The Jazz Band Rehearsal - A Work of Art

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Assisted by the Hoover High School
First Edition Jazz Ensemble
Sallie Vines White, Director

Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic
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I. PLANNING

BALANCE - Goals

Long-term goals provide direction, but are sometimes difficult to measure.

A more cohesive rhythm section
A saxophone section that plays well in tune
Balanced rhythm section
Preparation of a program, especially a more challenging program.

Short-term goals provide more instant gratification as the tasks are more measurable and easier to accomplish.

Passage to be played at a given tempo
Rhythmic passage to be played cleanly
Having your shy tenor player improvise for the first time
Fulfillment of an assignment given at a previous rehearsal

BALANCE – Activity

Section issues vs. Ensemble Issues

Don't dwell on a single section (a sax soli, for example) for too long at the expense of the rest of the band. Use sectionals if needed

Run-throughs vs. Nit-picky stops and starts

Work in musical sections (8 or 16 bars at a time): Run it –Rehearse – then run again

Detail is lost if small mistakes are ignored in the desire to "just get through it".

II. WARM UP and TUNING

Match my Pitch

Scales - Play scales on starting notes. Choose based on level. All by ear.
Beginner: 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1 major scales. Slow and deliberate. Keep keys simple and known
Intermediate: Full scales. Add dorian and mixolydian modes. Ascending and descending. Moderate tempos
Advanced: Ascending and descending. Medium tempos. Variety of keys and ranges.

Chords - Play arpeggios on starting notes. Choose based on level. All by ear
Beginner: Triads ascending and descending (1-3-5-3-1)
Intermediate: MA7, mi7, 7 chords. Ascending. Start on root. Ascending and descending.
Advanced: MA7, mi7, 7 chords. Ascending. Start on 3/5/7. Ascending and descending.

Call and Response - All by ear
1 or 2 bars in length
Teacher lead
Students lead

III. SOLOS and IMPROVISATION

IMPROVISATION STRATEGIES

- Limited pitches
- Single Scale
- Chord Tones
- Making Chord Changes

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Collective Improvisation

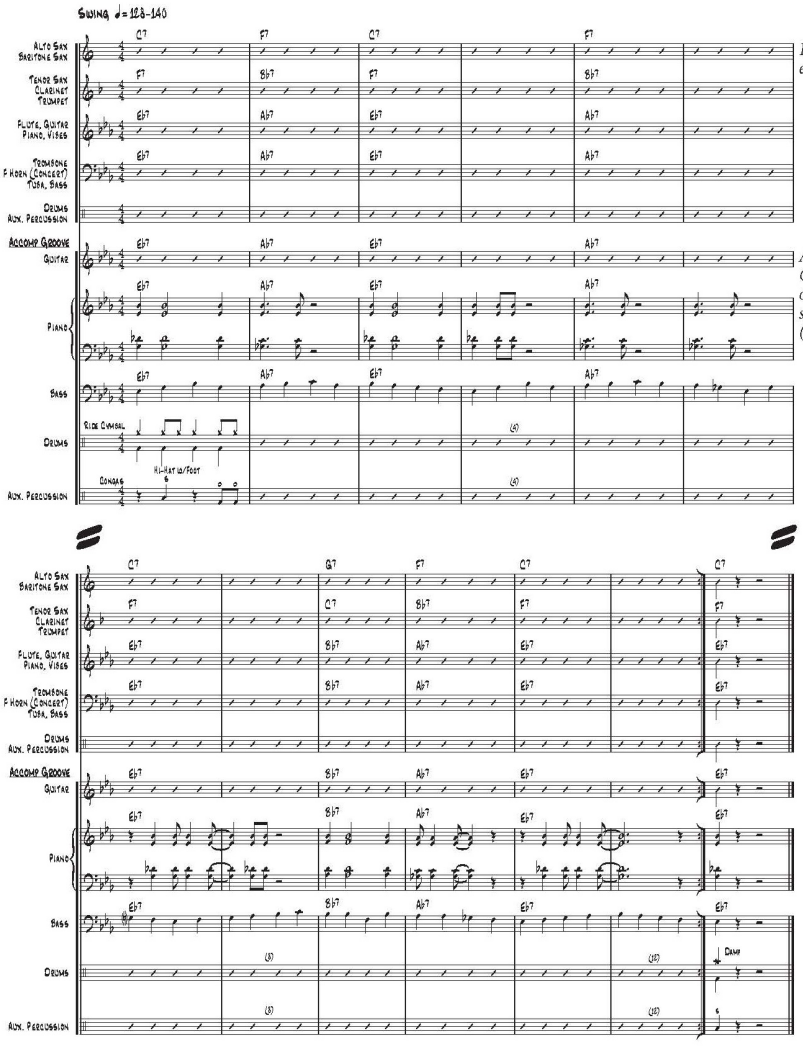
- Allows students to experiment with no exposure
- Allows everyone to play

