Presents:
How to Select Music for Your Jazz Ensembles

This session is presented by Jazz Education Abroad (JEA). Jazz Education Abroad is a 501(c)(3) focused on reaching countries in the Middle East, South American, Asia, Africa and Europe to present jazz festivals and workshops as a way to expand exposure to jazz education and jazz music in these areas. iJazzMusic.com is JEA's non-profit music publishing company that aims to increase exposure of its composers and arrangers by increasing downloadable access to high quality charts in JEA's outreach areas and beyond.

This session is a discussion with composers/educators Dan Gailey, the Director of Jazz Studies and Professor of Music at the University of Kansas, and, Jeff Jarvis, the Director of Jazz Studies and Professor of Music at California State University Long Beach and facilitated by Tim Libby, Director of Bands at Cherry Creek High School that will provide tips and recommendations on how to select the right music for your jazz ensemble.

Discussion Questions:

1. **What would say are the key elements of a quality chart?**
   Harmony, melody, authentic groove and form.

2. **How do you find a chart that fits your ensemble?**

In 1989, Jeff took part in a "summit meeting" of jazz editors from several notable publishing companies with the intent of standardizing editorial practices and difficulty levels for jazz charts. The intention was to provide consistency for jazz educators when purchasing charts; grade 3 charts from Hal Leonard or Alfred would observe similar parameters. Subsequently, nineteen states in the U.S. adopted the criteria below for grading the difficulty of jazz charts for their state lists. Here are those parameters and they can help guide your music selection choices:

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY
CRITERIA FOR GRADING JAZZ ENSEMBLE MATERIAL (REVISED 2008)

Very Easy (Grade 1)

● Target consumer: beginning jazz ensembles (elementary and/or junior high)
● Ideal Length: due to endurance considerations, 1:30-3:00
● Minimum Required Instrumentation: essential at this level due to instability of enrollment, chart should work for as few as 3 saxes (AAT or ATB) 2 trumpets, 1 trombone and 3 rhythm, as many as 17 pieces or anything in between. Optional parts required for flute, clarinet, Horn in F, Tuba, and Vibraphone.

- Miscellaneous considerations: easy to hear diatonic or pentatonic melodies with no abrupt interval leaps, tutti orchestration - no exposed playing, no woodwind doubles, easy key signatures and time signatures (no changes during chart with regard to either), frequent use of unisons to build confidence (simple counterpoint is okay)
- Completely notated rhythm parts
- Solos: written only, w/ very easy chord changes (e.g. blues or easier)
- Rhythm parts: fully notated with chord symbols provided, drums should have suggested beat   at beginning, little or no single line notation for guitar
- Articulations: abundant
- Very simple rhythms throughout - occasional use of eighth notes
- Trumpet range: to D-Eb5, Trombone range: to D4
- Style: Basic swing, rock and simple Latin styles

Easy (Grade 2)

- Target consumer: middle school and less experienced high school groups
- Ideal Length: up to 3:30
- Minimum Required Instrumentation: essential at this level due to instability of enrollment, chart should work for as few as 3 saxes (AAT or ATB) 2 trumpets, 1 trombone and 3 rhythm, as many as 17 pieces or anything in between.
- Optional parts required for flute, clarinet, horn in F, tuba, vibes
- Miscellaneous considerations: easy to hear diatonic or pentatonicmelodies with no abrupt interval leaps, tutti orchestration - no exposed playing, no woodwind doubles, easy key   signatures and time signatures (no changes during chart with regard to either), frequent use of unisons to build confidence (simple counterpoint is okay). Rhythms can be slightly more difficult, more frequent use of eighth note figures, some syncopation
- Introduction to easier Latin styles such as bossa and samba
- Solos: suggested with chord symbols provided
- Rhythm parts: fully notated with chord symbols provided, drums should have suggested beat at beginning, little or no single line notation for guitar
- A little more sectional independence
- Trumpet range: to F5, Trombone range: to F4
- Style: Basic swing, rock and simple Latin styles No styles requiring 16thnote subdivision.

Medium Easy (Grade 3)

- Target consumer: majority of high school groups, better middle school groups
- Ideal Length: to 4:00-5:00
- Minimum Required Instrumentation: highly recommended, but full instrumentation acceptable
- Miscellaneous considerations: No woodwind doubles, minimal exposed ensemble writing, time signature changes not recommended, occasional sixteenth figures acceptable.

