some tips on what kids need to know to find the groove in the "Medium Swing" world.

Drums

Full kit ride- basic "layin' it down" feel

Bass drum – a straight ahead big band chart will usually play four on the floor or feather the bass drum – optimal sound is "felt but not heard". ("Reverse Feather" is an option)

Ride Cymbal – Start with quarter notes to lock in with their bass drum and high hat. (Note: the player should still think the "do da la" triplet feel when playing quarter notes – it gives them a swing feel!) When this feels solid they can go to "spang, spang a lang" triplet pattern – be aware of where they play on the cymbal. (Ed Thigpen said that he tries to get 3-5 sounds out of each cymbal depending on where/how he strikes it.)

Hi – Hat – closed on two and four – don't crush it, let it breathe

Snare – can cross – stick on "4" then build and add "2" and "4"

Be sure to listen to the balance of the various elements – is one of instruments too loud?

Closed High Hat – this is often used during a bass solo

Similar to the above pattern except that there is no ride cymbal or snare drum used and the High Hat is kept closed with the left foot (how tightly can vary the sound of what you are doing for effect). The right hand plays a "tick, tick a tick" based a triplet pattern on the closed cymbal. Basic drummers would often play the first "tick" closer to the dome of the cymbal (Not on the dome) and the "tick-a" closer to the outside edge of the cymbal (Not too close!)

Bass

A big sound and a good attack are important here. Be sure that the player is reaching down towards the end of the fingerboard with their right hand and anchoring their thumb on the neck. The player will need to use a lot of the "meat" of the side of their finger to get a big, full sound. They need to use more than just their fingers to get the sound out of the bass (electric players with amps that go to "11" will struggle with this concept). The left hand needs to press the strings firmly to the neck to avoid notes stopping prematurely or sounding thin.

The quarter notes of the bass player must “lock” with the feathered bass drum and the quarter notes of the ride cymbal. It is again important that the bass player think “do-da-la” while playing the quarters – this will make it easier to lock into the quarter notes that the drummer is playing. The low sound of the bass must balance with the high sound of the ride cymbal for a real swinging effect.

Piano

The piano often adds the conversational aspect to the rhythm section. This can be done by putting in melodic comments to groove based on the chord changes or by comping to add color to the conversation. Most classically trained pianists can read changes but will play triads in root position. Encourage your player to start by using simple voicings based on the third and seventh of the chords (leave the root out). You could start here in the left hand and then “stack fourths” with the right hand beginning on the root or fifth of a dominant chord. Rhythmically, the player should vary their comping within the triplet subdivision of the beat – syncopations being placed on the “la”. Pianist should leave plenty of space for the other players – careful not to play too much!

Guitar

The universal standard of comping in this medium swing style is Freddie Green of the Count Basie Band. He used simple voicings, primarily 3rd's and 7th's, that he strummed downward (pick never goes beyond the width of the neck and use wrist with a slight turn to get the “chunk”!) on all four beats. He would slightly lift off of the strings on the “la” of the beat to put a little space between his quarters and add more attack to the next beat. He played an unamplified, acoustic guitar, tilted slightly out at the bottom that had great projection. When done properly, the guitar can really fill out the sound and swing of a rhythm section. When using an amp keep it behind the guitar and use the neck pick ups for rhythm playing. An acoustic, arch top guitar is best (Epiphone, Joe Pass Model is good with Labella 800 round wound strings)

3. Putting it all together

Once the rhythm section gets comfortable in laying down this groove there are numerous variations that can be applied. For Example: 2-Beat, broken time, pedal points, breaks, double time, call and response, texture variations (orchestration) and More!!!

These are all techniques that can be used to communicate more clearly the variety of feelings that the musicians wish to express. Above all though it is important that the players think the same underlying subdivision to keep the rhythm section swinging no matter what techniques are employed. Listening to each other and complimenting each other with a common understanding of swing is what it is all about! The importance of the same subdivision and same concept of the subdivision applies to all styles!

Rhythm Section Resources – short list

There are thousands of rhythm section books, methods, DVD's and such out there. The trouble is picking out the ones that will help you and your players out the most. When selecting ones that you wish to use, remember that probably the most valuable resources will have some aural examples. Listening and emulating is the tradition of jazz and remains the best way to learn – there is no shortcut! Our job is to make the journey of discovery exciting for our students.

