

ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

High School Jazz Band Program

Rehearsal Strategies: The Music of Gerald Wilson

Essentially Ellington 2013-14

In 2008 Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) began including non-Ellington repertoire in the charts distributed to through the *Essentially Ellington* program (*EE*). These charts have included works by seminal jazz orchestras, such as the Count Basie Orchestra, and important arrangers including Mary Lou Williams and Benny Carter. This year four of the selections are from the pen of composer/arranger Gerald Wilson. For more than fifty years Wilson has been among the elite jazz composers and arrangers not only with his own orchestra but will notable names such as Jimmie Lunceford, Basie and Ellington. While three of the charts included here, *Dissonance In Blues*, *Nancy Jo*, and *Teri* are Wilson originals, one is an arrangement of the Juan Tizol classic, *Perdido*. Each chart offers different characteristics for your band to exploit, and though always forward looking, Wilson's writing style is still rooted in 1) Swing, 2) Bop and 3) Blues. *Nancy Jo* offers up all three in one chart.

Nancy Jo is *Swingin'*...

Nancy Jo evokes the inherent dance feel of the swing era. This is because of the repetitive nature of the rhythm; it feels like a Kansas City style riff tune. Notice the similarity to a tune like *Jumpin' at the Woodside*. Both have background figures that line up with the 2-3 clave rhythm:

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Nancy Jo" in 4/4 time. The score is arranged in a system with six staves. From top to bottom, the staves are labeled: CLAVE, BRAGS, WOODCHOPPERS, SAXES, NANCY JO, and RHYTHM. The Clave staff shows a 2-3 clave rhythm. The Brags staff features a melodic line with various intervals. The Woodchoppers staff consists of a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Saxes staff shows a melodic line with some grace notes. The Nancy Jo staff includes chord symbols: BMIN^{7(b5)}, Emin^{7(b5)} A^{7(b9)}, DMIN⁷, CMIN⁷, F⁷, and B^{b7}. The Rhythm staff shows a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

This rhythm is enhanced by the brass when they enter on an accented beat 4. A good practice will be to sing/play the rhythmic figures will clapping the clave rhythm. This will help keep the ensemble from rushing coming off of beat 4. It will be important for the rhythm section to keep the parts here simple and danceable. Don't overplay and ruin the dance groove. As the chart develops there will be places to stretch out. Here, however, the most important goal for the rhythm section is to establish a consistent ride cymbal and quarter note pulse.

Continuing in the dance band mode, be sure to overexaggerate dynamics and articulations to give the chart energy. Simple whole note and half note passages need to have energy and this is achieved through articulation and dynamics. For example, the dynamic marking at letter D for saxophones is *p*, but to give this passage energy, use a slight breath accent on the downbeats of each note. This allows this whole/half note part to give a strong sense of time. This effect is then overexaggerated four measures before letter E by putting really strong accents on each 2nd note:



Be careful not to try to swell into the notes or you will lose the effect. Brass will take advantage of exaggeration of the dynamic motion as well at letter E. Though the dynamic marking is *f*, if this section is only played loudly it doesn't dance. To give the figure energy, give the sustained notes a strong attack then drop the volume and crescendo to the short, accented note:



Nancy Jo is Bop...

Though the traits in the beginning of this chart suggest swing era sensibilities, it does not take long for Wilson to dip into the bop language. This can be seen in the chord changes (and the treatment by the

soloists) that we will observe in a moment, but it can also be seen in the articulation shift in the ensemble. The saxophones at letter J give us the bop articulation. The bop language is characterized by the accents that happen within the rhythmic line, not by the just the rhythm alone. Notice how the sax line is written

at letter J:

The image shows a single staff of music for a saxophone. It begins with a box containing the letter 'J'. The music is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The first measure starts with a forte dynamic marking 'f' and contains a series of eighth notes with accents. The second measure continues with eighth notes and a quarter note, also with accents. The third and fourth measures follow a similar rhythmic pattern with accents on various notes.

