Art of the Big Band- Part 1

The Jazz Rhythm Section

Aaron W. Bush, Foxboro Public Schools Email: busha@foxborough.k12.ma.us

Concepts:

- 1.) The rhythm section is the most challenging to teach due to perceived lack of conceptual knowledge from the teachers embrace the study of these instruments, you can do it! i.e string bass
- 2.) The rhythm section often sounds the most exposed and 'young' due to each player being forced to improvise the majority of the time *embrace improvisation in your rehearsals!*
- 3.) The rhythm section must always be 10 steps ahead of the rest of the band in terms of tune preparation, form/style knowledge, improvisation concepts *embrace the need to rehearse them separately*

I. Blues - main vehicle for rhythm section concept, soloing strategies

- Drums swing style, feel
 - o Kit balance volume from loudest softest: ride, hi-hat, snare, bass
 - Start with quarter notes they can swing just as hard! The skip-beat derives from the jazz triplet
 - Perceive the kit as a full band multiple sounds from one instrument drummers orchestrate arrangements in accompaniment
 - To develop snare fills, use Progressive Steps to Syncopation for the Modern Drummer by Ted Reed
- Bass TIME FIRST, then harmonic reinforcement
 - Start with solid time on chord roots percussive upper hand, one/two finger strum
 - Move to playing root on beat 1, chord-tone/connecting scale tone on 2, strong chordal function on 3, preparation of 1 on beat 4 - (1, 2, 3, 5 works well)
 - O Avoid notes ½ step above guide tone, tritone of guide tone
 - Force bass players to use the 'skip-beat' eighth-note walking technique to develop the concept of swing

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- Piano see attached voicings/comping rhythms
 - o Know chord, voice-lead, create voicings
 - Tensions enhancement of harmonic structure keep tensions above chord tones!
 - Avoid piano & guitar comping at same time alternate choruses

- o While substituting:
 - = 5 = 13, b13, 11, #11
 - \blacksquare Root = 9, b9, #9

Guitar

- o Freddie Green Style
- Early comping had fuller chords (3 or 4 note voicings) due to smaller groups -Kansas City Six. With larger big bands, there's more voices to compete with, and he honed his style into giving the band what they needed - music in 20s-50s was all dance music! Dancers shift weight on beats 1 and 3
- o 1 or 2 notes tenor harmony line against bass line
- Hollow body arch-top guitars have most tension on 3rd and 4th string 1 or 2 note voicings on 4th string preferably
- If bass gives roots or 5ths, we need to play 3rds/6ths/7ths on 4th string to compliment
- o Add lower chromatic neighbor chords occasionally on beat 2 or 4
- Multiple styles of the blues progression of harmonic function
- As mastery evolves, have students transpose into different keys by ear
- All instruments in the rhythm section solo!

II. II/V/I - most common chord form in popular music

- By learning this common chord progression, you're providing harmonic material for the majority of charts
- Learn in all 12 keys major first, then minor
- Vary styles swing, shuffle, Brazilian samba, Afro-Cuban mambo, jazz waltz, New Orleans street beat, 2-feel, brushes, etc.
- All rhythm section members solo over the 4 bar progression
- Solo improvisation material minor pentatonic rows
- See attached voicing & bass line suggestions
- For minor Dm7b5/G7b9b13(alt)/Cm6/9 (in minor 2, include root/flat 5)

