

Reading Jazz

Audio Tracking Sheet

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PREFACE

How This Text Can Help You

Throughout the country, thousands of music educators spend untold hours teaching jazz ensemble music by rote as, with few exceptions, students entering their bands have only had traditional, classically oriented training. Few are able to read written jazz music accurately, no less interpret the parts using idiomatic articulations.

This was also my situation, even though the members of the jazz ensemble were the best musicians in the school at which I taught. It was difficult to find time in an already overcrowded schedule to teach reading and interpretation of written jazz music. This self-study text and tape was developed in answer to this problem. I say self-study as most of the students using it were able to work through the duets by themselves with little or no help on my part. Indeed, the play-along format made learning to play in a jazz style easy and enjoyable. Completion of this text is now a prerequisite to membership in the jazz ensemble and excerpts from the duets are used for auditions. The result is that, from the first rehearsal, students are not only reading music, but working toward making it “swing.”

Although designed for scholastic use, the text may be of assistance to classical musicians who find themselves called upon to perform works in the jazz idiom, and music educators with little or no jazz experience who wish to conduct jazz ensembles or works in a jazz style.

Why Jazz Music Is Difficult to Read

Traditionally trained musicians encounter difficulty in reading jazz for three reasons. First, the rhythm patterns, although written in four quarter time with an even subdivision of the beat, are usually performed with an uneven subdivision of the beat. Secondly, performance of these rhythm patterns is complicated by an inconsistency in their notation by jazz arrangers and composers. One pattern may be written in several different ways, all of which are to be performed in an identical manner. Lastly, the phrasing and articulation are often poorly notated, if notated at all, the arranger assuming the performer will interpret the music with characteristic phrasing and articulation. It is to these three problems that this text is addressed.

How the Text Was Written

The rhythm patterns selected for use in this text were drawn from over four hundred pages of written jazz music currently in print. Any rhythm pattern that appeared three or more times was included in the book. These rhythm patterns were sorted into fourteen categories with one category (syncopated quarter notes) having thirteen subdivisions. The rhythm patterns are presented in the text in order of increasing complexity.

Prior to writing the duets, five intermediate method books were analyzed with regard to range, key signatures, note and rest values used, etc. This survey was used as a guide in limiting the technical difficulty of the duets.

There is a considerable range in the number of articulation marks supplied in the parts, from preliminary exercises in which every note is marked to duets in which there are few (if any) markings. This was done to simulate the wide variety in the amount of articulative markings to be found in the music students will play.

Final revisions were made after two years of use with students from two different school systems. The duets were rated by four prominent jazz educators representing middle school through collegiate levels in categories developed by the National Association of Jazz Educators. The consensus of these ratings was (1) grade of difficulty (rated I-VII): III/IV, or medium difficulty, and (2) musical rating (rated A-F): A minus, or excellent. It was also noted that articulations used conformed to the Standardization of Stage Bands Articulations recommended by NAJE.

INTRODUCTION

This text is designed to help you read written jazz rhythm patterns accurately using idiomatic articulations. The most commonly used jazz rhythm patterns are presented, one at a time, in order of increasing complexity in a series of duets. Each duet is preceded by an introductory section to guide you in your initial approach to the rhythm patterns. This introduction is divided into five parts: Heading, Written, Played, Preliminary Exercises, and Review.

Heading. The rhythm patterns presented in each duet is stated in the heading. Careful reading of the heading will help you understand the arrangement of the notes that form each pattern.

Written. Directly below the heading, the musical notation (and any alternate notations) of the rhythm pattern is shown, with reference to a particular measure in the duet where that rhythm pattern may be found. Compare the various alternate notations, one to another, to understand how notes of different duration are used in conjunction with rests and ties to write the same rhythm pattern in different ways. Also, compare the notation of particular measures in the duet to which you are referred. These comparisons will help you develop an understanding of the manner in which the various alternate notations are used.

Played. This section explains the articulation of the rhythm patterns with regard to (1) the duration of the notes that comprise the pattern, (2) the manner in which the notes are to be attacked and/or released, and (3) the accentuation of any particular tones within the pattern.

Preliminary Exercises. These exercises provide an initial approach to playing the patterns. A short heading is often included as an aid to your understanding the design or purpose of the exercise.

Cue notes above the staff are used in two ways: (1) to illustrate the uneven division of the beat (these are written on a one-line staff), or (2) as an aid to understanding the alternate notations of the pattern (these are written under a bracket). Phonetics representing the sound of the articulations are included below the staff so that you can “chant” each exercise, using “dah’s” and “daht’s.”

Make a preliminary study of each exercise to make certain you understand the purpose of the exercise (check the heading) and the way in which the patterns are notated (check the cue notes above the staff). Each exercise should be practiced in three ways. First, listen to the recording while following the music. Second, “chant” the exercise, using phonetics. Tap your toe to the beat while chanting. Careful attention to the articulations with regard to emphasis and inflection will help you get the “feeling” of each figure. **DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU REPEAT THIS STEP UNTIL YOU HAVE THE PATTERN “SKIPPING” ALONG — REALLY SWINGING.** Lastly, play the pattern on your instrument. Again, repeat this step, matching your articulation to that on the recording, until you have the figures “swinging.”

