

***More Than The Blues***  
***Insights Into The Jazz Ensemble Score Preparation & Editing Process***

**Michael Parkinson - Ohio University School of Music © 2012**

**Selecting jazz ensemble literature:**

- Who are the writers or artists whose works and compositional style appeal to you?
- A work's origin: an original or arrangement of a jazz tune, rock/funk piece, show tune, standard, folk piece.
- Why are you interested in performing this particular piece?
- What immediately strikes you as the strengths and weaknesses of the arrangement?
- How will it balance stylistically and technically with other works under consideration?
- How familiar are you with other works by this composer, arranger or artist?
- Are high quality recordings [of this piece] available by this composer, arranger or artist?
- How familiar are you with other works from this publisher?
- How familiar are you with other works in this particular style?
- How much time do you have to rehearse the ensemble when planning for a performance?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your band in meeting the requirements of the piece?
- How difficult will it be for "one line players" to grasp what you see from a full score?
- What is your sonic concept of the big band: a multi-colored prism that becomes focused by your ability to help the performers get the music of the page.

**Arranging techniques found in many big band works:**

- Introduction: full or building ensemble or rhythm section leading to ensemble.
- 4-way/5 way/7<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> chord voicing, polytonality, multiple extensions, polychords, quartal scoring.
- Interlocked voices, octave doubling in trumpets/trombones and lower saxophones.
- Melodic dominance by saxophones; "rhythmic" dominance by brass [punch figures].
- Tutti passages – how many and for how long?
- Ensemble "send-off" figures for soloists with backgrounds by the opposite horn section.
- Form variance: vamps, backgrounds, interludes, modulations, and solo breaks for variety.
- Baritone saxophone as a member of saxophone and trombone sections.
- Counterpoint: small band/combo, unison melodic lines in sections or cross-sections in call and response figures or in simple harmony, for send off figures or set ups to full ensemble passages.
- Call and response via sax solis, brass solis, band-drum interludes, and so forth.
- Improvisation: "favored instruments," full form, partial form, open vamp/form for multiple solos, simplified harmony.
- Reflection of the jazz vernacular – the vocal basis of the music.
- The "shout chorus" returning to the theme via a DS to a Coda or through composed to an ending.
- Where is the GOLDEN MEAN or is there one in the piece?
- Unaccompanied sections – effective in counterpoint and call-response sections.
- The ending: fermata, a riff figure, an abrupt surprise, full or part of the ensemble last chord, unison, wide-mid-low range, dynamic and rhythmic impact and attitude, "closing the door" by the drummer....

**"WHAT DO YOU WANT IT DO SOUND LIKE?" - what makes JAZZ sound authentic in the following eras?**

- 20s-30s New Orleans & Chicago styles "Dixieland", and blues
- 30s-40s Swing – New York, Kansas City, and "Tin Pan Alley"
- 40s-50s Bebop, cool, "West Coast"
- 50s-60s Hardbop, funky, or gospel influenced jazz
- 60s-70s Modal & avant garde styles
- 70s-present – the ECM sound, the European musical aesthetic
- 50s present – "Latin" and "world music" styles [especially since 1980s]
- 60s present – a wide variety of pop or rock styles.
- 60s-70s – the re-emergence of large jazz ensembles and the publishing of professional works
- 80s-90s – the "young lion" movement of "post-bop," revisiting established traditions of the 1950s and 1960s.
- The importance of the blues, gospel, and African vocal traditions throughout the history of the music.

**What are the defining stylistic and technical differences of these bands or composers – or your favorites:** Toshiko Akiyoshi, Count Basie, Bob Brookmeyer, Benny Carter, Bob Curnow, Duke Ellington, Gil Evans, Maynard Ferguson, Matt Harris, Woody Herman, Bill Holman, Thad Jones, Stan Kenton, John LaBarbera, Rob McConnell, Jim McNeely, Charles Mingus, Bob Mintzer, Sammy Nestico, Oliver Nelson, Lennie Niehaus, Buddy Rich, Kim Richmond, Maria Schneider, Rick Stitzel, Fred Sturm, Mark Taylor, Mike Tomaro, and Bob Washut.

