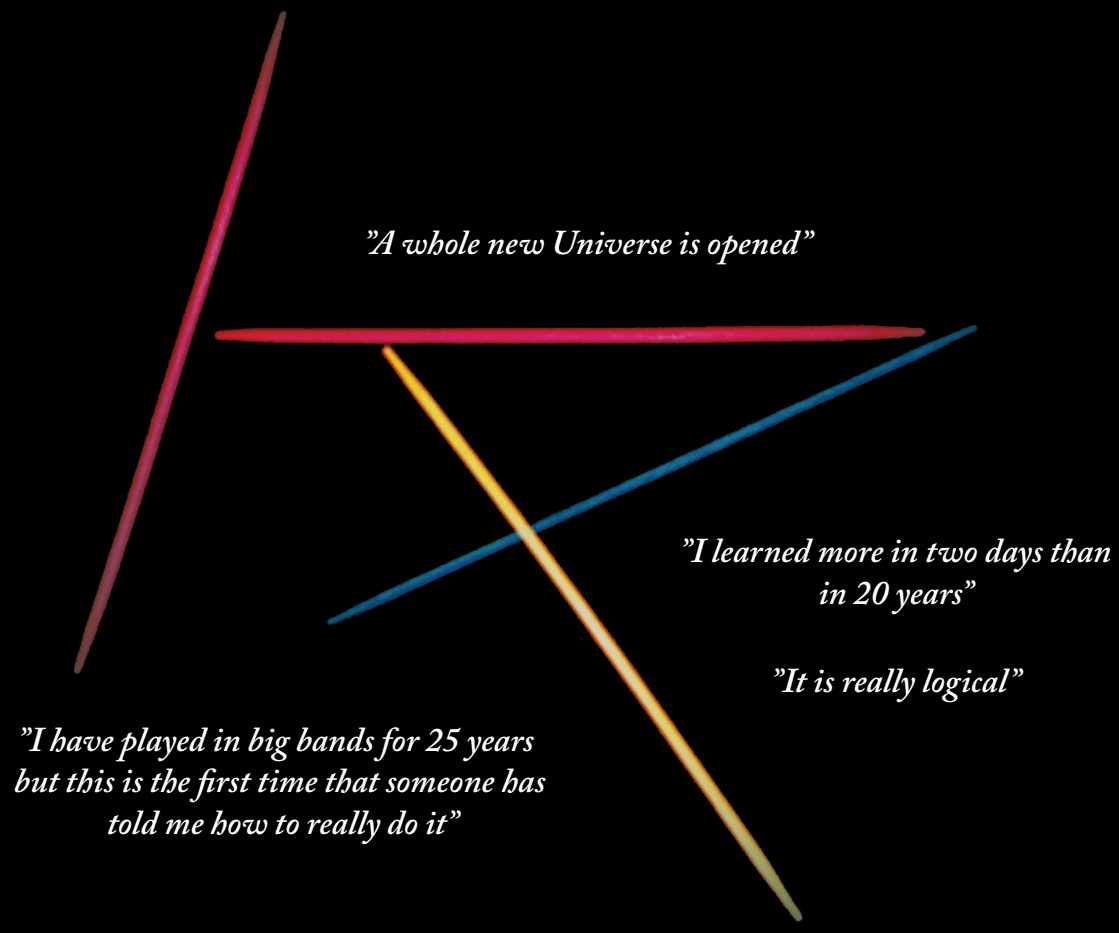
Mats Holmquist

The General Method

A New Methodology for a Tighter Big Band



Who's in charge of Timing? Which notes are most important?
What is an "Inverted Accent"? What is the best way to improve your band?

Jamey Aebersold Jazz®

Mats Holmquist

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A New Methodology for a Tighter Big Band

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First Edition.

To Beatrice

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To my translators, Jennie Larsson and Faima Ronakali.
To my wife, my father and my children for support.
And to KULTURAMA, where I could try all my ideas.

TIPS FOR THE JAZZ SOLOIST

by Jamey Aebersold

1. KEEP YOUR PLACE. Don't get lost. If you do get lost LISTEN to the rhythm section. The drummer will often give a little crash at the beginning of new sections. If you hit a note that is not what you intended, move it up or down a half-step and you'll probably be back in the scale (or chord). Remember, jazz music usually moves in two, four and eight bar phrases. You're never far from a new phrase beginning.

2. PLAY RIGHT NOTES. This really means play the notes you hear in your head ... the notes you would sing with your mouth. Having the scales and chords in front of you on a piece of paper is merely a guide. They don't provide the actual music that's going to be played. THAT comes from YOUR imagination. If you've got the scales, chords, and chord/scale progression MEMORIZED it provides courage to your imagination and allows you to operate from a more creative natural basis. It allows you to take some chances. It helps remove FEAR.

3. Using **REPETITION** and **SEQUENCE** is natural in music. It's found in all types and styles of music. The novice improvisor often feels that if they repeat an idea, everyone knows they are going to repeat it, so why do it; plus it's not original enough for your EGO so you don't play it. WRONG! The listener needs to hear some repetition and sequence or else they can't remember anything you play. Repetition and sequence are the glue that holds solos together. The usual number of times something is repeated depends on you but the average is 2 or 3 and then your mind will tell you when to repeat and/or when to use sequence. It's a part of the way we hear music played by others.

4. CHORD TONES (the 1, 3, 5, & 7 of a scale) are great notes to begin and end a phrase with. Just sing a phrase and see if you don't follow this simple rule. Our ears HEAR chord tones first so it's natural to begin and end there. Plus, it gives us and the listener what we're listening for - ***harmonic stability.***

5. SOUND. Be sure that you are getting a good, full sound on your instrument (or voice). Don't let the scales and chords or the progression or tempo intimidate you. Sound is foremost and is the FIRST thing a person latches onto when you sing or play. It leaves a lasting impression. So, be yourself and let your voice or instrument ring out. It's the main ingredient of your musical personality.

6. LISTENING. There's no way anyone is going to play jazz or improvise well without **listening** to those musicians who have come before. Through listening alone you can find ALL the answers. Each musician is a result of what they have listened to. It's easy to determine who people have listened to by listening to them play. We all tend to use imitation and it's good to do this. Some feel that if they listen to others they'll just sound like them. This is not true but your ego will try to convince you it's true. The ego hates competition or what it perceives to be competition. Don't let it fool you. If no one listened to anyone else, why play music? Music is for everyone and truly is a universal language.

7. Everyone has the ability to improvise. From the youngest child to the senior citizen. You have to have desire and set aside time to work at it until moving your fingers becomes automatic and the distance between your mind and fingers grows smaller and smaller to where you think an idea and your fingers are already playing it. It's not magic. If it is, then magic equals hard work and perseverance. When asked, "What is the greatest obstacle to enlightenment?" The Buddha replied, "Laziness." ***I agree!***

Contents

Mats Holmquist (b. 1960)

Mats Holmquist is a composer/arranger, big band leader of Swedish origin currently working as artistic director of JZ All Star Big Band, Shanghai (generally regarded as China's leading big band). He studied six years at the Royal College of Music, Stockholm and two years at University of North Texas receiving Master of Music/Composition degrees, from both these institutions. As a leader he has composed and arranged music for four albums of his own: three albums with his professional big band "Mats Holmquist Stora Stygga – Big Bad Band " and one with his own quintet, vocals and string quartet. He has performed with his own groups at international jazz festivals like Montreux, The Hague, San Sebastian, Pori, Aarhus, Oslo, Stockholm, Riga, Shanghai and many more. Three new CDs are planned; 1. "A (minimalist) Tribute to Wayne Shorter" 2. "Big Band Minimalism", the origin of Mats' own minimalist style and 3. "To Herbie", a Tribute to Herbie Hancock (also in his minimalist style).

His band is the only Swedish big band ever to receive a 4 1/2 (four and a half) star review for his CD "A Tribute to Chick Corea" on the leading music website; allmusic.com. They have performed with most established swedish vocal artists at concert halls and festivals all over Sweden visiting more than 75 cities and six other countries, performing more than 350 concerts in fifteen years time. They have performed for Bill Clinton, the German president in Berlin, the Swedish Royal family etc. His album "12 Standards" featuring twelve of Sweden's foremost pop singers, interpretating jazz standards, was the first big band album in Sweden released on a major pop/rock label (Stockholm Records). "Stora Stygga" has

been sponsored by multinational accounting firm Deloitte & Touche.

As a clinician with 30 years of experience he travels more and more internationally; Norway, Latvia, Germany, Russia, China etc. performing big band clinics using The General Method, as well as concerts with different big bands. He is also founder/director of the Swedish National Youth Big Band, three regional Swedish youth big bands and in 2005 he founded the only specialized pre-college big band program in the country.

Mats Holmquist has composed music for symphony orchestras, string orchestras, string quartets and he orchestrates and conducts strings for Sweden's world famous pop group Roxette. He has received a number of awards, grants and scholarships from different institutions in Sweden and his big band have been receiving government grants from the ministry of culture since 2004. In 2010, he started the attempt of establishing a new musical "sub-genre"that could be described as a fusion between modern big band music and the minimalism of Steve Reich; "Big Band Minimalism." Stora Stygga received government support for a small European tour which took place in the summer and fall of 2010. In January 2012 he organized a week long tour of Sweden with his Big Bad Band and Dave Liebman performing new arrangements of Wayne Shorter classical compositions in his own minimalist style.

The Author's Preface

This book is intended to act as a user's manual for musicians who wish to direct or play in a big band. It covers everything from playing in a big band to rehearsal methodology; how to put together a band, choices of substitutes, the planning of performing seasons, how to put together a concert program, sound engineering, etc. It is primarily targeted towards the band director, but musicians will benefit from this book just as much. It is all about a new way of thinking and prioritizing.

After having rehearsed big bands professionally for twenty years, **The General Method** was formulated for the first time in 2001. Over the years I have been carrying out a sort of empirical research, where I tried various ways to analyze and explain the "laws of nature" that govern musical situations. I discovered that when I began to define and name these "laws of nature" (or "Rules", as I call them), it became a lot easier to both learn and remember them. To name the laws of nature, and label them as rules, is a way of structuring knowledge.

My objective has been just that: to structure the knowledge about musical events that are "floating around", and label them. Many musicians are already aware of most of these situations, but have difficulty applying their knowledge in a teaching environment; hence, the importance of having a "language" ("*The Rules*").

One of the most important aspects is that everyone in the band should think alike. By this I mean that all members of the band must have the same focal point in any given moment; for example, maintaining fast tempos, developing similar phrasing and timing on an organic level, understanding the role of their own part, etc. If everyone in the band is thinking alike, the listeners will hear this and feel a sense of harmony. By using **The General Method**, new pieces will take less time to learn, since a common concept - an entire language - already exists.

The General Method creates an attitude - a common way of prioritizing the most important elements at a given moment. It can work as a tool for improving a band and can create good results in a very short period of time. However, it is important to emphasize that no method may be able to fully represent "the absolute truth" and this one is no exception, but this book will hopefully be able to help both musicians and directors. Hopefully, they can avoid making the same mistakes I have made throughout the years.

Good Luck!

Mats Holmquist

"Mats has written a real hands-on book, equally useful for big band directors and players. Besides his extraordinary skills as an arranger which I can attest to having shared the stage with him, Mats has seriously considered many of the unspoken details concerning big band practices addressing subtleties such as beat placement and even the physical layout of such a large group. I learned a lot."
Dave Liebman

The General Method

The most common method of rehearsing a big band is what I would call the *specific* method. You rehearse the difficulties that are *specific* to the piece on which you are working. By this I mean that you play through the piece in its entirety, then rehearse the rough spots over and over again, without explaining to the band *why* it is not working. Here, I would like to launch a new methodology that I call **The General Method**. It is built upon the idea of making the musicians conscious of **"The Rules"** of musical developments and phenomena. Anyone can incorporate these easy-to-remember rules. For example, when musicians are aware that a series of syncopations (offbeats) are almost always rushed and that fast tempos usually drag, then they can apply this rule not just to a specific piece, but to all pieces of the same style/genre/tempos. **This "General" knowledge is transferable**!

Therefore its name, **The General Method**, is all about **general knowledge**. The rules may not apply at all times, but certainly they are applicable in most situations. The rules act as traffic signs warning of danger ahead. They provide the musician with a little extra knowledge (and therefore, caution) as he/she navigates a big band chart. The rules are presented in Chapter 1.

My hope is that this terminology can be generally applied, so that the world of music, or at least our part of it (African-American music), may be given a common language. A common language is always valuable as it provides names and labels to a variety of musical situations, thus facilitating better communication and comprehension.

Prioritizing is a key element of **The General Method**. People often have difficulty concentrating on more than one thing at a time. Therefore, it is very important to talk with your musicians about what is most important at the moment; what should be prioritized. Once the technical challenges of a piece have been prioritized (solved), the player is free to concentrate on playing musically. In turn, this brings on a sense of enlightenment and equips the player with a clear and automatic strategy:

1. Awareness the "natural laws of music" ("The Rules").
2. Reacting accordingly, and solving the problems.

While it is important to learn "The Rules", it does not completely eliminate the need to rehearse some difficult pieces "specifically" dealing with their unique and specific challenges. Knowing the rules, however, will greatly reduce the time spent needed for specific rehearsal because most challenges will already have been addressed. Learn the rules!

1. The Rules

This chapter constitutes the essence of **The General Method**. The Rules below, terms, "laws of nature", or whatever you would like to call them, have come about in order to make musicians aware of the phenomena that govern music performance. Experienced musicians are acquainted with most of these "laws of nature" but, so far, they haven't been defined or named. In order to sort the information, it must first be given a name and then be categorized just like in a library. Here, the following parameters have been used: Timing, Phrasing, Articulation, and Dynamics.

> *"Imagine this entire room filled from floor to ceiling with books containing an enormous amount of knowledge. But all this knowledge is not worth anything until it is sorted out, as in a library!"*

It is unlikely that we will find what we are looking for before the sorting out is done.

A lot of the phenomena that governs music performance has a tendency of appearing continuously. Therefore, you can compare them to "laws of nature." Defining these Rules is also an attempt to create a language in order to make it easier to communicate amongst musicians and band directors. The term *Distinction of Attack* (see page 22) is, for instance, very practical in order to be able to communicate to a musician that she/he must make a greater difference between attack and the actual note: "*You must make a greater 'Distinction of Attack,' make the attack **ff** and the note **mp**.*" The musician who learns to understand the rules will develop her/his musical awareness and therefore improve her/his own playing. For directors, the rules can function as a checklist to help determine that the music is performed well.

Timing

Fast tempos drag

Everything seems to pull towards an average of 120 bpm. At fast tempos, even two eighth-notes can drag; this is the most common phrase ending in traditional big band music á la Basie/Nestico, among others. A longer series of eighth notes also has a strong tendency to drag, especially in the lower instruments, (ex. trombones). This is partly because tone formation takes longer, as these instruments are technically more difficult to play.

Slow tempos are rushed

In ballads and other pieces, it is common for the tempo to increase during the first few bars and then gradually stabilize at a level that feels good and comfortable for the musicians. The secret of playing slow tempos is that everybody has to subdivide the rhythm into smaller note values. Horn players are not as familiar with this concept as rhythm players, especially drummers (see ***Subdivision,*** page 10).

"Law of Least Resistance" (timing)

There are different ways to drag or rush a tempo. The least common is linear, which means that the music would slow down successively throughout the entire piece (Fig. 1a). The result would be an almost total stop before the end of the piece, which is highly unlikely. Much more common is a successive decrease in tempo, perhaps the first 4 to 8 measures before stabilizing at a comfortable tempo, especially for the rhythm players. I call this the *Law of Least Resistance* (Fig. 1b). Another common procedure is that the band, mainly the rhythm section, does not "take" the tempo that is given. This could be combined with a successive decrease to a comfortable tempo in the first bars, as mentioned above.

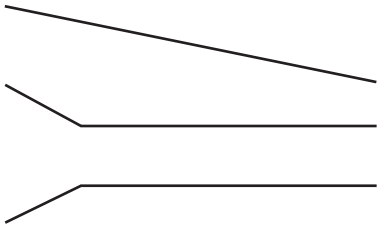
In slow tempos, not taking the tempo that is given is less common. The principal concept for slow tempos

is otherwise reversed to the one for fast tempos. Slow tempos accelerate for a few bars and then stabilize at a comfortable tempo (*Law of Least Resistance*) (Fig. 1c).

Fig. 1a

Fig. 1b

Fig. 1c



Soft dynamics make you drag

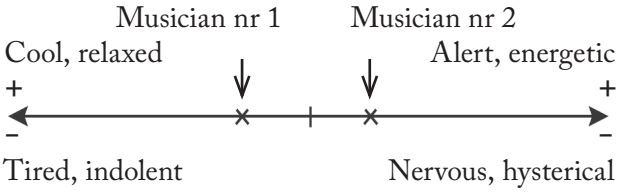
This is a well-known phenomenon. Medium tempos at ***mf*** are the easiest to maintain. In very loud dynamics there is also a risk of dragging, but not as much. In soft dynamics, you should try to play with the same energy and attitude and think as aggressively as in loud (or medium) dynamics. This can help you overcome the tendency to drag.

The "Energy Barometer"

This is a term to explain how the listener experiences different levels of energy created simply by where on the beat the musician plays. A simplified explanation is that musicians who play behind the beat are, at best, referred to as relaxed and cool, and at worst, indolent or suffering from lack of commitment (low energy). Musicians who play on top of the beat will, at worst, be considered nervous and stressed, and at best, committed and alert (high energy). Use the *Energy Barometer* as a model when you have musicians in the band who play behind or on top of the beat. Draw their position in relation to the beat (with a cross) on a line with the actual beat as a center point, with "forward" and "backward" as extremes in different directions (Fig. 2). This is a pedagogical way of increasing their awareness and bringing perspective to their own position on the beat, early or late, so that they can adjust accordingly.

Some musicians talk about European vs American timing, where the Americans are more on top of the beat and the Europeans are more laid back. My personal experience (although, generally speaking) is that Scandinavians are the ones furthest laid back, Mid-Europeans are slightly closer towards the beat, and finally South-Europeans and Americans are the most on top of the beat. Where you personally want to stay will probably depend upon the character and tempo of the piece and, of course, your personality. Musicians want to push the beat more in a medium or up-tempo setting than in a slower tempo setting.

Fig. 2



It is always hard to enter on time after a rest

No matter if you have an eighth-note rest or a hundred bars of rest, it is always hard to enter on time after a rest. The reason for this is that you are not "in the center of time" during a rest. When you are about to enter, you would have needed to play along mentally with the music so that you are currently "in the center of time." A drummer is almost always in the center of time since he or she more or less plays constantly and, at the same time, is subdividing the beat in their own playing. A horn player often plays a long note and can only subdivide mentally. Another explanation for the difficulty in entering after a rest is that both visually and graphically it often looks as if the notated rest takes up more space than it should. A notated rhythm with a lot of eighth-note rests is a typical example of this rule. It is a matter of ***playing through the rests*** (see below). The tendency for this rule is logically most obvious at fast tempos.

Play *through* the rests

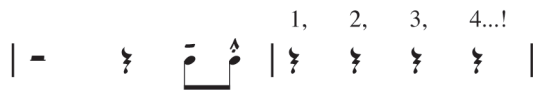
This is a way to avoid making rests too long. One must think in terms of the entire phrase - including its rests - as a whole, and not as the sum of smaller fragments. It is very common to give eighth-note rests interjected in the midst of a phrase too much time. "Play through the rests!"

"The Ghost Rest"

Inexperienced players often "lose" a beat of the bar when a rest appears on a downbeat after a short syncopation on the offbeat immediately before. The beat vanishes just like a ghost. Fig. 3a shows what happens in the mind of an inexperienced player and Fig. 3b shows the reality.

Fig. 3a

Fig. 3b



Galloping syncopations

"Syncopations are almost always rushed." It is difficult to play a series of syncopations, even a short series, without rushing. It is hard to remain steady in between the downbeats. Unconsciously you play onwards (faster) until you end up on the next downbeat. This is a problem even professional musicians can encounter. "Hold steady on the syncopations!"

The "Popcorn Rule"

This rule is a deeper explanation of syncopation tendencies. What often happens when you tell your musicians not to rush the short syncopations is that they overreact, and begin to sustain the notes too long.

In a series of short syncopations, you are faced with two challenges:

1. Not to rush, timing-wise
2. Not to prolong the note values of the short syncopations

The term *Popcorn Rule* is a far-fetched association to a popcorn machine, where the kernels of corn are bouncing against the wall, as short syncopations should do (see ***Short syncopations should bounce***, page 19).