Section Improvisation

- Gradually limits the number of players
- Keeps everyone engaged

Solo Improvisation

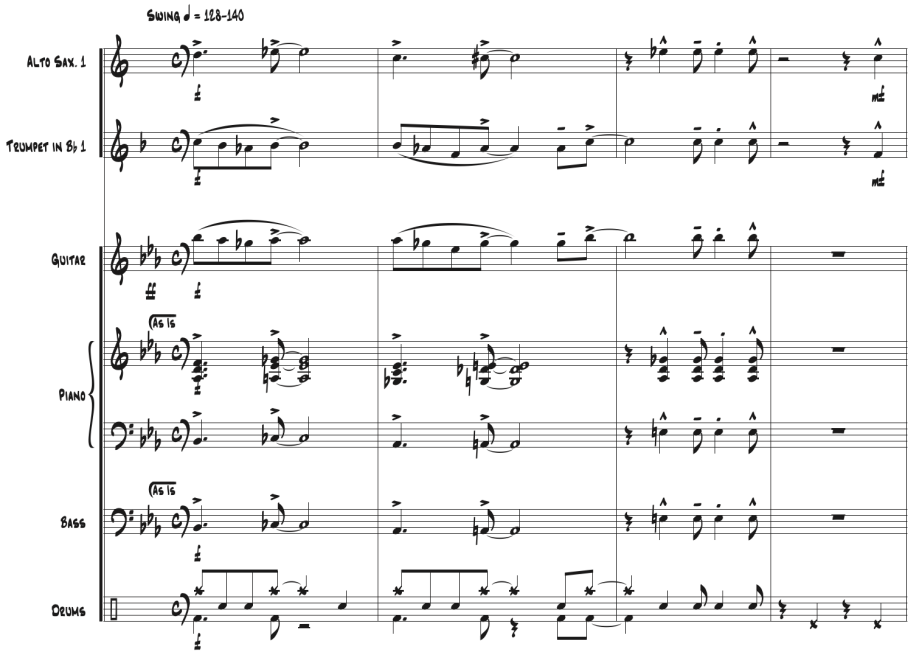
- Trading twos or fours
- Everyone solos, but it is short