**What makes these artists – or your favorite artists – distinctive:** Louis Armstrong, Bob Brookmeyer, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Jack DeJohnette, Dave Douglas, Bill Evans, Ella Fitzgerald, Herbie Hancock, Johnny Hodges, Billie Holiday, Dave Holland, Keith Jarrett, J. J. Johnson, Charles Lloyd, Pat Metheny, Lee Morgan, Thelonious Monk, Wes Montgomery, Mark Murphy, Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, Wayne Shorter, Tomasz Stanko, McCoy Tyner, Sarah Vaughan, Kenny Wheeler, Joe Williams, Lester Young, and Joe Zawinul.

### **How do you teach this information to your students?**

[: LISTENING, LEARNING, APPLICATION, MASTERY :] through internet links from musician home pages, *Jazz Times*, *Downbeat*, YouTube, Wikipedia, All About Jazz, Grooveshark, NAXOS, Rhapsody and Spotify, as well as books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, and so forth.

### **Why edit jazz ensemble music?**

- Clarification of the composer or arranger's intentions and comparisons to significant recordings.
- Provide training in the unwritten rules of jazz interpretation and big band performance techniques.
- Enhance solo improvisation by possibly adding additional space or correcting harmonic errors in the chord progression provided by the arranger.
- Improve the rhythm section parts, especially the drums (score study, score study, score study).
- Address range extremes, breathing, melodic phrasing, articulation, dynamics, and long note releases.
- Help the music to rhythmically flow effortlessly off the page.
- Enhance the work's historical and stylistic significance.
- Eliminate needless repetitions such as lengthy repeated sections, da capo, or del segno that may detract from a work's quality or sonic impact.
- Consider the performing space's impact upon shaping the work's sound.
- Place a work within the reach of your ensemble without distorting the composer or arranger's intentions.
- Make a work more accessible and attractive to the listening audience

### **How did I get started editing jazz ensemble music?**

**Bill Scarlett:** my first real jazz band director at the University of Tennessee, believed in the "living" concept of jazz. The performers must respect the composer/arranger, but bring valid personal interpretations to the piece. Bill believed that, regardless of the era in which a work was conceived, the performer must not live in the "*style museum*." By verbal explanation and sonic example (saxophone), Bill worked extensively on dynamics, breathing, articulation, rhythm, balance, the focus point of sound, and stylistic accuracy to "get the music off the page." If something in the arrangement (*it was rare to have a score*) did not work, Bill FIXED it. Hence the ensemble developed a consistent personality with high-quality technical and sonic production, and accurate style in each piece we performed. Bill used the oral and aural traditions with highly descriptive language of how a phrase or rhythm was to be played. We often sang our parts on scat syllables to gain the VERNACULAR of the music.

**Eric Leinsdorf – "Cadenza."** In his autobiography, Mr. Leinsdorf discussed the necessity of personally preparing scores and parts. This was especially important when he began traveling as a guest conductor with limited rehearsal time to prepare works for performance. In the 1970s I began purchasing full sets of jazz ensemble works and the scores for many jazz band, concert band, chamber music, and wind ensemble works as well. I became a scrounger at finding great music at low prices in dusty bins, which helped build a collection of music that has saved me many times. I purchase several works each year and I have friends who often send to me a new work they have written.

**Elizabeth Green – "The Modern Conductor."** Professor Green discusses preparation and editing of the classical score. I found many of her comments to be valid in preparing the jazz ensemble score.

**Donald Hunsberger – articles in "The Instrumentalist," 1980 & 1981,** on score and part preparation. Dr. Hunsberger devised a check system of analysis, which I adopted to jazz ensemble scores.

**Claude T. Smith – "What do you want the music to sound like"?**

**The Jazz Vernacular -** Thanks to my older brother, Larry, who was a fine trumpet player and an ear improviser, and the jazz records he brought home from college, I became aware of the sounds associated with jazz that do not appear in other music: vibrato for color and rhythm, the vocal quality of the music, the blues and flexible pitch, rhythmic vitality, improvisation, and the personal interpretation of a work by the performer.

### **Questions & answers regarding editing:**

**Question:** How much or how little editing should be done to a piece of music?

**Answer:** "What do you want it to sound like" - making sure the edits make the piece more believable or authentic.

**Question:** When do you do the editing?

**Answer:** I edit the scores and parts BEFORE they are handed out whenever possible – OR I provide the students with a list of changes to be made. The investment of MY time saves a tremendous amount of THEIR time (and my frustration) in rehearsing and preparing the music.

