

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR YOUR JAZZ RHYTHM SECTION

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FEATURING STUDENTS FROM THE BUTLER UNIVERSITY
JAZZ COMBO PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

THE RHYTHM SECTION IS THE ENGINE OF THE BAND. DIRECTORS WHO INVEST TIME IN THEIR RHYTHM SECTION ARE REWARDED WITH A BAND WHOSE POTENTIAL TO GROOVE HARD IS MUCH HIGHER. LISTED BELOW ARE A FEW COMMON PROBLEMS THAT I HAVE OBSERVED IN CLINIC, FESTIVAL AND CONCERT SITUATIONS. THE SOLUTIONS ARE A COMPILATION OF SUGGESTIONS FROM MASTERS ON THOSE PARTICULAR INSTRUMENTS.

THESE TECHNIQUES CAN BE HELPFUL IN DAILY TEACHING SITUATIONS. HOWEVER, THE TECHNIQUES SHOULD BE AUGMENTED BY REGULAR VISITS TO YOUR SCHOOL FROM THE BEST THAT YOU CAN FIND AND AFFORD ON EACH GIVEN INSTRUMENT. COUNTLESS TECHNICAL ISSUES CAN BE SOLVED BY A CLEAR VISUAL OR AURAL DEMONSTRATION.

HELPING OUR STUDENTS LISTEN TO AND IMITATE GREAT MUSIC SHOULD ALWAYS BE A PRIMARY GOAL AS JAZZ EDUCATORS. THE TECHNIQUES WON'T DO MUCH GOOD IF YOUR STUDENTS ARE NOT ENGAGED IN LISTENING TO THE MUSIC. IN A SENSE, IF YOUR RHYTHM SECTION CAN HAVE A "GARAGE BAND" MENTALITY COMBINED WITH THE ABILITY TO READ MUSIC, YOU HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS AND THE POTENTIAL FOR A REALLY SWINGIN' BAND.

COMMON ISSUES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

BASS

- WEAK TONE/ATTACK: QUARTER TRICK (DEMO), YOUTUBE
- OVER-AMPLIFICATION: ALL ACOUSTIC
- BASS LINE CONSTRUCTION: METHODOICAL WRITTEN APPROACH (EXAMPLE 1), TRANSCRIPTION (EXAMPLE 2)

DRUMS

- POOR TIME: FIXED TIME SOURCE PRACTICE (RECORDINGS OR METRONOME), LIMITED KIT PRACTICE (DEMO)
- INCONSISTENT RIDE PATTERN: BUILD FROM QUARTER NOTES AND ADD SKIPS (EXAMPLE 3)
- LIMITED COMPING LANGUAGE: TRANSCRIPTION AND PRACTICE AROUND THE KIT

PIANO/GUITAR

- **POOR VOICING CONSTRUCTION: METHODOICAL WRITTEN APPROACH (EXAMPLE 4), MASTER ONE SET OF VOICINGS, THEN MOVE ON**
- **UNCOMFORTABLE COMPING RHYTHMS: TRANSCRIPTION AND PRACTICE EACH UNIT (DEMO)**

COLLECTIVE

- **TIME COHESION: EYE CONTACT, PROXIMITY, DUO REHEARSAL (DEMO), LISTEN TO THE SAME RECORDINGS**
- **OVERPLAYING: TWO OUT OF THREE HOLD DOWN THE FORT (DEMO), LISTENING**
- **POOR BALANCE: ALL ACOUSTIC, RECORDING REHEARSALS AND LISTEN BACK**
- **LIMITED COMPING RHYTHMS: TRANSCRIPTION AND DRILL TOGETHER (DEMO)**

DIRECTORS

- **LACK OF ATTENTION TO YOUR RHYTHM SECTION: RECORDING REHEARSALS, GUEST DIRECTORS, CHANGE YOUR LOCATION IN REHEARSAL**
- **LACK OF RHYTHM SECTION CONSIDERATION IN REPERTOIRE SELECTION: CONSIDER WHAT THEY CAN DO AND WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO LEARN, CONSIDER WHAT THEY ENJOY-**
- **UNWILLINGNESS TO GROW WITH YOUR STUDENTS: BRING IN GUESTS AND TAKE NOTES, RECORD MASTERCLASSES**
- **UNWILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE MODERN REPERTOIRE/CONCEPTS: ????**

