

ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

High School Jazz Band Program

REHEARSAL STRATEGIES – *Second Line* BY REGINALD THOMAS, PROFESSOR OF JAZZ PIANO MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST LANSING, MI

FROM HIS EARLIEST DAYS, DUKE ELLINGTON WAS NOT ONLY INTERESTED IN WRITING POPULAR TUNES BUT LARGER WORKS AS WELL. HE WROTE SUITES THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER THAT ALLOWED HIM TO FOCUS HIS ATTENTION TO A GIVEN MUSICAL TOPIC. THESE INCLUDED WORKS SUCH AS *Black, Brown and Beige*, *THE Sacred Concerts*, *THE Queen's Suite*, *THE Far East Suite* AND *THE Latin American Suite*, TO NAME A FEW. NEARER THE END OF HIS LIFE AND CAREER, HE PENNED THE *New Orleans Suite* FOCUSING ON ONE OF THE REGIONS MOST IMPORTANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAZZ MUSIC. THIS IS A WONDERFULLY DIVERSE PIECE OF MUSIC RANGING FROM THE BLUESY ORGAN OF WILD BILL DAVIS ON “*Blues for New Orleans*”, TO THE SWEET GOSPEL SOUND OF “*Portrait of Mahalia Jackson*”, THE VIRTUOSO TRUMPET ON “*Portrait of Louis Armstrong*” AND THE GLORY OF THE STREET PARADE ON A PIECE FOR THIS YEAR’S EE REPERTOIRE, “*Second Line*”.

DUKE’S APPROACH TO BRINGING THE STREET PARADE TO LIFE IN THE BIG BAND SETTING WAS NOT TO TRY TO *be* A NEW ORLEANS BRASS BAND OR SMALL “DIXIELAND” GROUP. INSTEAD HE CHOSE TO FOCUS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MUSIC AND APPLY THEM IN A BIG BAND SETTING. THE TITLE *Second Line* TO MANY WOULD AUTOMATICALLY INVOKE THE SOUND OF THE DRUM LINE RHYTHM FROM A BRASS BAND (FOR EXAMPLE, LISTEN TO HERLIN RILEY ON “HAPPY FEET BLUES” FROM WYNTON MARSALIS’ MAJESTY OF THE BLUES). DUKE DOESN’T GO THERE; THE BAND IS SWINGING ALL THE WAY! SO, SINCE THE APPROACH DOESN’T INVOLVE TRYING TO BE A NEW ORLEANS BRASS BAND, PER SE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW ORLEANS MUSIC.

New Orleans Music Traits

DUKE OFTEN USED A SMALL SECTION OF MUSICIANS THAT WE CALL THE “PEP” SECTION TO PLAY A MELODIC SECTION OR SOLI TOGETHER. WHEN LISTENING TO GROUPS LED BY ARTISTS SUCH AS KING OLIVER, JELLY ROLL MORTON OR LOUIS ARMSTRONG YOU WILL NOTICE A SIMILAR SMALL “FRONTLINE”

ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

High School Jazz Band Program

SECTION BUT WITH A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO MELODY. THE TRUMPET (OR 1ST TRUMPET IF THE GROUP EMPLOYED TWO) WOULD PLAY THE MAIN MELODY WHILE THE OTHER INSTRUMENTS (USUALLY CLARINET AND TROMBONE) IMPROVISED AROUND THAT MELODY. RATHER THAN CREATE THIS GROUP WITHIN THE ENSEMBLE, DUKE INSTEAD USES THE TUTTI ENSEMBLE AS THE 1ST TRUMPET MELODY AND ALLOWS THE SOLOIST(S) TO IMPROVISE AROUND THE REST OF THE BAND. AS YOU DISCUSS THE FORM WITH YOUR STUDENTS THEY WILL SEE THIS CLEARLY THROUGHOUT THE CHART. HE ALSO USES THE ENSEMBLE TO SOUND LIKE IMPROVISED PARTS. NOTICE THIS EFFECT IN THE DUET BETWEEN THE TRUMPETS/SAXES AND THE TROMBONES AT LETTER M:



The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Trumpet in Bb and Trombone. The music is in 4/4 time. The Trumpet part (top staff) features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including a triplet of eighth notes. The Trombone part (bottom staff) provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes, often mirroring the rhythmic patterns of the trumpet.

