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Just What Is All That Jazz?

Susan Capestro, presenter

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What types of jazz are of historical relevance?

Styles of jazz prevalent at various times throughout the 20th century:

- 1) **Traditional** – up to the 1930's, New Orleans style, Louis Armstrong, Dixieland, Scott Joplin, ragtime, boogie woogie, early stride
- 2) **Swing** – about 1935-1945, Big Bands, such as Duke Ellington, Count Basie, but this style and orchestration has been continued by many contemporary jazz artists such as McCoy Tyner and Bob Mintzer.
- 3) **Bebop** – early to mid 1940's, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, highly ornamented (like Chopin!), fast, light. Lots of tunes in "rhythm" changes.
- 4) **Cool Jazz or Modern Jazz** – the 1950's, subdued, understated, Stan Getz, Lester Young, *Take Five* by Dave Brubeck.
- 5) **Hard Bop** – late 50's, early 60's, extension of bebop with more R&B (rhythm & blues) and gospel influences, The Jazz Messengers, Max Roach, Freddie Hubbard, Charlie Mingus, Thelonius Monk, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins
- 6) **Free Jazz** - free improvisation, avante garde, Sun Ra, Anthony Braxton, Ornette Coleman, Charlie Haden 1960's, improv rooted in melodies, progressive jazz, noisy, complicated.
- 7) **Fusion** - electric instruments, rock elements, funk elements (blues subdivided into sixteenth note subdivisions) Herbie Hancock jazz / rock.

What are Other Useful Categories of Jazz?

- 1) **Latin Jazz** - Brazilian and Afro-Cuban – straight rhythm, not swung, has clave, from son clave, and lots of percussion.
- 2) **Vocal Jazz** - Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Diana Krall, etc.
- 3) **Mainstream Jazz** - today includes bebop and post-bop, coined in 50's by Stanley Dance to describe work of contemporary musicians.
- 4) **Modal Jazz** – improv based on scales instead of chords, *Kinda Blue* by Miles Davis, John Coltrane, tunes *Little Sunflower*, *Three Flowers* and *Footprints*, also Bill Evans' *Nardis*.

What are Some Elements of Jazz?

improvisation
blue notes
swing
call and response
polyrhythms
syncopation

Jazz Piano

So what's relevant for pianists and keyboard teachers?
In what context is jazz played on the piano?

Solo Piano: Jazz piano can be played by one person, of course.

Ensemble Playing: Piano can be played as part of a jazz ensemble:
Small group – duo, trio, quartet, etc.
Large group – octet, nonet, swing band, etc.

There are different ways to arrange within each of these. Generally, in ensemble playing, there is a bass player, so the pianist plays fewer roots of chords. Here are some things to use in arrangements, to bring a lead sheet or "chart" to life:

Bass lines – simple, one note, the root
simple, two note, the root plus the 5th
using chromatic approach notes to roots and 5^{ths}
other melodic bass lines based on chord outlines
especially good for bebop

Stride style – a la Joplin
generally bass note, then chord
root then chord, root then chord, repeated, or
root then chord, 5th then chord, repeated

Blues - LH patterns, various, such as 5^{ths} and 6^{ths}
boogie woogie, various ostinato patterns
good for swing and blues improv.

Ostinato LH – in Latin rhythms, good for Latin and modal

Ballad Voicings - good for any ballad style, slow

Shell Voicings – good for bebop and ballads, ensemble playing

However, any of the above can be used in any style. Be creative!

Sequence of Session Activities:

***Donkey Riding* [elementary lead sheet]**

- are there any dotted quarter and eighth note patterns? where? circle
- clap and count rhythm
- first 8 ms., will, RH shift? Which 5F Pos? put RH in pos., play&count
- play I IV I V I progression in C, RH
- any different chords in donkey riding? play in root pos. or inv.?
- bass players, play roots of chords on every half note pulse
- bass, chords, plus mel. up one octave – all play
- chord players, play chords on every 2nd and 4th pulse
- switch parts, play
- chord players, also play roots in LH and all sing

***Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy* [swing and blues]**

- are there any tied notes? trace
- clap rhythm, straight eighths
- clap rhythm, swung eighths
- play and count melody
- split group, half play 5ths and 6ths accompaniment
- switch parts
- new accomp: Root, 3rd, 5th, 6th, b7th, 6th, 5th, 3rd
- add some chord players I IV V and I, mel. up one octave
- choose a melody player to improvise

***Anthropology* [bebop and “rhythm changes”]**

- are there any ties? trace
- are there any rhythms on upbeats? clap
- clap and count rhythm
- play and count melody
- add bass players, roots of chords (use Bb on 1 and 3 of ms. 5)
- bass players play blues line from BWBugleBoy during part B
- add chord players
- choose a soloist to play arpeggios going up (shedding bop style)
- choose a soloist to play a solo
- demonstration of more elaborate bass line using half steps
- demo of more elaborate solo using chrom. & scalar approach notes

***Little Sunflower* [Latin and modal]**

- clap and count 2:3 clave, all say 1 a 2 a 3 a 4 a
- bass players, play and count (all count)
- hear clave again, add bass to clave (all count)
- clap and count rhythm of melody
- play and count melody along with bass & clave
- choose a soloist to play dorian
- choose a soloist to play d minor pentatonic/blues
- choose a soloist to play d harmonic minor

***Misty* [ballad]**

- melody players play mel., bass players play roots
- bass players add 7ths to roots
- switch parts
- bass players add 3rds to 7ths and roots
- which note of the chord is the melody note? (lots of 3rds here)
- mel. players add RH chord tones underneath mel., bass-roots only
- demo voicings

Donkey Riding, traditional work shanty, arr. by S. Capestro, from *Ready to Play!*
Whole Octave Publications

Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy, by Don Raye and Hughie Prince, from *Big Book of Swing*, Hal Leonard Corp.

Anthropology, by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, from *The New Real Book*,
Sher Music Co.

Little Sunflower, by Freddie Hubbard, from *The Real Book*.

Misty, by Erroll Garner and Johnny Burke, from *The New Real Book*, Sher Music
Co.

Note: These session materials and slideshow will be viewable to all public visitors at <http://www.wholeoctave.com>, where I'll continue to field questions and comments, until the end of August. At that time, it will be moved into our wiki's premium content section. (Use "NCKPCode," good until 9/30, to join Whole Octave at a discount.) - Susan Capestro