- Rhythm parts: fully notated with chord symbols provided, drums should have suggested beat at beginning plus ensemble hits
- Trumpet range: G-A5, Trombone range: G4
- Swing, Rock, Basic Latin (Bossa, Medium tempo Samba, no Afro-Cuban, Salsa), Funk charts acceptable provided sixteenth subdivisions are reasonable.

Medium (Grade 4)

- Target consumer: high school and some college groups
- Ideal Length: same as Medium Easy (4:00-5:00)
- Minimum Required Instrumentation: optional, but always a sales enhancement.
- Miscellaneous considerations: No woodwind doubles, accessible time signatures (easy metric shifts acceptable).
- Solos: suggested solos not required, but a sales enhancement.
- Rhythm: suggested voicings plus chord symbols recommended for piano, some single line notation for guitar w/ chord symbols provided. (Many guitarists will be unable to read notation.)
- Trumpet range: D6, Trombone range: A4
- No stylistic limitations, brighter tempos acceptable, more challenging Latin styles acceptable (Afro-Cuban, Salsa, etc.)

Medium Advanced (Grade 5)

- Target consumer: Advanced high school and most college ensembles
- Miscellaneous considerations: Chords and slashes acceptable for rhythm section and soloists
- Woodwind doubling is acceptable, but a sales deterrent.
- Trumpet range: F6, Trombone range: Bb4

Advanced (Grade 6)

- Target consumer: Elite college and professional groups
- Music can be challenging in most every aspect, requiring the highest level of proficiency, endurance and conception
- Woodwind doubling is acceptable, but a sales deterrent.
- Trumpet range: G6+, Trombone range: C5+

BRASS RANGES
Directors are aware of the capabilities of their lead players, so choose material they can handle. Avoid playing a pro level chart where some parts have to be played an octave lower.

RHYTHM SECTION PARTS (WRITTEN OUT, OR CHANGES)
Again, you know what your players can handle. Choose material accordingly. (Refer to previously mentioned grading criteria.)

ACCESSIBLE SOLO CHANGES
If you program grade level appropriate music, the solo changes should fall within accessible parameters. Writers and publishers who offer music for a variety of ability levels know the technical limitations of these categories.

INSTRUMENTATION, LENGTH
Make sure the music you select suits your band's complement of instruments. For example, programming a Latin piece when you don't have auxiliary percussionists in your band will result in a lack of authenticity.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE--WHAT WILL YOUR STUDENTS LEARN
Quality, appropriate material written especially for school groups works better than charts written for another purpose that a composer is "recycling".

3. What are some considerations for concert programming?

VARIETY OF STYLES
Stylistic diversity sustains listener interest. It also requires students to learn multiple idioms within the jazz context.

LENGTH OF CHART/CONCERT
Considerable effort should be devoted to carefully timing each chart, using the timings to determine concert length. Add extra time for announcements between selections. Publishers usually offer chart durations, but the timings do not factor in extra repeats, solo sections, etc. You can arrive at a more accurate timing by using the stopwatch app on your smartphone, or you can compute the duration mathematically as follows:
1. Count the total number of measures, adding measures for repeats, solo sections, D.C. or D.S. al CODA.
2. Multiply the total measures by the number of beats per bar.
3. Divide the number of total beats by the metronome marking.
4. You'll arrive at a number, decimal point, and more numbers. The number to the left of the decimal point is the number of minutes.
5. Multiply the numbers to the right of the decimal point by 60 to convert the number to seconds.
   120 measures x 4 = 480/132 bpm = 3.63636364

.63636364 x 60 = 38. The duration is 3 minutes and 38 seconds

<u>AUDIENCE CONSIDERATIONS--WHO ARE YOU PERFORMING FOR</u>
Avoid pandering to your audience excessive pop tunes intended to be "parent-pleasers". But don't avoid entertainment value altogether. Try to find ways to accomplish this without compromising the integrity of your program or your instruction. Imagine a concert program the way musicians and record producers treated albums where the order of tunes were carefully arranged to take the listener on a musical journey. Mix up the styles, tempos, key signatures, time signatures, and so on. If playing a park concert for senior citizens, include standard tunes they will recognize. You can still program modern arrangements that serve your goals and objectives. The audience will still like the material because it still features music they know.

Open conversation to take questions from directors