THE EFFECT IS REALLY COMPLETED WHEN THE CLARINET ENTERS IMPROVISING AROUND THIS DUET AND THUS GIVING THE ILLUSION OF THREE IMPROVISED PARTS, AS IN A TYPICAL NEW ORLEANS JAZZ BAND. ANOTHER TRAIT OF THE NEW ORLEANS BRASS BANDS WAS THE FACT THAT THE MUSIC OFTEN WAS MORE REPETITIVE THAN DEVELOPMENTAL. THIS IS, OF COURSE, DUE TO THE IMPROVISED NATURE OF THE MUSIC. DUKE DEFINITELY APPLIES THIS TO THE FORM OF *Second Line*, WHICH DOES NOT FOLLOW THE MORE TYPICAL APPROACH THAT DEVELOPS A THEME AND BUILDS TO A SHOUT SECTION AND THEN RECAPITULATES. THIS PIECE HAS THE FEEL OF A MARCHING BAND PROCEEDING DOWN THE STREET. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH DUKE'S USE OF A SIMPLE AB FORM THAT IS GENERALLY REPEATED TWICE FOR EACH SECTION. THE OVERALL FORM FOLLOWS THIS STRUCTURE:

- INTRO ON THE A SECTION W/CLARINET PLAYING SIMPLE VERSION OF THE MELODY 2 X'S
- B – TUTTI MELODY W/TROMBONE AND CLARINET IMPROVISING 2 X'S
- A – TUTTI MELODY 1 X
- B – TUTTI MELODY W/PIANO AND CLARINET IMPROVISING 2 X'S
- A – TUTTI MELODY W/ CLARINET IMPROVISING 2 X'S
- B – BONES W/ SAX BACKGROUND, CONTINUE CLARINET IMPROVISING 1 X
- A – BRASS SHOUT, CONTINUE CLARINET IMPROVISING 2 X'S
- B – TROMBONES ANSWERED BY TRUMPET AND SAX 2 X'S
- A – TRUMPET SOLO WITH SAX/TROMBONE BACKGROUND 2 X'S

ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

High School Jazz Band Program

- B – CONTINUE TRUMPET SOLO WITH SAX BACKGROUND 2 X'S
- A – CLARINET SOLO W/SAX BACKGROUND 2 X'S
- A – TUTTI MELODY W/CLARINET IMPROVISING 2 X'S
- B – TUTTI MELODY WITH CLARINET/TROMBONE IMPROVISING CONTINUE TILL END

IN EXAMINING THE FORM HAVE YOUR STUDENTS TAKE NOTE OF THE FACT THAT THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE IMPROVISING AROUND THE MELODY SO THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF THE NEW ORLEANS EFFECT. FURTHER, THE SOLOISTS ARE THE NEW ORLEANS FRONTLINE INSTRUMENTS – CLARINET, TROMBONE AND TRUMPET. WE'LL TALK MORE ABOUT THIS WHEN DISCUSSING IMPROVISATION.

Ensemble

THE PARTS ON SECOND LINE ARE NOT NECESSARILY DIFFICULT. HOWEVER, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO TAKE NOTE OF THE ARTICULATION OF THE MELODIC LINES AND THE DYNAMIC PURPOSEFULNESS. IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE MELODY THAT IS FIRST PLAYED BY THE ENSEMBLE IS THE MELODY FOR THE B SECTION (LETTER C). A COMMON MISTAKE THAT I HAVE NOTICED IS THAT YOUNG BANDS OFTEN PLAY THIS MELODY TOO LOUD. THOUGH THE MARKING IS FORTE, IT IS BEING PLAYED IN UNISON; THEREFORE IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO PLAY IT SO LOUDLY. ALSO, IF PLAYED TOO LOUDLY THERE IS NO ROOM TO VARY THE ARTICULATION AND THAT IS WHERE THE INTENSITY WILL COME FROM. WHILE LISTENING TO THE RECORDING HAVE YOUR STUDENTS SING ALONG:

