



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 25-27, 2019**

**Jazz Rehearsal Techniques and
Strategies**

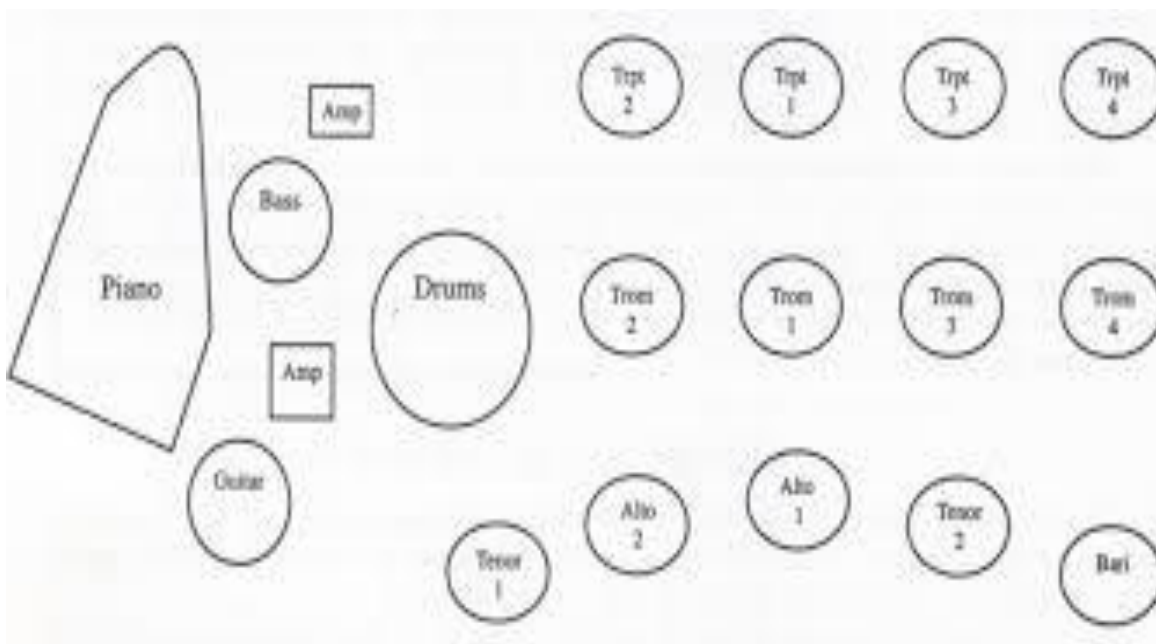
**CLINICIAN:
Richard Dunscomb**

Demonstration Group: Dekaney Alumni Band

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JAZZ REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES CLINIC

DICK DUNSCOMB HANDOUT – TBA 2019



Swing-style Basics

- Listen, repeatedly, to professional jazz recordings to identify and understand jazz styles. [L] [SEP]
- Identify the jazz sound - the rhythm section is particularly [L] [SEP] important in this regard.
- Strive for clarity of sound throughout. [L] [SEP]
- Identify the steady beat or time and know how to make it work.
- Understand the swing eighth-note concept. [L] [SEP]
- Identify characteristic jazz nuances, shapes, and musical language.
- Work on developing a groove. [L] [SEP]
- Be able to sing confidently with jazz syllables, connecting visual and aural skills. [L] [SEP]

• SUGGESTED JAZZ ARTICULATIONS

Many different syllables can be used to imitate the appropriate feel of jazz. The ones we have chosen are but one example. Encourage all students to sing the syllables.

Today the following syllables will apply:

- Du full value eighth and quarter notes
- Dot short eighth and quarter notes
- Du, Da connector eighth notes (Du, Da – on and off beat)
- Dah sustained or full value note, sometimes accented
- Daht strong, detached accent

Duke's Place

The musical notation for 'Duke's Place' consists of three staves of music in 4/4 time. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is as follows:

- Staff 1: Four measures. Measure 1: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 2: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 3: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 4: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note Bb4.
- Staff 2: Four measures. Measure 1: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 2: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 3: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 4: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note Bb4.
- Staff 3: Four measures. Measure 1: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 2: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 3: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter rest. Measure 4: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note Bb4.

Lyrics are placed below the notes: 'du dot' under the first two notes of each measure, and 'du dot' under the last two notes of each measure.

Articulation Exercises - Clinic

dot dot du da du dot dot dot du da du dot

5 daht daht du da du dot daht daht du da du dot

9 dah du du dot dah du du dot

The image shows three staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains two measures of music: the first measure has a quarter note on G4, a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on B4; the second measure has a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4. This pattern is repeated in the second measure. The syllables 'dot dot du da du dot' are written below the first measure, and 'dot dot du da du dot' below the second. The second staff starts with a measure rest, then a quarter note on G4 with an accent (^), a quarter note on A4 with an accent (^), and a quarter note on B4. This is followed by a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4. The syllables 'daht daht du da du dot' are written below the first measure, and 'daht daht du da du dot' below the second. The third staff starts with a measure rest, then a quarter note on G4 with an accent (>), a quarter note on A4, and a quarter note on B4. This is followed by a quarter note on C5, a quarter note on B4, and a quarter note on A4. The syllables 'dah du du dot' are written below the first measure, and 'dah du du dot' below the second.

