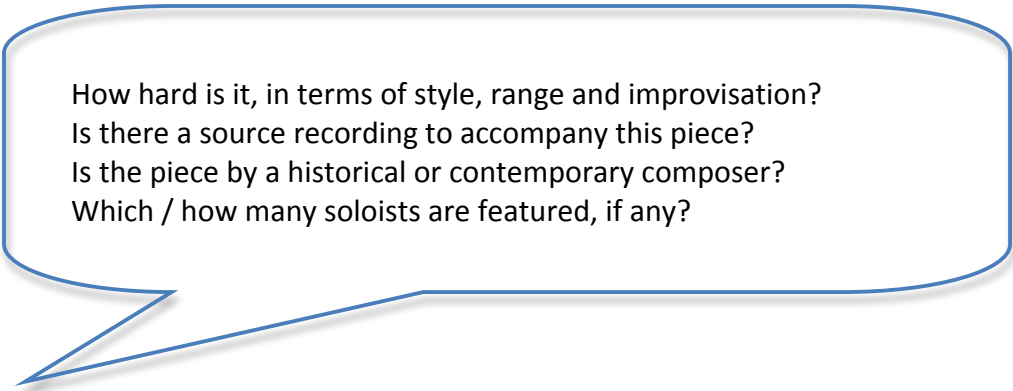


Repertoire

Choosing appropriate repertoire for your jazz ensemble can be a challenging task. When choosing pieces for your band, ask yourself the following questions:



Listening

The most effective starting point to learning jazz is simply *listening*. As a sample of big band styles, I have listed some of my favourite big bands and “arranged” small ensembles from various eras. Please note that this list is only a small sample of what’s out there!

<p><u>Early jazz and swing: (20s to WWII)</u>                      Louis Armstrong Hot Fives and Sevens                      Jelly Roll Morton and his Red Hot Peppers                      Fletcher Henderson                      Glenn Miller                      Tommy Dorsey</p>	<p><u>Swing to bop eras</u>                      Duke Ellington (spans multiple decades)                      Count Basie                      Dizzy Gillespie                      Earl Hines                      Buddy Rich</p>										
<p><u>The 1950s and 60s</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Gerry Mulligan quartets &amp; big band</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">Miles Davis – Birth of the Cool (Gil Evans)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Bob Brookmeyer (New Art Orchestra)</td> <td style="border: none;">Stan Kenton</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Bill Holman</td> <td style="border: none;">Horace Silver Quintet / Jazz Messengers</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">John Coltrane – Blue Train (3 horn section)</td> <td style="border: none;">Thad Jones / Mel Lewis orchestra</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Herbie Hancock (The Prisoner, Speak Like a Child)</td> <td style="border: none;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Gerry Mulligan quartets & big band	Miles Davis – Birth of the Cool (Gil Evans)	Bob Brookmeyer (New Art Orchestra)	Stan Kenton	Bill Holman	Horace Silver Quintet / Jazz Messengers	John Coltrane – Blue Train (3 horn section)	Thad Jones / Mel Lewis orchestra	Herbie Hancock (The Prisoner, Speak Like a Child)	
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### Rhythmic styles: time feel and groove

An ensemble is only as good as its rhythmic feel. Let's examine the components of some common styles for jazz ensemble...

**Swing** is the quintessential jazz style. It is also one of the most challenging to teach, as there are many components and variables. The foundation of this groove generally rests with the bassist and drummer. When listening to ensembles swing, whether at slow or fast tempos, listen to the rhythmic placement of the ride cymbal, hi-hat, and the bass player (in a "4" feel, "2" feel or broken). Experiment with exercises where one member of the pair is playing slightly ahead or behind the beat. This often tenuous relationship is where the beauty exists!

The "comping" instruments (piano / guitar / vibes) most often serve a supporting role during ensemble sections and solos. Most charts will provide written voicings for piano, which generally work well. Guitar voicings are not as commonly written out, and guitar players from a rock background often play root position "power chords" ... this texture is generally far too thick in most "non-rock" styles. As an alternative, the guitarist can play the *guide tones* (ie. 3rds and 7ths of the chords in a smooth stepwise voice leading shape) using the middle two strings of the guitar. A "Freddie Green" (short quarter note with a low amp volume and lots of articulation) works well in most situations.