Daht daht, doo ___ doo dot
Da doo da doo da dee da doo dot
Deedot dah deedot dah deedla doo da doo dot
Daht, doo ___ dot

EACH SYLLABLE SHOULD REPRESENT THE SOUND THAT THE STUDENTS WANT TO CREATE. THE MORE EMPHASIS THEY CAN GIVE TO *daht* AND *dot* (OR DE-EMPHASIS ON THE OTHER SYLLABLES) THE MORE INTENSITY THEY WILL CREATE. REMIND THEM TO NEVER MISTAKE VOLUME FOR INTENSITY.

ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

High School Jazz Band Program

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF PURPOSEFULLY DIFFERENT ARTICULATION CAN BE SEEN (OR RATHER HEARD) AT LETTER H. THE RHYTHM OF THE FIRST PHRASE (THE FIRST 4 MEASURES AT LETTER H) IS ARTICULATED WITH MOSTLY SHORT NOTES WHILE THE SECOND PHRASE IS ARTICULATED WITH MOSTLY ALL LONG NOTES:

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff is for the Alto Saxophone (ALTO SAX.) and the bottom staff is for the Trombone (TROMBONE). Both are in 4/4 time. The first system is titled "PRIMARILY SHORT NOTES DENOTED WITH ACCENTS AND STACCATO MARKINGS". The Alto Saxophone part features a series of short, accented notes with staccato markings. The Trombone part has a similar rhythmic pattern but with fewer accents. The second system is titled "PRIMARILY LONG NOTES AS INDICATED BY PHRASE MARKINGS". The Alto Saxophone part features long, sustained notes with phrase markings (arcs) above them. The Trombone part features long, sustained notes with phrase markings below them.

THIS CHANGE IN ARTICULATION ALLOWS FOR A MINI-DIALOGUE WITHIN THE PHRASE. HAVE YOUR STUDENTS SING SYLLABLES THAT REFLECT THESE DIFFERENCES AND THEN RECREATE THEM ON THEIR INSTRUMENTS. OTHER DIALOGUES TO PAY ATTENTION TO ARE BETWEEN SECTIONS OF THE CHART. FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE A SECTION (LETTERS E, H, I, K, L, U, V) THE MELODY IS ALWAYS HARMONIZED WHILE ON THE B SECTION (LETTERS C, D, F, G, W TILL END) THE MELODY IS ALWAYS UNISON. IT WILL BE YOUR ENSEMBLE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN THESE SECTIONS. THIS IS WHAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO GIVE THE CHART DIRECTION. IF YOU OPEN THE CHART UP FOR IMPROVISATION AT ALL, THIS MUST BE KEPT IN MIND.

Improvisation

THERE ARE NO SOLO SECTIONS WRITTEN INTO THIS CHART NECESSARILY. THE CLOSEST SECTIONS TO SUCH A THING WOULD BE LETTERS O THROUGH R WHICH CONTAINS BOTH SECTIONS OF THE FORM AND LETTERS S AND T WHICH IS ONLY THE A SECTION OF THE FORM. THE PARTS ON THESE SECTIONS ARE BACKGROUND FIGURES; THEREFORE, OPENING THESE SECTIONS FOR SOLOS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY USING THE BACKGROUND PARTS ONLY ON CUE. HOWEVER, THERE IS MUCH TO CONSIDER REGARDING

ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

High School Jazz Band Program

IMPROVISATION EVEN WITHOUT OPENING IT UP FOR MORE SOLOS. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR STUDENT IMPROVISERS TO DIALOGUE WITH THE MELODY THROUGHOUT THE CHART. *Where* TO PLAY WILL BE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS *what* TO PLAY. NOTICE IN LETTERS C AND D WHERE THE CLARINET IMPROVISES AROUND THE ENSEMBLE PARTS:

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a jazz ensemble. The first system shows a Clarinet (Cl.) part with a solo line and a 'Fill around Ens.' instruction. The second system shows a Clarinet (Cl.) part with a solo line and a 'D' section marked with an 'Am' chord. The ensemble parts include Alto, Tenor, and Bari saxophones. The notation is in 4/4 time and features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