A FEW GREAT RECORDINGS FOR RHYTHM SECTION PLAYERS

RHYTHM GUITAR: FREDDIE GREEN ON "MOTEN SWING" CHARLIE CHRISTIAN ON "SEVEN COME ELEVEN"

COMPING RHYTHMS: BILL EVANS ON "SO WHAT"

RIDE PATTERN (TRADITIONAL ARTIST): ED THIGPEN ON "BAND CALL" JIMMY COBB ON "SO WHAT"

RIDE PATTERN (MODERN ARTIST): BRIAN BLADE ON "LIKE SONNY" AND "NIGHT AND DAY"

UPRIGHT BASS TONE AND ATTACK: DAVE SANTORO ON "LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE" CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE ON "ISFAHAN"

SHUFFLE GROOVE: MEL LEWIS ON "DON'T GIT SASSY" ART BLAKEY ON "MOANIN'"

A FEW GREAT RESOURCES FOR RHYTHM SECTION PLAYERS AND TEACHERS

BASS RESOURCES

- AEBERSOLO, JAMEY. RHYTHM SECTION WORKOUT VOL 30. NEW ALBANY, IN, JAMEY AEBERSOLO, JAZZ, INC, 1984.
- BERG, KRIS. BASS LINES IN MINUTES. LEBANON, IN: HOUSTON PUBLISHING INC., 1993.
- CARTER, RON. BUILDING JAZZ BASS LINES. MILWAUKEE, WI: HAL LEONARD PUBLISHING, 1998
- LINDSAY, GARY. JAZZ ARRANGING TECHNIQUES FROM QUARTET TO BIG BAND. MIAMI: STAFF ART PUBLISHING, 2005
- MAULEÓN, REBECCA SALSA GUIDEBOOK FOR PIANO AND ENSEMBLE. PETALUMA, CA: SHER MUSIC CO, 1993

IMPORTANT BASSISTS

JIMMY BLANTON, OSCAR PETTIFORD, PAUL CHAMBERS, CHARLES MINGUS, RON CARTER, PERCY HEATH, SCOTT LAFARO, RAY BROWN, CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE, SAM JONES

DRUM SET RESOURCES

- AEBERSOLO, JAMEY. JAZZ RHYTHM SECTION WORKOUT. JAMEY AEBERSOLO JAZZ, 1984.
- REED, TED. PROGRESSIVE STEPS TO SYNCOPATION FOR THE MODERN DRUMMER. ALFRED PUBLISHING CO. INC. 1996.
- RILEY, JOHN. BEYOND BOP DRUMMING. NEW YORK: MANHATTAN MUSIC, INC. 1997.
- RILEY, JOHN. THE ART OF BOP DRUMMING. NEW YORK: MANHATTAN MUSIC, INC. 1994.
- WWW.YOUTUBE.COM (THIS GENERATION OF STUDENTS LEARNS VERY EFFECTIVELY FROM VISUAL AIDS).

IMPORTANT DRUMMERS

JO JONES, PHILLY JOE JONES, JIMMY COBB, ROY HAYNES, ELVIN JONES, TONY WILLIAMS, ART BLAKEY, MEL LEWIS, SONNY PAYNE, JEFF HAMILTON, JEFF "TAIN" WATTS, ERIC HARLAND, BRIAN BLADE.

GUITAR RESOURCES

- DI LIDDO, MIKE. EASY JAZZ GUITAR: VOICINGS AND COMPING. NEW ALBANY, IN, JAMEY AEBERSOLO, JAZZ, INC.
- JOHNSON, CHARLTON. CHORDS FOR JAZZ GUITAR. MILWAUKEE: HAL LEONARD CORPORATION, 2004.

