

Guidelines for Directing a Jazz Combo

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Equipment Case (please bring to each rehearsal)

- At least two extension cords (e.g., one long, one short), each with multi plugs
- White board markers, white board cleaner, chalk, eraser
- Pencils (enough for each member of the combo); sharpener
- iPod with connector to plug into a regular guitar amplifier
- Handouts
- Lead sheets (concert, Bb, Eb, and bass clef)
- Tuner

Combo Set Up

Set the combo up like a baseball diamond: bass at home plate, piano at first base (facing the bassist), drums at third base, horns at second base (facing the rhythm section). Everyone should be close to one another, easily able to see one another (see combo setup diagram on p. 5).

Suggested Order of Events (do in the following order for each tune)

1. arrive early, start on time, pass out lead sheets (C, Bb, Eb, and bass clef parts).
2. listen to the definitive recording together in class, identifying the key players and insisting your students memorize their names and respective instruments. Then teach, discuss and have the students memorize the form (e.g., AABA, ABAC, 16-bar tune, 12-bar blues, etc.). Play the definitive recording again, pointing out the sections as they go by and having the students say *aloud* where they are on the first beat of each section (e.g., “top - second A - bridge - last A”) chorus after chorus throughout the entire recording. Point out what is happening during each chorus (e.g., playing the head in unison, piano solo, tenor sax solo, etc.).
3. memorize the root movement, have students play roots along with definitive recording (including drummer on vibes) – see examples 1 & 4.
4. memorize chord qualities, teach/show voicings to pianist and guitarist, teach bass lines to bassist; have horn players (and pianist, bassist, and guitarist if able) play the arpeggios with the definitive recording as follows (see examples 2 & 5):

- 1 3 5 7 9 for chords lasting two bars (have the 9th sustain for the second bar)
- 1 3 5 7 for chords lasting one bar
- 1 3 for chords lasting two beats
- for II V I's in major, play:*



- for II V I's in minor, play:*



* You may also have the final 7th in the penultimate measure resolve to the 6th in the last measure (i.e., practice ending the line on both the 9th and 6th)

5. memorize scales, have students play them in eighth notes along with definitive recording as follows: for chords lasting one bar, just play the scale; for chords lasting two bars, have the 9th sustain for the second bar; for chords lasting two beats, just play 1 2 3 4 (see examples 3 & 6).
6. memorize the head, play with definitive recording.
7. head arrange the chart (include intro, outro, backgrounds, trading fours or eights, etc.).
8. rehearse the combo, paying particular attention to the rhythm section; make sure the drummer delineates the form via fills, changing cymbals for different soloists, etc.
9. keep everyone involved throughout (playing backgrounds, saying where they are in the form, etc.).
10. teach improvisation, beginning with simple jazz phrases based on chord tones only, then include scale tones and more; emphasize jazz rhythms.
11. transcribe phrases from definitive recording.
12. improvise, incorporating phrases transcribed from definitive recording.
13. re-rehearse intros and endings.
14. have a student talk down the arrangement (pick a different student each time).
15. play entire tune without stopping.

General Tips

- Meticulously tune up the band before every session, beginning with tuning by ear and then checking each instrument one after another with an electric tuner. Emphasize the importance of good intonation throughout rehearsal, insisting your students intensely listen to each other and adjust their embouchures as need be.
- Make sure your students *memorize* everything (root movement, chord progression, scales, head) AS they learn them. Get their eyes off the page as soon as possible (when they *almost* have it memorized). Never perform with music stands.
- *Play* with the group as much as possible; demonstrate (mostly what would/could be playable by the students).
- Encourage your drummer to clearly delineate the form of each tune by playing small fills between sections, big fills between choruses and bigger fills between soloists. He or she can further delineate by changing cymbals for each new soloist, playing the bridge differently (e.g., dropping in a cross stick on the snare drum rim on beat four of each bar), using brushes for the piano solo, etc.
- Provide students with a lead sheet of the tune they'll be doing at the next rehearsal; ask them to download the definitive recording and memorize at least the root movement before the next rehearsal.
- Spend no time pontificating on how the students need to be more disciplined and practice more, or philosophizing. Use the entire session for getting something *accomplished*. The progress your students make is far more likely to inspire them to practice on their own accord than any sermonizing you might do.
- Regarding improvisation, urge your students to utilize phrases of the masters that they've transcribed on previous tunes when soloing on subsequent tunes, transposing where need be. Also, encourage them to quote from heads they know, increasing their understanding of jazz vocabulary all the while.
- On each tune, encourage each student to DEVELOP his/her solo, i.e., start somewhere (fewer notes, lower register, less intensity) and take it somewhere (more notes, higher register, more intensity), climaxing the solo on the penultimate bar of the last chorus, winding it down for the last couple of measures and ending the solo on the first or second bar of the next chorus on a color tone of the chord, letting it sustain.
- When soloing, encourage your students to refer to (quote) the melody of the tune he/she is playing, dropping it in from time to time as “organically” as possible (so it doesn't sound contrived).
- Before teaching a contrafact, that is, a jazz tune utilizing the same chord progression as an extant tune, teach the “source” tune first so your students learn from whence the contrafact came. This would include such jazz standards as *Oleo* (from *I Got Rhythm*), *Donna Lee* (from *Back Home Again in Indiana*), and *Groovin' High* (from *Whispering*). Encourage your students to quote from the source tunes when soloing on their contrafacts and vice versa.
- Always be as encouraging as possible and never, *ever* demeaning. Be upbeat, dynamic, educative, and entertaining. Use humor.
- If you want to know how well a jazz musician plays, listen to him or her play; if you want to know how well a jazz musician *teaches*, listen to his or her *students* play.