The written articulation suggests accents at the beginning of each 2-measure phrase. However, when we apply a bebop approach to the articulation, it looks more like this:

This image shows a five-staff musical score for saxophones. The staves are labeled from top to bottom: ALTO SAX. 1, ALTO SAX. 2, TENOR SAX. 1, TENOR SAX. 2, and BARITONE SAX. The music is in 4/4 time and spans three measures. Each staff contains a line of music with various articulations, including accents and slurs, applied to individual notes within the phrases, illustrating a bebop approach to articulation.

This image shows another five-staff musical score for saxophones, labeled A. Sax. 1, A. Sax. 2, T. Sax. 1, T. Sax. 2, and B. Sax. The music is in 4/4 time and spans three measures. Similar to the previous score, it illustrates a bebop articulation approach with accents and slurs applied to notes within the phrases.

The accents on the *and-of-4* and the *and-of-1* create forward momentum in the rhythm. Also, note that the only short articulation is the quarter note at the end of each phrase. All other notes should be long or connected. Have the students clap these accents while singing the melodic line. Notice the note change at the end of each 2-measure phrase above (leading into the next 2-bar phrase). On your parts that *and-of-4* is written as a tied note, however, using a leading tone into the phrase allows you to create the articulation that you hear on the recording. Accent on the *and-of-4*, slur into the next downbeat and breath accent the *and-of-1*. Practice this section slowly so to ensure that everyone plays the articulation together. Have the entire band sing this section with the saxophones so that everyone learns the articulation. It will be critical that the soloists approach articulation in the same manner.

The shout chorus at letter M reverts back to the swing era approach through the end of the chart. The challenge is to make these transitions feel natural rather than like two different charts. The rhythm section can help considerably with this by not going too far in either direction. Don't let the drums or the comping get too busy during the solo sections and too square during the swing sections. Finding the right balance is key. Finally, the soloists, who are integrated so nicely throughout the chart, will help bridge this gap between bop and swing. The soloists should have a nice mix of swing, bop and blues.

Nancy Jo is Blues...

My personal belief is that "the blues" is at the core of all jazz music. I never want to stray too far away from the blues. You will find this to be true of Gerald Wilson's music as well. Depending on each soloist's experience level, several approaches can be taken on this chart. A close examination of the chord changes to *Nancy Jo* reveal that this composition is a disguised blues with an interlude. The example below compares the chord changes at the first solo section, letter C (bottom line) to standard blues changes (top

line):

Notice in measure 1 the common chord tones between the two chords, making the **Bmin7(b5)** a simple chord substitution for the **F** chord. The same is true in the third measure with the **Dmin7** substituting for the **F** chord. The ii-V7 progression in the second measure simply leads to the **Dmin7**. Though the chord qualities are different in measures 5 and 6, the root motion is the same. Measure 7 has another simple chord substitution made possible by common chord tones and measure 8 contains leading motion. Finally, the last four measures are essentially the same.

Recognizing this progression as a blues means that there is a starting point for dealing with improvisation. For the young improviser, the use of blues scale can be useful. Remember that the blues scale built off of the relative minor (or 6th scale degree) is appropriate to blues and is the more appropriate sound here. Notice how this sound still fits the harmony very well:

The note choice above, including the grace notes, do not stray from that simple blues scale yet still fits the harmony nicely. A more experienced improviser can make more use of arpeggios and the voice leading from chord to chord to deeper into the bebop language. These chord changes are similar to Charlie Parker's *Blues for Alice* chord changes. Listen to *Blues for Alice* or *Freight Trane* (John Coltrane) or other examples that make use of this type of progression and transcribe to understand what they are doing.

The bridge of the solo section (letter E-G) continues to explore the bebop language by employing the most common chord progression in bebop, the *ii-V7* or *ii-V7-I* progression. It is used here by descending in whole steps allowing for sequencing through several key centers. Have your students practice common

language over this series of *ii-V*'s in order to have ideas under the fingertips. Note the example below:



In order to achieve the bop feel, pay close attention to the rhythm. Notice the use of upbeat to help the rhythmic language. Harmonically, the above example makes use of resolution to chord tones (*f* to *E^b*, *D* to *C*, *B^b* to *A*, etc.) to create a sound that leads through the chord changes. The quarter note in the second measure of each phrase represents the resolution of the 7th of the *ii* chord to the 3rd of the *V* chord. Have students transcribe and write their own *ii-V* ideas to develop more language.

