

Moving the Big Band Online

*Preparing your students for the future:
Capitalizing on the opportunities presented by
remote learning.*

Handout - use your phone camera

- I. Rationale
- II. Historical context
- III. Inertia
- IV. Student-Driven Possibilities
- V. Opportunities
- VI. Ideas and Resources



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Technology

- ❖ We live in a digital society
- ❖ “The Shattered Screen” mentality
- ❖ What are employers really looking for?
- ❖ Digital Natives vs. Digitally Enabled - I am the Oregon Trail Generation

How Can Digital Audio Workstation Software Enhance Learning?

- ★ Continuous Reflective Practice
- ★ More Opportunities for Student Ownership
- ★ More Opportunities for Collaboration
- ★ More Room for Creativity
- ★ Progress can be Planned/Systematic
- ★ Validation of Musicianship Fundamentals
- ★ A/V Technology Competency = Career Mobility

Ask Yourself!

- ❖ What value does a jazz band provide to a music department?
 - The director's perspective
- ❖ What value does a jazz band represent to a high school?
 - The administrator's perspective
- ❖ What value does a jazz band represent externally?
 - The parent's perspective

Value assessment:

It's not a surprise that the majority of time spent in a jazz band class is spent preparing for the performance.

Typical Director's Internal Dialogue

- Can we get through the tunes without a trainwreck?
- Does it sound clean and rehearsed?
- Is it obvious that we are doing the typical things that are evident to adjudicators?
- Do our soloists sound OK
- Are the trumpet bells up(!)
- Where the heck is <insert essential ensemble member>
- Where the heck is your <item essential to instrument function>
- Do we have enough music for the concert?
- Did I leave the trumpets with enough gas for pep band...?

Nothing on this list is student focused.





Possible Learning Outcomes for Jazz Band

1. Ensemble playing and performing experience
2. Familiarity with jazz and commercial styles
3. Experience with improvisation and jazz notation
4. Familiarity with instrumental tendencies in jazz and commercial music
5. Enhanced aural skills with respect to harmony and intonation
6. Enhanced aural skills with respect to musical aesthetic
7. Enhanced musicianship through diverse rhythmic exposure
8. Exposure to the history and ethnomusicology of jazz and commercial music

Preparing your students for the future

What does the future hold?

- ❖ Commercial Music
 - Literally everything that is not playing in an orchestra or recording and album of all-state list music
- ❖ Commercial Media
 - Games, Film, TV, Production, Engineering, Social Media, Recording, Sound Design...
- ❖ Career Mobility
 - Critical thinking, professional, and interpersonal skills
 - Possessing broad technical competencies

We must prepare our students to thrive within a digital society.





Ideas and Resources for Online Jazz Band Education

- ★ Ensemble Skills
- ★ Improvisation/Theory
- ★ Composition
- ★ Reflective Practice
- ★ History/Sociology



Ensemble Skills

SoundTrap or BandLab: Collaborative Music

1. Play along with the recording, then take away the recording and reflect.
2. Follow the leader; sectional recording and reflection.
3. Remote recording projects of repertoire

Non DAW-focused ideas

1. Transcription + reflection (play with the record)
2. Critical analysis of performances and reflection
3. Playing challenges - flipgrid, facebook, IG, etc...



Improvisation

- ❖ Improvisation is 1 part learning your scales and 76,544 parts aural skills
 - Aebersold Vol. 104 “Free Play” and Vol. 2 “The ii V7 I”
 - iRealB and otherwise for play-alongs
- ❖ Communication/interaction in improvisation
 - SoundTrap/BandLab MadLib project
- ❖ Online Resources
 - See Handout
- ❖ Importance of Rhythmic Aesthetic
 - Drum Genius practice
 - Metronome on 2 and 4



Theory

- ❖ Theory is fundamentally linked to improvisation in Jazz
 - This is why there are no PhD's in jazz theory or composition!
- ❖ Modes
 - Have them make videos where they teach the modes of the major scale to their parents(!)
 - Have them reduce chord changes to the MAJOR keys
 - Have them simplify chord changes for the ii/V7/I (ie: the major keys)
- ❖ Jazz theory is like chemistry, everything is named by what it literally is.
 - Aural skills informing Didactic knowledge
- ❖ Form in jazz is easily heard and rationalized
 - Musicianship, Aural Skills



Composition

- ❖ BandLab or SoundTrap
 - Have students create compositions in the style of specific musical examples.
 - Have students engrave/transcribe and use this as the basis for their composition
 - Challenge students to create music that is both meaningful to them and demonstrates some learning outcome.
- ❖ iReal Pro
 - Have students create “tunes” using just ii V7 I chords and a specific form or otherwise
 - Have students alter chord changes on existing standards that still work with the melody
 - Have students transcribe the chord changes from their favorite pop music using jazz symbols



Reflective Practice and Storywork

- ❖ Reflective practice is the act of looking back on what you have done/experienced and critically assessing the value it has brought to you and how it has shaped who you are.
 - Challenge your students to find music they listen to on a regular basis that is “jazzy”, discuss
 - Challenge your students to rationalize what makes a genre identifiable to them.
 - Help your students understand why what they are doing is important to them beyond the classroom
- ❖ Storywork is the practice of communicating (to yourself or others) how you got to where you are, and gaming out where you want to go from here.
 - Ask your students what they are interested in and where they want to go with those interests
 - Reflection worksheets located in the handout!
- ❖ The power of a liberal arts education
 - Gain career mobility and professional skills while studying what you are passionate about.

History and Sociology

- The history and roots of jazz
 - ◆ African music
 - ◆ Trad Jazz
 - ◆ Development of the Dance band and Big Band
 - ◆ Jazz and an Artform - Bebop
- Sociology surrounding jazz in America
 - ◆ Slavery in America
 - ◆ Racism and music
- What is Jazz?
 - ◆ Deep dive into listening and aesthetic

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Questions?

Handout



The Gene Harris Jazz Festival will be embracing these opportunities in the Spring!

More information as it is approved!