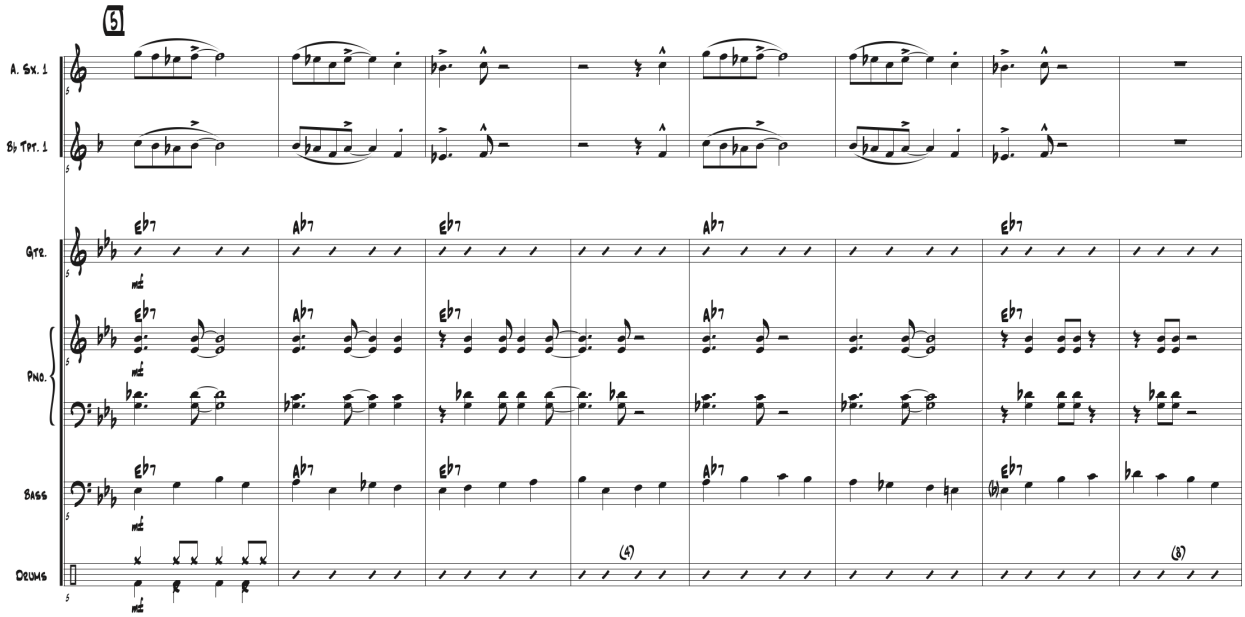


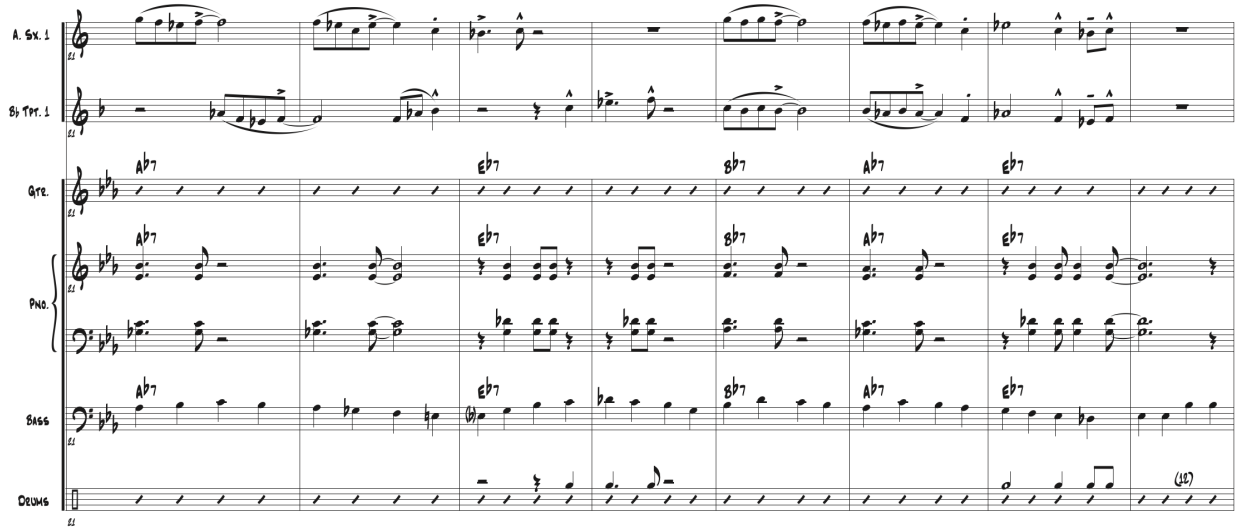
III. RHYTHM SECTION - Hierarchy of Needs