Finally, if you have several soloists to feature, don't be shy about opening the solo sections. Remember that the form is 2 choruses of blues, a 16 bar bridge and another chorus of blues. You can divide this among the soloists, as it is written in the chart, or have you advanced players play over the entire form. Those choices are up to you and it is important that you make this fit the strengths of your band.

The *EE* repertoire has often included pieces that feature horn players such as *Blood Count* and *Prelude to a Kiss* for alto sax and *The Shepherd* and *Portrait of Louis Armstrong* for trumpet. This year with the inclusion of *Dissonance In Blues* and *Teri* the bass and guitar get to show off their abilities as soloists and melodic voices.

Dissonance In Blues: A Lesson In Subdivision

Though *Nancy Jo* is a disguised blues, *Dissonance In Blues* is not at all veiled. It is as blue as blue can get. The tempo is slow and the setting allows for strong, blues drenched inflection throughout. The most distinguishing characteristic, however, is that the bass carries the melody dialoguing with the sax section. This is set up from the very beginning with the chromatic bass movement against the descending sax chords to set up the melody at letter A. The chords need to have energy and blues inflection while not overpowering the bass. This will be achieved by giving slight breath accents to the attack then backing off for the sustain. The use of vibrato, glissandos and swells in appropriate places will also create a strong



blues feel:

As can be seen above, there's a lot of shaping that can be done to achieve effect. Find motion and inflection that feels good to you. Notice that I have written the above example with a 2/4 measure. This is simply to simplify the count-off for the students so that the intro doesn't confuse them and so that they can see/hear the phrasing.

The key to creating a strong swing feel at this tempo will be to ensure that everyone in the ensemble subdivides. Remember, the slower the tempo the more important it is to subdivide to hold the tempo. However, subdivision is also going to help interpret the feel throughout this chart. For the introduction, the bass is actually playing an even 8th note subdivision while the drummer plays a triplet based swing pattern. At letter A, everyone is playing a triplet subdivision with the saxophones playing off the bass rhythm. It is important that everyone sings the subdivision and knows where their notes lie within that subdivision. Have your students sing doo-dl-a while tapping the heel to the time:



Be aware that the second 8th note (the upbeat) should line up with the third triplet and this is where the natural accent will occur. This practice should help hold the sax line together and keep the students from rushing.

For the bass, this subdivision will help generate the time/feel throughout the melody. Be sure to drive the triplet figure at the end of each 2-measure phrase into the next phrase. For upright players, be sure to use the side of the finger (not the finger tip) to get as much skin on the string for a nice, big sound. Continue this sound and feel through letter B, the bass solo. Students should learn the transcribed solo to use as an example but not be afraid to play their own solo ideas. Have students listen to (and transcribe) great bass soloists such as Oscar Pettiford and Ray Brown to further their understanding of blues language.

Depending on the level of your bass soloist, you may consider opening up letter B for additional choruses. If you do so, I would use the sax background on the 1st chorus as opposed to the last chorus, which is commonly done. In this case, the sax background is meant to flow from the loud band chord that precedes letter B.

Letter C is the first time the ensemble is featured melodically. Be sure that the saxophones make a difference in sound from the background sound they've been using. Keep the subdivision in mind to ensure the feel. Though there are some accents written in the part, there are other natural accents that occur because of the subdivision. There are several options for articulating this line:



In the first example the accents from the score are included with additional accents to give that mimic the brass articulation (*and-of 1*, downbeat of 3). Example 2 makes use of the natural accents on the upbeats and takes advantage of breaking the phrase into two parts. Play around with the articulation to find what you like for your ensemble. Be sure the brass plays with a full sound at the **ff** dynamic as well as the **p** dynamic on the answer to the saxophone line. Be careful not to make the first note too short; think “fat” notes here (sung “daht”). The shake should first settle on the pitch then create the effect to ensure good intonation. Finally, be sure that the brass follows the shape of the melodic line to lead into letter D.