"Like draws to like"

or

Syncopations are most often late and downbeats are most often early

In a rhythm where a syncopation on the offbeat of 1 is followed by a downbeat of 3, the syncopation on the offbeat of 1 naturally wants to be followed by a syncopation on the offbeat of 2. That means that there is a clear tendency to be early on the following downbeat of 3 (see Fig. 4a).

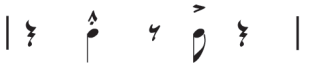
Another example: a downbeat of 2 is followed by a syncopation on the offbeat of 3. In this case, musicians are often late on the offbeat of 3, since the downbeat of 2 wants to be followed by the downbeat of 4 (see Fig. 4b). The tendency, in this case, is not quite as apparent as in the previous the example.

In this case, you should consider the following tendencies:

1. The offbeat of 1 is often late.
2. The downbeat of 2 is often early.
3. The offbeat of 3 is often late (but not as strong a tendency as being late on the offbeat of 1)

Fig. 4a

Fig. 4b



Sustain long notes to their full note value

It is extremely common among big band musicians to not sustain notes for their full value. Explain to your band that it is equally important to end a note at the same time as it is to begin a note at the same time. Many musicians "agree" on where to begin a note, but not about where to release it. I tell my musicians to "aim" at the release point. If the note ends on the downbeat of 3 they should count and think "3" when the note is released, just as they would if the note were to begin on 3. At the same time, you should consider how to release the note with an ***Energy Release*** (page 23) or a phrase ending diminuendo - ***The Anthill*** (page 22). Also see ***The Brick*** (page 22). Releasing a note with a phrase ending diminuendo is a common mistake, comparable to not sustaining the note's full value. Feel free to conduct and shout, "1, 2, 3, 4 off!" With inexperienced bands, you often have to repeat this procedure many times before the musicians learn how to consistently sustain long notes to their full value.

The "Tied Over Syncopation" Rule

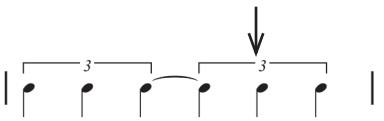
Many times, eighth-notes and sixteenth-notes that are tied from offbeats to downbeats take up too much time. Musicians focus too much on the ties so that the *succeeding note arrives too late*. The solution is to carefully feel the phrase as organic, so that you

get a good "flow" and avoid chopping the phrase into smaller pieces.

Fig. 5a  *Fig. 5b* 

The "Tied Over Triplet" Rule

As in the example above, the second triplet in tied over triplets will very often be late. If the second triplet is late, the succeeding notes will also be late, and a kind of domino effect will occur.

Fig. 6 

Rushing on straight quarter-notes

This concerns mostly young and inexperienced musicians. As soon as they have a couple of downbeats in succession, they want to rush. You will have to remind them many times to correct this natural tendency, as this is one of the big challenges in teaching inexperienced musicians.

Dragging on short quarter-notes

While this problem is not as common, it is also not rare. Musicians who do this are, in my opinion, too focused on their own sound, which they want to be "fat" and "jazzy." Another reason is that they think they have heard bands like the Count Basie big band do this. The expression "laid back" (like Basie) has become a curse. In Sweden, and probably in may other countries, there is a belief that the Basie band was playing behind the beat, meaning that the horns were further back on the beat than the drums. The truth is that the Basie band was seldom "hanging" on the beat, and if they were, this occurred on certain phrases which were more or less rehearsed. This has lived on as a myth, but it is really a misconception. "Play on the beat!"

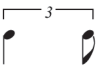
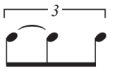
Note: This rule concerns mainly older musicians, as younger musicians are usually less relaxed and more "stressed."

Indistinct attacks are conceived as being further behind the beat.

An indistinct attack can be conceived as being further behind the beat. The ear simply cannot hear the beginning of the note because it did not have enough "edge", and lacks a distinct beginning (see page 23, ***Play with an edge***).

The transformation of the jazz triplet

As most jazz musicians know, the beat position of the jazz or "swing" triplet changes depending upon the tempo. At moderate tempos, the jazz triplet places itself on the third triplet of the beat.

Fig. 7a  *Fig. 7b* 

The faster the tempo, the more the triplet approaches the position of 50% through the beat (straight eighths). The slower the tempo, the more it approaches the position of an exact third (67%) through the beat (see Fig. 8a). This describes how the "swing triplet" (or jazz triplet) is transformed from almost exact triplet eighth-notes to straight eighth-notes (see Fig. 8b). Somewhere around 280 bpm the notes become, for all practical purposes, straight eighths. If we had researchers helping us measure this, we would discover that different musicians have different "triplet feels." This is why I try to avoid giving exact numbers. The important thing is to realize that the faster the tempo, the less the eighth-notes have a swing feel.

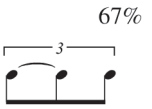
Fig. 8a 

Fig. 8b 

"The Basie myth"

There is a big misconception regarding swing feel which I have chosen to call *the Basie myth*. Many musicians believe instinctively that the expression "laid back" means playing behind the beat.

My view is that the Basie band, generally speaking, was playing "late" triplet eighth-notes, but downbeats were played right on the beat.

This concerns mainly slow and medium tempos. When playing a triplet eighth-note very far back on the beat, a collision occurs between the triplet and the following downbeat. This collision is the essence of a good "swing feel" which the Basie band did so well. Basie's guitarist, Freddie Green, is assumed to have strongly contributed to this effect since he consistently played downbeats which reinforced the collision between the syncopations of the horn players and the downbeats of the bass and drums. This collision is not as noticeable in fast tempos since musicians play eighth-notes more and more straight

as the tempo increases; the triplet eighths will become almost exactly straight in really fast tempos.

I estimate that a normal jazz triplet in medium tempo (approximately 120 bpm) is most often played somewhere around 63%.

Many times bands play the downbeats late but play the jazz triplets relatively early. They think that this is being laid back and that this is what the Basie band did (to be late, or "laid back" on the downbeats). This is the fatal misconception which I call "The Basie Myth." For example, if you listen to one of the most famous big band album of all time, "The Atomic Mr. Basie," the horn players sometimes seem to be further on top of the beat than the rhythm section.

Conclusion: The Basie horn sections were not generally playing "behind" the beat. Most often they played downbeats right on the beat, but they played the jazz triplets late (especially in slow and medium tempos). Late jazz triplets and driving downbeats (which are never late) is what makes the magical Basie swing happen.

Too late on the offbeats of 1 and 3

Musicians are often late on these positions of the beat. The tendencies are greatest in medium and up-tempos, and most distinct on the offbeat of 1. These tendencies are strong and even very skilled musicians can be affected by them.

Too early on the downbeat of 2

It is very common that the downbeat of 2 is played too early. This tendency is not as strong as the one above (offbeats of 1 and 3), but is clearly noticeable, especially in slow and medium tempos.

Late on the second and early on the fourth sixteenth-note of the beat

In sixteenth-note notation, it is very common to be late on the second and early on the fourth sixteenth-note of the beat. Many musicians (including myself) find it more difficult to read sixteenth-note notation than regular jazz/swing eighth-note notation. One reason could be that the page looks more cluttered and every bar contains (on average) more notes. In sixteenth-note notation, it is important to subdivide into sixteenths, and to know that most problems occur on the second and fourth sixteenth of the beat.

Crescendos and diminuendos often create disturbances in timing

Diminuendos, and to a lesser degree crescendos, most often make the band drag. "Terracing" dynamic levels or suddenly changing dynamic levels can also cause disturbances in timing.

Drum fills often create disturbances in tempo

Many drummers often play setups and fills that are too complicated which can create confusion in the entire band since the fills are sometimes fully accurate timing-wise. Many times, the fill is too long and too vague due to its overly complicated nature. It is better if the drummer "composes" (decides) the fills in advance because it is much more difficult to "improvise" fills. Although the drummer may find this uncreative and boring, it is safer and creates a better result for the entire band.

Change of "groove" often causes a change in tempo

This implies, for example, a change from *Beat Music** to swing or from Latin to swing. The tendencies regarding dragging or rushing are not always clear, but it is more common to drag when changing to swing than the opposite. It hereby follows that when changing from swing to Latin there is a tendency to rush.

**Beat Music* refers to music in straight eighth-notes with a distinctive beat (usually on the snare drum), most usually in connection with Rock, Pop or Funk and the like. Jazz musicians usually encounter *Beat Music* in connection with Funk, Rock-Samba, Rock-Bossa and similar.

Improvised solos often cause an increase in tempo

I think there are two main reasons for this:

1. It is extremely common for a solo to increase the overall energy level of the music.
2. Maintaining the tempo is not always the primary focus of the soloing musician, preferring instead to focus on interaction and creativity.

Both of these issues tend to make tempos increase.

Two ways of resuming the original tempo

If an improvised solo has increased the tempo, what is the best course of action? Should the original tempo be subtly restored, or should the "new" faster tempo be maintained? In general, there are only two options:

1. Gradually slow down towards the original tempo.
2. At a given moment, in a natural point between themes or phrases, resume the original tempo immediately. Often this point is the downbeat of the first bar in the next theme or phrase.

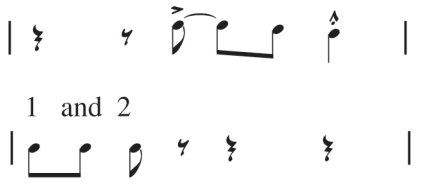
I prefer the second suggestion, but it seems like the first way of gradually slowing down is used much more frequently. It is also very common that musicians keep on playing the faster tempo; never resuming the original tempo. Resuming the tempo immediately is more difficult and demands a keen ensemble awareness and specialized rehearsal.

Subdivision

Subdivision means that you think and feel smaller note values than what is notated. In 4/4 time, it is common to subdivide into eighth-notes. In *Beat Music,* it is very common to feel sixteenth-notes (even in 4/4). This makes it easier to read and understand the rhythms but also makes the timing more steady. If you try to enter on the offbeat of 2, you can think in terms of three eighth-note rests in the beginning of the measure followed by the eighth-note on the offbeat of 2 (Fig. 9). It can be useful to think about what a drummer would play in a similar rest.

"Think drum fill!" A well executed drum fill, or "kick", can make it easier for the horn players to enter. The drummer is subdividing for the horn players, so to speak.

Fig. 9



"Points of Direction"

Points of Direction mean rhythmic "points of control" to be used for checking your timing for accuracy. For natural reasons, these points of direction appear on downbeats, or the beats that your foot is tapping. In 4/4, it is each quarter-note: 1, 2, 3, 4 (Fig. 10a) and in alla-breve it is 1 and 3 (Fig. 10b). Of all the *Points of Direction*, the downbeat of 1 is the most crucial for maintaining steady timing and tempo. Continuous checking is important. Notes that are positioned between the downbeats are, of course, harder to check, but they have a tendency to fall into place if the *Points of Direction* are correct.

Fig. 10a

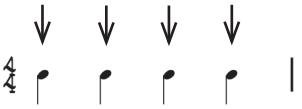


Fig. 10b

Use the "Points of Direction" to facilitate reading music ("Imaginary Points of Direction")

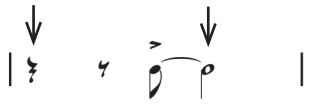
You must constantly ask yourself, "Downbeat or offbeat?" "Behind or before which downbeat?" The answers can be: right on 2 (downbeat), after 1, before 4, etc. It is very important to teach your musicians to use the *Points of Direction* to make both reading and thinking in these terms easier. For example, if you try to enter on the offbeat of 3, then the closest *point of direction* will be the downbeat of 3. You should focus all your energy on finding the downbeat of 3 then playing on the offbeat. Use the downbeat of 3 as a starting or reference point (see Fig. 11). This can also be called a ***Start Signal*** (page 11).

Fig. 11

It is also possible to "think backwards." In attempting to enter on the offbeat of 2 in "alla-breve", many musicians count to 2 and then try to enter. Often, they will be late. Since the points of direction in "alla-breve" are the downbeats of 1 and 3, they should focus on the one that is closest to the offbeat of 2. In this case, the downbeat of 3. Have them focus on the downbeat of 3 and think of this

entrance as an early 3 (downbeat). **When a note and a *Point of Direction* do not coincide (fig. 12) they are called *Imaginary Points of Direction*.**

Fig. 12



"Start Signal"

Start Signal is a term constructed to simplify rhythmic entrances which musicians consider difficult to play. Timing is partly dependent on music reading, so a weak reader might need help in entering on an offbeat. Think of the previous downbeat as a *Start Signal* (bang, drum stroke, foot stomp or similar) that provides a helping hand to enter properly on the next offbeat. For example, if you try to enter on the offbeat of 2 in 4/4, the *Start Signal* will appear on the downbeat of 2. Use the *Start Signal* as a "rhythmic reference tool." (*Start Signals* are in a sense "mentally accented *Imaginary Points of Direction*").

Fig. 13

Count the sixteenth-notes in *Beat Music*

In *Beat Music*, which is frequently notated in "sixteenth-note notation", you should always keep in mind which sixteenth of the beat the next note appears on. By "sixteenth-note notation", I refer to music that is preferably notated by sixteenth-notes, eighth-notes and punctuations of these. Within African-American music, this is mostly the case in *Beat Music* (not swing or Latin). As mentioned above, it is very common to be late on notes that appear on the 2nd sixteenth-note of the beat (Fig. 14a), and early on notes that appear on the 4th sixteenth-note of the beat (Fig. 14b).

Fig. 14a

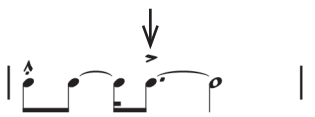
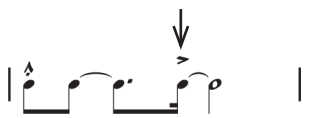


Fig. 14b



"Pyramids" and divided phrases

In a *Pyramid,* each musician usually plays one or a few notes of a group of notes in a continuous movement (Fig. 15a). Even if the individual musician simply has to enter on a downbeat of 3, it is very often played too late. There are several reasons for this phenomenon. One is because each musician has his own part, not shared by anyone, so a less experienced player has no one to follow. Another reason is because everyone enters in different spots and this creates problems similar to the ones dealt by the rule: ***It is always hard to enter on time after a rest*** (page 6).

Conclusion: Entrances are often very late in *Pyramids* and phrases that are divided between different musicians and different sections.

The solution is to be aware of this and instead strive to stay on top of the beat, and at the same time, sing the entire phrase (*Pyramid*) within yourself (Fig 15b), even if you are only playing a part of it.

Fig. 15a

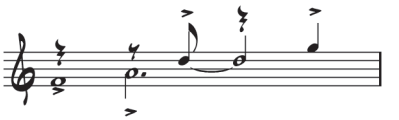
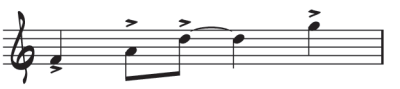


Fig. 15b



The "Spit It" Rule

The rhythm of two repeated sixteenth-notes in 4/4 (usually medium tempo) is referred to by many musicians as being similar to the sound of pronouncing the words "spit it" quickly. The *Spit It* rule means that these sixteenth-notes should be played at the same speed no matter what the tempo is; try not to figure out the exact speed of sixteenth-notes in the actual tempo. I estimate the speed of these notes as two sixteenth-notes in a tempo of 100 bpm.

 = "Spit-it"

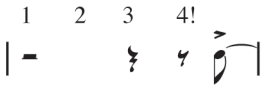
Summary of entrances

There are basically four ways of entering a phrase, timing-wise. It is very important to make a distinction in your mind which method to use in each instance. Sometimes, one is better and sometimes another, depending upon which beat the entrance appears, and also the tempo and style (straight or swing eighth-notes).

Examples:

A.

Count 1, 2, 3, 4, then play (if the phrase starts on 1 or the offbeat of 4.

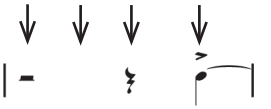


B.

Subdivision. For example, if entering on the offbeat of 2, subdivide and "feel" three eight-notes on the downbeat of 1, then play!

C.

Use the *Points of Direction*. Many times it's good to tap your foot on the *Points of Direction*.



D.

Use the *Imaginary Points of Direction* (or *Start Signal*) when a note does not coincide with a *Point of Direction*. The example below is an *Imaginary Point of Direction*.

Timing In Different Styles

Beat

Beat Music often means straight sixteenth-notes, and often in tempos around 100 bpm. *Beat Music* can sometimes feel more static than swing, so it is even more important to find "the important notes" of the phrase; the ones that should be accentuated such as the beginning of the phrase, phrase endings, and the highest note of the phrase (see ***Phrasing***, page 15). Straight eighth-notes and sixteenths can "swing" just as much as triplet eighth-notes if you can find the right *Phrasing*, *Energy Levels* and more.

In *Beat Music,* it is common to swing the sixteenth-notes (played with triplet feel) naturally without thinking about it. Sometimes it works for the horns to swing the sixteenths while the rhythm section is playing straight, and sometimes not, depending on the character of the phrase(s) and the tempo. A decision can be made from case to case and it can also change throughout the piece. The important thing is to be aware of what you are doing. Let your ears and instincts be the judge. It can be a matter of taste and sometimes both alternatives can function well; straight-sixteenths or triplet-sixteenths. Many times it has to do with how much you swing the sixteenths. If you swing them too much, they do not work at all, but if you swing them just a little bit less, they can work very well. The question is not only "to swing or not to swing", but also "how much should they be 'swung'?" Usually, it is more likely to cause problems if you swing them than if you do not, and I also see more problems if you swing them harder than if you swing them a little bit less.

Note: To swing harder means that the placing of the triplet is later than if you swing less (earlier).

In *Beat Music* there is often a certain degree of triplet subdivision. If you take a closer look into a traditional swing accompaniment, the drums would play "*ting-ting-a-ling-ting-a-ling*" (of course not continuously), which contains a triplet subdivision (only) on the 2nd and 4th beat. The 1st and 3rd beat contains only straight quarter-notes. In a beat groove, with a certain triplet subdivision, the triplets might have a different

rhythmic placing and could be of a smaller quantity. One very common *beat* groove has triplet subdivision on the 4th beat of measure 1 and on the 1st beat of measure 2. That means a total of only two subdivided beats out of eight (in two bars). This might be one of the reasons why one groove is felt like *Beat Music* and the other like swing, although both contain either triplet-eighths or triplet-sixteenths. Some musicians call a beat with a certain triplet subdivision a "swing beat."

In some Beat Music charts you may find both a mixture of triplet-sixteenths, straight sixteenths, and sixteenths with only a slight touch of triplet-feel. I interpret this as yet another argument showing that it is the context and the character of the phrase which decides if the phrase should be played straight or with a triplet-feel, and if the swing is to be hard or light.

Beat Music is often notated with sixteenth-notes as the basic pulse. The sixteenths are the equivalence of the eighth-notes in swing. Since the most common tempos in beat music are found around 80-100 bpm, the equivalence in swing would be double that (around 160 - 200 bpm). These are fast tempos. In fast tempos, the triplet eighth-note (67%) is closer to being a straight eighth-note (50%).

Conclusion: It is unlikely that triplet-sixteenths with a late placing would work well. This depends partly on the fact that we are dealing with fast tempos; the equivalent of around 200 bpm in swing (with triplet eighth-notes). Due to this, musicians are more likely to play either straight-sixteenths or lightly "swung" triplet-sixteenths (early placing, probably around 50-58%). In my opinion, the biggest risk is swinging the triplet-sixteenths too hard and too close to an exact triplet (67%).

Latin

Here you will often find a lot of syncopations and fast tempos. From a music reading point of view, it might be difficult because of the many syncopations and relatively few downbeats. You have to be extra careful and read the exact rhythms, not just roughly skim the notation (which is quite common among non-professional musicians). Downbeats and offbeats are often mixed together. It is also very common that you "cling" or stick to the syncopations (see ***Tied over syncopation rule***, page 7) which prevents the phrase from flowing. A group of eighth-notes following a series of syncopations will often drag. In well known songs, it is common not to read the music correctly, but to play it as you remember it.

The music of Bob Mintzer

Bob often writes rhythms with half-notes and dotted quarter-notes in "alla-breve." Many musicians play as if they think that timing is less important when playing long note values, so they tend to get lazy and are therefore late. It is important to remind your musicians about this. A frequent rhythm in Bob's music is half-note + dotted quarter-note + eighth-note syncopation (tied over to the next bar). In this type of rhythm in "alla-breve" tempo=120 bpm, which he often uses, it is very common to be late on the syncopated eighth-note. At this fast tempo, many musicians think (read) and tap their feet on 1 and 3. It is very important in this type of rhythm - a half-note and dotted quarter-note followed by an eighth-note syncopation - that one is careful distinguishing between: downbeat - offbeat, downbeat - offbeat, and to be aware that the syncopation can easily be late. The solution is to subdivide into eighth-notes, or use the *Imaginary Points of Direction* at least while learning the piece.