For horn sections, the same theory applies. In a swing style, the off-beats (syncopations) are sometimes played slightly behind the beat, as exemplified in the Basie style. In terms of accent, most accented figures in swing are articulated with the tongue and the breath. Listen for this in recordings, and avoid over-tonguing.

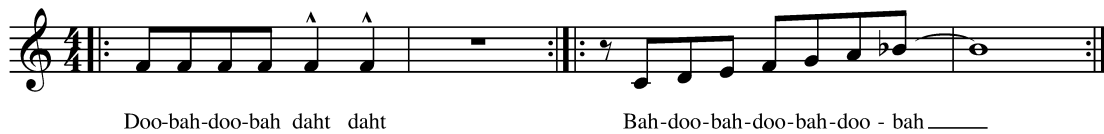
**"Latin" styles:** This catch-all term is used to describe musical styles derived from Latin-American countries such as Cuba and Brazil. Common styles include samba, salsa, bossa nova, and rhumba. Once again, focused listening is the key to learning these styles. In general, Latin styles have a heavy emphasis on *polyrhythm*; listen carefully to the interplay between percussion instruments and rhythm section, and teach your students terminology such as *clave*, *montuno* and *tumbao*.

**Funk / rock / fusion:** These styles all have their individual components, which will not be covered in detail in this handout. Find historical and contemporary recordings for reference, as always!

### Teaching using the voice and body movement

As in most musical styles, vocalization and movement are two of the most important keys to learning jazz. Have students sing and clap rhythms, accents, or anything that needs refinement. It can also be fun to encourage students to use their limbs independently as a drummer, for example clapping a rhythm while tapping beats 2 and 4 with the left foot. Scat syllables can also be useful to teach rhythms and pitch

relationships. In figure 1 (below), scat syllables are paired with long and short notes. Strive for legato articulation on the offbeat eighth notes.



In figure 2 (below), work on consistent placement of the offbeat eighth notes in measure 1. These figures often RUSH! Bar 3 is an example of a “ghosted” note at a fast tempo, where the middle note of the triplet is played much quieter than the rest.



### Ensemble blend and balance

It is often stated that the lead trumpeter and the drummer are the two most important members of the jazz ensemble. This is especially true in the case of blend and balance. The drummer should work hard to keep the volume at a reasonable level to support and drive the band, but avoid overplaying as this can easily overpower the ensemble. Lead players in each horn section should strive for confident sound and consistent time feel, and the inner voices in each section should listen carefully to each lead player. When the entire horn section is playing with a unison rhythm (eg. a “shout chorus”), the lead trumpeter is king!

### The Conductor in Rehearsal

The conductor should be organized, efficient and goal-oriented in order to achieve the best results possible. For a warm-up, I often use “call-and-response” ideas to encourage good time feel, articulation, and sound concept. This also gives an opportunity to teach theory (chord progressions, scales, modes, etc.). In rehearsal, problem areas should be addressed in ensemble and solo sections. Occasionally splitting the group into sectionals can also help make use of time and offer a change of pace. Conducting should generally consist of important cues, stops and starts, and tempo / dynamic changes. Generally, it is unnecessary to conduct each beat, unless a portion of music contains a difficult rhythmic passage. Snapping or clapping on beats 2 and 4 (or 1 and 3 in fast tempos or Latin feels) is a useful strategy.

Baritone saxophonist Shirantha Beddage is a nationally recognized performer, composer, arranger and educator. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Jazz Studies from the Eastman School of Music (Rochester, New York, USA), a Master of Music degree in Jazz Studies from William Paterson University (New Jersey, USA) and a Bachelor of Music degree from Humber College (Toronto, Canada), where he now serves as Director of Theory and Harmony in the Music department. Shirantha Beddage’s exciting new CD, *Identity* (2012) is due for release in the fall of 2012 on Addo Records.