If you decide to include other soloists, the ideal place to insert them would be between letters C and D. If you do, be careful that the chart doesn't get too long. Letter D is where much of the fun begins because of the changes in subdivision throughout. Though the double-time subdivision is written in 16th notes, the concept is the same as if it were 8th notes in cut time. However, rather than singing triplets in the double time feel, sing it as swing 8th's. Have your ensemble practice tapping their heels while alternating singing



each subdivision:

It is important all students to have control of both subdivisions whether they play within both or not. The trombones add yet another level of articulation by playing the shuffle articulation 4 measures before letter E. Remember that in the shuffle articulation, the downbeat 8th note (in this case 16th note) is played

with a shorter attack. The key to playing this section is to know what subdivision happens when for each section of the band, including the rhythm section. The spot to really be prepared for is the 9th measure of letter C. Though the brass chord is written to enter on the *and-of-4* in that measure, that chord should be played in double-time to line up with the saxophone line. Be sure to reference the recording when rehearsing this section.

The final section, which is a sort of tag to the last blues chorus, returns to the opening sound with bass and saxophone. The concept of balance and approach to energizing the sustained sax chords will be the same. The effect to work on here will be in bars 2 and 3 of letter E. Though this effect is written here as a dynamic effect, treating the half notes as quarters with a legato tongue to make the volume changes will be more effective. Listen to the recording and copy the saxophone approach. It will be much easier for your students to hear the musical example rather than an explanation.

It is a welcome change to have rhythm section instrumentalists as feature soloists; and as *Nancy Jo* provides this opportunity for bassists, *Teri* offers the chance to let our guitarists shine.

Teri: A Lesson In Sound

Guitarists can often feel left out of the big band. Many times their parts are simply copies of the piano part and they are often asked to lay out in deference to the piano. Freddie Green has helped us to realize the importance of the guitar in an accompaniment role in swing music; however, Freddie rarely (hardly ever) was a soloist with the Basie Orchestra. Yet, in small groups the guitar is often a crucial voice – organ trios, fusion groups, etc. and instrumentalists such as Wes Montgomery, Joe Pass and Pat Metheny, to name a few, have shown that the guitar can be a powerful solo voice. One of the most striking features about each of these guitarists, as is true for any featured soloist, is their sound – or more appropriately, their voice.

The first thing that listeners hear of the featured soloist is the sound of the player, which is not to be confused with the sound of the instrument. Wind players are often aware of this while rhythm players can take it for granted. Don't allow your students to simply play the instrument into the amplifier and be satisfied with whatever sound comes out. There are several factors to consider regarding sound:

- Solid body vs. hollow body guitars – A hollow body instrument has sound even without the amplifier. It is important to not let the amplifier change the natural warmth of this sound. Though the wood of the solid body guitar does have some bearing on the sound (a Les Paul does sound

different than a Fender, for example), the tweaking of the amplifier will have more bearing on the sound of the instrument.

- Pickups – The actual quality of the pickup does make a difference to the sound. However, here I’m referring to which pickup is used. If the instrument has two pickups, the student must be aware of the difference in sound between the two. The bridge pickup will have a much brighter, harsher sound. The neck pickup will generally be warmer.
- Amplifiers – The amp can make a huge difference to sound. The size of the speaker(s), the type of equalizer or tone knobs all makes a difference to the sound. I suggest starting with the sound flat and then tweaking from there to get as natural a sound as possible.
- Effects – The use of effects boxes and pedals has become popular among many contemporary guitarists. Be careful not to over use effects such as chorus and delay. Using reverb, however, does add warmth to the sound, but students should still use it in moderation.
- Use of pick (plectrum) – The size, strength and shape of the pick makes a huge difference to the sound. Wes Montgomery used no pick at all and revolutionized how we think of guitar sound. A little internet research can go a long way in helping to understand different players’ approach.

