

Basic Jazz Concepts

- General rules of articulation
- The “swing” concept
- Dynamics & Phrasing
- Nuances
- Listening

General Rules of Articulation

Points to Remember

- Always play with a legato connected sound whenever possible.
- Impose a slight tenuto on the eighth notes that fall on the downbeat to lengthen the note in a series of eighth-notes.
- Articulate more of the up beats than down beats in a series of eighth-notes.
- Vary your articulations as much as you like, to create your own identity.



Heavy accent held full rhythmic value.



Heavy accent played shorter than full rhythmic value.



Heavy accent played short (i.e., like an eighth-note)



Short and light with space before and after the note.



Tenuto or legato articulation. Hold full rhythmic value.



Eighth-notes are legato except before a rest.



Syncopated quarter-note values are often separated, while dotted quarter-note values on the up beat are played full value and with an accent.

Swing

- Articulation vs. rhythm
- Tempo/style of the composition (e.g., ballad, shuffle, straight-ahead) and swing
- Using syllables: doo-bah, doo-dot
- The count-off to establish style

Dynamics & Phrasing

- Notes longer than a quarter-note
- Balance: unisons vs. tutti
- Rise and fall of the melodic line
- Accentuating the change in direction within a line
- Slur markings are often phrase markings

Select Jazz Nuances

- Vibrato
- Bends
- Growls
- Falls

Listening

- Listen often
- Listen actively to all aspects of the music and the inflections used
- Dissect the music, in layers (texture, instrumentation, isolate certain instruments, examine articulations and nuances used)
- Play recordings in rehearsals

Tolson's Jazz Commandments

- See p. 75 in Jazz Ped Text
- Reading example: So What by Miles Davis