Ballads

Ballads usually mean slow tempos. Slow tempos are difficult to maintain because they tend to speed up. It is very hard to maintain tempos around 60 to 68 bpm or less, while tempos around 72 to 76 and up are much easier. The secret of maintaining slow tempos is that everyone has to subdivide into smaller note values. Usually, the choice is either eighth-notes or sixteenth-notes - straight or swing - depending on the piece. The slower the tempos, the smaller the note value of the subdivision. In ballads, I usually ask the drummer to play the hi-hat almost unnaturally loud. When playing with brushes, the hi-hat is the only feature (except for the bass) that clearly accentuates the tempo and can keep the band on track when it comes to timing.

New Theories Concerning Timing

Background:
In African-American music the concept of "The Beat" is almost mythical and sacred, and I have yet to hear anyone define exactly what it is. Musicians know that it is possible to "push time" or play "laid back" without slowing down or speeding up the tempo (keeping every downbeat of 1 the same distance from each other).

Usually, we consider "pushing the time" or playing "laid back" as being in relation to something. For example, it might be a singer in relation to a rhythm section or a horn section in relation to the drums. In relation to the horns, the drummer in a big band could almost be defined as the beat.

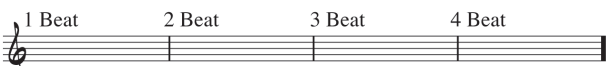
"What is the definition of the beat, and what does playing laid back mean for a solo drummer or a solo bass player?"

Conclusion: If one way of playing time generates energy and "flow" (pushing time), and another way of playing generates a sense of coolness (laid back), both without speeding up or slowing down in tempo, then **these phenomena have to be created within the bar.** Thus, the conclusion has to be that the various beats of the bar are unequally distributed, or displaced. This means, for example, that beats 1 and 3 are "longer" than beats 2 and 4, or vice versa (see example B and C, this page). By "longer" I mean that 2 and 4 are "late" (shorter) mathematically than 1 and 3, when playing laid back.

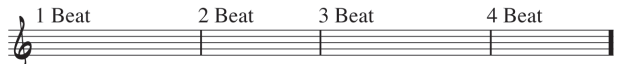
"Displacement of beats within the bar."
My theory, *Displacement of beats within the bar*, is that if we want to play laid back we should make beats 2 and 4 shorter (late) than 1 and 3 (see example B, this page), and if we want to push the time then we should play beats 2 and 4 equal to (or even longer than) 1 and 3 (see example C, this page).

IMPORTANT: Saying that beats 2 and 4 could be longer (early) is purely a symbolic description! To push time is, most of all, a question of playing directly on the beat with a distinct attack, rather than to be early on 2 and 4, since the feel of pushing time seems to appear already when playing each beat at similar length. To be even earlier on 2 and 4 is almost impossible for most since it feels totally "wrong".

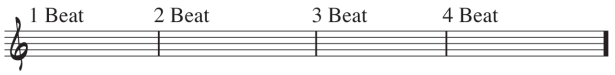
Example A: No Tendency (equal beats)



Example B: "Laid Back" (late on 2 and 4)



Example C: "Pushing Time"



IMPORTANT! Example C, above, is more symbolical. To push time is more about being very much on the beat, with a distinct attack, than to be early on 2 and 4!

Drummer
If the above theory is correct, then a solo drummer could push time when playing swing by placing the hi-hat right on the beats of 2 and 4 (with a distinct attack) or play laid back by placing the hi-hat late on beats 2 and 4. Something that is easily detectable in rock music is that the snare drum plays just a little on the late side in medium and slow tempos.

Bass Player
This theory doesn't explain why a solo bass player can also be perceived as pushing time or playing laid back, since they are supposed to play all beats mathematically equal when "walking". In this case, I believe there are two things that cause a solo bass player to push the time or play laid back:

1. To really place every beat at equal distance from each other, never "losing a beat" by being late. Being late creates a feeling of distrust in the ears of the listener; every lost beat is loss of "reputational capital" and, of course, a loss of energy. It takes a long time to regain a lost beat and to restore our "reputational capital".
2. A distinct attack. If the bass player wants to push the time, he/she needs to play with a distinct attack, since indistinct attacks are conceived as being further back on the beat (see ***Indistinct Attacks***, page 8).

When playing together with a drummer, the bass player can create a sense of laid back (or "lazy") time by playing "behind" the drummer. For example, tone production takes much longer for the bass than a cymbal. Therefore, the bass player needs to actually play his/her note before the drummer to make it sound like they are playing together.

Phrasing

"The Syncopation Rule": Syncopations (and accents) have greater emphasis

Syncopations (offbeats) should be emphasized more heavily than downbeats, and the difference should be much greater than you think.

Important: The emphasis on the syncopations should be made even if the arranger did not mark them with accents. Don't depend on written accents because they are not always notated, especially in older notation.

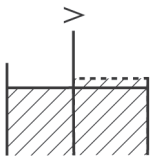
Fig. 16a

Important: Stating that syncopations (offbeats) have greater importance does not mean that the entire note value has greater volume. This is very important to emphasize when working with young and inexperienced bands. (see ***Rotten Fish Syndrome***, below). The accent is comprised mainly of the attack on the note (*Distinction of Attack*, see ***Articulation***, page 22). Fig. 16c is a graphic image of the rhythm in Fig. 16b where I try to visualize my view of how an accentuation, emphasis on a note is made (*Distinction of Attack*).

Attention: In general, the emphasis on the syncopated note is not "louder" than the non-emphasized downbeat. Only the attack of the note is louder (see dotted line of graphic syncopation)!

Fig. 16b

Fig. 16c



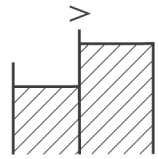
YES!

"Rotten Fish" Syndrome

This concerns mainly young and inexperienced players as mentioned above. When you teach the *Syncopation Rule*, which states that syncopations (offbeats) have greater importance compared to downbeats, young players often play the long note with the same, loud volume as the attack (see Fig. 17, this page). What really matters is that the attack is emphasized, not the entire note. The entire long note should not be loud, only the actual attack (see Fig. 16b, this page). This type of note (long, loud) may sound disturbing, annoying, or unpleasant. This explains my comparison to a rotten fish (Fig. 17).

This is how it should *not* be played:

Fig. 17



NO!

"Energy Levels"

Important: This is perhaps the most crucial definition in *The General Method*. Teaching a band these principles makes the players start thinking about how phrasing works. A general understanding of the *Energy Levels* principal can take the band to another level musically - from not being able to phrase at all to phrasing at a higher level of musical interpretation. It is necessary to make musicians think in these terms. When I give seminars/workshops this is one of the first definitions I speak about.

Different notes have different *Energy Levels* depending on their rhythmic placing in the phrase. It depends on whether it is an offbeat or a downbeat, if it is located at the beginning, middle, or end of the phrase, and on which beat (1, 2, 3 or 4) it appears. In this situation, the *Energy Level* involves how much a specific note is to be accentuated/emphasized. Syncopations (offbeats) generally have a higher *Energy Level* than downbeats, and the first and last note of the phrase are usually more emphasized than others.

Try describing *Energy Levels* in different classifications. How you classify is symbolic and at your discretion. You could, perhaps, insist that levels 3 and 4 should be the same in many cases. The most important

aspect is to make the musicians understand that there are differences, and that they often need to be reminded that execution should not be "flat" and superficial. A flat way of playing is often boring and unexciting. Clear classifications will increase the awareness of the musicians and make them think in new directions!

ENERGY LEVEL 1: Unemphasized downbeats.

Fig. 18

ENERGY LEVEL 2: Offbeat eighth notes; "Jazz eights" that are emphasized.

Fig. 19

ENERGY LEVEL 3a: Long emphasized syncopations (dotted eighth notes or longer).

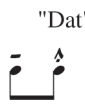
Fig. 20

ENERGY LEVEL 3b: Short emphasized syncopations (should be played with a bouncing feeling).

Fig. 21

ENERGY LEVEL 4a: Phrase ending of the *Dat* type = short note (most often eighth notes).

Fig. 22



ENERGY LEVEL 4b: Emphasized straight quarter notes with "rooftop" accents.

Fig. 23

Exception: The first note of the phrase is always Energy Level 3, minimum, even if it appears on a downbeat!

Write the phrase on a whiteboard and then draw small horizontal lines, on different levels, representing the *Energy Level* of each particular note, either next to or above the notes. Make each horizontal line around 2 cm (3/4 inch) wide (Fig. 24a). **You can tie the lines together, and make a pattern similar to a stellar constellation.** Draw syncopations, first and last notes of the phrase higher up, and unaccented downbeats further down, in proportion to their *Energy Level*; 1 at the very bottom, 4 at the top and so forth.

Another option is to draw the notes underneath, and above them write the level of accentuation (*Energy Level*) with figures 1, 2, 3, 4 (Fig. 24b). Continually refer to the *Energy Levels* when you want your players to emphasize a note more or less. *"This note has Energy Level 4, so it should be emphasized more!"* It is worth noting that I have given the "rooftop" accents a higher *Energy Level* (level 4) than, for example, a long syncopation on the offbeat of 3 (level 3) with an accent (dotted quarter-note). Very few bands that I have met play this way, but I guarantee it will swing more (bands like "Thad Jones - Mel Lewis" did it). The *Energy Levels* are perhaps the very best tool for increasing a musician's understanding of phrasing.

Fig. 24a

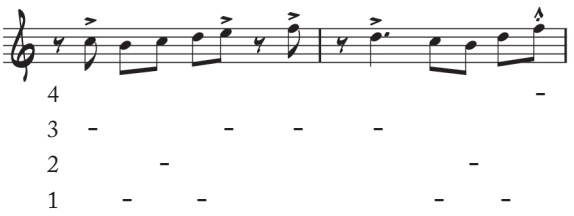
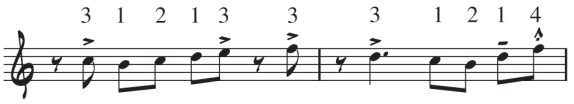


Fig. 24b



Naturally it is easier to play a note on Energy Levels 1 and 2. To play notes on levels 3 and 4, demand more energy both physically and mentally. The logical conclusion is, of course, that most "crimes" against the rule of *Energy Levels* are committed on levels 3 and 4.

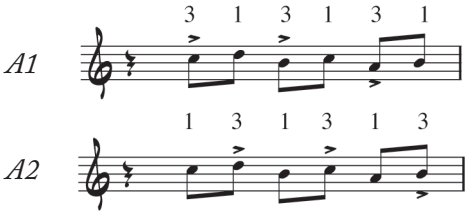
"Listen to your musicians and make sure that they emphasize the accentuations enough on levels 3 and 4!"

Conflicting Accents

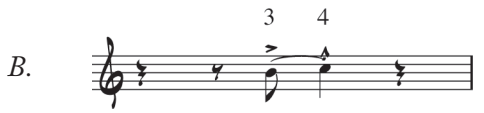
If there are two accents following each other, what should you do: emphasize one or both? When there are two accented/emphasized notes next to each other it creates a sort of conflict, since the normal situation is an oscillation between the emphasized and the non-emphasized notes that are next to each other.

Example A1: Since the first note of the phrase has Energy Level 3 (because of the accent), and the second eighth-note has Energy Level 2, the first note should be emphasized more. Normally, the *Energy Levels* would be reversed 1-2 (example A2), but now they are 3-1 (example A1). In A1, the second note is practically non-emphasized, becoming Energy Level 1 instead of the usual 2.

In A2, the first note should have been Energy Level 3, being the first note of the phrase (see ***The most important notes …***, this page), but in this situation, you need to make the first note non-emphasized in order to make the second note emphasized; Energy Level 3 (because of the notated accent).



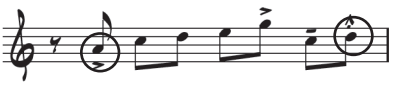
Example B: In this case, we have, in my opinion, a situation with two emphasized notes next to each other. However, the emphasis of the first eighth-note (Energy Level 3) and the following quarter note (Energy Level 4) are quite different in character. Therefore, there is no sense of conflict, although many times players miss the accent/emphasis on the first note in a case like this.



The most important notes of the phrase are the first, last (and highest) notes

Use this rule and you will automatically have found a tool for good phrasing. It applies nine times out of ten. Give the first note of the phrase a good punch even if the arranger has not placed an accent there. This tells the listener that something important is starting. **To *not* emphasize the first note of the phrase is one of the most common phrasing mistakes made!**

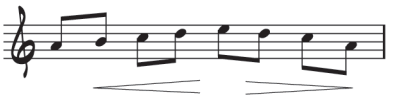
Fig. 25



Follow the line of the phrase

This is perhaps the most important guideline for good phrasing. If the line goes up, crescendo – if the line comes down, diminuendo. This is a very effective and easy way to create good phrasing. The object is always to find the natural phrasing of the line. But, this alone does not define ultimate phrasing. Many bands phrase very little and some hardly at all. The responsibility for recognizing the good lines is on the lead player. The first time they play a piece, they investigate the material. The second time they should have a set phrasing concept. After that, their job is to stick to this concept and be very consistent.

Fig. 26



"The Vertical Perspective"

The Vertical Perspective is a big and wide definition that can include all parameters: timing, phrasing, articulation, and dynamics. I have chosen to place it under phrasing since I think this parameter feels closest. The name suggests that it concerns musical developments in the vertical plane. *The Vertical Perspective* can be used for analyzing ensemble playing, improvised solos, individual musicians' style of playing, and more.

If a rock drummer plays loudly on the snare drum on 2 and 4, and softer on the hi-hat on 1 and 3, it is one example of the use of *The Vertical Perspective*. Make your drummer play different volumes on 2 and 4 compared to 1 and 3. You will then notice that when differences are bigger, more excitement is created in the music compared to if the differences are smaller. If the differences become too big, the playing feels nervous or almost hysterical.

Miles Davis is one example of a musician who used *The Vertical Perspective* extensively. He used big changes in dynamics as well as changes in activity: soft dynamics, sudden outbursts - loud playing in the higher register, rests and more, for utilizing the vertical plane.

I have created this term (or definition) to bring more awareness to the importance of the vertical plane for creating tension in music. Please listen to "Walkin'" from the album "Miles Davis Live at Carnegie Hall" where Miles uses the vertical plane extensively, while Hank Mobley (tenor sax), who plays the solo after Miles, uses it a lot less. Hank Mobley is a fine musician, but I believe most of you would agree that Miles' solo is much more exciting. It is my opinion that his extensive use of the vertical plane is one of the reasons I find his solo more exciting.

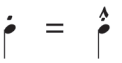
In big band music, you could apply the concept of *The Vertical Perspective* by way of extended, more distinct, and almost exaggerated phrasing. I've had contact with many bands that under-phrase to a point where there is nearly no phrasing at all. The reason is that they have very little phrasing knowledge. These bands need to make use of *The Vertical Perspective* much more. It is very important to have good knowledge about the phrasing rules.

Fig. 27 is an attempt to visualize *The Vertical Perspective* in, for example, an improvised solo. It would look like an EKG (cardiological diagram) or a topographical map.

"Rooftop Accents"

It means that *Rooftop Accents* (most often quarter-notes) should be played with maximum emphasis, louder than surrounding notes. They should be played with the feeling of an upbeat so that the note gravitates towards the next beat, which is very often the downbeat of 1 in the next bar. This is done by moving the air (although it should have an attack with an edge, using the tongue), putting a crescendo (or rather a subito ***f***) on this important note. I have given the *Rooftop Accents* Energy Level 4 which indicates that this type of note should be among the most emphasized.

The "Rooftop Accent" Rule:
Rooftop Accents should be short, played with maximum emphasis and with an *upbeat feeling*, even though it might not be an actual upbeat.

Fig. 28 

Seek the short notes of the phrase

or

The short notes of the phrase should be emphasized the most

This rule is closely related to ***The subordinate clause rule*** (see below) and ***Rooftop Accent*** (above). If there is a short note (for example, an eighth-note) in between longer notes (dotted quarter-notes or longer), it should, in nine cases out of ten, be more emphasized than the longer notes. This goes for short, emphasized notes like *Rooftop* quarter-notes as well as melodic eighth- and sixteenth-notes. In melodic lines, often a minor emphasis will be enough (see ***Distinguish between rhythmic and melodic music***, page 29). The notes that will be distinguished as short will be determined by the context. Sometimes a half-note is short compared to the surrounding ones (for example several whole-notes).

The "Subordinate Clause" Rule

or

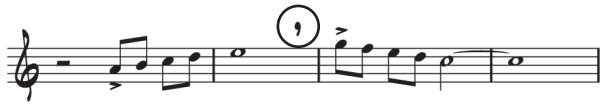
Every new phrase ("Subordinate Clause") should have an accent on the first note

In language, a *Subordinate Clause* is often what appears after a comma sign - the second or last part of the sentence (some sentences have several *Subordinate Clauses*). In music, a *Subordinate Clause* could be defined as sudden short note values succeeding one or more longer notes that establish a kind of musical stop. When the phrase reenters (after the stop), we have a *Subordinate Clause*. For example, if the phrase lands on a whole-note, followed by a

string of eighth-notes, the first eighth-note should be clearly emphasized, even if it seems to appear in the middle of the phrase. In fact, the first eighth-note is the first note of the *Subordinate Clause*.

The "Subordinate Clause" Rule:
"The first note of the *Subordinate Clause* should be accentuated; emphasized just like the first note of the phrase!"

Fig. 29



"Mental Accent"

By this term, I refer to an accent that does not have to be written in the part and is not extremely pronounced, but at the same time it should be "felt". The *Mental Accent* exists more in the head of the player (mentally) than actually heard. If you use a *Mental Accent* at the beginning of a fast moving line/phrase, it can function as a "vitamin injection", so that the beginning of the phrase receives more energy and better timing. The first note of a fast moving line/phrase is the best example of where a *Mental Accent* could be used.

Phrase on the very first run-through

Most musicians want to learn the notes first and "the music" - phrasing and the like - later. However, the interaction (ensemble playing) then becomes more difficult since each musician does not understand the meaning of the notes and the lines of the other musicians. Try to phrase on the very first run-through, then you will understand the meaning of all the musical phrases of every part. You will see the context quicker and learn the piece faster. If you yourself are making a mistake at a certain spot and the player beside you plays correctly (with conviction) at that very spot, then you will learn from him: "Yes, that is the way it should be played!" Musicians learn from each other under the condition that everyone is confident and tries to phrase on the first attempt. This is not easy, but if you get used to this procedure, then the work will flow easier and you will learn faster.

"Nestico's 3 & 4 Offbeat" Rule

Sammy Nestico's music is, for many musicians, the foundation of the modern, "mainstream" big band tradition of rhythm, phrasing, and the like. His arrangements on the albums "Have a Nice Day" and "Basie Straight-Ahead" are probably the most played charts by amateur big bands all around the world, historically speaking. Sammy loves rhythms with a short syncopation on the offbeat of 3, often followed by a long syncopation on the offbeat of 4, and he uses it a lot. Study, for example, "Switch In Time" at letter G where these rhythms occur in more than half of the first 16 bars. These notes need to be emphasized. They should be played "through the roof", but in many bands they stay unaccented which makes the phrasing/rhythm uninteresting. **In medium and slow tempos these notes are often played too early** since a triplet-eighth means the third triplet of the beat (67%). Fig 30a shows a common notation and 30b a more correct one.

Fig. 30a  *wrong*

Fig. 30b  *correct*

Short syncopations (off beats) should bounce

Short syncopations should almost always "bounce" and be more emphasized than surrounding notes (downbeats, long notes). Nestico's 3 and 4 offbeats should therefore have maximum bounce. Jazz and related music is largely built on syncopations. To summarize, they should be fun, emphasized, and exaggerated.

Fig. 31 

Bring out what is between the notes

Between the notes, you can find bends, glissandi, falls, do-its, and the like. There is a tendency for musicians to focus only on the notes, forgetting many things connected with phrasing. Things that are written between the notes are sometimes even more important than the actual notes themselves. Many times they make up the actual essence of

the music. Much of the language of jazz lies here, and therefore these things have to be tastefully exaggerated.

The "Fall" Rule

A *fall* is almost always some sort of climax of the phrase, of the entire piece, or part of the piece. It should always have an extra attack - a big distinctive attack - even if there is no accent notated on the actual fall note. You should also crescendo through the fall, so a sound that I call "gravel" appears. If a crescendo is not being played, the fall might be heard as a *Dah*, phonetically, instead of a more suitable *Daoo*. There is a minimum length for a fall to sound like one, and not as a *Dah* (long note). In playing a short fall, you need to reach a long way over a short period of time for the "gravel" to appear.

