

# *How to get your Jazz Program off the ground and Swingin'!*



## *Education!*

## Why have a Jazz Program?

Jazz is a style of music that sometimes gets a bad rep. People traditionally associate Jazz with elevator music, or Kenny G. However there is much more to it than that. Jazz has culture, history, opportunity, and deep traditions that can motivate young musicians to take risks, and dive deeper into the world of music.

## How is it valuable to your program?

- Your program is the opportunities you offer.
  - If you offer diverse opportunities in your program you will keep more kids, and motivate them to have pride in what they do. Jazz is a perfect place to expand the opportunities that are available to your kids.
- Gives an extra challenge to your top tier musicians
  - Extra opportunity = more playing time. You will see things in jazz; note wise, rhythm wise, harmony wise, that you don't see as much in traditional classical music.
- Jazz is fun! You just have to find the right artist / subgenre of jazz that speaks to you.
  - There are so many emotions, styles, and approaches that go into jazz. If you spend enough time searching, you will find the style of jazz that speaks to you. The more you listen, the more you appreciate it. This holds true in all styles of music.

## How do I fit jazz into my schedule?

- Before school / after school
  - If you are unable to fit a jazz ensemble in your 1st-6th hour schedule, zero hour or after school rehearsals can get the ball rolling to show your administration that jazz is something to invest in for the future.
- RTI / Study period option
  - Many schools are implementing a study period for struggling students to get extra help with teachers during the school day (1-2 times per week). This could be your rehearsal time.
    - Potential problems with this?
- During the school day
  - Established jazz programs already have this built in
  - This is obviously the dream scenario. You meet everyday to establish consistency, routines, expectations, and jazz pedagogy.
  - Schedules vary from school to school. Music teachers can be expected to teach guitar, piano, or music appreciation. You can pitch to your admin that instead of having the above curricular options that Jazz can ultimately help build your program.

How do I get kids to join?

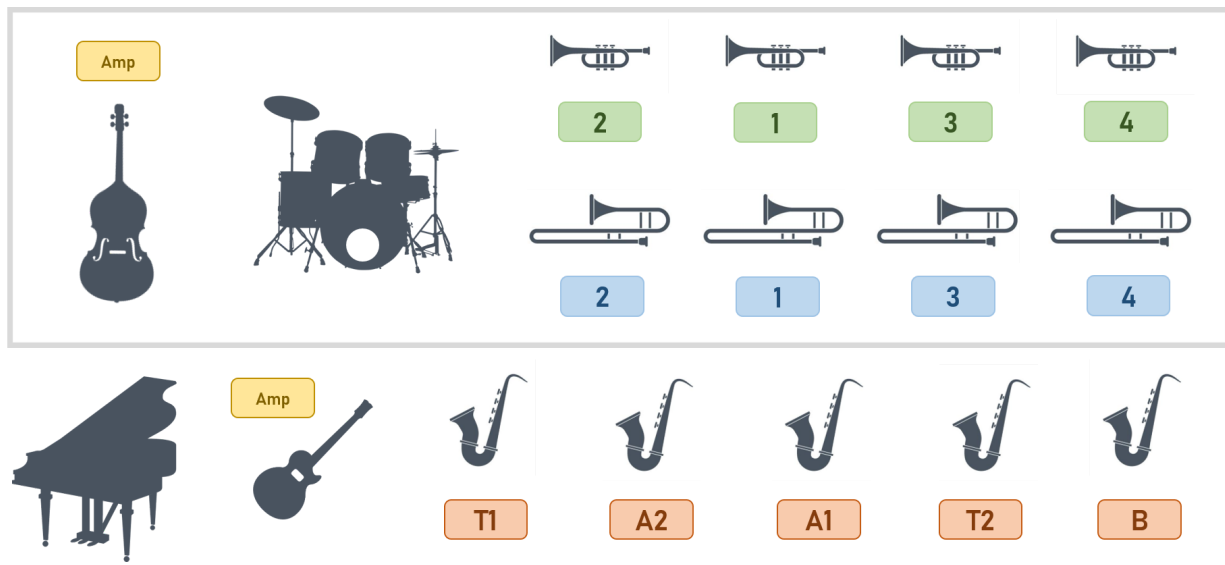
- Talk Jazz Band Up! If you aren't excited about it, they won't be excited about it.
- Play Jazz music as they enter the room (Look at suggested jazz artists later on in the packet)
- Play Jazz inspired songs in your concert ensembles to give them a taste of Jazz style. They are out there, and they can be equally beneficial as traditional concert band lit.
- Personally ask the kids who you think would enjoy it! (You might have to beg students in the early stages of developing this part of your program).
  - There is no other feeling as a music kid, than having their band director ask them specifically to be a part of something. Pick your leaders, not just your top musicians. Culture is more important than chops.