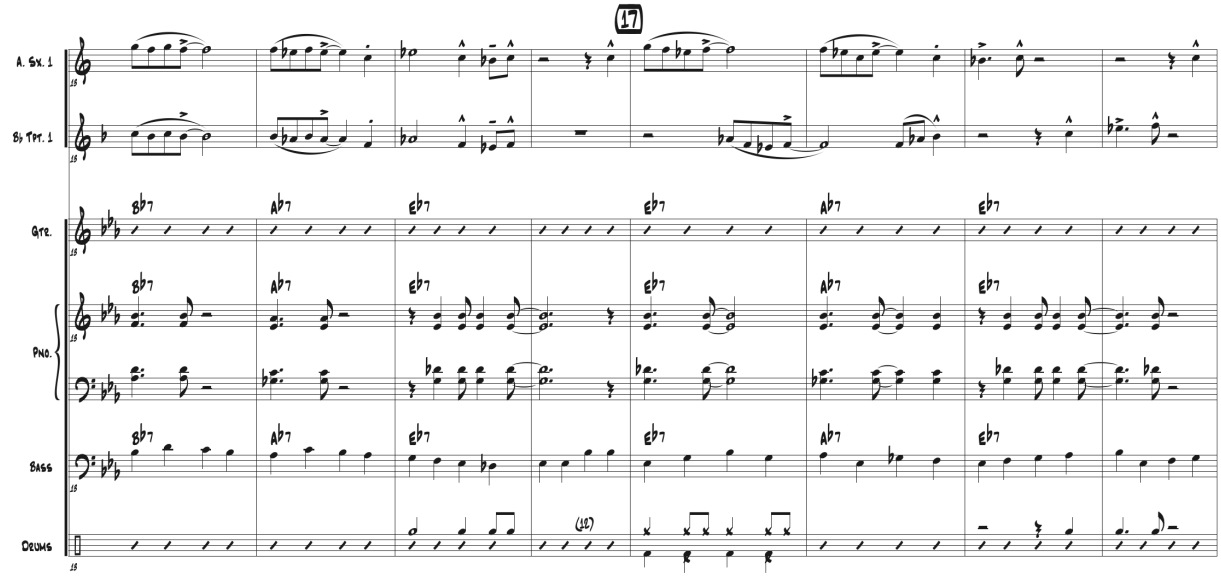
GOOD TIME

Consistent tempo
Balance between instrument
Comping Instruments









FIGURES in Rhythm Section - Bars 1- 4 Rollin' The Blues Away

Bars 1-4

Bars 41-56 - Drum Figures

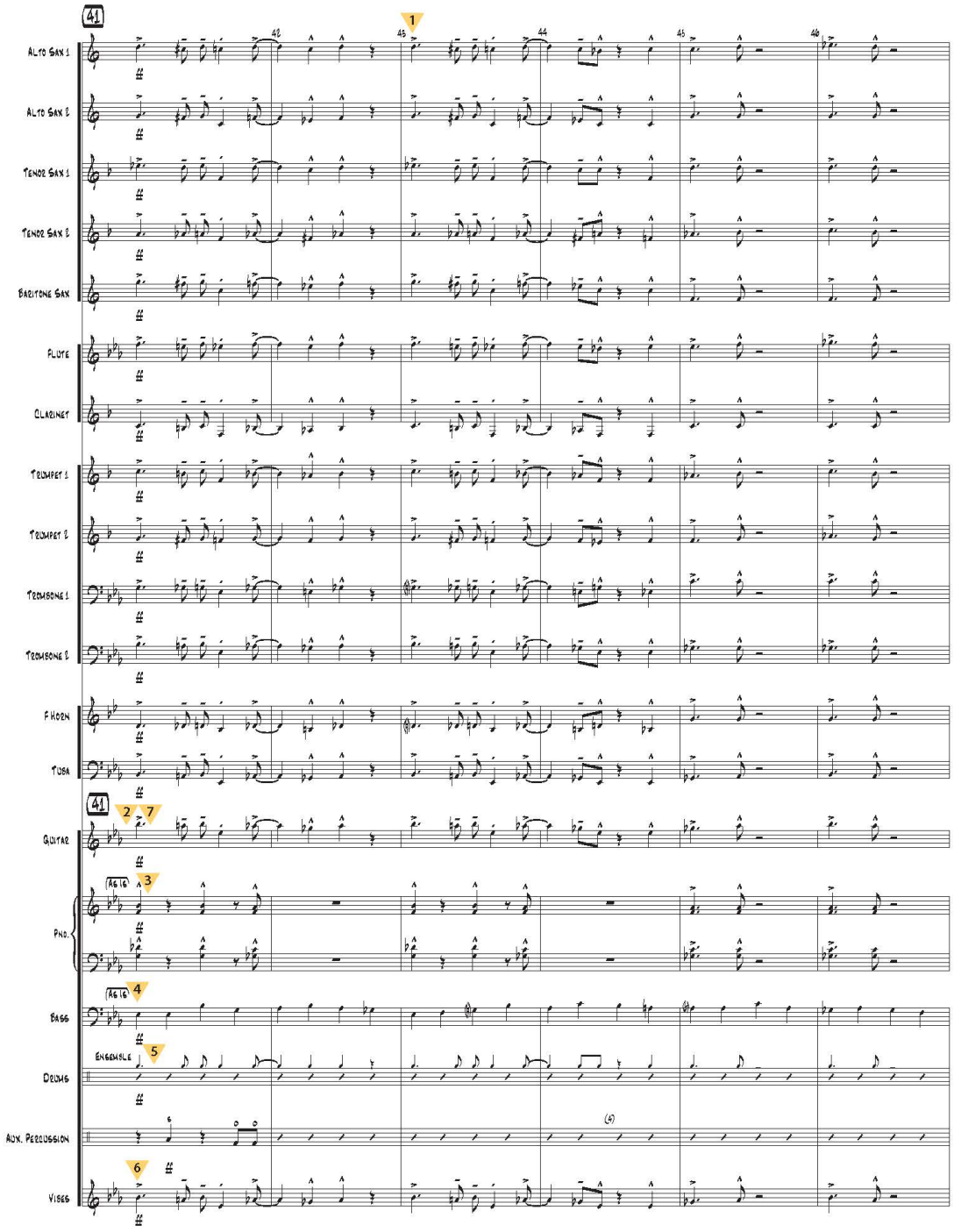
Play Time. No Figures

Cymbal Crashes on downbeats

Some Fills in bar 45-46

Figures and Fills throughout

Resource	Student	Director
Spotlights	46A	4–9
Rhythm Sectional	46B	10–13
Jazz Starters	46–47	14–23
Lead Sheet	56B–56C	36–41



1 - Jazz Starter **D3**
2 - Guitar Spotlight **C**
3 - Piano Spotlight **B**
4 - Bass Spotlight **C**
5 - Drums Spotlight **C**
6 - Vibes Spotlight **B**
7 - Rhythm Sectional Lessons **1–4**

