

The Nuts & Bolts of the Jazz Ensemble: Preliminary Considerations

- Jazz Ensemble course description: The study and performance of jazz techniques & interpretation of style.
- Student Learning Outcomes (objectives):
 1. To perform jazz styles in several mediums in order to develop ensemble performance skills such as intonation, tonal blend, dynamic control, rhythmic accuracy, and instrumental roles within an ensemble.
 2. To perform jazz music with a satisfactory level of performance ability, skill competency, and musicianship.
 3. To perform jazz music of different style periods with the correct jazz interpretation.
 4. To be able to perform a jazz improvisation that is appropriate and idiomatic to the musical compositions studied.

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- The Conductor/Director
 - Have a philosophy and set goals
 - Take charge
 - Know the students' strengths
 - Have an audition plan (sight-read, improvisation, prepared piece, scales)
 - Have a plan for improvisation within the ensemble
 - Know the music
 - Have a rehearsal plan and include listening

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- Rehearsal outline
 - Ensemble set-up
 - Selecting music
 - Sight-reading
 - Style variety
 - Development of an “ensemble” sound
 - Goal oriented and concert planning
 - Time for improvisation
 - Planning concerts
 - Making time to listen

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- Listening
 - Make time for listening
 - Demo recordings
 - Accessibility of recordings
 - Listen to as many aspects as possible (form, style, articulations, solos, harmonies, etc.)
 - Listen to live performances
 - Listen regularly!

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- Resources
 - Time constraints: solve them with awareness, knowledge and creativity
 - Scheduling issues: expect issues to occur and be prepared to address them
 - Who will teach this course?
 - Build strong relationships with other teachers.
 - Rehearsal space and equipment?
 - Communicate and educate your constituents!