Falls might need to be rehearsed just like most other things. Make a loop (see ch. 2.22) of a few bars where you repeatedly make a new fall every other bar or every fourth bar. This procedure might seem odd or different among some musicians, but that is no reason for not doing it (if it is necessary).

The Fall Rule:

1. A fall is almost always the climax of the phrase.
2. The fall should always be accentuated.
3. Crescendo through the fall with the help of the "gravel" sound. You should "work" through the fall.

Note: When learning point #3, many musicians tend to improperly prolong the fall. Make a point of telling them that the length of the fall is not the issue - even a short fall has to be "worked through". It is a question of reaching a long way in a short period of time.

A short, explosive fall is what I usually call a "Gunman-Fall". The image here is of a gunman who shoots very fast and unexpectedly "from the hip".

"Foreplay" (playful naming)

Foreplay is connected to the ***Fall rule*** concerning the length of the note before the actual fall. The most common procedure is to hold the note very briefly, for only fractions of a second (Fig. 32a). However, you can make the *Foreplay* considerably longer - one or several bars (Fig. 32b) - and rehearse an artistic gesture which can be quite exciting. Either make a collective decision of an exact note value for the *Foreplay*, or just let the lead trumpet player decide. In that case, he/she has to be very consistent and play it the same length every time. It is important to "grab hold" of your note before starting the fall. The note has to be established in the ear of the listener, even if very quickly, before the fall begins.

Fig. 32a

Fig. 32b

Shakes

Many musicians lack confidence in their ability to play a good *shake*. Therefore, they often stop shaking halfway through the note. The *shake* rule states that everybody has to be shaking, even those who think they really cannot play a good one. The director should tell these players to make as much "noise" as possible to sound like a real shake. This way they support their lead player, who often is left alone in the shake. The saxes cannot shake, but they can make a trill with a larger interval than a second, preferably a third. This kind of trill sounds much more like a shake than the usual trill with the interval of a second. The brass instruments shake through jumping between adjacent notes in the overtone series, where the jumps are most often a bigger interval than a second.

The Shake Rule:

1. If you consider yourself unable to make a sufficient shake, you should try to make as much "noise" as possible that sounds like a real shake. Try to do it as convincingly as possible.
2. It is very important that the sound of the shake covers the entire note value. It is extremely common for inexperienced musicians to stop too soon.

The "Bend" Rule

"Where should the *bend* be placed, timing-wise?" Various clinicians have different opinions on this. Some might say that you should begin the bend where it is notated; others say that it should be

completed where it is notated. I state that the truth lies in between these descriptions. The bend is often started before the note is notated, and very often ends later than the note is notated. A simplification can have its advantages.

I prefer to start the bend slightly before where the note is notated and ending precisely at the actual spot where the note is placed. (Fig. 33a)**.**

I do this for practical reasons. The advantage with having a description, or "rule", is that everybody will make the bend at the same time and the result will be "tight". Fig. 33b shows how I believe most bends are executed (timing-wise).

Fig. 33a

Fig. 33b

Trills

A procedure for trills is *the trill rule*. It can be used to make all players perform the same kind of trill. Just like other rules, it cannot be applied in 100% of all cases, but in most instances it can.

The Trill Rule:

1. Attack the trill with a pronounced accent.
2. Perform the trill at high, or maximum speed.
3. Be sure to make the trill last the entire note value.

Glissando equals crescendo

For a *glissando* to be heard, you must *crescendo* through it, so that adjacent notes, the "gravel", can be heard (see ***The Fall Rule***, page 20). This is a rule that can be applied on almost 100% of all glissandi. As usual, the crescendo can have different curves and different levels of steepness, depending on the music. **Most of the time it is better to make the crescendo late and relatively sudden.**

The "Breathing" Rule

Breathe decisively and rhythmically! Musicians do not always do this, which could result in:

1. Not breathing at the same time
2. Not inhaling enough air
3. Having difficulties in creating good *Energy Releases* or *Inverted Accents* (see ***Articulation***, page 22)

Often it is better to breathe on a downbeat, because then it is easier to synchronize everyone's breathing. Therefore, you should breathe on downbeats in most cases even if you have to make a longer rest by doing so. *Breathing decisively and rhythmically also helps to create better timing*, as breathing is an integral part of rhythmic wholeness.

"Move The Air"

Move the air means that you, with the help of your air, quickly and explosively accent a note. For example, when you are playing every other note softly - loudly, softly - loudly, you could say that you are "moving the air" to the notes that are accentuated. In these situations, it is very common for the notes before and after the accent to be affected, as well. These notes, or at least part of them, inadvertently become loud, too. Train yourself to avoid this.

Fig. 34a

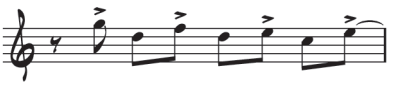
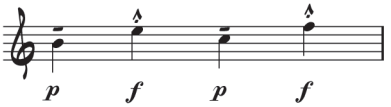
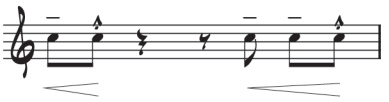


Fig. 34b



The "Repeated Note" Rule

This rule is used to embellish a series of repeated notes, as they could easily become dull. Even if you only have 2 or 3 notes, you can make a crescendo to make the "phrase" more interesting. However, this rule should not be applied as often as many of the other rules. It should be used with good judgment and taste.

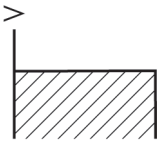


Articulation

The Brick

The Brick is a symbol which represents a long, straight, uniform note with a shape similar to a brick. As mentioned before, it is very common to be careless with the release of a note because most musicians are more focused on the beginning of the note, rather than the release. If you add an "edge" to *The Brick*, you have a good description of how to play a long accentuated note. The edge looks similar to an antenna. *The Brick* should be played with an edge at the beginning (*Distinction of Attack*, page 22), and an *Energy Release* at the end of the note (page 23).

Fig. 35



The Anthill

The Anthill is to a great extent the opposite of *The Brick*. Instead of an abrupt ending, *The Anthill* has a phrase ending diminuendo at the end of the note. In African-American music, *The Brick* is much more common than *The Anthill*, while in music from the classical era the situation is reversed. *The Anthill* symbol is derived from how it looks from the side, against a tree in the woods. ***The Anthill* should only be used when a diminuendo is notated!**

Fig. 36

The Brickhill

This type of note is a fusion of *The Brick* and *The Anthill*. It consists of a phrase-ending diminuendo like in *The Anthill* but it ends sharply just like *The Brick* (see Fig. 37b). You could describe it as 50% Anthill followed by 50% Brick.

This is used much more seldom than *The Brick*, even if no diminuendo is notated on the actual note (which rarely is the case). As mentioned above, *The Anthill* is only used when a diminuendo is notated. The most common use of *The Brick Hill* (or perhaps the only use of it) is in a longer series of three or more syncopated quarter-notes (or tied-over eighth-notes - see Fig. 37a). *The Brick Hill* creates a bouncing feeling or a feeling of pushing something in front of you. (Note: In Ex. 37a, the last note is a *Brick* and is therefore illustrated as such in Ex. 37b).

Fig. 37a

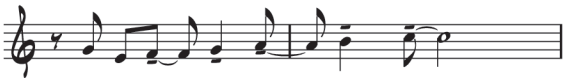
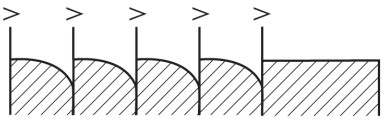


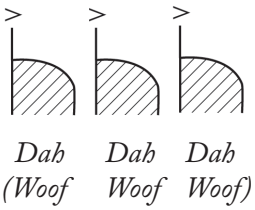
Fig. 37b



The Dog

The Dog is similar to *The Brick Hill* only with an actual rest (space) between the notes (see Fig. 37c). If it is executed correctly, and with an accent, it could be likened to the sound of a barking dog. *The Dog* also creates a bouncing feeling just like *The Brick Hill*. It might also sound "cocky" – i.e. with attitude.

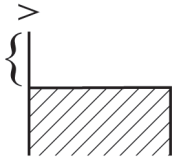
Fig. 37c



Distinction of Attack

This is perhaps the most useful of all rules under the parameters of articulation. *Distinction of Attack* equals the difference in volume between the short attack of the note and the actual note itself, as in the case of an ***fp*** or a long note brick. The existence of this term makes it easy to explain to a musician how you want their attacks to be – more or less *Distinction of Attack*.

Fig. 38

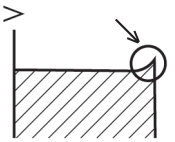


Distinction of Release

This is a parallel to the rule *Distinction of Attack*, but concerning the release of the note. It is not as

useful as *Distinction of Attack* since it is uncommon to accent a release, but there are spots where it could be used successfully. Many musicians probably have not considered that it is possible to accentuate the release of a note. Although, the most common scenario is that the release is unaccented, or that players inadvertently use a phrase-ending diminuendo, which should be avoided unless a diminuendo is written in the part (see ***Energy Release*** page 23 and ***The Brick*** page 22). The most common practice should be an Energy Release. In "funky" music, it might be stylistically correct to emphasize the release of long notes, in almost an exaggerated manner (see Fig. 39).

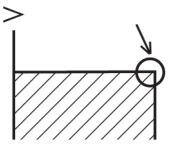
Fig. 39



Energy Release

In classical music, diminuendos are often used at the end of phrases, such as the common appearance of a small diminuendo on the last note(s). In Jazz and other African-American music, most releases are performed "straight" without phrase-ending diminuendos. This is preferred, as unintended phrase-ending diminuendos are a big problem in big band music. An *Energy Release* has a sharp edge which you could visualize as an incision by a scalpel on the release of the note (see Fig. 40). Phonetically, this equals the "t" in *Dat*. Without the sharp edge the note becomes *Doo*. If some players use the *Energy Release* and some use phrase-ending diminuendos, the result will be sloppy.

Fig. 40



Play with an edge

By an "edge" I mean a distinct attack - a big *Distinction of Attack*. Phonetically you can describe the attack as a "D", if a long note is described as *Doo*. If there is an accent marked on the note, you should always play with a distinct edge. To play with an edge means using a distinct (sufficient) *Distinction of Attack*, consistently. This should be common practice in big band music, especially rhythmic passages (page 29, ***Distinguish between rhythmic and melodic music***).

Tongue cut-off

A *tongue cut-off* is when the tongue cuts off the air-stream and the sound suddenly stops. Phonetically you can describe it as the "t" at the end of *Dat* (short note) or *Daaht* (longer). The *tongue cut-off* is recommended for most releases in traditional big band jazz, as in a brick. Ending without the "t" brings muddiness and a loss of energy to the release. A *tongue cut-off* is preferred to achieve an *Energy Release*. In classical music, the *tongue cut-off* is seldom used.

Inverted Accent

This applies particularly to the horn players. The *Inverted Accent* occurs when everyone releases the note at the exact same time with an *Energy Release*. What happens then is that **the silence itself creates an accent**, almost a shock, since silence constitutes the opposite of a loud sound. If even just one horn player sustains the note longer than the others, there will be no such effect. Of course, in principle this applies to the rhythm section as well, but it is more common and more evident with the horns.

This term, just like *The Brick* and the *tongue cut-off*, was created to focus the musicians' attention on how and where to end a note correctly. Normally, musicians focus on beginning the notes at the same time, but very little regard is given to ending at the same time. In Fig. 41a, you see a successful *Inverted Accent*, and in Fig. 41b, you see an unsuccessful one. An unsuccessful *Inverted Accent* happens when one or several musicians sustain the note longer than the others, or when they make an indistinct release or even a phrase-ending diminuendo. Fig. 41b illustrates several musicians with different releases.

Fig. 41a

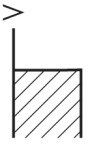
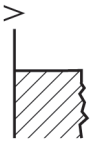


Fig. 41b



Ones and Zeroes

This means in my vocabulary short notes/long notes. The symbol *Ones* and *Zeroes* is a metaphor to the digital world where only ones and zeroes exist. The essence of what I am trying to describe is that only long or short notes exist - nothing in between. Musicians should ask themselves: "Short or long, short or long" constantly. Different opinions of the length of notes contribute more than almost anything else to the feeling of a "loose" or sloppy band.

Rhythm section players generally have less knowledge about this matter than horn players because it is not heard as clearly if, for example, guitar, piano, and bass players sustain their notes the same length. Rhythm section players play with *Energy Releases* more seldom than horn players. An instrument like the piano has a "built in" phrase-ending diminuendo since the note cannot be affected after the key has been pressed down and the sound slowly fades away.

The most common situation is that musicians play long notes where they should be short rather than the opposite. This cardinal error in big band music is all too common. There is a lot of notation that is unclear about the length of notes and, in fact it is quite uncommon to have notation that is totally clear in this respect. A pedagogical "trick" I have used to correct this problem is saying to the band "So far today, all of us together have played about 400 long notes that really should have been short!" This usually makes players pull themselves together and be more careful concerning the short notes (see page 56, ***Horn players' most common mistake***).

The "Short/Long" Rule

Alternating between long and short notes, continuously, is hard. What usually happens is that long notes become a little too short and short notes become a little too long. The latter is the most common situation. The *short note/long note Rule* states that you need to exaggerate the differences, especially if there are continuous shifts. You should also seek the short notes (above) and play them with more emphasis than the long ones. When music shifts between long and short, the short notes often have a *Rooftop Accent*. Then *"The Rooftop Accent Rule"* should be applied, so that the rooftops are more emphasized than surrounding notes (see ***The Rooftop Accent*** rule, page 18).

Fig. 42

General Accents

or

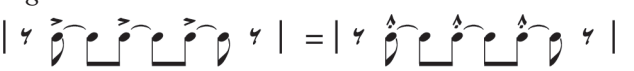
Short notes in old-fashioned (incorrect) notation

In older notation, especially from the 30's to the 50's (but sometimes even later) there is quite a bit of indistinct notation of short notes. A "regular" accent means full note value. During this period, both short and long notes were notated by this accent. It is obvious that this automatically gives rise to misunderstandings. Therefore I have created the term *General Accents* to facilitate the execution of arrangements with this kind of notation.

General Accents means that a decision is made (at the rehearsal) that a certain accent should be played a certain way, for example:

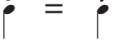
1. Tied-over quarter-note syncopations are played like regular Rooftop Accents (but on offbeats).

Fig. 43



2. Straight quarter-notes (downbeats) are played like regular Rooftop Accents (short), even if the note has no accent. (Fig. 44)

Fig. 44



3. Then the following question arises: "Should all notes with a "regular" accent be played short?"

   Answer: "No, only notes up to the length of a quarter note, not longer notes (see page 99, ***Notation psychology***)!"

"The Machine Gun"

This is something that applies to young and inexperienced bands in particular. *Machine Gun* means that young and inexperienced players have difficulties playing sustained "jazz eighths". Instead, they shorten them. This becomes very edgy and does not swing, and sounds a bit like a machine gun. Tell your players not to shorten the jazz eighths, and instead to play a cool "jazz tenuto" with full note value on every note (see Fig. 45). As soon as there is a gap between the notes it starts sounding like a machine gun (see Fig. 46). Draw notes with and without gaps in between and describe the difference between jazz tenuto and *The Machine Gun*.

Fig. 45 and 46 show a musician playing "jazz eighths", but in different ways; jazz tenuto and *Machine Gun*, respectively.

Fig. 45 "Jazz tenuto"

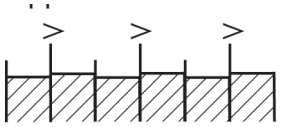


Fig. 46 "Machine Gun" (TAH-Syndrome)

The "TAH-Syndrome"

The *TAH-Syndrome* is an explanation and an elucidation of the term *Machine Gun*. A good jazz tenuto sounds *Doo-Doo-Doo*, phonetically. The *Machine Gun* sounds like *Tah-Tah-Tah*. The reason is that there was a gap between the notes (see Fig. 46). It is the actual gap that makes a *Doo* into a *Tah*, and I have chosen to call this phenomenon the *TAH-Syndrome*. This definition works not just for the notes in a series of jazz eighths, but for other notes as well to explain the desired attack you want at a specific point - TAH or not TAH, for example. A TAH could be the right kind of attack to give to a long note that should be pronounced (making a gap just before the long note).

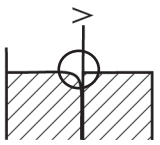
Fig. 47a

Fig. 47b

"The Invisible Hole"

As mentioned above a TAH could sometimes be the right kind of attack to give to a long note that should be pronounced. This is actually what many skilled musicians do when they want an emphasized attack, perhaps between two long notes. They create a "hole" or rather a drop of intensity (volume) right before the attack of the next note. This way it is easier to make the attack pronounced.

Fig. 48



Semi-Legato

Semi-Legato is what you call a note if it has a weak or muddy attack which sounds almost like a legato. If you want a note to be accented you should avoid the *semi-legato* and instead play with an edge. You can hear recordings with excellent musicians sometimes playing *semi-legato*. The musicians we hear on famous recordings have excellent control over breathing and articulation, so they can manage to make a clear, distinct attack using only the air (see *Move The Air*, page 21). This is much harder for amateurs.

I recommend that first you carefully learn to play with an edge, meaning no legato, and then become more free in your playing later on, when you have full control. One example where it would be a definite disadvantage to play *semi-legato* is a phrase-ending of the type *Doo-Dat*. A *semi-legato* style of playing here would result in a phonetical *Doo-Wop*, which in no way has the clarity of a *Doo-Dat*.

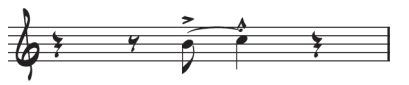
But, of course there are instances where a *semi-legato* way of playing could be an advantage (see below).

Avoid approaching a "Rooftop-Dat" with a legato

In my opinion, it is especially important **not** to play legato when approaching a short note, usually being a quarter-note with a rooftop accent. As mentioned above, a phonetical *Doo-Wop* (legato or *semi-legato*) in no way has the clarity of a *Doo-Dat*. Many times professionals attack with a legato or *semi-legato*, but this is more difficult and requires very developed breathing and tone production techniques, which amateurs do not always have.

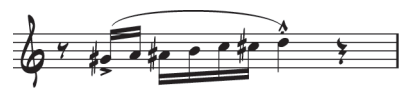
I can think of **two exceptions to this rule**, and the first involves an eighth-note (offbeat) approaching a rooftop quarter-note (downbeat), as in ***Example A*** below. The second involves fast moving lines with short note values (***Example B***, below).

A



OK!

B



OK!

"Legato Prohibition"

Along the lines of the reasoning in the Rule *Semi-Legato* and *"Avoid approaching ..."*, my opinion is that **legato should only be used in the instances listed below**. What should be used of course is the Jazz Tenuto.

1. Fast moving lines, usually in the saxes or trumpets - quick eighth-note triplets, sixteenth-notes or shorter note values. (see example B above)
2. Long background notes (see *The Long Background-Note Rule*)
3. Some melodic lines. These melodic lines are more common in Latin and Pop music than in swing jazz
4. As a soloist (melody), you can usually choose your own articulations, although they have to fit within the overall context of the piece

I try to make every band I direct adhere to this rule, although it is, of course, very controversial. There are many recordings with the finest musicians around playing a lot of legatos, but remember that legato takes away a lot of the rhythmic distinction that is so important to African-American music. Moreover, the biggest advantage with using this rule is that it makes everyone play alike, which also strengthens the rhythmic intensity and creates a tight and uniform sound.

The "Long Background Note" Rule

Long background notes, like half and whole notes, should most often be played legato or with a soft tenuto. It is important that musicians have the capacity to play a soft enough tenuto or a legato to make background notes work. Very often there are no legato slurs notated in the parts. They can also easily be mistaken for phrasing slurs (see below), which can cause misunderstandings of how specific notes should be attacked. Background notes, for obvious musical reasons, should seldom be attacked with accents because then they would no longer be background notes. If your band has worked extensively with playing with an edge, big *Distinction of Attack* and the like, there is a risk of players becoming "overambitious", and playing all notes accentuated. In most cases, long background notes should not be accentuated.

The "Phrasing Slur" Problem

Very few musicians know the difference between phrasing slurs and legato slurs. Therefore many musicians play legato when they see a phrasing slur. The converse - players mistaking a legato slur for a phrasing slur, is much rarer. If you were to read a dictionary of music notation, you would find that the difference between a phrasing slur (Fig. 49a) and a legato slur (Fig. 49b) is that the phrasing slur begins and ends further away from the note head than does the legato slur. Can you see the difference? This is the cause for many misunderstandings on this point. Example Fig. 49c shows with an over-explicit notation how the phrase should be played. This type of notation rarely or never exists, unfortunately.

