ARRANGING TECHNIQUES AND REPERTOIRE

WELCOME TO THIS VERY NOT BORING SESSION
ARRANGING TECHNIQUES
AND REPERTOIRE

WELCOME TO THIS VERY NOT BORING SESSION

also known as

WHY DOES PAUL HATE TROMBONE PLAYERS SO MUCH?
ARRANGING TECHNIQUES AND REPERTOIRE

WELCOME TO THIS VERY NOT BORING SESSION

also known as

JAZZ IS HARD
ARRANGING TECHNIQUES AND REPERTOIRE

WELCOME TO THIS VERY NOT BORING SESSION

also known as

WHAT DOES PAUL HAVE AGAINST HAY BURNER?
WHY THIS SESSION?

• When I adjudicate jazz festivals, I often notice that some of the selected repertoire does not seem like a natural fit for the ensemble

  • Sometimes the repertoire seems too demanding

  • Other times, the ensemble is shorthanded (e.g. 3 saxophones, 1 trombone, 2 trumpets) but are still attempting to perform repertoire for standard big band instrumentation
ANTI-GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

• I don’t want you to leave afraid of programming challenging music, because challenging music helps students to grow and progress

• I don’t want you to leave afraid of programming music from the “canon” (i.e. Ellington/Strayhorn/Basie/Thad Jones), which is crucial to learning the idiom as well as to American history
GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

• I **DO** want you to leave feeling like you have a better feel for how to recognize and anticipate challenges that will arise in repertoire

• I **DO** want you to have an idea of how to do simple re-scoring of passages to make them more accessible to your band

• I **DO** want you to leave with a better idea of how to find repertoire that may fit your ensemble depending on the abilities/needs of your students
The first thing I teach in my jazz arranging course is:

• You don’t necessarily have to use a **jazz font**. It doesn’t make anything any easier to read.

• Neither does this font.

• Or this font.
The next thing I teach in my jazz arranging course is:

• How do we write for an ensemble with limited abilities?
  • Technical Demands
  • Part Independence
  • Stylistic Demands
TECHNICAL DEMANDS

• Range

• Chromaticism and/or angularity

• Harmonic Density

• Rhythmic Complexity & Tempo
RANGE

Middle School Level

Notation below is transposed (written) - not concert pitch
## Hay Burner

**Sammy Nestico - Kendor Music, Inc.**

From the Basie-Straight Ahead album of 1968 featuring the legendary Count Basie, Harold Jones, Grover Mitchell, Marshall Royal, and Freddie Green. Highlights here include a recurring alto sax/trumpet duet.

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[ADD TO CART](#)

## Ace of Hearts

**Patty Darling - Sierra Music Publications**

Written with developing bands in mind, this fun, accessible chart can be performed as written or used as a tool to reinforce ear training and improvising. There is ample solo space for alto.

Listen | View | Watch | My Library | Description | Number | Level | Price | Qty |
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[ADD TO CART](#)
RANGE

High School - Intermediate Level

Notation below is transposed (written) - not concert pitch
RANGE

Hay Burner - comp./arr. Sammy Nestico
Ace of Hearts - comp./arr. Patty Darling
ANGULARITY

Hay Burner - comp./arr. Sammy Nestico
RHYTHMIC COMPLEXITY

Hay Burner - comp./arr. Sammy Nestico
RHYTHMIC COMPLEXITY

Ace of Hearts - comp./arr. Patty Darling
HARMONIC DENSITY (solos)

One of the things that can make a solo section challenging is the number of keys it uses, and how quickly the key changes.

Learn to identify key changes by identifying the dominant chord, which often (though not always) functions as the V chord.
Here, so much root motion moves down by 5th that everything looks like a II-V-I progression... until you look for the dominant chords. It's the V chord that establishes the cadence, and the key.

Here, we are in Ab major for 5 measures until the G7 chord, which establishes C major as the new key center.
Ace of Hearts uses a minor blues form for its solo section. It's simple, easy to hear, and students can sound good with a pentatonic scale or the minor blues scale before they learn how to play every chord.
HARMONIC DENSITY (solos)

While Hay Burner doesn't have a solo section, beware of other arrangements that have solo sections which are far more difficult than their listed level.
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HARMONIC DENSITY (solos)

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HARMONIC DENSITY (ensemble)

Block Voicings - 4-part Close

Rules of 4-part close voicing from Gary Lindsay’s Jazz Arranging Techniques:

1. Lead plus three harmony notes below

2. All four voices within an octave

3. Four different pitches

4. One note from each category (root, 7th, 5th, 3rd) or its available substitute

5. Adjacent intervals include 2nds, 3rds, and sometimes 4ths
HARMONIC DENSITY (ensemble)

Block Voicings - 4-part Close

WITH 7TH AS TOP NOTE...
Cmaj7

WITH 9TH AS TOP NOTE...
Cmaj7 C7

(9th subbed in place of root) (13th subbed in place of 5th) (11th subbed in place of 5th)
HARMONIC DENSITY (ensemble)

Hay Burner - comp./arr. Sammy Nestico
HARMONIC DENSITY (ensemble)

Block Voicings

5 Part w/ Doubled Lead

Drop 2

5 part close with doubled lead down the Octave

\[ Cmaj7 \]

Drop 2 with doubled lead down the Octave

\[ Cmaj7 \]

(13th subsed in place of 5th)
HARMONIC DENSITY (ensemble)

Block Voicings

5 Part w/ Doubled Lead

Drop 2
HARMONIC DENSITY (ensemble)

Ace of Hearts - comp./arr. Patty Darling

Contemporary arrangers may still use block voicings, but often less frequently.