Review. This section is used to alert you to the second and third appearance of a rhythm pattern in the duets. Reference is made to a particular measure where the pattern may be found, and the duet in which the pattern first appeared.

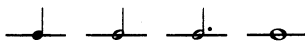
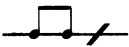

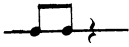


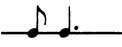
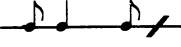

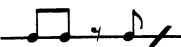
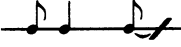
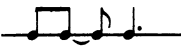

Studying the Duets. Approach the duets in the same manner as the preliminary exercises. First, analyze the rhythm patterns while listening to the recording. Second, practice chanting the phonetics while tapping your toe and fingering the notes you are chanting on your instrument. Concentrate on the articulation. Again, this second step is most important. **REPEAT THIS STEP UNTIL THE FINGERING MOVES EFFORTLESSLY AND THE CHANTING “SWINGS.”** Lastly, play the duet on your instrument, matching the articulation to that on the recording.

Practice Both Parts. Part I is on the left channel and Part II is on the right channel; the rhythm section is on both channels. After you have Part I really “swinging,” turn off the left channel and play Part I by yourself with Part II and the rhythm section on the right channel. Practice Part II in a similar manner, turning off the right channel and playing with Part I and the rhythm section after the figures are “swinging.”

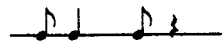
The Table of Contents forms an index of the first three appearances of a particular rhythm pattern in the duets, and may be used as a guide to work on a particular pattern you feel needs practice.

Class Applications. The duets may be used for class instruction as the various parts — C treble clef, Bb, Eb, and bass clef — may be played together.

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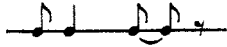
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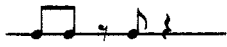
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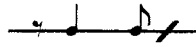


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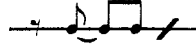


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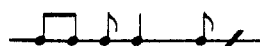
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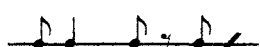
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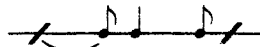


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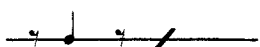


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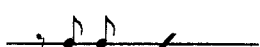


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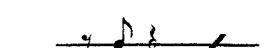
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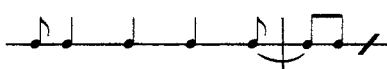
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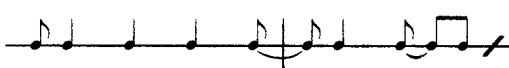
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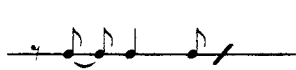
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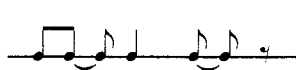


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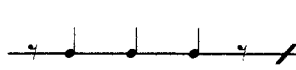
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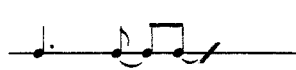
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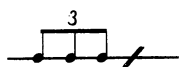
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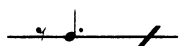
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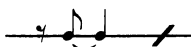


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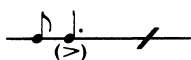
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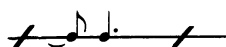
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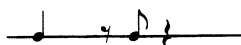


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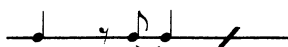


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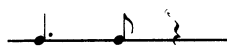
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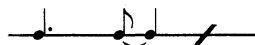
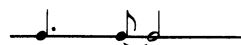
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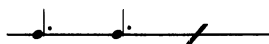
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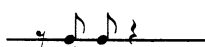
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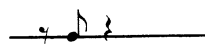
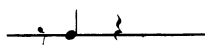
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Duet 29, p. 73; m. 14 - 15.



Duet 29, p. 73; m. 21.

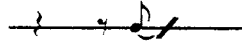
28 Individual Eighth Note Anticipations 70



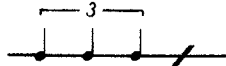
Duet 29, p. 73; m. 20.



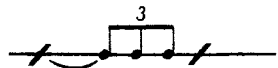
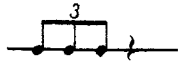
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FIRST TIME

MODERATE SWING TEMPO, MYSTERIOSO

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff (I) contains notes and rests with lyrics: 1 *mp* DAH, 2 DAH, 3 DAH DAH, 4. A box labeled "CUTOFF AT START OF FOURTH BEAT" is positioned above measure 4. The second staff (II) contains notes and rests with a dynamic marking of *mp*.

TO NEXT STRAIN | FINE ENDING

Musical notation for measures 5-9. The first staff (I) contains notes and rests with lyrics: 5, 6, 7, 8 CUTOFF!, 9. A box labeled "CUTOFF!" is positioned above measure 8. The second staff (II) contains notes and rests.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The first staff (I) contains notes and rests with lyrics: 10 *mf* DAHT DAHT, 11 DAHT DAHT, 12 DAH DAHT, 13 DAH DAHT DAHT. The second staff (II) contains notes and rests with a dynamic marking of *mf*.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The first staff (I) contains notes and rests. The second staff (II) contains notes and rests.

D.C. AL FINÉ