Many, probably most, of all notated phrasing slurs are needless. Knowing how long the phrase stretches is seldom the problem for the individual musician. You cannot blame the players for these misunderstandings since the slurs look almost exactly the alike. Several ways of notation are needed, maybe different colors? "Unnecessarily notated phrasing slurs makes the band play worse!" Teach them the difference between phrasing slurs and legato slurs, and explain the problem.

Fig. 49a Phrasing slur

Fig. 49b Legato slur

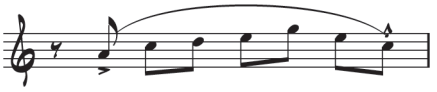
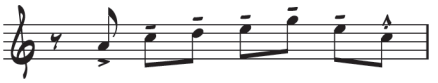


Fig. 49c Notation of actual (correct) performance without Phrasing slur (jazz tenuto)



The "Triplet" Rule

This rule implies that quarter-note triplets, half-note triplets and triplets with longer note values, should be played in a way that each and every note is accentuated (Fig. 50). This does not concern eighth-note triplets where usually only the first note of the group (of 3) is accentuated (or many times none at all). This results in a feeling of changing the manner of execution when playing triplets (with longer note values than eighth-notes).

Fig. 50

The Badger

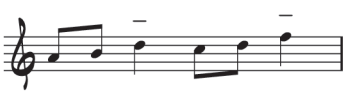
The Badger is a rule connected to long notes that appears at some sort of climax such as, for example, long, loud final chords. The implication is that when you have "grabbed hold of" this often high and important note, you must sustain it at all costs. The saying is that a badger that bites a person does not let go until the person is dead, or it hears the sound of crushed bones (although this is not true). What happens many times at high points is that many players are unable (or unwilling) to sustain this note. It is important to do so (like *The Badger*) and preferably as straight and stable as possible. A good example where to use *The Badger* is, as mentioned above, final chords, but it could also be in a demanding shout chorus, for example. Negligence from musicians results in unbalanced and "messy" final chords, and the like. Make your musicians sustain these types of chords straight and balanced. You can practice this by sustaining chords exceptionally long, to make a habit of sustaining chords of this type in a disciplined manner, until the director releases them.

It is more difficult to play a distinct, short note after a long note or a long phrase

In my opinion, the reason for this being is partly that the musician may be tired after a long note or a long phrase. Part of it is also because it is difficult to quickly shift from concentration on an open air flow, to concentrating on making the tongue cut the air stream and produce a short note. You should be careful with short notes in long phrases, after long notes, or, after which is most difficult: *a shake*.

"The Hotplate Syndrome"

This syndrome concerns mainly long quarter notes. A quarter-note in medium and fast tempos can seem like a "short" note. This is the main reason why musicians play them too short. Most often it concerns occasional long quarter-notes and not a number of repeated ones, like in the example below.



"The long note/short note Paradox"

In my world, only short and long notes exist, no half or semi-long as spoken of by some musicians. "How long need a note be to be regarded as long or short, respectively?" This question probably cannot be answered by anyone.

My definition is that all notes that end abruptly, with an *Energy Release*, *Inverted Accent* and the like, are short in nature.

A relatively long note will appear to be short in nature if it ends abruptly (see Fig. 52).

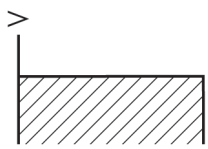
All notes that end with a phrase-ending diminuendo, or *The Anthill*, are according to my definition, long in nature.

A note that ends with a phrase-ending diminuendo could be felt as a long note even if it is only an eighth-note (see Fig. 53). "How long is a note that ends with a phrase-ending diminuendo?" Some people will hear it as being one length, while others will hear it as another length. A dog, who hears better than humans, will probably hear it as a longer note.

The conclusion of this reasoning is that there are only four possible types of notes, length-wise:

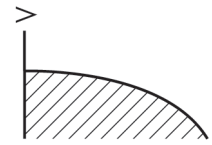
1. Short note of the short type, *Dat*
Fig. 51

2. Long note of the short type, *Daaht*
Fig. 52



3. Short note of the long type, *Doo*
Fig. 53

4. Long note of the long type, *Dooh*
Fig. 54



Now you're probably asking yourself, "What type is a 'regular' whole-note in medium tempo?" My answer: "It depends on how it is released!" If this whole-note is played like a *Brick* it will be a *Daaht* (with an *Energy Release*). Just because it has an *Energy Release (t)* it does not need to be heavily accentuated (see *Distinction of Release*, page 22). How abruptly and accented the release should be is determined by stylistic criteria and the musical taste of the director. If it is played like an *Anthill* (with a phrase-ending diminuendo) it will be a *Dooh*. The term *Long Note/Short Note Paradox* has been invented to make musicians think more carefully about how a note should be ended (released). Above all, the musician should become more aware of his own way of releasing a note.

Articulation in Different Styles

Thad Jones

One of his trademarks is straight quarter-notes with rooftop accents, many times on the fourth beat of the bar. Use the *Rooftop Accent* rule, which states that this kind of note should be very pronounced/emphasized, short and played with an upbeat feeling. They should be played with an upbeat feeling even though it might not be an actual upbeat. It is very common that this kind of note is "hidden away" and made unaccented and indistinct. This kind of note should preferably be stopped with a *tongue cut-off* to become distinct enough. Thad Jones often wrote long, jumpy phrases with rooftop accents in the beginning, middle, and ending of the phrase. This is one of the reasons why these types of rooftop accents are so difficult to play in his music (see ***It is more difficult to play a distinct, short note after a long note or a long phrase***, page 27).

The music of Bob Mintzer

Since Bob often writes long notes; half-notes and whole-notes, you should think carefully about how to attack them. In his music a clean, almost classical tenuto or legato will be preferred most of the time. Some players attack Bob's long notes with an accent, which is something you should not do for the most part (unless an accent is written in the part - see ***The Long Background Note Rule***, page 26).

Dynamics

Structural Listening

Structural Listening is something that many people would probably call being musical. By this term I mean that you should at all times listen for what function your own part has in the music. For example, if you yourself have a series of whole-notes, it is a good assumption that somebody else has a part, maybe a more melodic line, that should be brought out more. Then you should stand back and let the other part come forward. Long notes can sometimes serve as "melody killers"; that is that they kill the melody and what should be brought forward: "Be careful with your long notes; do not play them too loudly" (unless they are the melody)!

Protect the melody

The melody (the theme) should always be heard. But, who has the melody? Who ought to be heard right now? Use your *Structural Listening*. Long background notes are probably the melody's worst enemy, so be careful with them. If you have a series of whole-notes, you probably do not have the melody. Let the melody come through. It is very important that those who carry the melody assume their responsibility. Example: trumpets in the middle and low register often have problems coming through when playing the melody, especially in less experienced bands. Ask the trumpet players to "use more air" and play out, without changing the character of the music. Bob Mintzer often lays the melody in the low and middle register of the trumpets. In my experience, the players play too softly in these instances, with the result being that the melody is not heard.

"Percussive Notes"

By *Percussive Notes* I mean non-melodic, often detached, notes that should be played in a percussive-like manner. These types of notes are very common in big band music. ***Percussive Notes*** **should be played one or two dynamic levels higher than written; minimum *f*.** The notes have a rhythmic nature, and since they are short they are not "in the way", covering something, for example, the melody. They will be even more effective if they are played with "explosive" attacks.

The Percussive Note rule:

1. **Always play them *f* no matter what dynamic is indicated**
2. **Play them with "explosive" attacks**

Distinguish between melodic and rhythmic music

Melodic music often contains a lot of legato playing and, less frequently, strong accents. You can, with advantage, use an almost classical legato and a very soft and controlled tenuto or jazz tenuto. This is something that classically trained musicians find easier to do than non-classically trained musicians.

In rhythmic music, you can make more use of harder attacks (bigger *Distinction of Attack*). Here you should most often *Play With An Edge* (see page 23). If I hear musicians play with unclear, muddy attacks (not enough *Distinction of Attack*), I usually say, "Don't forget that this is rhythmic music and our best weapon to make the music more interesting is our attacks!"

For a crescendo or a diminuendo to be heard, a difference between top and bottom of at least two dynamic levels are needed.

This range of course is not exact, but merely serves as a description of the fact that crescendos and diminuendos need to be exaggerated to be heard. I assert that a crescendo from ***mf*** to ***f*** is very difficult to perceive. If you use this rule as a starting point, then the following rule can be connected to it:

If the arranger wants you to make a crescendo of only one dynamic level, you should come down one dynamic level at the beginning of the phrase and then let the crescendo move up two dynamic levels.

Then there is a good chance that the crescendo and the intended effect becomes audible.

Three different ways of making a crescendo

There are basically three ways of making a crescendo, which are listed below. One might think that the linear crescendo (A) would be the most useful, but it is quite the opposite. In my opinion the exponential crescendo (B) is the most useful and the linear crescendo the least. The third variant is "Terrace Dynamics" (C) which was the only model for dynamics until the 18th century. My own crescendo, "*The Holmquist Model*" (below) is derived from the exponential crescendo.

Linear Crescendo

A.

This crescendo is best used for long crescendos – about four bars minimum (in a medium tempo). As mentioned above, the linear crescendo is probably the least useful crescendo, and not good for a ***fp*** on a whole-note, for example.

Exponential Crescendo

B.

This is the crescendo that you should use most of the time when the duration is no longer than let's say four bars.

Terrace Dynamics

C.

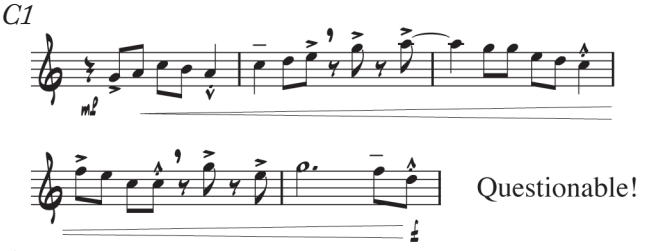
This is a graphic symbol of **Terrace Dynamics** (C above).

A cliché among composers and arrangers is to write a crescendo "hairpin" for a long phrase, which really consists of a series of subordinate clauses (parts of phrases), where it would be better to use a new dynamic for each one.

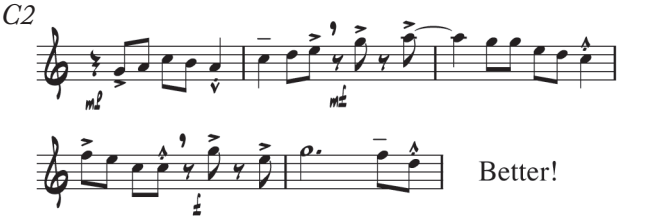
See the difference between the graphic crescendo C1 and the **Terrace Dynamics** notated in C2. Note that this is only one phrase, consisting of three subordinate clauses (*mp, mf, and f*).

In my opinion, C2 is a much better way of notating this phrase. C1 is more of a theoretical way of notating since it gives the impression of being a linear crescendo, which would be difficult to perform in reality.

C1



C2



Crescendo using the "Holmquist Model"

This model means starting the crescendo after exactly half of the note value and releasing the note at the very climax. It is very important that the climax appears at the very end of the note. If you reach the high point too early, an anti-climax will arise. The graphic curve of the crescendo looks like the shape of a trumpet seen from the side, with a steeply rising curve (exponential). When the crescendo starts (later than what is common) it rises fast. How steep the rise will be and how high (volume) you should climb is decided by stylistic criteria. In funk and beat music, a steeply rising curve will work well; the curve in traditional jazz will, for the most part, be less steep. The *Holmquist Model* is an exponentially rising crescendo (Fig. 55a) as opposed to a linear crescendo (Fig. 55b).

Fig. 55a

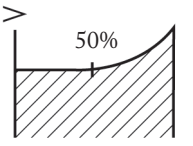
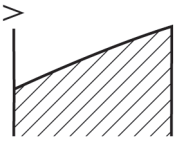


Fig. 55b



This rule has come about because most bands make their crescendos too early, which makes it hard to maintain the intensity towards the ending of the

note. Here I want to point out that, for example, the Basie band does not make crescendos similar to the *Holmquist Model*. They usually reach the climax much earlier, perhaps after 70 to 80% of the note value. An important reason to choose the *Holmquist Model* is that everyone knows very clearly when to start the crescendo. It is also easier to perform since the climax appears at the very end. The Basie crescendo is more physically demanding since the climax is reached earlier and the player has to maintain a loud note (often high), which can be hard.

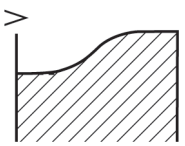
"Basie Crescendo"

Here, I want to describe how the Basie band (and perhaps a majority of bands) most often makes its crescendos. This is a sketch of a "normal" crescendo, for example on a whole-note. The Basie band (on records from the '50s and '60s) made crescendos that started rather early (25 to 30% into the note), and reached the climax at approximately 70 to 80% through the note. This is early compared to the *Holmquist Model* (100%). A *Basie Crescendo* is more difficult to perform for two reasons, as mentioned above:

1. There is no evident starting point: 23% or 29% of the note value?
2. If you reach the climax at 70 to 80% of the note value, it is physically harder to maintain the note at this dynamic level (*f*, *ff*)

If you are unable to maintain the note, an anti-climax will occur. Of course there are also artistic aspects of a crescendo. If a *Basie Crescendo* is more aesthetically appealing to you, then you should use it, even though it is more difficult to perform and have the band sound tight. You can also invent your own crescendos with new types of curves.

Fig. 56



Fortepiano using the "Holmquist Model"

Make a strong accent (big *Distinction of Attack*, above) in the first micro-second of the note, at least two dynamic levels louder than the actual long note. After the attack you should come down extremely quickly to the soft dynamic level (most often ***p***). Next, hold the note in a low dynamic level to exactly 50% of the note value. Finally, play the *Holmquist Model* (with a steep exponential curve) crescendo.

The most common problems are:

1. Not enough *Distinction of Attack*
2. Not coming down to a low enough dynamic level after the strong accent (not enough *Distinction of Attack*) (Fig 57a)
3. It takes too much time before the note stabilizes (Fig. 57b)
4. The crescendo starts too soon, before 50% of the note value

It is difficult to both make a big *Distinction of Attack* and very quickly stabilize the note on a low dynamic level. There is a great risk of missed notes, especially in the high register. If the lead trumpet player plays in a very high register, he/she cannot make as big of a *Distinction of Attack* as the players who are playing in the middle register. The fortepiano will still be distinguished by the listener if everyone who is able to make a big *Distinction of Attack* does so.

Fig. 57a

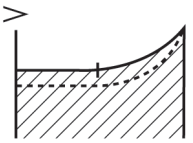
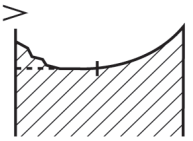


Fig. 57b



The "Reversed Crescendo" Rule

or

Diminuendos often start too early

This works just like crescendos but the other way around. It is very common that when musicians see a diminuendo on a whole-note, for example, they start decreasing the volume immediately after the attack. The diminuendo is most often notated at the beginning of the note which becomes incorrect, since a diminuendo cannot begin at the exact moment the note is attacked. The note must first be established, so that the listener can perceive it: "Aha! a C on ***mf*** !" Once established, it can become softer and softer.

The *Reversed Crescendo Rule* dictates that you should not begin the diminuendo until after half the note value.

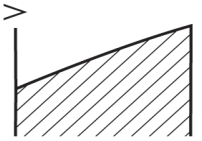
Fig. 58a

Fig. 58b

"Linear Crescendo"

A *Linear Crescendo* is most often suited for long, slow rising crescendos of 4 to 8 bars or more. The long sustained loud note of the *Basie Crescendo* and the steeply fast rising crescendo of the *Holmquist Model* are not possible in very long crescendos. Linear means a crescendo that rises at a uniform volume throughout.

Fig. 59



"Phrasing Crescendo"

The definition of a *Phrasing Crescendo* is a crescendo that is made for "decorating", a long note to keep it from becoming dull, but which does not have to be written into the part.

The director should tell the lead trumpet player, "Play a *Phrasing Crescendo* here!" However, most likely an experienced lead trumpet player will make such a crescendo already on the first play-through without anyone telling them so. These crescendos are performed at musically obvious places. That is the reason why many lead trumpet players almost automatically play *Phrasing Crescendos* where it is suitable. Fig. 60a shows the phrase without a *Phrasing Crescendo*, and Fig. 60b shows the phrase with such a crescendo.

Fig. 60a

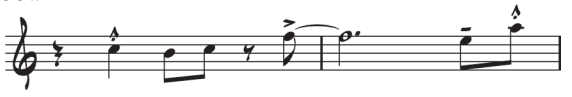
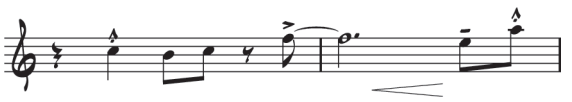


Fig. 60b



Good phrasing solves most problems with dynamics

(This rule could as well have been placed under the parameter ***Phrasing***).

One of the most common discussions in a band is whether or not one is playing too loudly. Whether or not one is playing too softly is almost never discussed. A good band should be able to play both loudly and softly. If the band is playing loudly without any phrasing, the music will feel thick and heavy (not good). Since a majority of big bands do not have perfect phrasing, playing too thickly and heavily becomes the primary problem and playing too loudly becomes the secondary problem. Many directors focus too much on dynamics and too little on phrasing. They tell their bands repeatedly that they are playing too loudly. It becomes some kind of "patent solution" which directors hide behind, when they should instead focus on teaching phrasing.

I state that in many cases, when you think the problem is dynamics, it really concerns phrasing much more.

If the horn players in a band phrase well, you will seldom experience problems with dynamics, as long as the "electric" instruments are not too loud. Dynamics are usually quite easy to handle; "Just play the dynamics as written!" Phrasing is a kind of dynamics on a micro-level and also a much more complex issue. If you can phrase, problems with dynamics will, for the most part, solve themselves.

If you listen to the great prototypes within this genre (big band music, jazz), you will discover that they can and often do play loudly, and sometimes very loudly! But, it never sounds thick and heavy - and they can also play very softly.

You just have to play loudly and softly, in the correct manner:

1. Never play so loudly that phrasing becomes impossible (see the rule, ***It is impossible to phrase at too loud a Dynamic level***, below)

2. While playing softly, you must be careful not to drag, which is very common, and not to lose the edge of the attacks (also very common). In soft dynamics, you often play

with less *Distinction of Attack*, which makes rhythms unclear and muddy. Keep a big enough *Distinction of Attack* even in soft dynamics.

The above concerns mainly the horn players.

It is impossible to phrase at too loud a Dynamic level

To be able to phrase well one has to be able to play with a clear distinction between all four Energy Levels. For example, if the average note has the "volume" equal to the Energy Level 3, then you won't be able to perform the Energy Level 4 without "hitting the ceiling." It is all too common that rhythm sections play too loud (especially in "beat"-music). This makes the horn players play louder than they are able to control. The director is responsible for making sure that the rhythm section is not playing too loud.

Conclusion: In order to be spared from problems with dynamics, one should make sure that:

1. **Horn players apply all the rules regarding phrasing correctly, so that they are able to play with a clear distinction between all four Energy Levels, thus creating movement in the vertical plane.**

2. **Horn players don't lose control over their tone production. Don't let tones "crack".**

3. **The drummer control dynamics, and bassists, pianists, and guitarists do not turn up their amplifiers too much. Clearly, they should not play louder than the drums.**

Bring the volume down in unison

Playing in unison sounds louder, in actual volume, than playing in parts. The experience might seem contradictory since chords and harmonies create interest, but it is still a fact. Since unison is already louder, there is no reason to use force and pressure here. Doing so only influences timing and intonation negatively. Since "Syncopations and accents have double value" (*The Syncopation Rule*, see page 15) it would be foolish to play too loud in unison. "How could you give syncopations double value if already playing in ***f*** or ***ff***!"

Increase the volume going from unison to harmony

A very common technique of arranging is to have the band playing in unison and then unfold into harmony at a high point. Since unison has greater volume, you have to increase the volume where the harmony begins. Practice hearing when the change occurs, and "push" more at this point.

In unison, there is no lead

In unison there is no lead. Therefore, it is important that the lead player stops "playing lead" and blends into the section by not playing louder than the others. The ideal unison is a situation where the sound of an individual player could not be perceived individually, but rather the sound of all players blends together. In the sax section, the tenor sound should often dominate the alto sound. A reason for this is that the lower register of the alto sound (where unison passages many times are found) might easily sound pressured. In the trombone section, the bass trombone player has to be careful not to dominate because of the bigger (and different) instrument.