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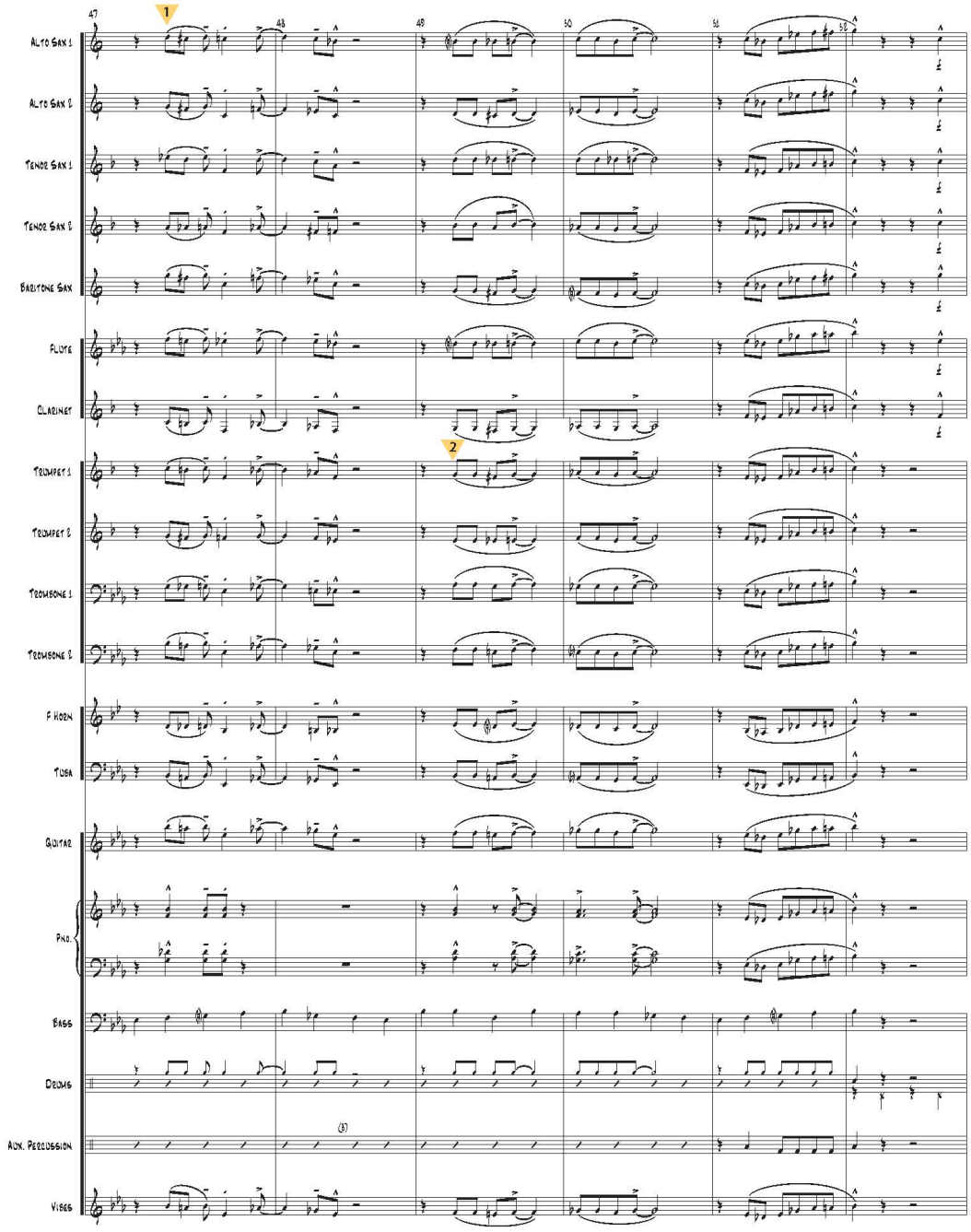

1 - Jazz Starter **D4**
2 - Jazz Starter **D5**

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IV. BRASS AND SAXOPHONES - Tuning and Articulation

SAXOPHONES

- Tuning as a section
- Balance as a section
- Balance issues within the ensemble – must balance brass

TRUMPETS

- Tuning as a section
- Balance as a section
- Cleanliness issues as a section

TROMBONES

- Tuning as a section
- Balance as a section
- Balance issues within the ensemble – must balance trumpets

Brass and Saxes – Good attacks

- Avoid "shaped sound" of concert band. More front end on all notes
- Most noticeable on ballads!

SINGING

- Saves Chops
- Internalizes collective rhythm feel

BOOKS and MATERIALS REFERENCED:

Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method by Dean Sorenson and Bruce Pearson
Edition number W31, Neil A. Kjos Music Company

First Place for Jazz by Dean Sorenson
Edition number W75, Neil A. Kjos Music Company

Excellence in Jazz Pedagogy: Jazz Theory - Concepts and Practical Applications
Edition number W81, Neil A. Kjos Music Company

Excellence in Jazz Pedagogy: Rhythm Section
Edition number W79, Neil A. Kjos Music Company

NOTES