In Ace of Hearts, Patty Darling uses them most on figures that are quarter notes or longer, or accents followed by rest - not in fast-moving 8th note lines the way Nestico did.
PART INDEPENDENCE

• Jazz Ensembles are smaller than Symphonic Bands, but often the repertoire is more harmonically dense.

• Classic arrangements written for professional ensembles often demand far more independence from each performer.

• This is good because it presents a worthy challenge, but it is also daunting for students who haven’t developed the necessary technical abilities.
UNISONS vs. DIVISI

With “part independence” in mind, something I might consider when choosing repertoire and evaluating playability of a piece is the presence of unisons vs. divisi.

- More unisons across the ensemble result in less demand in terms of part independence.
PART INDEPENDENCE

• Nobody wrote for independent voices better than Duke Ellington/Billy Strayhorn, and their music represents a key part of the jazz ensemble canon that should be addressed in curriculum

• But, programming entire concerts that utilize similar techniques might result in a high degree of difficulty, and less variety than programming that also includes contemporary literature
• University of Oregon Jazz Ensemble repertoire, Fall 2019

  • “Counter Block” arr. Thad Jones (for the Count Basie Orchestra)
  • “Flirtibird” comp. Duke Ellington
  • “Just Kidding” comp. Eliane Elias/arr. Bob Brookmeyer
  • “Beneath the Mask” comp. Bob Washut
  • “Once Around” comp. Thad Jones (for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra)
SECTIONALIZED VS. MIXED ORCHESTRATION

Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your ensemble, combined with a study of the orchestration decisions the arranger made, can help you to anticipate what ensemble figures may be challenging due to how exposed they are.
From Hay Burner…

This is spectacularly fun trombone writing - but difficult to play at a high level
SECTIONALIZED VS. MIXED ORCHESTRATION
SECTIONALIZED VS. MIXED ORCHESTRATION

Compare that to a quick scan of Ace of Hearts, where the trombones are virtually never left on their own, and certainly not in a 4-part chord voicing.
See this passage of James Miley’s composition for Middle School level ensembles - Thunk, to see how the tenors/bari can be used to support the trombones.
Adding the saxophones with the trombones to support them

THIS IS THE WAY
Soft lead trumpet player? Don’t have four players?
Re-score the section into unisons/octaves to support the lead voice.
RE-ARRANGING FOR YOUR ENSEMBLE

Don’t have a full trombone section but still want to do something that utilizes four-part block voicings in that section throughout the chart?

DON’T
RE-ARRANGING FOR YOUR ENSEMBLE

Don’t have a full trombone section but still want to do something that utilizes four-part block voicings throughout the chart?

Try scoring the exposed trombone parts into the saxes/trumpets, or even the piano.
“Convertible” charts that are written for fewer instruments

Small group repertoire (lead sheets/real books)
SELECTING REPERTOIRE TO TEACH STYLE

Basie, Ellington, and Thad are the primary sources for this in the large jazz ensemble... but if their music is too difficult...

Try teaching blues heads and bebop melodies while imitating the recordings
SELECTING REPERTOIRE TO TEACH STYLE

BLUES
Tenor Madness
Sir John
Straight, No Chaser
Blue Monk
Au Privave
Cool Blues
Now's the Time
Sandu
Blues for Alice
One for Daddy-O
Billie's Bounce

BEBOP
Groovin' High
In Walked Bud
Good Bait
Scrape from the Apple
Oleo
Half Nelson
Dexterity
Ornithology
Yardbird Suite
A Night in Tunisia
REPERTOIRE FOR BEGINNING IMPROVISERS

Stick to the blues, or songs with few key centers

Simple/Few Key Centers

Autumn Leaves
Afternoon in Paris
Black Orpheus
Blue Bossa
Cantaloupe Island
Doxy
Impressions
Lady Bird

Little Sunflower
Satin Doll
Sister Sadie
So What
Solar
Song for My Father
Take the A Train
There is a ton of classic Basie/Thad Jones/Ellington repertoire that form the core of big band repertoire - these pieces are the gold standard, and every ensemble should work towards them.

Here are some alternative arrangers whose work is less dense harmonically/orchestrationally and which may be more accessible to beginning ensembles:
RECOMMENDED ARRANGERS

Patty Darling
Mike Dana
Matt Harris
Victor Lopez
Manny Mendelsohn
Michael Philip Mossman
Paul Murtha
Mike Steinel
Rick Stitzel
Steve Owen
George Stone
Fred Sturm

Mark Taylor
James Miley
Mike Titlebaum
Mike Tomaro
Bob Washut

and

Jessika Smith
RECOMMENDED ARRANGING TEXTS

Jazz Arranging Techniques - Gary Lindsay

Instrumental Jazz Arranging - Mike Tomaro and John Wilson

Arranging for the Large Jazz Ensemble - Dick Lowell and Ken Pullig

Jazz Arranging and Composing: A Linear Approach - Bill Dobbins
FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT

Paul Krueger

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