Exercise 4.2 - Syllables - AA

da du dot da du dot da du da dah da du dot dot

da du da dah da du dot dot dah da du dah dot dot

du du dot da du dot da du dot da du da dah da du dot dot

da du da dah da du dot dot dah da du dah dot dot

du da du dot

Focus on the Rhythm Section

- Set-up
- See and hear each other
- Know the appropriate sound of swing
- Use acoustic instruments when possible
- Electric guitar and bass fix for swing style
 - Create a Groove
 - Metronome for al

Directed Student Listening

Spend time in class listening. It is critical for you to point out what to listen for, as it will make a huge difference for your young and inexperienced students. Direct them to listen to the overall sound of the ensemble, the sound of the individual sections and instruments, the articulations, the phrasing and style, the balance, the impact, and so forth. Listening to professional playing will help your students lock into a mental concept of sound and to ultimately imitate that sound.

Below is a short list of some professional jazz ensemble recordings that can provide proper examples for your ensemble. These recordings are primarily straight-ahead (swing) jazz in a modern style.

Some Suggested Big Band Recordings

Count Basie, *Basie Straight Ahead, April in Paris*

Duke Ellington, *The London Concerts*^{[L][SEP]}

Bob Florence, *With All the Bells and Whistles*

Gordon Goodwin, *Swingin' for the Fences*

Woody Herman, *The Three Herds*

Bill Holman, *A View from the Side*^{[L][SEP]}

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, *A Touch of Class*^{[L][SEP]}

Quincy Jones- Sammy Nestico, *Basie and Beyond*

Bob Mintzer, *Incredible Journey*

Bill Watrous, *A Time for Love*

Patrick Williams, *Sinatrland*

9 3

ALTO SAX. 1

ALTO SAX. 2

TEN. SAX. 1

TEN. SAX. 2

BAS. SAX.

TRP. 1

TRP. 2

TRP. 3

TRP. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

VIB.

GR.

PNO.

BASS

DR.

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REHEARSING THE JAZZ ENSEMBLE

1. The unique sound of the jazz ensemble results greatly from the fact there is only one player on a part. Therefore, doubling parts will produce an unbalanced and uncharacteristic sound. At no time should lead parts be doubled. If you make a decision to double parts in rehearsal so more students can participate in the program, remember it is not acceptable to do so in a performance.
2. Identify who has the melody and be sure everyone can hear it.
3. When the entire ensemble is playing, the two outside voices should be distinguishable not dominant – the lead trumpet and the baritone sax.
4. Pay particular attention to balance within sections by having lower parts play up to the lead player's volume to support the blend, but not overpower the lead line.
5. Use proper jazz articulations with all instruments.
6. Unison lines can always be played softer than lines that are harmonized, and players should never use vibrato when playing unison or octave lines.
7. Fast passages are always played more accurately when played lightly.
8. Bring out moving lines
9. Think and play in four-bar phrases whenever possible.
10. Play all dynamic levels. Exaggerate dynamics.
11. Understand the proper balance within the rhythm section, as well as the tone quality that is appropriate for the style. Continually keep the rhythm section aware of the balance with the wind sections.
12. The rhythm section should automatically play softer in two places: the head and the solo section.

REHEARSAL TIPS FOR PLAYING BALLADS

Legato playing Is generally called for throughout the chart for winds. This is a must to keep the music moving in a natural flow.

Breathing together playing at a ballad tempo can be challenging. At a slower tempo, the entire ensemble is more transparent therefore breathing together is especially important. Each wind section should strive to breathe as one. Playing ballads also requires special attention to phrasing, blend and balance.

Even and straight eighths in a ballad tempo, the ensemble often will change the feel from a light swing to straight eighths. This provides a nice musical contrast. It is also important to note where the eighth notes change from even to swing and back to swing again.

Subdividing the beat is a common concept in jazz. Subdividing a beat or measure is done mentally to help maintain a steady pulse at a slow tempo. Mentally thinking with subdivided beats will help the ensemble maintain a steady temp.

Rhythm section tips drums should use brushes, bass should be legato and smooth, guitar and piano sustain comping.

Dynamics ballads provide an opportunity to display the softer side of the ensemble.

SELECTING MUSIC – WHERE TO BEGIN

Know the best arrangers for your groups level

Rhythm section – does your section need written parts

Evaluate the group – strengths and weaknesses
Especially ranges of lead trumpet, lead horn, lead alto
How about soloists – review the changes
Written solos, scales provided, etc.
Programming needs – concert, festival etc.

CHOOSE QUALITY MUSIC

Classic jazz standards

LOOK FOR CONSISTENTLY GOOD ARRANGERS – CREATE A LIST

Neil Hefti, Quincy Jones, Sammy Nestico, Mike Sweeney, Mike Steinel, Doug Beach, Mark Taylor, Mike Story, Victor Lopez, Mike Kamuf, Dave Wolpe, Mike Tomaro, Jeff Jarvis, Dave Barduhn, Roger Holmes, Alan Baylock, Rick Stitzel, Paul Baker, Scott Ragsdale, Eric Richards, Mike Carubia, etc.

HELPFUL APPS –

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Dick Dunscomb, creator and author

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