Listen with your students to different guitarists’ sound and make critical decisions about what sound is going to sing best with the band. The next step is realizing the different voices that guitarists sing in. each player will have his own unique voice just as wind players do. Wes popularized the use of octaves as a melodic voice. Pat Metheny found a way of holding the pick that created a very unique voice. Decisions regarding portamento, vibrato, bends, etc. are all important to the player’s singing voice. In the transcribed guitar part, note the different voices used by Anthony Wilson:

a. Use of grace notes and turns



b. Use of portamento and octaves



These effects lend character to the soloist's voice and allow him to give expression to lyrical statement. Students must be careful in the use of expressive techniques. Everything must be done on purpose, not out of habit. Guitarists who have listened to a lot of blues and rock, for example, may tend to put a fast vibrato at the end of every sustained note. Effects must remain in the character of the music that is being played.

Next, the treatment of the melody vs. solo flourishes must be examined. If you have both guitar parts (the written melody part and the transcribed part) be sure that your soloist plays the written part to know exactly what the melody is. If looking at only the transcribed part, a close inspection of the beginning up to letter B will give a good idea of what the written melody is. Letter B through letter D is basically a repeat (though in a different key) of the melody allowing for more improvisation. With that in mind plan on keeping the first half of the tune a little straighter to allow for the piece to build. Though there will be some help from the ensemble, most of the energy in direction will be guided by the soloist.

Ensemble

Though the winds play pretty much whole and half notes throughout, they create a setting on top of which the soloist will sing. This setting is not creating a dance feel, as in *Nancy Jo*, but instead is creating a sound pallet. For this reason I would avoid the use of much vibrato and opt for more of a straight tone sound. The pallet will be created by the sound of the harmony, the voicing and dynamic motion. Balance is going to be key in creating the proper mood and allowing for the guitarist to be heard. Just because the soloist can turn the volume up on the amplifier doesn't mean he should have to. Have the soloist play with just the rhythm section to set the balance then have the ensemble adjust to that sound. The technical challenges for the ensemble will be:

- Intonation – Vibrato can often hide some of the ensembles intonation issues. Playing with a straight tone will expose those issues. Make sure your students check their chords against the piano to ensure good intonation.

- Balance and blend – This is not only referring to the balance between soloist and ensemble but also refers to the blend of each section and the balance between the sections. All parts are important to the sound of the chord and the timbre of each voice in the section must match. Remember that it takes as much breath support to play at softer controlled volumes as it does to play loudly. Though this chart seems simple, the chops must be strong in order to pull it off effectively.
- Dynamic motion – The lead player will still need to guide dynamic motion throughout to help give the chart direction. These parts should crescendo and decrescendo. Rarely will the notes just sit there. Though it can be tempting to put the brass in bucket mutes to keep the sound controlled, it may be more appropriate to play into the stands to allow the horns to come out of the stands for dynamic effect.
- Attacks and releases – At a slow tempo such as this, attacks and releases are really exposed. Be sure that everyone is subdividing for a strong sense of time to help attack together. Use a “doo” tongue to ensure that the attack is not too harsh. Notes should be held full value; don’t allow anyone in the section to cheat the end of a note. These little things show the difference between a young band and a mature ensemble.

Rhythm Section

The rhythm section serves a crucial role in this chart as it does on all ballads. The emphasis should be on maintaining a strong time/feel while coloring the sound pallet and dialoging with the soloist. Each instrument will do this in its own unique way.