**Question:** When does “editing” become “arranging”?

**Answer:** When the enhancements to the work are overtaken by distortion of the composer/arranger’s intent.

**Question:** What will the work sound like in the performance space?

**Answer:** This is a major reason for editing articulations, dynamics, phrasing, tempo, long note durations, breathing issues, and range.

**Inadequacies of jazz ensemble scores:** In the 1960s-70s, many jazz band scores were of the one-line condensed style. I had to study the parts to get an accurate idea of how the music would sound by transferring more information to my “score.” If there was no score, I used an “edited” lead alto saxophone or lead trumpet part, or I created my own score from the lead alto, trumpet, trombone, and piano part.

**Problems in the “as played-as recorded by” editions:** Information regarding style, tempo, solo form, dynamics, articulations, and phrasing was often inadequate or omitted from published versions of famous works, especially when arranged in “easier editions.” Drum parts were often (and often still are) the worst.

### **Key points in editing, in other words – what am I going to have to “fix”:**

- Addressing the degree of difficulty for the ensemble **and** the soloists: style, era, idiomatic scoring procedures for all sections, rhythmic complexity, tempo, form and harmonic scheme: uniformity or variance in demands.
- Rhythmic style, tempo, and either a number or lettering system accurately placed on all parts.
- Does the score agree with the parts and vice versa?
- The basic layout of the arrangement: do the various “parts” add up to a worthwhile “whole?”
- Instrumentation: 5/4/4/4 or a variance on this – are all parts essential?
- The work’s duration is/is not indicated on the score or is not accurate.
- Balanced percentages of scoring for the ensemble and space for the soloists.
- Saxophones: use of doubles such as soprano sax, flute, clarinet, or bass clarinet.
- Baritone saxophone: used with the saxophone section, as a substitute bass trombone or both.
- Trumpets: use of mutes and/or flugel horns – are they an additive or a deterrent?
- Trombones: use of mutes and requirement of a bass trombone depending on range.
- Timing: do the woodwinds and brass have adequate time to change instruments or use mutes (in or out)?
- Range considerations for saxophones, trumpets, and trombones (total range).
- “Face time:” breathing issues and rests for the saxophone and brass sections.
- Rhythm section: acoustic or electric based sound, use of auxiliary percussion or vibraphone.
- Piano/Guitar/Bass parts: sophisticated scoring with dynamics, or simplistic chord based writing.
- Drum part: cues for set up, play through, seal off, kicks, dynamics, fills. **GIVE THE DRUMMER A SCORE AND GO THROUGH IT TOGETHER!**
- Tonality, harmony and form: one key center, modulations, substitute/extended harmony, song form/blues form, modal, ii-V function, and so forth.
- Clearly indicated: D.S., D.C., endings, Coda, key changes, articulation devices (note lengths, accent patterns, legato/staccato, dynamics (crescendo, decrescendo, timing), releases (the long note rule).
- Problems on the parts with page turns – especially problematic on D.C. or D.S. to Coda. [red pencil]
- Importance of the jazz vernacular in providing a stylistic understanding for accurate rhythmic and melodic execution? **EXPECT INTERPRETATION.**
- Syncopation – the rhythmic lifeblood in call and response rhythms, themes, riffs, and background figures – dating from Henderson & Basie in the 1930s.
- Syncopation breathing concerns – reacting **IN TIME** – breathing for the entrance/not at the note.
- **DYNAMICS:** Volume is the enemy, intensity is the friend, and dynamic variety is the spice of life.
- [: Long note leads to short note; short note leads to long note :]
- “Long Notes” – the Four **D** Syndrome: **Duration** – long notes played as events in time; **Dynamic** – static, active, passive, which direction.; **Direction** – always forward in TIME, and **Deliberate** – the repetition factor, doing it right and enjoying it!
- Finding the **RIGHT** tempo for your band with a metronome for the piece regardless of what the score does or does not indicate – many scores still do not have actual tempo indications.
- Articulations: tempo & style determine how short a note is to be played in an ensemble passage.
- Articulation & phrasing indications: has the composer helped the music to move **horizontally** in time and **vertically** in balance.
- Tutti passages: All of the wind/brass as extensions of the lead trumpet, in loud, soft, slow, fast, full harmony or unison sections.
- **Where’s the melody?** Melodic interpretation is directly related to rhythmic agility, stylistic understanding, volume control, vocal/vernacular concepts, and long note concepts.