IMPORTANT GUITARISTS

FREDDIE GREEN, CHARLIE CHRISTIAN, GRANT GREEN, JIM HALL, PAT METHENY, JOHN SCOFIELD, JOHN McLAUGHLIN, WES MONTGOMERY, JOE PASS

PIANO RESOURCES

- LEVINE, MARK. THE JAZZ PIANO BOOK. PETALUMA, CA. SHER MUSIC CO., 1989.
- MANTOOTH, FRANK. VOICINGS FOR JAZZ KEYBOARD. MILWAUKEE: HAL LEONARD CORPORATION, 1986.
- MAULEÓN, REBECCA SALSA GUIDESBOOK FOR PIANO AND ENSEMBLE. PETALUMA, CA: SHER MUSIC CO, 1993

IMPORTANT PIANISTS

DUKE ELLINGTON, JELLY ROLL MORTON, JAMES P. JOHNSON, BILL EVANS, BUD POWELL, HERBIE HANCOCK, WYNTON KELLY, RED GARLAND, MCCOY TYNER, CHICK COREA, KEITH JARRETT, HORACE SILVER, THELONIOUS MONK, COUNT BASIE

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS?

CONTINUED DIALOG AND COPIES OF HANDOUTS?

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THANKS AND HAVE A GREAT CONVENTION!

BASS LINE CONSTRUCTION (EXAMPLE 1)

1. ROOT ON DOWNBEAT
2. CHORD TONE ON BEAT 3
3. CREATE A MELODIC LINE WITH SCALE TONES (OR CHROMATIC APPROACHES) ON BEATS 2 AND 4

The musical notation consists of three staves in 4/4 time, all in the key of F major (one flat). The first staff shows a melodic line starting on the root of F7 (F2) on the downbeat. The notes are: F2 (beat 1), G2 (beat 2), A2 (beat 3), Bb2 (beat 4), C3 (beat 1), D3 (beat 2), E3 (beat 3), F3 (beat 4). Above the staff, the chords F7, Bb7, F7, and F7 are indicated for measures 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. The second staff shows the chord progression for measures 5 through 8: Bb7, Bb7, F7, and D7. The third staff shows the chord progression for measures 9 through 12: G-7, C7, F7, G-7, and C7.

DAVE SANTORO'S WALKING BASS LINE ON "LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE" (EXAMPLE 2)

TRANS. PIVEC

C Δ 7 C/B C/A C/G D7 G7 E-7 A7 D-7 G7 C Δ 7 G-7 C7
 9 F Δ 7 B-7 E7 A Δ 7 A-7 D7 D-7 F-7 Bb7
 17 Eb Δ 7 Eb/D Eb/C Eb/Bb F7 Bb7 G-7 C7 F-7 Bb7 Eb Δ 7 Bb-7 Eb7
 25 Ab Δ 7 D-7 G7 C Δ 7 F7 F \circ 7 G-7 C7 F-7 Bb7 Eb Δ 7 D-7 G7 C

RIDE PATTERN EVOLUTION (EXAMPLE 3)

ALL QUARTERS (FOCUS ON TIME AND EVEN TONE)

5 ADD SKIPS EVERY TWO BARS

9 ADD SKIPS EVERY BAR

13 ADD SKIPS EVERY BEAT

17 VARIATIONS

PIANO VOICINGS (EXAMPLE 4)

ROOT AND CRITICAL TONES

7 F7 $\flat 7$ F7 F7 $\flat 7$ $\flat 7$

7 F7 F7 C7 C7 F7 F7

ROOT, CRITICAL TONES, AND ONE COLOR TONE ON TOP (5 OR 9)

13 F7 $\flat 7$ F7 F7 $\flat 7$ $\flat 7$

19 F7 F7 C7 C7 F7 F7

(7,3,5,9 or 3,7,9,5)

25 F7 $\flat 7$ F7 F7 $\flat 7$ $\flat 7$

31 F7 F7 C7 C7 F7 F7

2

FOURTHS DOWN FROM THE 5TH OR ROOT

37 F7 Bb7 F7 F7 Bb7 Bb7

PNO.

43 F7 F7 C7 C7 F7 F7

PNO.