- Drums – The drummer is not only responsible for maintaining a pulse but will add appropriate colors and help the band’s dynamic motion. Notice the use of cymbal rolls on the recording that helps with the winds’ crescendo. The drummer can make use of brushes, mallets and sticks to give a different setting to varying sections.
- Bass – The bass is the harmonic foundation of the ensemble. For that reason, on a chart with so much of the background sound being sustained chords from the winds, it is important for the bass to play low bass notes. This is not a chart where the bassist should spend much time in thumb position. The interest the bass helps create is in regard to the subdivision. Notice how the bassist plays simple fills that mostly show a duple subdivision, though there are occasional triplets to add

rhythmic interest. These fills are still around the root and 5th of the chords:



- Piano – With the winds playing chords throughout, it is not necessary for the pianist to play chords all of the time. The pianist will create colors and dialogue with the soloist. Notice on the recording how the piano plays a chord in the spaces where the winds do not. Also, make note of the single line dialogue in answer to the guitar line.

Remember that the rhythm section parts are transcribed. It is not necessary for your rhythm section to play these parts specifically. In fact, those parts won't be relevant if the soloist is not playing what was played on the recording. Have your rhythm section rehearse with the guitarist without the winds to get a sense of how the soloist will phrase. Have them also rehearse with the ensemble without the soloist to be sure that everyone knows what the textures are, where the entrances are and what the dynamic motion is. Finally, put all parts together and listen closely for how everything will fit together.

Teri offers your ensemble the opportunity to show off a subtle and sophisticated approach to playing a ballad. However, if you want to show off your great soloists and swinging ensemble playing, then *Perdido* may be a great choice for you.

***Perdido*: The Classic Revisited**

Bebop Introduction

Bassist Rodney Whitaker is fond of saying that “life is a tenor battle”. With the line played here by Jimmy Hamilton and Paul Gonsalves, this chart certainly opens with that sentiment, though Clark Terry may have something to say about that. This line actually predates this arrangement and you can find different versions of it on other recordings. A favorite is from *The Cosmic Scene* by Duke Ellington's Spacemen. That recording features Jimmy Hamilton and Clark Terry playing an extended version of this line and is worth your checking out. So, though it is written for two tenors here, don't feel locked in; you can feature whomever you would like to on this opening line. In fact, have your entire band learn it; this is a great

teaching tool for getting students into the bop sound. Be sure to sing with Clark Terry’s “doodle”



articulation:

The “d” attack will keep the sound from being too harsh and the “doodle” will give a connected feeling to the line. Pay strict attention to the articulation that you want throughout (not only accents but long and short notes as well) and write them into the parts. Though it is common to accentuate the upbeats in jazz, don’t accent every upbeat especially on lines with constant 8th notes or you will create a loping feel. Try singing articulations with this feel:



The “ghost” note on the *and-of-2* and the *and-of-4* breaks up the accents and allows the line to still have momentum. This feel may work on many of the 8th note passages throughout, however, in some cases you may want to accentuate the sound of the clave. The 3rd and 4th measures of letter C are the perfect



example:

The clave phrase accentuates the “Charleston” rhythm in the 2nd measure of the example (downbeat followed by an upbeat) and the reverse “Charleston” rhythm in the first measure (upbeat followed by a downbeat). It is common to see only the “Charleston” rhythm (or its reverse) and the articulation will be the same. Now, remember that phrases that begin and/or end on an upbeat will normally be accented but accenting downbeats does occur. For example, if a phrase is creating a moving quarter note line within the 8th notes, it may be proper to accent the quarter note or downbeat:



Keeping all of these articulation examples in mind, you can now look at each phrase and apply the articulation that you feel works best. Uniformity throughout all instrumentalists is what counts most. Have students listen to as many bebop recordings as possible to hear great examples. Once you have agreed on the articulation be sure that everyone writes it into their parts, sings them with the proper syllable while clapping the accents and play matching that articulation. A trick that I use to get the students to hear the articulation is to have them whisper their parts – no pitches, just air. The accented notes should reveal themselves. Here is an example of how I might approach a passage:



Don't forget that the rhythm section should also be singing this part. It is crucial that they know this line in order to comp properly. Notice on the recording that the rhythm section plays more in the Basie style rather than trying to be a bebop group. Don't let the section overplay here. Listen to how the drums accentuate the bebop line.