## Examples of Score Editing:

- ***This & That*** – Maria Schneider, published by Kendor Music, Grade 2+, permanently out of print
  - Permission to copy score granted by the composer for this presentation.
- ***Matt's Mexican Special*** – Kris Berg, published by Doug Beach, Grade 3, permanently out of print
  - Permission to copy score granted by the composer for this presentation.
- ***Fables of Faubus*** – Charles Mingus, arr. Sy Johnson, Grade 4, Hal Leonard
  - Work is in print, scores and parts are available for purchase. Summation of information for the ensemble:

Sy Johnson was a long-time collaborator with Mingus, but some of his concepts do not work. In no recording of “Fables” does the solo form go into the “Latin” section – which in the original [“Mingus Ah Um”] is a “society” 2 beat. Hence, the solo form is from m. 84 – 121. The solo form can start with the “2 beat” feel like the theme and go to 4/4 or stay in 4/4 the whole time. As these are not easy changes, it might be a good idea for alto and trumpet or guitar to trade sections – Mingus liked for soloists to “talk” to each other! I have indicated a bass solo from 121 – 136 with D.S. at 137. There is no need to go further. I hope that you can secure the Mingus play-a-long published by Hal Leonard – “Faubus” is in there with the same changes and the correct solo form. The D.S. can go to m. 9 or m. 28 – it’s your call. Note that I’ve added some features on the D.S. from m. 46 – 57 – messing with alto 1, trumpet 3, trombones, and guitar – to make it sound more like Mingus.

Published-Authorized Sheet Music:

*Charles Mingus – More Than A Play-Along*, Hal Leonard, 1999 (available in C, Bb and Eb editions)

*Charles Mingus – More Than A Fake Book*, Hal Leonard, 1991 (fifty-five works by Mingus with commentary, photos, etc.)

Here are the recordings that I know of, each very different from each other:

- “Mingus Ah Um” [this is the original featuring Booker Ervin, tenor sax, Jimmy Knepper, trombone, John Handy, tenor sax, Horace Parlan, piano & Dannie Richmond, drums]- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1q9TISo1aw>
- “Charles Mingus presents Charles Mingus” [with Eric Dolphy, ww, Ted Curson, trumpet & Dannie Richmond, drums] - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtwxJJkMUF8>
- “Charles Mingus with Eric Dolphy, Cornell 1964” – this is very adventuresome, rather long, but also very interesting. [Dolphy, bass clarinet, Clifford Jordan, tenor sax, Johnny Coles, trumpet, Jaki Byard, piano and Dannie Richmond, drums. <http://grooveshark.com#!/s/Fables+Of+Faubus/3lw9n6?src=5>
- “Charles Mingus in Europe [1964]” - <http://grooveshark.com#!/s/Fables+Of+Faubus/3RPsYz?src=5> - basically same band without Johnny Coles.
- “Gunslinging Birds – Mingus Big Band from 80s or 90s – this is the “advanced” Johnson’s arrangement and shows how loose things can get! <http://grooveshark.com#!/s/Fables+Of+Faubus/3DMUId?src=5>

Some background information:

- <http://mingusmingusmingus.com/>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fables\\_of\\_Faubus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fables_of_Faubus)
- <http://www.jazzwax.com/2009/05/charles-mingus-fables-of-faubus.html>

Edits that I made to the score/parts reflecting my desire to come closer to 1959 Mingus “Ah Um” original recording and to address numerous issues I felt detracted from the ensemble’s delivery of a strong performance:

- Tempo – changed from 120 to 128+
- Lowered dynamic ranges throughout the piece, from piano to a maximum of fortissimo, not forte-fortissimo as indicated in the score/parts.
- Addressed numerous long note articulations/crescendos and releases.
- Addressed comping issues on solo form in guitar and piano.
- Added phrase markings and style indicators on all parts.
- Added breath marks via releases of long notes [whole note becoming dotted half note, adding quarter rest], especially in trombones.
- Increased the role of the drums as ensemble leader and for style color.
- Deleted “ah” singing, returned to playing lines on instruments – a nonsensical arranging choice.
- Shortened arranger’s solo form to the original due to degree of difficulty of confronting THAT information.
- Cut around fifty measures from the arrangement.
- Suggested an alternate D.S. to eliminate some repetition.
- Changed the final tutti rhythm to match the original Mingus ending.

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