Instrumentation

- Traditional Jazz Ensembles
  - Saxophone (2 alto, 2 tenor, 1 baritone). Trombone, trumpet, Bass, Drums, Piano / guitar. Try to start your rhythm section students on lessons a year before they enter your jazz group.
    - If students want to be a part of jazz band but don't play these instruments, try to convince them to become a 'doubler'. This is usually contingent on your school owned instrument inventory.
      - Clarinet / Flute can switch to Saxophone
      - French Horn can switch to Trumpet
      - Baritone / Tuba can switch to Trombone / valved trombone for even easier switch.
- Non traditional
  - Non-traditional Ensembles can include the other instruments. This will not achieve the traditional jazz big band sound, but offers students who don't play traditional jazz instruments to still be a part of the ensemble if you don't have a lot of school owned instruments.
- Can you double parts? YES!!!
  - Get as many kids as you can (within reason) involved in the program.
  - Do not exceed 10 people in a section.
  - Start Trimming down the size once the program is strong.



## Organizations / Set up



- Set Up takeaways
  - Lead Players sit in the middle
  - Solo Chairs typically sit closest to the rhythm section so they can hear time and harmony better
  - Tenors do not sit next to each other
  - Rhythm section
    - Guitar amp is in front of Drums
    - Bass amp is behind Drums
- In Brass sections, don't be afraid to switch up part assignments depending on the song. If you do switch up parts, have them switch where they stand between songs, and always have people who play the same part stand next to each other.

## Electronics / Gear

- Bass Amp
  - Rolland KC Series 400 and over
- Guitar Amp
  - Rolland KC Series 200 and below
- How to Amp the bass
  - Pick up / Microphones
    - Fishman BP-100 Classic Series Upright Bass Pickup
    - <https://www.sweetwater.com/insync/choosing-the-best-mic-for-upright-bass-with-sound-samples/>

These are my go to's. Feel free to do some research of your own by talking to rhythm section professionals. They can offer lots of insight on equipment. The Rolland amps each have 4 channels each so you can amp lots of things all at once.

### How do we get the band swingin'?

- Essential Elements for Jazz Ensembles
  - This will get the band playing short jazz melodies, and has a plethora of improvisational tools as well. It has great stuff for rhythm section, and all horns.
- Take things you do in regular band (scales) and instead of playing it 'straight' play it swung. (triplet based)
- Pick good tunes
  - Find Jazz standards that are played by the great historic big bands, that are arranged by predominant jazz arrangers (Victor Lopez, Michael Sweeney).
  - If the band is well established, play the same exact songs that the greats played.
  - There are also many great tunes composed by great arrangers. Look for soli sections, basic chord progressions, and inflection opportunities for the still growing jazz ensemble.
- Bring in clinicians!
  - College pros / Local pros
- Listen, Listen, Listen!!!
  - Prioritize listening in your class. It could only take a few minutes, but can go a LONG way in getting your kids and yourself listening to jazz style. Just like any language, we learn by listening, and then we replicate. I learned by listening to Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. If we listen to the greats, we can ingest it and apply it in our performance and practice.

### Performance Opportunities

- Traditional concerts
  - If your concert band are performing, fit your Jazz band into those concerts if applicable.
- Community performances
  - School fundraisers, band fundraisers, Community centers
- Guest artist concert
  - Bringing in a guest soloist to feature on your tunes can be a great experience / tradition for your groups, and the community. It also shows the students the possibilities of jazz if they continue on the Jazz path.
- Jazz Festivals
  - Jazz festivals offer a great opportunity for your students to hear other jazz programs around the state of Michigan. Some are competition based, others are clinic based. All performance opportunities are growth opportunities.
  - CMU
  - WMU
  - MSU
  - Hastings Jazz Festival
  - Essentially Ellington

### Repertoire / Listening Suggestions

## Big Bands

- Duke Ellington
- Count Basie
- Jazz at Lincoln Center
- Gordon Goodwin big Phat Band
- Clayton - Hamilton Jazz Orchestra
- Thad Jones - Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra
- Benny Goodman
- 8-Bit Big Band

## Neo-Jazz

- Vulfpeck
- Snarky Puppy
- The Bad Plus
- Jacob Collier
- Cory Wong
- Fearless Flyers
- YellowJacks
- Victor Wooten

## Arrangers (for Middle School)

- Michael Sweeney
- Paul Murtha
- Victor Lopez
- Mike Lewis
- John Berry

## Saxophones

- Charlie Parker
- Johnny Hodges
- Paul Gonzalvez
- Joshua Redman
- Benny Carter
- Sonny Stitt
- Dexter Gordon
- Illinois Jacquet
- Wes 'Warmdaddy' Anderson
- Walter Blanding
- Victor Goines
- John Coltrane

## Trombones

- JJ Johnson
- Wycliffe Gordon
- Marshall Gilkes
- Slide Hampton
- Michael Dease (MSU prof)
- Chris Crenshaw
- Vincent Gardner
- Elliot Mason

## Trumpet

- Louis Armstrong
- Cat Anderson
- Chet Baker
- Wynton Marsalis
- Miles Davis
- Lee Morgan
- Woody Shaw
- Kenny Dorham
- Randy Brecker
- Roy Hargrove
- Dizzy Gillespie
- Clark Terry

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