Play louder in the "Root Register" (horn players)

A bass trombone and baritone sax player need to be able to shift volumes between different registers (occasionally this also applies to the entire trombone section and/or tenor saxes). If they are playing parts closely harmonized with the rest of the section, they should balance their volume accordingly with the others in the section. But, if they are playing in what I call the *Root Register*, most often below C3, they should be louder. In this register they are, most of the time, playing the same notes as the bass, often roots. This is the reason why I call it the *Root Register*. It is not only okay, but desirable to play louder in this register. The bass does not have to make these shifts because it is nearly always playing in this register anyway and does not have to balance its volume with a group of similar instruments.

The "Mute" Rule

When brass players use mutes, dynamic levels should be played significantly louder than written so that it can be heard, since the arranger almost always notates the "general" dynamic levels. If the

part says ***p***, I suggest that you play two dynamics higher, minimum ***mf*** . If it says ***mf***, then play ***ff*** and so forth. It is not easy to play ***ff*** in a part of the piece that perhaps has a beautiful or light character. This might feel a bit schizophrenic. For this reason you often have to ask the trumpet section (most of the time) repeatedly to play louder using their mutes.

Mutes also affect timing, at least the harmon mute. Tone production takes more time, therefore players have to push the time, playing with harmon. With other mutes this phenomenon is less significant or almost non-existent. What goes for the trumpets regarding mutes is equally valid for the trombones.

"General Dynamics"

This term means that composers/arrangers usually write the same dynamic level in all parts for example, not considering if some parts need to bring out the melody while others with long background notes need to stand back. I have never seen an arrangement where there is information about the principle for notation of dynamics (for example, whether or not if *General Dynamics* are applied). There is nothing to do but study the specific arrangement and draw conclusions from the context, if you want to know how the composer notates dynamic levels.

Good balance facilitates intonation

Example: If two or more musicians play in unison in the higher register, and intonation is bad, it is very common that one of the musicians backs off, plays softer, or even stops playing. In these situations, I will ask them to use *The Badger* (see page 27). Sustain the note and do not back off, but listen instead. If both (or all) musicians sustain their notes at the same volume, it almost seems like pitches target each other like missiles. My theory is that musicians search the right pitch continuously more or less consciously, and this is done much easier when the balance is good. Not all players will be able to hear what is wrong and exactly where their own pitch is at all times. But, you should force yourself to listen actively if intonation is bad and try to balance all parts.

"If all parts are heard in balance, it is easier to create good intonation!"

"Relative Dynamics"

Relative Dynamics means that all the musicians in the band do not have to play the same dynamics all the time. In beat music, for example, the rhythm section many times plays the same dynamics throughout the entire piece, while the horns vary, depending on the character of the phrase (following the phrase, phrasing). Also, within the horn section, different parts can have different dynamic levels depending on "what they have to say". One of the horn sections might have varied dynamics with a lot of phrasing, while another, statically, is playing long background notes. It is one-dimensional in thinking that all sections should always have the same dynamics, and there are lots of examples that contradict this way of thinking. If a band member asks, "Shall we play the same dynamics as they do?" You should explain this term and contemplate if *Relative Dynamics* could be useful here.

Make beginners play loudly/ distinctly and not too softly when learning ensemble playing

Beginners are very often afraid of standing out, to be heard individually. Many times they sit and wait for the person sitting beside them to take the initiative so that they themselves only need to follow without being heard too much. The result is that everyone plays listlessly and without courage, not taking responsibility for the result. If you make everyone play loudly (distinctly) by communicating that it is totally OK to make mistakes, but not to play listlessly and without courage, everyone will have to take responsibility for the result. This, of course, has to be combined with an effective learning process which, for example, includes singing hard rhythms and using a drum machine at sectional rehearsals (for the horns) and the like (see *Rehearsal Methodology*, see page 43).

The "Ming Vase" Syndrome

When playing a ballad or other soft music many players become affected by the *Ming Vase Syndrome*. This means that when attempting to play soft and "beautiful" many other aspects of music are lost; timing, maintaining of tempo, articulation, phrasing and more. Many times the tempo decreases and possible accents are not articulated correctly (big enough *Distinction of Attack*).

Phrasing involves emphasizing some notes more than others. Sometimes the emphasized/accented notes are not emphasized enough for the same reason.

"Work against the *Ming Vase Syndrome* when playing soft, beautiful music!"

Ask the electric instruments to turn the volume down

I have almost never directed a new band without having to ask either the bassist, guitarist, and/or keyboardist ("the electric section") to turn the volume down. Generally speaking, these musicians have a much higher demand for hearing themselves clearly (loudly) than do the horn players. For example, a saxophone player often does not hear himself/herself in a tutti nor can he/she change the situation. Use this argument to persuade "the electric section" to decrease their demands of hearing themselves at all times. If they play too loudly, especially the bass, it affects the entire band. What happens then is that the whole band starts to play louder and suddenly you have a "circus" that will never stop. The musicians with a volume button have power. "Do not let them misuse it!"

General Rules

"The Addition Effect"

This term could be applied to all four parameters: Timing, Phrasing, Articulation, and Dynamics. Obviously, the effects will be different in the varying parameters. *The Addition Effect* defines that as more musicians play incorrectly, the problem compounds itself. One mistake might not be noticeable, but if enough similar mistakes are made it will be disastrous, at a certain *Threshold Level* (see below). For example, if everyone in the band plays just a little too loudly, the result will still be that the total level is clearly too high. One musician playing with poor timing is better than everyone playing poorly. Fortunately, a musician who has less developed timing, intonation, etc., usually plays softer and tries to follow the more experienced players. Furthermore, these players seldom play a lead part, which is also critical.

Explain *The Addition Effect* to your musicians when you want to increase the level of the band and the accuracy of the playing. It concerns the individual musician's discipline and self criticism.

"Avoid even small mistakes, as when they are compounded they will become a problem!"

"Threshold Levels"

If each musician in the band is playing just a little bit too loudly, the overall volume will be too loud, as mentioned above. This occurs at a certain *Threshold Level*. If everyone lowers their volume just a little bit, the total volume will probably end up under the *Threshold Level*, which will make them sound good again. The term *Threshold Level* can, just like *The Addition Effect*, be used on all four parameters, for example:

"Our total volume is just a little bit above the *Threshold Level*. If everyone lowers their volume a tiny bit, then the total volume will fall below the *Threshold Level* and everything will be fine!" Or, "Our phrasing is below the *Threshold Level* needed to function well. We have to increase the difference in *Energy Levels* (see *Phrasing*, page 15) to reach above the *Threshold Level!*" Or, "We are dragging and falling below the acceptable *Threshold Level!*"

Aggressiveness is good

This term is most applicable for the parameter of articulation, but in fact, it is applicable to all of them. Aggressiveness is often the same as energy. Generally speaking, attacks are much harder in African-American music: Jazz, Pop, Rock, Soul, etc, than in classical music. African-American music is played with more *Distinction of Attack* (see *Articulation*, page 22). You could say that hard attacks are aggressive and create energy. Young and inexperienced players often play with total lack of phrasing, which to a great part equals lack of difference in *Energy Levels* (see *Phrasing*, page 15). This is also a loss of aggressiveness, and therefore a loss of energy. All these things can be defined as aggressiveness and are an important part of the African-American musical language.

"Teach young musicians at an early age to phrase, and play loudly with a big *Distinction of Attack!*" Use the *Dissolvent* (see page 53) and teach them the terms *Distinction of Attack, The Brick, Doo-Dat* (phonetic descriptions of short and long notes). Learning how to play loudly can be mentally liberating for many players, but evidently you should only play loudly when the music calls for it. To be able to phrase well the musicians need to learn: *Energy Levels*, *The Syncopation Rule*, *Follow the line of the phrase, Most important notes of the phrase*, which are the most important rules for phrasing. When music oscillates in the vertical plane it becomes more exciting (see *The Vertical-Perspective*, page 17), which often creates an enhanced experience of energy and aggressiveness.

Changed priorities for faster learning

More or less without thinking, most big band musicians have the following priority order, especially at a first run-through. I have not included articulation since my opinion is that very few big band directors work consistently and thoroughly enough with this parameter (unfortunately).

1. Play all the notes correctly.
2. Timing
3. Dynamics
4. Phrasing

For pedagogical reasons I want to change this priority as follows:

1. **Timing**
2. **Phrasing**
3. **Dynamics**
4. **Play all the notes correctly.**

The big difference is that I have put "play all the notes correctly" last in my preferred priority. It lies within the character of African-American music that rhythm is the most important parameter. If everyone in the band plays "rhythmically" together, you can get away with a number of "wrong" notes (but less so in the lead part.) If everyone has good and similar phrasing, this is even more true.

I have not included articulation, as mentioned above, although it is a very important parameter. The reason is just to make the description easier, since most bands are very much unaware of and seldom discuss this parameter in depth.

When a band plays a chart for the first time, it is very common that, when it gets technically difficult, the band drags to get more time to play all the notes correctly. There is also a clear tendency to disregard everything but the actual notes: dynamics, accents, bends, glissandi and the like. Tell your band that you want to change the priority. "Never drag, no matter how difficult it is; it is better to play a lot of 'wrong' notes!"

Phrasing is also a higher priority than playing all the notes correctly. Try to phrase correctly on the very first run-through (see ***phrase on the very first run-through***, page 19) because it is easier to play a *Phrasing Crescendo* than to play all the notes correctly in fast moving lines with a lot of sixteenth-notes. It is not difficult to play ***f*** for eight bars and then play ***p*** for eight bars; rather it is a question of priority.

"Bring out the music!" The music depends very much on timing, phrasing, and articulation; the actual notes just tell a tiny part of the story. With the help of the above model for changing the priorities you can get results surprisingly quickly. Above all, you get a general view of the new chart more quickly using this model.

The first time you try this model it is not easy for the musicians, since it concerns changing your frame of mind very drastically. But, this is a very useful exercise for the mental part of your musicianship.

Things to remember when introducing "The General Method" for the first time

When you present a group of people with this amount of new information, you will surely encounter some setbacks. In the beginning, the band may actually play worse than before (see *The Contrary Effect*, page 68). So, let the process take the time it needs: weeks, months, or years. The important thing is that the process to sounding better has been started. It is important to point this out to them when you start to rehearse. It will increase their confidence in you knowing beforehand what is going to happen. You will probably have to point this out quite a few times and ask them to continue playing regardless of the result, since it takes time for the new ideas to settle in sufficiently for them to become natural.

What often happens is that where accents were too weak, they will now be too loud, or where the tempo dragged, it now might rush. It is better not to correct this too early, just let them play on. Usually the problem sorts itself out. You should only comment on this if the assimilation takes too long, and then ask them to back off just a little bit.

It is good to rehearse in loops and at sufficiently slower tempos, especially now when so many things are new and there is so much to think about. Don't forget that rehearsing in loops is probably the most efficient way of rehearsing a technically or rhythmically difficult spot (see *Loops*, page 51). Let the musicians play a lot and interfere as little as possible. Then the result will come quicker than you expect.

When you start the rehearsal with the lecture on *The Rules* for the first time, it is important to tell the band that as the rehearsal moves along you will speak less and they will play more and more. After all, that is what they are there for.

Good luck!

OVERVIEW

and Cross-related Rules, Definitions and Procedures

Here is a list of the rules, definitions and procedures connected to the same phenomena in order to achieve greatest possible overview. I have enclosed shortened explanations which makes this list good for studying and remembering:

Maintaining of Tempo

High Tempos drag

Low Tempos are rushed

"Law of least resistance /Timing"
- Slowing down to a "comfortable" tempo.

Soft Dynamics make you drag

The Drum Machine
- Do not conduct a horn sectional without one, it helps create better timing.

Use a Metronome
- Most of the time when rehearsing a big band, especially when using "The Slow Motion Method".

Long Count-offs
- Used for establishing new tempos and focus on the actual tempo.

Tendencies of Timing

Galloping Syncopations
- Syncopations are almost always rushed.

"The Popcorn Rule"
- Prolonging short syncopations when trying not to rush.

Like draws to like
- An offbeat often wants to be followed by an offbeat and a downbeat wants to be followed by a downbeat.

Rushing on straight Quarter Notes
- Mostly young and inexperienced players.

Dragging on short Quarter Notes
- Mostly older players, "victims" of "The Basie Myth".

The Tied-over Syncopation Rule
- Late after the tie.

The Tied-over Triplet Rule
- Late after the tie.

Too late on Offbeats of 1 and 3
- Most common in high tempo.

Too early on the Downbeat of 2
- Most common in medium and slow tempo.

Late on the second and early on the fourth Sixteenth Note of the Beat
- Concerns mostly sixteenth note notation.

"Pyramids" and Divided Phrases
- Stay on top of the beat and sing the whole phrase within you.

Position On the Beat

"The Energy Barometer"
- A tool for making individual musicians - and whole bands - more aware of their position on the beat.

Indistinct attacks are conceived as further back on the beat

The transfer of the Jazz Triplet
- From ca. 67% of the beat to 50% between 70 and 280 bpm.

The Basie Myth
- The Basie band was not playing "behind the beat".

Rests

It is always hard to enter on time after a rest

Play through the rests
- To create better Timing and a more organic phrase.

"The Ghost-Rest"
- Inexperienced players "losing" a beat after a short syncopation.

Disturbances of Tempo

Crescendos and Diminuendos often create disturbances in timing

Drum fills often create disturbances in timing

Change of "Groove" often causes change in tempo

Improvised solos often cause an increase in tempo

Tools for Correct Entrances On Time

Subdivision
- Subdivide the beat to create better timing.

Points of Direction
- Rhythmic control stations.

Use the "Points of Direction" and the "Imaginary Points of Direction" to facilitate reading.

Start Signal
- Tool for entering correctly.

Count the sixteenth notes in Beat Music
- Always know on which sixteenth note of the beat you are about to enter.

Values of Emphasis – notes

The Syncopation Rule
- Syncopations and accents have double value.

Rotten Fish-Syndrome
- An emphasis equals greater *Distinction of Attack*, not greater volume on the whole note.

Energy Levels
- All notes have different *Energy Levels* depending on their rhythmic placement in the phrase and possible accent markings.

The most important notes of the phrase are the first, last – and highest note
- The first note of the phrase is most often forgotten.

"Rooftop" Accents
- Should be played; short, with great emphasis and the feeling of a pick-up.

Seek the short notes of the phrase
- They are usually the most important.

The Subordinate Clause-Rule
- The first note of the *Subordinate Clause* should be emphasized just like the first note of the phrase.

Mental accent
- An accent that is more "felt" than heard, good for first notes of fast moving lines.

Nestico's 3 and 4 offbeat-rule
- Sammy loves syncopations on these beats, they should bounce and not be played too early.

Creating Movement in the Vertical Plane

Follow the line of the phrase
- If the line goes up, crescendo.
- If the line comes down, diminuendo.

The Vertical Perspective
- The use of the *Vertical Perspective* is very important in creating excitement in music.

Phrase on the very first run-through
- This will make everyone learn the piece faster.

Short syncopations – offbeats should bounce
- High energy level.

Notes are not music
- Always try to find the best phrasing.

Things Between the Notes

Bring out what is between the notes
- Falls, Bends, Glissandos, Doits and more.

The Fall Rule
- A fall is a climax, it should be played with an accent, and you should crescendo through it.

Foreplay
- Equals the note value that is sustained before the Fall starts.

The Flare Rule
- If you can not flare make as much noise as possible that simulates a flare.

The Bend Rule
- The bend should be finished at the point where the actual note is placed.

The Trill Rule
- 1. Distinct attack
- 2. Maximum speed
- 3. Sustain the whole note value

Glissando equals Crescendo
- Make a late, exponential crescendo.

Attacks and Releases

Sustain long notes to their full note value

The Brick
- A long uniform note attacked with a clear *Distinction of Attack* and released with an *Energy Release*.

The Anthill
- A note that uses a phrase ending diminuendo, should not be used unless a diminuendo is notated.

Distinction of Attack
- The difference in volume between the attack and the actual long note.

Distinction of Release
- The difference in volume between the release and the actual long note.

Energy Release
- A sudden release with generates energy.

Play with an edge
- Edge = clear *Distinction of Attack*.

Playing straight – uniform notes
- Makes it easier to create a tight band.

Short and Long Notes

Ones and Zeroes
- Always distinguish between short and long notes.

The Short Note/Long Note Rule
- Exaggerate short and long notes.

"General Accents"
- Rules created to distinguish between short and long notes in imperfect notation.

Notation Psychology

The Long Background-Note Rule
- Play background notes with jazz tenuto or legato.

It is more difficult to play a distinct, short note after a long note or a long phrase

The Long Note/Short Note Paradox

Percussive notes
- Short notes that should be played with explosive attacks and minimum dynamic ***f***.

Use phonetic descriptions for short and long notes
- For learning hard rhythms by singing.

The most common mistake made by the horns
- Playing long notes where there should have been short.

Problems in Articulation

"The Machine Gun"
- A gap between the notes creates this sound.

The "TAH-Syndrome"
- A wider explanation of the above phenomena.

Semi-Legato
- Legato and semi-legato should normally be avoided in African-American music.

Avoid approaching a "Rooftop Dat" with a legato
- See above.

"Legato Prohibition"
- (see Semi-Legato and avoid approaching ..., above)

The Phrasing Slur problem
- Unnecessary notated phrasing slurs makes players play legato when they should not.

Definitions for Articulation

Tongue cut-off
- The tongue cutting off the airstream and thus ending the note.

"The Invisible Hole"
- A "unhearable tiny hole" created to easier make a good attack.

The Triplet Rule
- All triplets with longer note value than an eighth-note should all be emphasized, not just syncopations.

The Badger
- Sustain important long notes like final chords to their full value at all cost.

Melody and Accompaniment

Structural listening
- Understanding the function of your own and all other parts, at all times.

Protect the melody
- Long background notes i.e. can easily become "melody-killers".

Distinguish between melodic and rhythmic music
- Melodic music = jazz tenuto and legato. Rhythmic music = big *Distinction of Attack* and no legatos.

Crescendos and Diminuendos

Crescendo using the *Holmquist Model*
- An exponentially growing crescendo that starts after 50% of the note value and climaxes at the very end.

Basie Crescendo
- A crescendo that starts after ca. 25-30% of the note value and climaxes at ca. 70-80% of the note value.

Fortepiano using the *Holmquist Model*
- Problems:
  1. Not enough *Distinction of Attack*.
  2. Not coming down to a low enough dynamic level after the accent.
  3. It takes too much time before the note stabilizes.
  4. The crescendo starts too soon.

The Reversed Crescendo Rule
- Do not diminuendo too soon, wait until 50% of the note value just like a *Holmquist* crescendo.

Phrasing Crescendo
- A crescendo used "automatically" by the lead player to embellish a long note.

Linear Crescendo
- Better used in long crescendi, 4 bars or more.

Tools and Definitions for Dynamics

Good Phrasing solves most problems with dynamics
- Solve the problems with phrasing first and the problems with dynamics will also be solved.

Bring the volume down in unison
- Unison is louder than parts.

Increase the volume going from unison to parts

In unison, there exists no lead
- No individual sound should be heard.

Play louder in the "Root-Register"
- Mainly baritone sax and bass trombone should play softer in the middle register - close position voicings - and louder when play roots in the low register.

The "Mute" Rule"
- Play two dynamic levels louder in a mute.

"General Dynamics"
- When the arranger/composer notates same dynamics in all parts not considering individual parts that should stand out.

Good balance facilitates intonation
- If no one backs off when tuning is not perfect, it is easier to intone.

Relative Dynamics
- Very often different players and sections should use different dynamics depending on the function of their parts.

Make beginners play loud/distinct and not too soft when learning "Ensemble Playing"
- Creates many good effects.

"Dissolvent"
- The name of the method for the above mentioned procedure.

Ask the electrical instruments to turn the volume down
- Is something the director has to do very often.

2. Rehearsal Methodology

2.1 Planning the Rehearsal

Schedule a day, time, and a rehearsal room well in advance; preferably several months in advance. Most of the time with professional bands you have to schedule further in advance than if it is an amateur band. This way you have a better chance of getting all the members of the band to attend. Late scheduling often results in some musicians only being able to make either the rehearsal or the gig.

A good rule that is often overlooked:
"Attendance at rehearsals is mandatory if you want to play the gig."