Bowing to the Duke

The placement of the *Perdido Line* at the top of this arrangement creates the anticipation of the great writing that is to follow. Gerald Wilson writes figures that complement this line very well, features each section of the ensemble and tips his hat to the original Duke arrangements. The chart's introduction is an 11-measure big band shout arranged in three 3-measure phrases followed by a 2-measure break for piano (letter I). The drummer needs to be sure that his set-ups are within this phrasing. Next, be aware that the form (*AABA*) starts at letter J with the piano playing the first A section though Duke disguises that he is playing the melody to *Perdido*. Your pianist can play the written line or his own melody but shouldn't give the tune away just yet. The rest of the opening melody (letters K through M) has the feel of

the original Ellington chart though arranged slightly differently. (For further exploration of that sound, refer back to the earlier *Perdido* rehearsal guide.)

Letter N is an interlude to usher in the clarinet solo and should drop down in volume then build to set up the solo. Once into the solo, the band parts are again reminiscent of the original Ellington chart, however, Wilson creates some unique challenges. For example, the saxophones have what appear to be the original Ellington background figures at letter T but at one measure before letter U Wilson has the saxophones go from melody to background hits and back to melody within a couple of measures:

Background Melody Background Melody Background Melody

The image shows a musical score for Letter U, consisting of five staves. The first staff is labeled 'Tensei Sax'. Above the first measure, the letter 'U' is enclosed in a box. The score is divided into six measures, with dynamic markings of *mf* and *mp* alternating between measures. The notation shows a transition from a background figure to a melody and back to a background figure.

The editor notated that change here with dynamic markings in order to help with this effect. The melody is in unison and the background is harmonized. If the unison line is played too loudly then the effect is lost. The brass has a similar effect back at letter L:

The image shows a musical score for Letter L, consisting of five staves. The score is divided into three measures. The first measure is labeled 'Melody' with a dynamic marking of *f*. The second measure is labeled 'Hit' with a dynamic marking of *f*. The third measure is labeled 'Melody' with a dynamic marking of *f*. The notation shows a transition from a melody to a hit and back to a melody.

The brass section has a harmonized melody with a background hit on the *and-of-4* after the double bar then return to the harmonized melody. The melody should continue at the same general volume after a

strong, accented hit. In this way Wilson sets up multiple layers within single sections of the band. Look for this effect in other places as well.

After a departure from the Ellington sound, Wilson returns to the Ellington shout from the original *Perdido* arrangement at rehearsal letter AA on the last A section of the form. Letter BB begins an Ellington shout chorus but be careful not to peak too soon because Wilson will add his own shout chorus next.

The Gerald Wilson Touch

Beginning at the pick-up to letter X after the solo section, Wilson really starts to add his unique stamp to this classic tune. He passes off a harmonized melody from the trombones (first A of the form) to the saxophones (second A of the form). You hear here traces of great swing writing (bones) *and* bebop writing (saxes). Be sure the lead player sets the articulation, dynamic, etc. and that the section follows. The bridge and last A return to an Ellingtonian feel to set up the Ellington shout chorus as mentioned earlier with tenor blowing and brass swells. Again, don't totally peak here because Wilson's approach to his own climactic ending is to drop the volume back and build. The last A section of the form drops the volume to lead into Wilson's final climax.

From rehearsal letter FF, the effect is to build in 8 measure phrases while the intensity is fiery and consistent throughout. To do this, practice again using the whisper technique. Once everyone has the articulation, be sure to over-exaggerate the accents, especially at the softer volume level. The final climax will be at letter II, returning to the same shout that the chart started with. This is the moment that you have been building the anticipation for and everyone in the ensemble must understand this to completely sell it to the listener. Following the musical directions and cues set up by Wilson should take the listener on an aural history lesson in swing, bop and Ellingtonian joy!

Each of Gerald Wilson's charts offers something unique, challenging and fun for your ensemble to play. There is ample opportunity for you to feature great soloists, demonstrate your band's ability to swing, show your ensemble's level of maturity and create an exciting program. We can't wait to hear what you do with the music. Remember to make it your own and have fun doing so!

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