Ten Most Common Chord Scales

<u>Chord</u>	<u>Scale Name</u>	<u>Formula</u>	<u>Scale Beginning On C</u>
CΔ	Major	major scale	C D E F G A B C
C7	Mixolydian	major scale with a b7	C D E F G A Bb C
C-	Dorian	major scale with a b3 and b7	C D Eb F G A Bb C
CØ	Locrian	notes from major scale ½ step higher	C Db Eb F Gb Ab Bb C
Co	Diminished (W/H)	W H W H W H W H	C D Eb F Gb Ab A B C
C-Δ	Melodic Minor	major scale with a b3	C D Eb F G A B C
C7alt	Super Locrian	notes from melodic minor scale ½ step higher	C Db Eb Fb Gb Ab Bb C
C7b9	Diminished (H/W)	H W H W H W H W	C Db Eb E F# G A Bb C
C7#5	Whole Tone	all whole steps	C D E F# G# Bb C
C7 or C-	Blues Scale	1 b3 4 b5 5 b7 1	C Eb F Gb G Bb C

Song For My Father

(Form: AAB)

Example 1-Roots

F- Eb7 Db7 G-/C F-

Eb7 F- Eb7 Db7 G-/C F-

Example 2-Chords

F- Eb7 Db7 G-/C F-

Eb7 F- Eb7 Db7 G-/C F-

Example 3-Scales

F- Eb7

Db7 G-/C F-

Eb7 F-

Eb7 Db7 G-/C F-

Blue Bossa

(Form: 16-bar tune)

Example 4-Roots

C- F- D \emptyset G 7 alt. C-

E b - A b 7 D b maj 7 D \emptyset G 7 alt. C- D \emptyset G 7 alt.

Example 5-Chords

C- F- D \emptyset G 7 alt. C-

E b - A b 7 D b maj 7 D \emptyset G 7 alt. C- D \emptyset G 7 alt.

Example 6-Scales

C- F-

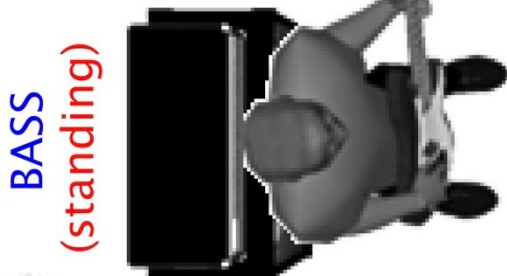
D \emptyset G 7 alt. C-

E b - A b 7 D b maj 7

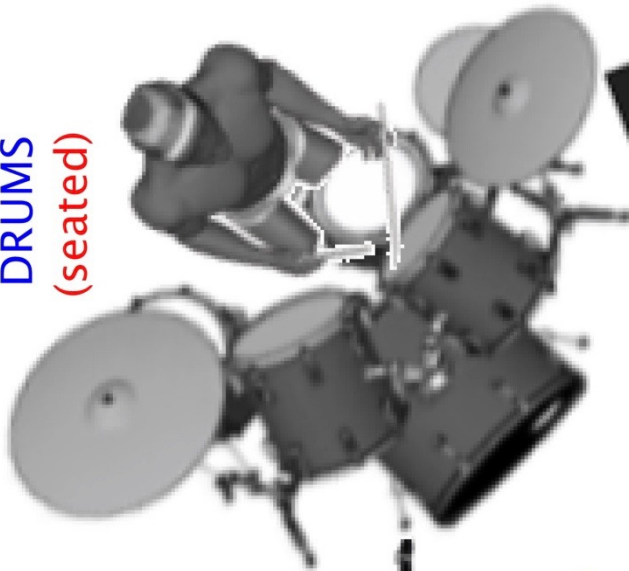
D \emptyset G 7 alt. C- D \emptyset G 7 alt. C-



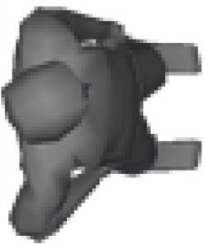
PNO
(seated)



BASS
(standing)



DRUMS
(seated)



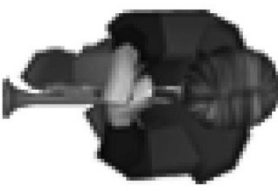
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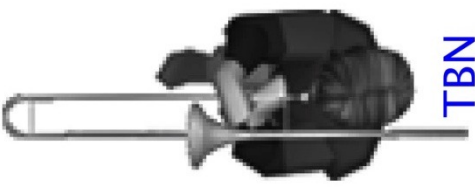
TENOR



ALTO



TPT



TBN



GTR
(seated or standing)