AS CAN BE SEEN, THE CLARINET FINDS A WAY TO PLAY IN THE HOLES BETWEEN THE ENSEMBLE'S PHRASES AND PLAYS IDEAS THAT ARE RELATED TO THE MELODY. THIS IS THE GOAL OF YOUR SOLOISTS THROUGHOUT. FURTHER, WHEN MORE THE ONE SOLOIST IS IMPROVISING AROUND THE ENSEMBLE, EACH WILL NEED TO BE AWARE OF WHAT THE OTHER IS PLAYING. IT'S LIKE HAVING A THREE-WAY CONVERSATION AND EVERYONE IS LISTENING AND REACTING TO EACH OTHER.

AS FOR OPEN SOLOS (OR THE SOLOS AT LETTERS O AND S), THE PLAYERS CAN STRETCH OUT A LITTLE MORE. THE KEY WILL BE PLAYING WITHIN THE STYLE OF THE MUSIC. THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

High School Jazz Band Program

FOR YOUR STUDENTS TO TRANSCRIBE SOME OF JAZZ MUSIC'S EARLY MASTERS. BE SURE THEY ARE CHECKING OUT PLAYERS SUCH AS SIDNEY BECHET, JOHNNY DODDS, LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND JACK TEAGARDEN AS WELL AS SWING ERA MUSICIANS LIKE ROY ELDRIDGE, BARNEY BIGARD AND TRICKY SAM NANTON. REMEMBER THE GOAL ISN'T NECESSARILY TO PLAY AS NEW ORLEANS MUSICIANS OF THAT PERIOD BUT TO LEARN FROM AND PAY HOMAGE TO THEIR SPIRIT AND LEGACY. HARMONICALLY, THE SOUND IS CENTERED MUCH ON PENTATONIC SCALES AND BLUESY SOUNDS. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO TRY TO PLAY UP AND DOWN A LOT OF SCALES OR TRY TO SPELL EVERY CHORD. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL OF THE GROWLS, BENDS AND EFFECTS THAT ALLOW FOR EMOTIONAL IMPACT.

Rhythm Section

FINALLY, THE PROPELLING FORCE BEHIND THIS CHART WILL BE THE RHYTHM SECTION. THOUGH THE ARRANGEMENT STARTS WITH A 2-FEEL, FROM LETTER C THROUGH THE END OF THE CHART THE RHYTHM SECTION PLAYS A DRIVING 4-FEEL. BE SURE THAT THE 2-FEEL STILL HAS FORWARD MOMENTUM AND THAT EVERYONE IS FEELING ALL FOUR NOTES OF THE MEASURE. DON'T LET BEATS 1 AND 3 GET TOO HEAVY OR THE FEEL CAN SEEM TO PLOD. THOUGH THERE IS NO GUITAR PART WRITTEN, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT GUITAR DOESN'T FIT. TO THE CONTRARY, THE GUITAR CAN HELP SOLIDIFY THE GROOVE BY PROVIDING A SOLID QUARTER NOTE PULSE. THIS WILL ALSO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO THE WALKING 4-FEEL MUCH EASIER.

THOUGH THE FEEL THROUGH THE END OF THE CHART IS A WALKING 4-FEEL, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE SOUND HAS TO BE STAGNANT. LITTLE THINGS SUCH AS A CROSS-STICK ON BEATS 2 AND 4 (CHOPPING WOOD), A CHANGE OF CYMBAL, TERRACED DYNAMIC MOTION, PEDAL POINTS, FULL PIANO COMPING OR SPACE WILL MAKE HUGE DIFFERENCES TO THE GROOVE AND FLOW OF THE CHART. YOU GET TO DECIDE HOW TO SHAPE THE SECTIONS OF THE CHART IN GENERAL AND SOLOS IN PARTICULAR. LET YOUR STUDENTS HAVE FUN MARCHING THE BAND UP THE STREET.

AS ALWAYS I HOPE THIS IS HELPFUL AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN NEW YORK!