The following is a short list of possible methods to look at:

Piano

“Voicings for Jazz Keyboard”, by Frank Mantooth, publ. Hal Leonard
“The Jazz Piano Book”, by Mark Levine, publ. Sher Music

Bass

“The Evolving Bassist Millennium Edition” – Rufus Reid, publ. by JA Jazz
“How to Play Bass in a Big Band”, by Jeff Campbell, publ. Advance Music
“Bass Sessions” Bk 1 & 2, by Karyn Quinn, publ. Kjos

Drums

“The Sound of Brushes” – Ed Thigpen
“Syncopation”, volume 1 & 2 – Ted Reed
Vic Furth “Essential Drum Grooves” comes with DVD (www.vicfurth.com)

Guitar

The best source of guitar knowledge that I know is Rick Haydon at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. Rick teaches at Birch Creek as well as the J@LC band director academies. Rick recommends the following:
“Guitar at First Sight” by Charles Duncan – good book to get student to learn fingerboard
“Jazz Band Rhythm Guitar”, by Bruce Foreman, publ. Mel Bay
“Romancing the Chord”, Bucky Pizzarelli, publ. Mel Bay

Latin Rhythm Section

“Salsa Guidebook”, by Rebecca Mauleon, publ. Sher Music
“Afro-Latin Rhythm Dictionary”, by Thomas Brown, publ. Alfred
“Tito Puente – Drumming with the Mambo King”, by Tito Puente and Jim Payne, publ. Hudson music

Consult Jamey Aebersold catalog for more resources:

www.aebersold.com
www.jazzbooks.com

Also – don't forget the many fine Jazz educators in the state of Wisconsin – I have not met anyone not willing to help – we are blessed!!

Charts that Work!

The following is a partial list of charts that I have used to teach jazz listening and style through the students performance of them. Most are more advanced charts, though some are easier than others. I like them because most of them have original recordings by great, professional bands with swinging rhythm sections, great lead players and soloists! Also, look at the standard repertoire list for WSMA solo/ensemble as well as the entire list for more ideas!!!

<u>Composer/Arranger</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
Billy Byers	All of Me	Hal Leonard
Benny Carter	Vine Street Rumble	Sierra Music
Dave Barduhn, arr.	Flight of the Foo Bird	Jenson
Ellington/Berger	Across the Track Blues Black and Tan Fantasy Concerto for Cootie Half the Fun Harlem Airshaft Isfahan I Let a Song go out of my Heart Just a Sittin and a Rockin' Perdido Rockabye River Rumpus in Richmond The Mooche	Alfred
	...and lots more!!!	
Paquito d’Rivera	Chucho	Three-Two Music
John Fedchock, arr.	Angel Eyes	Kendor
Frank Foster	Shiny Stockings Four-Five-Six In a Mellotone Blues in Hoss’ Flat	Walrus Music
Victor Goines, arr	Second Line	Alfred
Freddie Green Arr. Steve Wright	Corner Pocket	Steve Wright pub.

Neil Hefti	Lil' Darlin' * The Kid from Red Bank Flight of the Foo Bird	Kendor
Oscar Hernandez	Machito's Blues*	Three-Two Music

Charts that work

Page Two

Composer/Arranger

Title

Publisher

Bill Holman	Stompin at the Savoy	Sierra
Thad Jones	Big Dipper A Child is Born* Don't Git Sassy Groove Merchant	Kendor
Paul Lavender, arr.	Tiger of San Pedro*	Hal Leonard
Dave LaLama, arr	Things Ain't what they used to be	Hal Leonard
Mike Lewis	One More for the Count*	
Frank Mantooth, arr	Cherokee It Had to Be You	Barnehouse Warner Bros.
Michael P. Mossman, arr.	Afro Blue Impressions A Night in Tunisia	Hal Leonard
Sammy Nestico	88 Basie Street Basie Straight Ahead Chelsea Bridge A Night in Tunisia Ya Gotta Try Hayburner Switch in Time Tall Cotton The Queen Bee* A Warm Breeze* That Warm Feeling* Wind Machine	Kendor
Dave Rivello, arr	Bye Bye Blackbird*	Alfred

Maria Schneider	Salina*	Kendor
Rick Stitzel, arr.	Apple Honey	Hal Leonard
Mark Taylor, arr	Kansas City	Warner Bros.
Ernie Wilkins	Moten Swing Jumpin' at the Woodside	Sierra Music

- Not too difficult in range or notes/rhythms
- Don't forget to check out
 - Wisconsin solo/ensemble jazz list
 - "Teaching Music through Performance in Jazz" GIA Publications