

## Midwest Clinic

### “Teaching Jazz improvisation In A Big Band Setting”

Ronald Carter – Professor Emeritus, Northern Illinois University

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

Meeting Room – W192

CLINIC GROUP: Edison Middle School, Miss Kimberly Branch – Director  
Champaign. IL

Clinic Synopsis: The objective of this clinic is to provide the music educator specific techniques for teaching jazz improvisation during full jazz band rehearsal or in non-jazz combo settings. The general statement made on many occasions is that jazz improvisation is not taught because “we don’t have a combo program at our school.” This notion is dispelled and ideas are presented to enable the teaching of jazz improvisation as a normal part of every large group rehearsal. This allows students the opportunity to play and create in a non-threatening environment.

#### Clinic Outline:

- I. The **blues** be used as the primary source for teaching the building blocks of jazz improvisation because it is the heart and soul of all music derived through the Afro- American culture.
  - A. **Call and Response** will be used to teach two riff based jazz melodies.
    1. Bags Groove – Milt Jackson/Miles Davis
    2. Sonnyoon For Two – Sonny Rollins
    3. The Minor Pentatonic Scale will be used a foundation sound for learning the melodies (heads)and call and response for improvisation.
- II. **Rhythmic feel** will be used as the starting point for improvisation because rhythmic feel is an important aspect of music derived from the African culture as it relates to Dance.
  - A. All clinic participants and the demonstration group will experience and internalize the swing

triplet pulse feel as well as the contrast of the duple feel. (Everyone has to participate!)

- B. "Drop It Like It's Hot Yeah"
- III. The **voice** will be used to teach specific concepts of style and phrasing and tie all aspects together because jazz is a vocally derived art form. Using the Clark Terry Doodle Tongue as a guide to singing jazz phrasings and articulations. (Refer to Chapter 4 "**Teaching Music Through Performance In Jazz for Beginning Jazz Bands.**") Use the **D** attack combined with the **vowel sounds**, A-E-I-O-U.
- IV. There will be an opportunity to **listen** to recordings of the jazz standards used in the clinic to learn the jazz language because jazz has its foundation in the **aural tradition**.
- V. Each member of the clinic group will be given an opportunity to learn a 12 bar blues progression and improvise during the session.
- VI. In the large group setting, have students start with two measure Improvisation, then four measures. Use melody fragments and common swing rhythms to help students relax, and take a chance. (Refer to Chapter 3, "**Teaching Music Through Performance In Jazz, Volume 2**")

**Sugga – Sugga – Waa – Waa ?**  
**Sha – Hoodalah?**

Special Thanks to:

Alec Harris & GIA Publications Inc.  
Conn-Selmer Inc.  
D'Addario Winds Inc.