This rule strengthens the morale of the band. Book a rehearsal room which is big enough and, preferably, equipped with rhythm section instruments and a small PA. It is best if you have one large and one smaller room. I recommend that the rhythm section and the horns rehearse separately when new material is worked on. The horns rehearse with a drum machine "click", which is amplified through the rehearsal PA, preferably with the sound of a closed hi-hat. The rhythm section frequently has a need to work on details quite different than the horns. They will want to work on grooves and different ways of accompaniment. The director should have sent parts and recordings of the charts to all members of the band well in advance. Nowadays the best thing is to put the recordings in a private file on the internet that only the band members have access to. The rhythm section will often want to listen back to these recordings during the course of the (sectional) rehearsal. The difficult passages for the rhythm section are usually found in quite different places than those for the horns. Furthermore, as stated previously, it is very useful for the horns to rehearse with a click. A drum machine does not drag when the horns do, and it does not get tired of playing the same passage over and over again. It will avoid all discussion about who is dragging (or rushing). Rehearsing with a drum machine "click" will quickly and effectively improve the timing of the horns. A good volume for the click is easy to control, something which is not always the case with a live rhythm section.

If there is only one rehearsal before the gig, it should not be scheduled on the same day as the gig if this can be avoided. The brass players in particular will become too tired, embouchure-wise. A couple of days for practicing, between rehearsals and gig, will also do everybody good. Even if the music has been distributed before the rehearsal, it is perhaps only later, after everything has been played through, that everyone knows where some practicing is required.

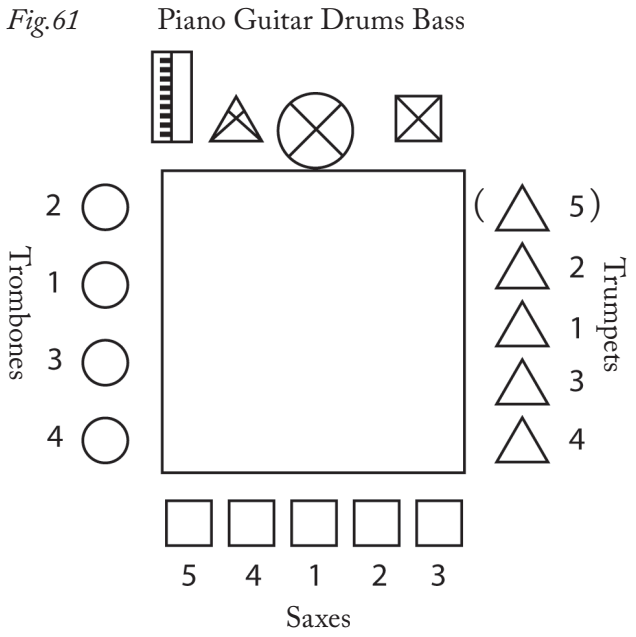
2.2 Band Set-up

Some books on this subject spend ten or more pages on band setup. This is not my intention. I do, however, want to stress one principle that is of the greatest importance: **Place the drums in a central position, so that all players can hear them!** The drummer is the boss of timing (and dynamics) and everyone has to be able to hear him or her.

During rehearsal (Fig. 61 below), it is best to sit in a square formation. The saxophone and trombone players will not get so tired aurally and mentally. This tiredness is common when you sit in concert formation. Place the drums in the middle of one of the square's sides. You can even pull the drums slightly into the square. The rest of the rhythm section players can be placed more freely. What I find to work best is to place the piano and guitar on one side of the drums and the bass on the other. If this cannot be done, it is permissible to place the rest of the rhythm section behind the drums, although the guitar and the piano have a close musical cooperation and need to be placed next to each other.

This is the ideal set-up for rehearsals:

Fig.61



At concerts the following applies (Fig. 62, right): (NB: The band is seen from the hall/audience)

* Horns on the right side, rhythm section on the left. Split the stage evenly down the middle: one side for the horns and one for the rhythm.

* The drums should be placed immediately next to the trombones (2nd). The bass will then stand slightly to the left behind the drums. You can use a riser for the drums or for drums and bass. The upside of this is visibility. The downside is that sometimes risers are unstable and rickety.

* The trombones are placed sitting on standard risers, which are 40 cm (15 to 16 in.) high, 4 meters (approx. 13 feet) wide and 1 meter (40 in.) deep. Trumpets are placed on identical risers, but they stand up. Place the risers so that you get a gap of 30 to 40 cm (11 to 16 in.) between the trumpet and trombone risers. In this gap you put the trumpet section's music stands.

* The saxes are placed sitting on the floor.

* Within the sections, the parts are placed like this:
A=traditional big band
B=modern big band

(Saxes: 1=1st alto, 2=2nd alto, 3=1st tenor, 4=2nd tenor, 5=bari)

A

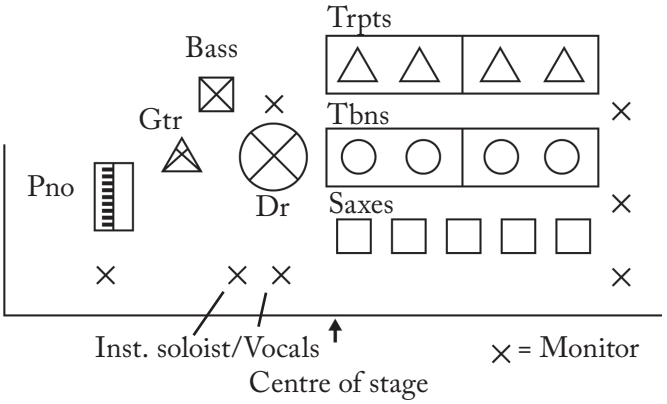
Trumpets		2	1	3	4
Trombones		2	1	3	4
Saxes	3	2	1	4	5

B

Trumpets	5	2	1	3	4
Trombones	4	2	1	3	5
Saxes	3	2	1	4	5

Band set-up at concerts (set-up A):

Fig. 62



NB: if there are enough risers, it is better to use six risers for the brass. This way the trumpet section's music stands can stand on the risers. In this standard (A) setup, you place the music stands between the trumpet and trombone risers with a gap of approximately 35 cm (13 to 14 in.) (as small as possible). Risers can also be used for the drums and the bass.

Downside: possibly rickety
Upside: better visually, perhaps better hearing.

With these setups, musicians playing the same part (1st, 2nd etc.) will be placed behind/in front of each other in a vertical row. It is important that the lead parts especially are placed like this. The baritone sax must also sit in front of the bass trombone. Do not spread out on stage. Sound travels at only 340 meters per second and timing problems can arise if the band is too spread out. If possible, try to sit so that no one is more than 4.5 meters from the drummer. 2nd trumpet, 2nd trombone and 1st tenor are placed close to the rhythm section because they have most of the solos in the classic (setup A)

big band repertoire (Basie etc.) Thus you get better interaction in the solos, since the rhythm section can hear and see the soloist better.

Monitors

Monitors for the horns are put on stands, so that they are on the same height as the musicians' ears. The stands are placed approximately one meter (40 in.) in front of every section and the speakers are turned back at a slight angle, directed mainly towards the two musicians on the far right. The others will hear the drums well anyway. The main reason for using monitors for the horns is to hear the drums. The mix for these monitors should be 70% ride cymbal and hi-hat and 30% bass or thereabouts. Most of the time the very best alternative is to have only drums (ride and hi-hat) in the monitor. It is not advisable to put saxes, trombones or trumpets in the monitors. This will only result in a too loud total volume and generally poorer hearing. Vocals should be heard through side-fills (speakers on side of the stage which mainly amplify vocals and soloing horns). Vocals can also be heard through the vocalist's own wedge monitor, but mainly by those musicians who sit close to this wedge. If the sound engineer asks the horns what they want in their monitor, you, as a director, should interfere and tell everyone that you will decide (see the above, 70% ride cymbal and hi-hat and 30% bass or only drums).

Music Stands

The horns normally have one music stand each, but the rhythm section often need two each, since their parts can be ten or more pages long, particularly the piano part. The music stands should not be too high, so that the horns play into them. If they do, a good part of the horns' sound and volume get lost, perhaps as much as 50%. It is good to slant the music stands down to an angle of approximately 45 degrees. Musicians may be uncomfortable with this to begin with, but it is important. It will still be easy to read the music, and a uniform height and angle will give a balanced sound to the section. If one musician plays into the stand, the balance will of course get quite poor. Visually there is also a lot to gain from lower stands. The audience gets better contact with the band if they can see the musicians from the waistline up, compared to just the faces. Many musicians may object to low music stands and claim that reading becomes harder. But, it is something they will get used to after some time.

The director should insist on the music stands being set up:

1. **Low - musicians should be visible from the waistline up.**
2. **Angled at approximately 45 degrees.**
3. **At the same height and aligned in all sections.**

Microphone Stands

To be on the safe side, it is best to demand full-length microphone stands with a bar. Short stands, which often have a foot instead of legs, are usually too short. If the brass is sitting on risers (trumpets are standing), the short stands are often too short. Even for the saxes, who are sitting on the floor, the short stands may be too short when the sax players stand up to take a solo. Microphone stands without a bar should also be avoided. They can cause problems with getting the microphone up close to the musician.

The trumpet microphone stands should be set up so that the bar is turned forward (towards the audience) and the microphone backwards (back towards the players). Otherwise, the microphone will come too close to the bell. It is important to tell this to the sound engineer in advance or he/she will be guaranteed to have set it up incorrectly, and lots of valuable sound check time will be lost in getting things the way you want them to be.

2.3 Handing out the Music

Parts are handed out and passed in using the same principle: Hand out or collect one chart at a time. Do not try to hand out parts individually. Instead, give the lead alto all the saxophone parts, the lead trumpet all the trumpet parts etc. You should refuse to accept individual parts when any chart is passed in. Musicians often try to do this, but you should demand that each lead player hands in all of his or her section's parts put in falling order (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), with the lead part on top and the lowest part last.

The music is put in order section-wise from top to bottom:

Saxes
Trumpets

Trombones
Rhythm section (gtr, pno, bass, dr)

Summary:

1. **Give the lead player all the section's parts and let her/him pass them on to the section**
2. **Do not accept parts back until the lead player gives you all of the section's parts in good order**

2.4 Overview

When you start rehearsing a new piece, it is very helpful to attain an understanding of its form as quickly as possible. The director should have studied the score and listened to a recording, if these have been made available. If there is a good recording, the best thing you can do is to let the band listen to it. It is not always necessary to play the entire piece, though. Short bits are sometimes enough. The rhythm section in particular needs to get a hint about the feel and groove of the chart. As mentioned above, you should always distribute a relevant CD or sound file to the rhythm section and lead horn players; lead trumpet being the most important. If you can, give all the musicians a recording, but for the rhythm section it is indispensable. Putting the recording on the internet makes it easily available to everyone, and this also saves a lot of time. In order to get a quick overview it is possible to omit repeats and solos. If you choose to do this, it is important to tell the band that you are trying to save time, not to discriminate against soloists or others.

2.5 Rehearsal Discipline

Once the rehearsal has started, it is only the director, the lead players and the drummer who have the right to speak. It is very common that the tutti players have opinions which they convey to their lead player. Sometimes four, five or even more discussions go on at the same time. This is very counter-productive. Any and all discussions should involve the director, and there should be only one discussion at a time. If someone playing a tutti part has suggestions, he/she must tell them during the break or after the rehearsal. It can be permissible to raise your hand and be allowed to ask a question. The situation described here is, of course, extreme and maybe strained, but it is also ideal and makes for a very efficient rehearsal.

If the lead trumpet, for example, wants to shorten a whole-note to be able to take a breath, he asks the director if it is OK to make a change. If the director agrees, everybody makes a note of the change. For example: If he or she wants the note to be released on the downbeat of four, everybody writes -4 in their parts. Minus 4 (-4) means a rest on the fourth beat; a quarter rest at the end of the bar. You should not write rests in the parts, as this is significantly less practical.

2.6 Divide the Band (sections)

A good way of rehearsing, as mentioned before, is to divide the band and let the horns and rhythm section rehearse separately, especially when new material is rehearsed for the first time. You will need two rooms: one small for the rhythm section and one bigger for the full band. The horn section rehearses in the big room using a drum machine played through a PA or a stereo. After roughly half of the rehearsal, you put the entire band together and play run-throughs of the charts, focusing on the whole rather than on details. When you work like this, you, the director, have a chance to emphasize the artistic aspects of the music, since the technical details have been taken care of in the sectionals.

2.7 The Drum Machine

"You should not perform a horn sectional without a drum machine!"

A drum machine will help the horns develop their timing quickly and effectively. It will also make the sectional rehearsal as a whole fast and efficient. It will prevent unnecessary talking; you turn it off – make a few short, relevant comments – and quickly turn it on again. No room for time consuming discussions.

It is best not to use pre-programmed swing accompaniments, since the triplet feel is different at different tempos. The swing/triplet feel becomes straighter and straighter the faster the tempo is. This means that in order to use programmed swing accompaniments, you would have to program a different triplet feel for almost every tempo. Use quarter-notes instead, preferably with a closed hi-hat sound.

In certain cases you could let a drummer program an accompaniment (on the drum machine) for an entire chart, if the chart is very complex. This can save a lot of time at horn sectionals.

Another reason for dividing the band is so the rhythm section does not have to wait while the horns learn technically difficult passages and vice-versa. The difficulties for the rhythm and horns are usually located in different places. Also, the horns tend to have more details to work on, which take a lot of time.

2.8 Use a Metronome

This is important for several reasons. If the band is working on a new difficult piece, it is important to follow how close you are getting to the final tempo, how far you have reached. This is good to know when you gradually increase the tempo. If you make a note of the metronome setting where the band is comfortable at the moment, you can go back and start at this tempo at the next rehearsal (or slightly slower).

It is also important to count the band in at a consistent and appropriate tempo. If not, the run-through is a waste of time, with no benefit whatsoever. Using a metronome will make you play at the correct tempo every time.

You can also use the metronome when singing hard rhythms. Even though the volume is soft, it does not necessarily need to be amplified (see ***Sing hard rhythms*** 2.19 below). You can hold it up so everyone hears it. The soft volume might actually improve concentration and it is a welcome contrast to the usual playing.

At Concerts

Should a metronome be used at concerts in order to get the exact tempo for every chart? This question has to be answered by each and every director on his/her own. If you decide to use one, my suggestion is that you put it a the lowest possible volume and only let it sound for around four beats as a reminder. Alternatively, you can put it in visual, silent mode. Many musicians think it is unattractive to use a metronome; no "feeling". However, if, for example, you are playing a concert that includes a lot of new material and perhaps do not even remember the themes of all the pieces, this might be a good occasion to bring a metronome for support.

The advantage of using a metronome is that you will get the correct tempo every time, the margin of error being only a few percent. If you are nervous after having had too little time for rehearsal and do not use a metronome, I would estimate that the margin of error may occasionally exceed ten percent. A really difficult chart at a fast tempo could actually crash completely with such a count-off. Again, many people think it looks bad using a metronome on stage. Perhaps it is best to decide from case to case and only use it when it is really necessary. One such occasion could, for example, be a concert where the risks are higher than usual and an incorrect (most often too fast) tempo could lead to a catastrophe.

2.9 "The Slow Motion Method"

(Note! This is the general procedure to be used when learning new material that is technically and rhythmically complex.)

When you are working with a very fast or difficult piece (or both), you can use *The Slow Motion Method* with great success. Actually, this is what you do most of the time unless the tempo of the piece is slow. This is a method where you radically slow the tempo down, perhaps as much as to below half the tempo you are aiming for. This is to get a better quality of learning. Usually, you start with singing the difficult rhythms and sorting out the phrasing. The director sings the lines with an unambiguous, almost exaggerated phrasing and explains where the rhythmic difficulties can be found. He/she can do this thanks to the knowledge learned from The Rules in chapter 1.

When you have mastered the phrases, both singing and playing, in a slow tempo, you start increasing the tempo in increments of around 4 to 6 bpm. The foundation must be strong before you start this increase. Both rhythms and phrasing must be solid. *The Slow Motion Method* is about adding technical learning and a comfortable feeling at fast tempos to this foundation.

Play twice at every tempo and make the increments very small to begin with. Needless to say, you have to use a metronome. Only a few, if any, musicians have perfect time, especially not when trying to conduct an efficient big band rehearsal. To begin with, you may have to play more than twice at every increment. You will have to judge from occasion

to occasion how many times that feel best at every tempo.

After a while you will notice that the increasing tempos feel easier and that you will not have to play so many times at every tempo. Perhaps you can raise the tempo a bit more in every increment. After a surprisingly short time you will be up to, or at least close to, the full final tempo. Many times I have seen a band go from half tempo to full tempo in one rehearsal, in about 20 to 60 minutes.

I have also used this method in many cases where the band has believed it to be virtually impossible to learn a certain piece at full tempo. It has always been a great success. Of course, many, or perhaps all of the musicians will still have some individual homework to do to reach technical perfection. But *The Slow Motion Method* has given them solid knowledge about the rhythms and phrasing and has also helped tremendously in giving a feel for playing together at a fast tempo. You cannot get that at home. T*he Slow Motion Method* is in fact better named the fast forward method.

2.10 Have a competition

During the rehearsal, when most of the phrasing etc. is there, you can have a competition between the horn sections. Choose a tutti section of the chart, where all the horns have the same rhythms. Let each section play the section 2 to 3 times together with the rhythm section the very best they can. This will inspire maximum concentration and focus. At the same time, you, as a director, get a chance to hear each section separately. You can scrutinize balance, timing, phrasing, articulation etc. for subsequent corrections. When every section has played, then you evaluate and select a winner. This should not be too serious or prestigious; keep it light! The section of the piece in question gets extra attention and gets worked on from a different angle. Most bands find this quite fun. They also learn a thing or two about their colleagues that they maybe did not know, since the band usually plays all together.

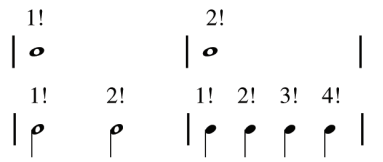
2.11 New band: rehearse the first piece for a long time

When you rehearse a band for the first time, or when you rehearse your regular band after a long break, it is good to spend longer time on the first chart. You will then rehearse according to the principles of The General Method. Some of the more common rules (see ch. 1) which bands on all levels need to reminded of are: ***Energy Levels, Distinction of Attack, Energy release, The Energy Barometer, Always give priority to Timing and Phrasing, The Rooftop Accent rule, Ones and Zeroes, Percussive notes, Structural Listening***, etc. All this in order to quickly start the musical thinking of the musicians; Thinking alike is vital (see below). According to The General Method, all the rules you learn in one piece are always applicable to other pieces in the same genre/style/tempo. When you have reached a satisfactory result with the first chart and everyone has been reminded of the most important rules, the other charts will be faster. If, instead, you breeze through the first chart too fast, the same problems will arise in all charts, since you have not solved them generally.

2.12 Long count-offs

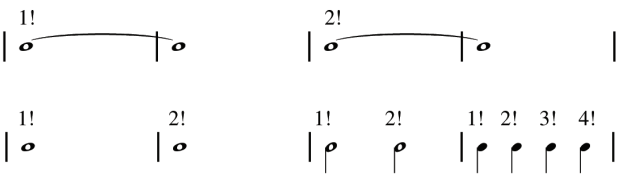
When there is a change of tempo or when you are playing at a fast tempo that is hard to keep up with, it is good to feel the tempo for a little longer. Hold the metronome up so everyone can hear it and say: "Get a good feel for this tempo!" After that, it is important to make a long count-off so that all musicians really get the tempo into their bones, e.g.:

Fig. 63a



You may even double the long count-off: two double whole notes, two whole notes, two half notes and four quarter notes.

Fig. 63b



2.13 Start with the most difficult spots

When the piece is played through once, go for the difficulties and start solving them. You have to ***Delimitate*** (see 2.21). Always begin with the hardest spots. If, for example, there is a sax soli which the saxes did not play correctly, you let them work on it as follows:

First you tell the other sections that you will rehearse the saxes and rhythm section for a while. Tell them how long, for example around five minutes. This way you convey a feeling that this is only going to take a short while and not go on forever. Tell them that they can put their horns down. This is important because otherwise they will be on alert, ready to play the entire time and soon tire and become frustrated. The musicians' confidence in you will grow when they see that you know what you are doing and that you have well thought-out strategy.

2.14 Limited Time ("The Soli Procedure")

I usually recommend a special method when rehearsing a technically very challenging passage for the first time. I call it *The Soli Procedure*:

Play the passage twice very slowly, twice a bit faster and twice at full tempo.

These are passages, for example sax solis, which demand individual practice and perhaps sectionals (brass solis are less common). Please note that this must not be confused with normal rehearsing of a tutti passage where all the horns play and have the same level of difficulty!

At the next rehearsal you can go more into details when the individual musicians have practiced their parts.