III. Learn Tunes - take them from accompanists to SOLOISTS

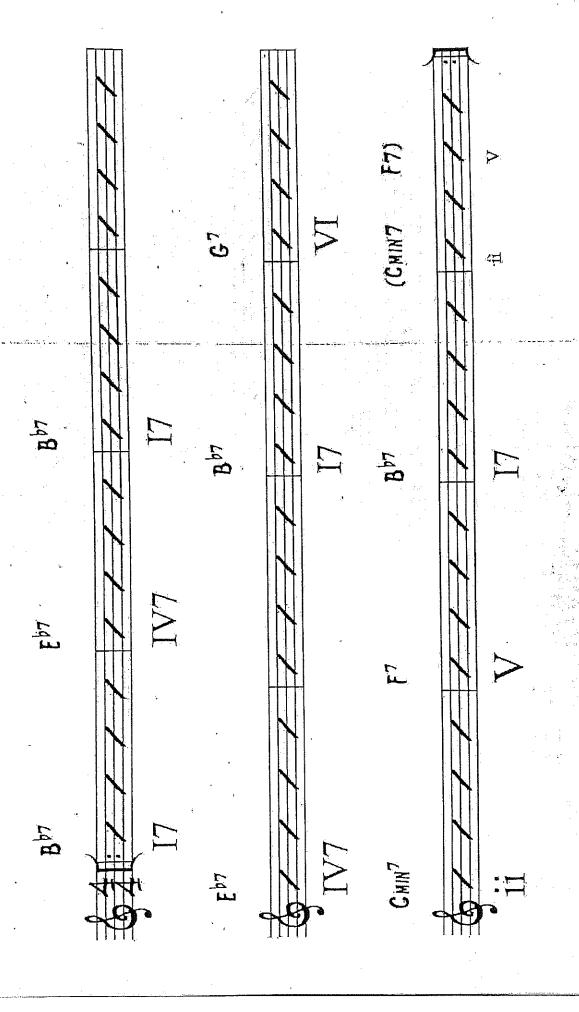
- Teach your rhythm section standards start with simple forms and develop
- All members learn head by ear and develop their own arrangement (intro/head/soloing/backgrounds/trading/harmony/vamp)
- ALL MEMBERS improvise over changes!
- Ex. Solar, There is No Greater Love, All the Things You Are, Green Dolphin Street

Progressive Steps to Syncopation for the Modern Drummer Ted Rec JAZZ Rhythms

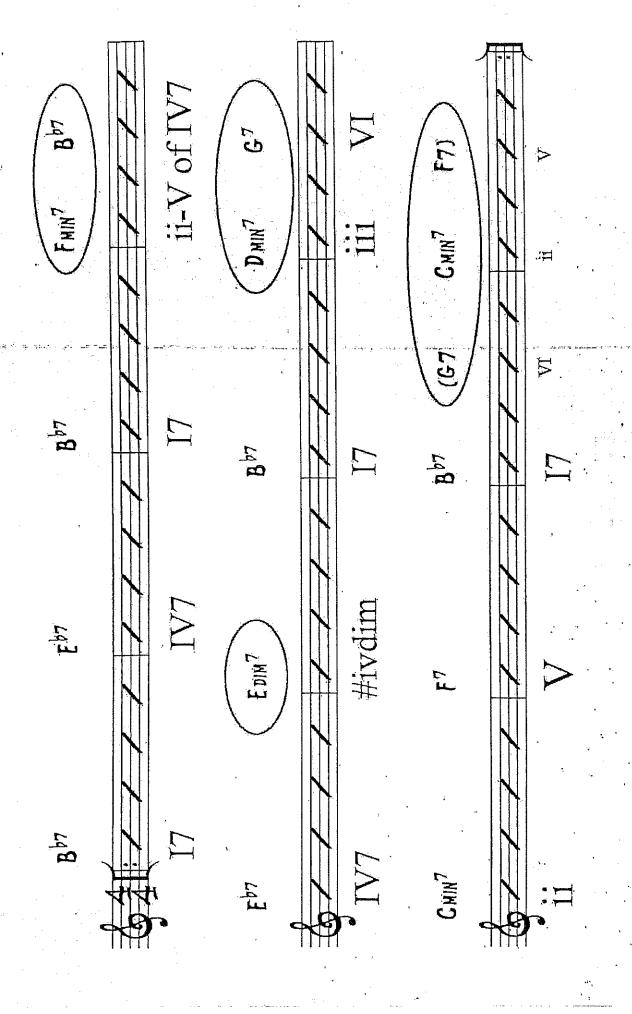
Basic Blues

			(F7)		
E b7		B b7	Eb7 Bb7	IV7 IV1	e for
B b7	T7 (1)	E b7	IV7	A A	×

Basic with Alteration



Common Additions



Bird Blues

GMIN7 BP7	Vi ii-V of IV7	DAIN? G7	Sycling chromatic ii-V's to the ii	B MAJ (G7 CMIN F7)	
(B) MALIT D7	J. V. of vi	(Eb7) EbMIN7 Ab7	IV7 Cycling chr	CMIN7	

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