

## Jazz Combo Basics

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*Are you interested in adding jazz combos to your music program? This session will focus on basic elements of developing a jazz combo, including scheduling rehearsals, finding motivated students, solving instrumentation challenges, effective use of listening examples, basic improvisation tools, and how to find arrangements that work right away, even with little jazz experience.*

- Support for Jazz Combos:
  - Gain support from:
    - Students
      - Group of dedicated student musicians
      - Festival or special performance opportunities
      - Sense of ownership
      - Motivates other students
      - A chance to promote themselves
        - Marketing
        - Social Media
        - Publicity
        - Scouting performance venues
    - Parents
      - Great after school activity
      - Motivates students to practice
      - Great social and leadership development
      - Teaches responsibility and how to be professional
    - Administrators
      - Studying jazz/developing creativity important to 21<sup>st</sup> Cent education
      - Develop listening skills
      - Benefits of working within a small group
      - Cultural/diversity study
      - Combos perform for special events
  - Rehearsal Time/Place
    - Time
      - After school
        - 40 minutes
        - 1-2 times/week

- Place
  - Band/Choir/MP Room
  
- Budget:
  - Mostly for charts
  - \$200+/-
  
- Selecting Music
  - Give students choices
  - Listen to original recordings
  - Flexible options include:
    - The Real Easy Book, Level 1: Tunes for Beginning Improvisors (3-horn edition, C/Bb/Eb/BC versions) Sher Music Co. \$32
    - The Real Easy Book, Vol. 2: Tunes for Intermediate Improvisers (C/Bb/Eb/BC versions) Sher Music Co. \$32
    - The Real Easy Book, Vol.3: A Short History of Jazz - (C/Bb/Eb/BC versions) Sher Music Co. \$32
    - Hal Leonard Jazz Combo Paks (Multiple Volumes with flexible instrumentation) \$50/pack
  
- Instrumentation
  - Be open to any instrument
  - Typical combo instruments include:
    - Voice
    - Violin
    - Flute
    - Clarinet
    - Saxes
    - Trumpet
    - Trombone
    - Vibes
    - Guitar
    - Piano

- Bass
  - Drums
- Equipment:
  - Music stands
  - A/V (CD's, mp3's, YouTube)
  - Keyboard
  - Amps for bass and guitar
  - Drum set
  - PA System (optional)
- Arranging Music
  - Pre-arranged Charts
    - Arranged for multiple instruments/transposed
  - Charts give sample:
    - Sample Bass Line
    - Chord Voicings
    - Melody
    - Harmony
    - Intro/Outros
    - Drum Examples
    - Backgrounds
    - Shout Section
  - Ask students to take a chance and come up with their own arrangements
- Listening Assignments
  - The most important aspect of learning music
    - Have students research versions of tune
      - Original version
      - One that they find interesting
      - Publisher audio example
      - Solos they might learn
    - Have students sing along with recording to gain:
      - Correct phrasing
      - Feel
- Styles

- Start with:
  - Blues
    - Learn 12-bar basic blues form
    - Learn Blues Scale
      - 1-b3-4-#4-5-b7
    - *C jam Blues* (Ellington)
  - Latin
    - Straight feel
    - Add Latin Percussion (horns)
      - Shaker
      - Bell
      - Guiro
    - *Song For My Father* (Silver)
- Rehearsal Etiquette
  - Have a LMS or website
    - Post rehearsal information/plan
    - Listening resources
  - Have a rehearsal plan
    - Send out ahead of rehearsal
    - Allow flexibility
  - Allow student to rehearse themselves as much as possible
  - Invite local jazz educators or advanced high school students to help
  - Always begin with listening to a version of the tune
  - Everyone has
    - a pencil
    - a folder with name/instrument
    - same arrangement/lead sheet/chart
  - Always be available and within earshot
  - Guide them through rough spots
    - If it gets frustrating, move on and work later
  - Equity within the combo
    - No leader
    - Everyone suggests tunes
    - Everyone helps with arrangements

- This may need some support for less experienced students
  - Only positive vibes
  - Solos are strongly encouraged
  - Work up simple backgrounds
- Work up 5-7 tunes of various styles
- Once chart is arranged, type and print:
  - Song title
  - Roadmap

Example:

● <b>Blue Monk</b>	<b>Cantaloupe Island</b>	<b>Song for My Father</b>	<b>Birdland</b>
Head 2x	Rhythm Intro 8 bars	Rhythm Intro 4 bars	Rhythm Intro 8 bars
Trumpet solo 1x with backgrounds	Head 2x	Head 2x	Head 1x
Piano solo 1x	Sax solo 1x	Bass solo 2x	Guitar 1x
Shout 1x	Violin solo 1x with backgrounds	Clarinet solo 2x with backgrounds	Flute 1x
Head out 1x	Head out 2x	Head out 2x	Head out 1x
3-time tag	Rhythm fade	3-time tag	Rhythm fade

- Performances
  - Dress rehearsal
    - Play for band
  - Concert
    - Dress professionally
    - Play for any band concert
    - Play in lobby for pre-concert entertainment
  - School/District Opportunities
    - Classroom visits for recruitment
    - PTA Meeting

- Open House
- Assemblies
- District events
- Other Venues
  - Festivals
  - Coffee Houses
  - Restaurants
  - Fundraisers
  - Other events
- Recording/Video
  - Record set for posterity
  - Use for promotion
  - For future combo reference