



## Jazz is Music: an Overview

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### What makes jazz different from other styles of music?

The differences present themselves in the rhythms, use of blues scales and modes to create melodies, the roll of the bass, piano, and drum set in the rhythm section, and the fact that much of the music will be improvised.

### The Main Elements of Jazz

1. a special beat called swing
  - difficult to define in words or in exact musical terms, when it is played, swing can be heard and felt. Part of the swing feel is in the way eighth notes are played. Traditional eighth notes are played as even divisions of quarter notes. In jazz, the eighth notes have a different time value. Two eighth notes still equal a quarter note, but the first one is a little longer and the second a little shorter. Syncopation also plays a part in making jazz “swing”. Phrases often begin by anticipating or delaying the downbeat by an eighth note. A melody is a series of notes. Improvised rhythms and melodies together over a swing beat is jazz. The rhythm section and the beat are of utmost importance
  - can be added to any tune
2. Improvisation
  - We all make things up as we go along as a normal part of life. Consider a conversation: you respond to what someone says rather than read from a script. Improvisation is a form of musical conversation. Once you learn the vocabulary (Prep Pages) with echos, then conversations are possible

### Why include it in your teaching?

Jazz in the string curriculum, as presented in Jazz Philharmonic is particularly effective in addressing the following National Standards (Content Standard Number):

2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
  1. Listening to, analyzing and describing music.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts and disciplines outside the arts
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

### Outline of Jazz Philharmonic and Jazz Philharmonic Second Set

- Original jazz compositions offered in a carefully constructed pedagogical order which can be self-contained performance vehicles. In general, tunes at the beginning of the book are easier than tunes at the end.
- *Absolutely no improvisation is necessary for the successful use of this book.* Development of some skill with improvisation will be a natural result of its use.
- In the violin and viola books the left page consists of a Tune and Background 1 and 2 parts. The cello book presents the Tune, Bass 2, and Background 2 parts, while the bass book begins with a Tune and Bass 1 and 2 parts. All students may participate in playing the tune.
- The right side of the book consists of the Tune, Solo 1 and Solo 2. Solo 1 is a medium level improvised version of the tune while Solo 2 is an advanced version.
- Sample jazz drum parts, chord jazz symbols, musical information and discography are included
- Preparatory Pages are designed to develop the skills necessary to perform each tune as well as to improvise and include scales and rhythm echos.
- Piano parts and scores - true jazz voicings in accessible form
- The Recording: Use the recording to teach the feel of swing. Jazz has historically been learned as an aural art form and, learning by ear is still an important element. Tune and accompaniment on right and left sides



so you can remove one or the other for practice or to use as a performance rhythm section. This allows the teacher to learn along with the student if you are new to jazz.

### Teaching Improvisation

1. Echo rhythms or melodic patterns in mass. Then individually (1/2/4 bars.)
2. Echo rhythms or melodic patterns in a conversation in mass then individually. (1/2/4 bars.)
3. Play follow the leader with rhythms or melodic patterns and then with variation parameters. (1/2/4 bars.)
4. Play 12 bar solos with each student playing 1 bar or rhythm or pitches then progress to 2 and 4 etc.
5. Half the group plays every other bar while the other half improvises rhythm or melody then (1/2/4 bars)
6. Play every other bar of tune and improvise alternate bars then progress to 2 and 4 etc.
7. Students Improvise with rhythms or melodic patterns (1/2/4 bars)

### Ideas for Improvisation

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Articulation                       | 11. Slides             |
| 2. Rhythm                             | 12. String Crossings   |
| 3. Rests/Space                        | 13. Bowings            |
| 4. Dynamics                           | 14. Interval skips     |
| 5. Slurs                              | 15. Riffs or Ositnatos |
| 6. Pitches                            | 16. Drones             |
| 7. Upper Neighbors                    | 17. Harmony            |
| 8. Lower Neighbors                    |                        |
| 9. Fill long tones (connecting notes) |                        |
| 10. Double Stops                      |                        |