Talk about this before you play the first time. Rehearsing at full speed at this stage only serves the purpose of giving the musicians a goal to reach. They can later go home and practice knowing what to aim for. Be sure to tell what metronome marking you will eventually use, so that the musicians can put their metronomes or drum machines at this tempo when they practice at home (see 2.24 ***Present the tempo for individual practice***).

It is OK to conduct this type of rehearsal with the full rhythm section, but if there are many hard rhythms then it is a good idea to use drums only. This is, however, a bit boring for the rhythm section. If you choose to work with drums only, let the drummer play a live "click track", very steady, preferably on a closed hi-hat. Ask him/her to play very loud for good hearing. Straight quarter-notes, eighth-notes or sixteenth-notes are often good. This is of course not a lot of fun for anyone. It is, on the other hand, very efficient. Make sure you tell everyone that this is only going to last for a short while. While the band plays, you the director, should make note of where the rhythmic problems lay.

2.15 Make sure everyone gets to play

If the saxes have played their soli for a while, the next part played should preferably involve the brass, the rhythm section, or both. This should be so even if the saxes have other difficult passages to rehearse. When all problems are solved, and I am referring to big problems, not small blemishes, it is wise to end with playing the entire chart through without stopping. This way the musicians get a good overview of the chart and can subsequently practice their respective difficult parts at home. This process should not take too much time:

1. Play the piece through
2. Locate the biggest difficulties (see 2.18 ***Rehearse beginning and end first***)
3. Rehearse these passages in loops – make sure that each section gets to play its most challenging passages
4. Final play-through of the full chart (preferably without repeats in the solo sections, see 2.18)

2.16 Listen to original recordings

It is very useful to listen to the original recording(s) of the pieces you are working on! Listen once before playing and then repeatedly (when needed) after having started and gotten to know the piece. Generally, it is very important to listen a lot to music in order to develop as a musician and learn the idioms and styles of various genres. Do not take for granted that all of the musicians have the necessary knowledge of all musical idioms. When you make it a habit to listen to original recordings together (or good renditions of the original chart), this becomes a powerful step towards increasing the band's awareness of styles, idioms and interpretation.

2.17 Always prioritize Timing and Phrasing

If you know what should be prioritized, then it is easier to make the music sound good. For natural reasons the individual musician believes that what

he/she hears in the vicinity of them in the form of wrong notes and "mistakes" is what the audience focuses on. This is not so. The audience listens in a quite different manner; they listen to wholeness (general impression). Chances are they have not heard the music that is played beforehand, so they listen mostly to the overall "attitude" that is created, and very little to details. Therefore it is important to convince both yourself and the audience of what is most important in the music. Timing, phrasing, and attitude are much more important than playing every note "correctly" or polished with good intonation and, to a certain extent, with proper dynamics. Dynamics are to a large extent "built in" to phrasing.

You can get away with a lot of wrong notes, squeaks and bad intonation if you have perfect timing and phrasing. Above all, it is phrasing that makes the music "come alive". Timing is extremely important regarding attitude and authority and perhaps the most important parameter in African-American music. Furthermore, good timing is probably the most important factor when it comes to creating the feeling of a tight band, which in turn creates a sense of security and calmness for the listener. If you are convinced (like I am) that timing and phrasing are the most important features of this type of music, then it becomes much easier to make the band sound good through focusing most of the rehearsal time on these parameters.

2.18 Rehearse beginning and end first

Very often the specific difficulties of a certain chart are located in the beginning and the end. By this I mean before and after improvised solos. Most often the difficulties are found in the presentation of the theme, possible solis (most often sax) and shout choruses. It is seldom that you will just simply find the most difficult spots at first glance, but if you want to have an efficient rehearsal, I recommend a procedure where you rehearse the sections before and after solos first. Then you make a run-through of the entire piece (preferably with a limited number of solo repeats) and take a chance on managing the solo backgrounds without rehearsing. At the next rehearsal you can begin with the solo backgrounds and make sure they are tight.

(Note! The number one priority, above all, is to start rehearsing THE most difficult spot. This procedure (2.18) is mainly for the first rehearsal.)

2.19 Sing hard rhythms

If the musicians are having a difficult time in understanding the rhythms, let them then set aside their instruments and sing the phrase over and over again, starting off in a slow tempo. ***Delimitate!*** (see 2.21): choose a few bars at a time, approximately 1 to 4 and sing the rhythms in loops. Most of the time it is only a few bars that are really difficult. Then, it is up to the director to locate exactly where the problems are and to solve them without playing large sections before or after, that the band already knows. The director sings the phrase(s) and shows how the phrase should sound, with a distinct, almost exaggerated phrasing. He or she also points out to the musicians how they are doing timing and phrasing-wise; "You are late there! It is the second note that should be emphasized the most!" Use phonetic descriptions for short and long notes; *Doo* and *Dat*, in order to clearly show where the short and long notes are (see ***Use phonetic descriptions for short and long notes***, ch. 2.20 below). When it sounds as though they know the rhythm rather decent, sing it a few more times, in order for them to get a deeper learning (see ch. 3.1, ***Motorial learning***…). When you sing (or play) you can use the drummer as a "click track" to your advantage. Preferably he/she should give the tempo on a closed hi-hat, loudly so that everyone can hear.

When your musicians have learned to sing the phrase correctly, let them take their instruments and play the phrase until they know it, but never in too fast a tempo. It often happens that you have to take a step back, slow down the tempo and in a way start all over again from the very beginning, but this time using the instruments. The reason for beginning with singing the phrase is because it is easier to sing than to play, and the players can concentrate a hundred percent on the rhythmic aspect of the music. When you play, you also have the motorial aspect to think about, which makes it even more difficult. Tell the musicians "if you cannot sing the rhythm you cannot play it!" If there are a lot of difficult phrases, then you can put off some of the detailed rehearsing onto the next rehearsal.

2.20 Use phonetic descriptions for short and long Notes

In chapter 1 *Play with an Edge*, I describe how you can name short and long notes. Long note = *Doo,* short note = *Dat.* The D is equal to the attack, that the tongue goes in and "thrusts". The ***t*** is equal to the tongue that intercepts the note, often with a "tongue cut-off". The phonetic descriptions are very effective when you sing a phrase to the musicians in order to visualize which of the notes in a phrase are short and long. To distinguish between short and long notes is among the most important things a horn player has to do in this genre (see ch. 1 ***Ones and Zeroes***). Make it a habit to sing with these phonetic sounds and to not use ones unconsciously selected, like; *Doo-be, Woo-be, Shoo-bap* etc. If it is difficult to sing with the correct phonetic sounds, for example in fast tempos, you can also assume that it is difficult to articulate when you play. You can use this fact as an "Articulations – Difficulty level – Measurer".

Here, two rhythm examples follow. The first (Fig. 64a) has a relatively common, but perhaps even poor notation, whilst the other one has a more exact notation of long and short notes (and Phrasing) Fig. 64b. "When you as a director sing rhythmic phrases for the band you must be 100% aware of which of the notes are short and long, even when the notation is inadequate!"

Fig. 64a

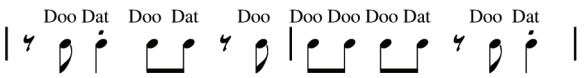
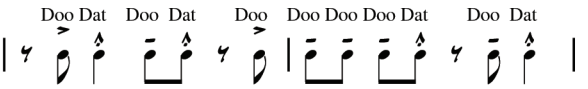


Fig. 64b



2.21 Delimitation

To delimit is one of the most important things a director does. It is all about locating the difficult passages, delimit them and try to find a method for the solution of the problem. To delimit also means to prioritize. The solution should always involve telling what is "incorrect" and why it was played incorrectly. Then you rehearse the delimited section in a "loop" (see below). If you do not delimit, but instead rehearse too large sections of the piece, or in a worst-case scenario work with repeated run-throughs, you won't even get close to the same degree of learning and understanding.

It is of course important, or rather a prerequisite that you are able to explain what the problem consists of right there as you run into it. This is done with the help of your knowledge about The Rules.

2.22 Loops

When you repeat a limited number of bars (preferably only 2 to 8) again and again, it is called a loop. The most common loop is for 2-4 bars. It is like putting a repeat sign around difficult bars; a delimitation, or putting a circle around the problem(s). The most efficient way of learning is to repeat as soon as possible what has just been played. At first you should play very slowly to avoid errors. Then the speed can be gradually increased (***Use a metronome*** 2.8). It is vital to play the phrase very slowly in order to discover what the actual difficulty is. It is possible that if you have practiced a phrase for a long time at a very slow tempo, you can increase the tempo sharply and still have it work (see ***The slow motion method*** 2.9). The reason for this is that the players have spotted the exact problem (for example, a fingering combination between just two or three notes) as being the only difficulty in the phrase.

Note! When the band begins to play in loops for the first time, there is a high risk that one or more players forget to repeat. Keep reminding: "Do not forget we are looping bars 12-14 plus a 'blind bar'!"

A blind bar basically means one or more bars where the horns take a pause (because they need to rest) while the rhythm section plays one (or more) extra bars. Then everyone begins all over again from the beginning of the loop.

2.23 Do not practice too fast

It is very common for musicians to practice difficult passages too fast. The result is that they learn the errors that occur, making them permanent and inerasable (see ***Motorial Learning*** ch. 3.1). I often hear musicians practice phrases way too fast, even very skilled musicians. However, when rehearsing the entire band you cannot follow the principle that everyone should play 100% correctly at all times, at least not in an amateur band, as it would take too much time. The director has to use his/her feel and

intuition in deciding how far he or she can go at each rehearsal. Afterwards everyone will go home and begin practicing in the tempo that suits them. That usually means they have to take a step backwards and start over in a slower tempo.

2.24 Present the tempo for individual practice

In order for the musicians to be able to go home and practice effectively, it is important to let everyone know the correct full tempo. Also inform them of which tempo has been played during the rehearsal. This, or slower, is the tempo at which they should practice.

2.25 Practice with a CD

Everyone in the band should receive a CD or an opportunity to access the new pieces from the internet, as this is a great way for them to be able to practice for a new project, especially when they are beginning to know the pieces pretty well. If they are able to play to the CD, it is highly likely they will be able to play together in a live setting.

Sometimes a musician can run into problems if the music on the CD is sounding sharp or flat, so that it becomes difficult to intone. If the piece is difficult, perhaps very fast, the musician can decide to play with the CD only when he/she has fully learned it. Then playing to the CD becomes a way of confirming that the musician really knows the piece.

2.26 Do not interrupt too often

It is probably a good idea not to comment on anything until after the second run-through, at least if we are dealing with an experienced band. Errors during the first run-through can straighten themselves out if the players are allowed to play. But if the band is less experienced, you can point out the difficulties in a particular piece before the run-through.

Generally speaking it is a good idea not to interrupt too often. The General Method states that you speak a lot in the beginning when you are explaining "The Rules". After a while it will become apparent that the same types of problems will keep recurring. Then you need only remind the players without taking up a lot of time. If after two run-throughs you notice that they are playing incorrectly at the same spots every time, show the correct rhythm by singing and clapping the phrase several times with the players, until it becomes internalized ("a part of them"). Do it convincingly and try to include both the rhythm and the phrasing. Use enthusiasm to try to get the musicians "going". If you are working a lot with loops, which is often the case when using The General Method, the musicians are always continuously playing.

2.27 Do not sweat the small things

It is your responsibility as director to make sure you do not spend too much time on the same phrase or the same piece. Since I decide before the rehearsal how much time each piece should get, I even go so far as to set a timer (see 2.32 ***Use a timer***, below) to ring when that time is up. A hard piece can get more time, while an easy one, or one that the band has played several times already, might only get a run-through. With only a few exceptions, I always begin with the more difficult pieces and move down in degree of difficulty. When you realize that you can no longer work on a particularly difficult spot, it is important to tell the band so. Tell them that they must continue practicing the piece individually and that you will play it again at the next rehearsal.

2.28 Your job is to remind

During the course of the rehearsal the director reminds the band of "The Rules" when necessary. It is very much a matter of pointing to what specific principle should be used for each given moment. If you are reminding them that a series of syncopations usually are rushed (*galloping syncopations*), this will probably be sufficient to make everybody play them correctly the next time.

Some of the most important decisions a director makes is when not to rehearse. As mentioned earlier many problems solve themselves if you just let the musicians play. Therefore I strongly recommend rehearsing in loops.

2.29 Sectional rehearsals without a Director

It is necessary to schedule separate sectional rehearsals to work out the especially difficult parts. One good rule is not to allow anyone involved to leave the rehearsal room until a time for the

sectional rehearsal is agreed on. My experience is that trying to set up rehearsal times by phone is doomed to failure. The director should also ask the section if they are prepared to put in the time needed for a sectional and individual practice to get the piece right. If they say no, you will have to take that piece out. However, they usually say yes, even if it is sometimes unrealistic. As a director, you have to use your own experience and intuition to make a choice as to whether a piece is too difficult or not, and if should be put on the shelf, as not to take time away from other pieces. Even in sections without a director the drum machine is strongly recommended for the various horn sections.

2.30 Play all pieces at the first rehearsal

If you are working on a new project that includes perhaps 12 to 18 pieces, it is best to play them all through before getting into too much detail. However, I do not recommend pure run-throughs as this can be too casual. If you use The General Method it would be logical to start with one of the easier pieces as a warm-up, and then go through the typical stylistic difficulties that will occur, before moving on. Then the following rehearsal time will function as a constant reminder of the important points brought up at the beginning of each rehearsal.

2.31 Figure out the rehearsal time for each piece

When you are planning the rehearsal, do not forget to include time for breaks and unforeseen problems in your time plan. Make a realistic estimate of time needed, but you need not be a slave to the clock. Still you will almost always discover that you have less time than you had hoped. This is why it is important to start with the difficult pieces and work towards the easiest. In this way the pieces you did not have time for are the easiest ones. Some of the pieces the band may already know quite well and others may only need a run-through to be freshened up.

Example: If you have three hours of rehearsal time and five pieces to learn, calculate 3 x 60 minutes minus two ten-minute breaks (a 10-minute break per hour except for the first hour) = 160 minutes. This is how a time distribution could look like:

Piece no. 1: 50 min.
Piece no. 2: 40 min.
Piece no. 3: 30 min.
Piece no. 4: 25 min.
Piece no. 5: 15 min.

Since the players have more physical and mental energy at the start of a rehearsal, it is best to play more complex pieces at the beginning. After a break, the musicians still have more energy to deal with complex structures, so a complex piece can also be scheduled after lunch, for example, but the energy will not last as long as it did earlier. Thus, it is better to rehearse the very most difficult pieces in the morning.

2.32 Use a timer

Use a timer to check on your time plan that you've constructed before the rehearsal. Then set the timer to the number of minutes the current piece is assigned, minus the time it takes to play it in its entirety (usually 4 to 9 min.). When the timer rings and the time is up, then it is time to play it through. If the timer rings and you feel the piece needs some more rehearsing, it is reasonable to stretch time a bit for these first few difficult pieces. Should you run out of time without having rehearsed all of the pieces, then the easiest ones are those you did not have time for, which in many cases is not disastrous.

2.33 Begin with a suitable piece

You should begin the rehearsal with a suitable piece. I would recommend an up-tempo piece without too many technical problems, one whose range is not too high and where the brass do not have too many long notes. This will get the rehearsal going and set the tone for the work. However, it is a good idea to try to vary tempos and styles even during rehearsals, which is why it is sometimes useful to break the difficult – easy rule.

2.34 "Dissolvent"

If the band has a horn section, or most commonly a brass section, that plays too weakly or cowardly, you can use a procedure that I call Dissolvent. The most common reason for the brass section playing weakly is not that the individual members are physically incapable of playing loudly. It is more likely that the reason is shyness and mental "hang-ups".

In this situation I tell the band to forget all about dynamics and just play as loudly as possible for a

while. Very often you will have to say this several times and try to tease and joke with them, especially with certain members, to make them go along. It is good to tell the band that the 3rd and 4th trumpet parts and the 3rd trombone part are the most difficult parts in the brass section. Most of the time it is these players who have the most problems with playing loudly. I usually say that there is almost no risk at all; that you cannot play too loudly in a ***f*** or more since your lead player is in a much better (meaning louder) register. The only limit for loudness will be that you can no longer sustain the note and it "cracks". It can be liberating for them to know that they basically cannot play too loudly at this dynamic level, but the only risk is that it becomes too soft. It is also a good idea for them to "know" that their parts are the most difficult ones. This will prevent them from feeling incompetent. In many cases, however, the weakest band members are the ones playing these parts, at least in amateur bands, and they may need a little more encouragement. When you used the Dissolvent procedure for a while it sounds like the players have blown away a lot of dirt that used to be stuck in their horns. This method is also good for increasing the energy and the attitude in the band.

The second (and subsequent) rehearsal(s)

After the first rehearsal, when hopefully everyone has gone home and practiced on their parts, you can use a different rehearsal technique.

"When you work with a piece you have rehearsed before, do not waste time by playing through the entire thing at the beginning of the rehearsal. It is a waste of time since you will run through it at the end, anyway!"

Suppose there are ten pieces to be rehearsed over the course of three hours (minus 20 min. break), with an average length per piece of 5 min.

Three hours rehearsal time = 180 min., minus 20 min. break = 160 min. total rehearsal time.
It takes about 50 min. to run-through all the pieces.
Remaining time is 110 min.
You have then lost about 30% of rehearsal time (almost a third)

You can call it lost time since you will play through the entire piece at the end in any case. As mentioned earlier, the run-through is no effective rehearsal method unless the band is at an extremely high skill level.

Begin by working on the difficult spots, the problems you have already identified and play them in loops. Once you have gone through all the hard spots, finish off with a run-through. **I think run-throughs are used way too much as a rehearsal method. It is much better to:**

1. **Identify the problems (which you have already done).**
2. **Explain how the problems are going to be solved (with the help of The Rules).**
3. **Practice them faster and faster in loops, *Slow Motion Method*, above.**
4. **Finish with a run-through.**

The final run-through is generally a way of giving everyone a comprehensive view of the piece and to play the improvised solos, etc. If you are on an extremely tight time schedule you can (in extreme situations) make do without the run-through, which is easier to do with a more experienced band. A less experienced band might feel that this is psychologically and emotionally very difficult, and the music could appear a little "abstract" to them.

2.35 Visions

At the second rehearsal comes the time for you to present your artistic visions, since by now everyone is acquainted with the material. Such a presentation would not mean as much at the first rehearsal when the main purpose is gaining an overview of each piece as rapidly as possible. Now you can be much more pedantic, continually working until it sounds like you want it to. Still, keep an eye on the clock so you will have time for the most vital work. You stand to gain by being persistent about your visions since everyone wants to be part of a band that sounds good and works well together. It is not a bad thing to force your musicians to work hard to meet your visions. The important thing is that it sounds good.

2.36 A concept of your own

When you tell your musicians how you want a phrase to be played, singing and clapping is not enough. It is important that you explain in words clearly what it is you mean. To do that, you must know exactly how you want it to be played. Otherwise it is like participating in a discussion without having any opinions. Having a personal concept, an idea on how a piece is to be interpreted is the end-all and be-all for a director.

2.37 Be specific

When you are trying to explain your ideas about phrasing, timing and the like, be clear and concrete. An example of being clear and specific could sound like this: "You are starting the crescendo too early. Wait until the fourth beat, using "*The Holmquist Model!*" The first chapter of the book, "The Rules", is an attempt to describe the mechanisms that govern such items as timing and phrasing in clear and precise terms. The advantage with these rules is that they are concrete and easy to understand, counteracting the tendency on the part of most directors to subjectivity, fuzziness, and lack of forethought. Making suggestions such as "play like the Basie band did on the record" means nothing until you can explain what they actually did. I believe that The Rules make this possible.

2.38 Thinking alike is vital

The Rules are intended to ensure that the band thinks alike as a whole. The concept that all members of a big band should think alike is probably the most important facet in creating great ensemble playing. Thinking alike would mean that phrasing is performed in the same manner, articulation in the same manner etc. I often tell the musicians: "I can hear what you are thinking; the way you think is how you play!" Very often you will find that musicians think too little or not at all, unfortunately – they play by instinct. To be able to phrase in a musical way you must figure out which notes in a phrase need to be emphasized. The lead players are the ones who primarily should do all the thinking, since they are the ones in charge (see chapter 1, ***Phrasing***).

2.39 Do not listen too much to yourself

Thinking alike also means that everyone knows what to listen for. Listening too much to yourself is one of the biggest mistakes a musician in a big band can make. I usually call it shutting yourself into your own private little phone booth. A tutti player in the horn section should listen to the drums and the lead (the different lead players since they shift), more than listening to themselves. The guitar, piano, bass and lead players should primarily listen to the drums. The guitarist and pianist should both listen a lot to each other, as should the baritone sax and the bass trombone. The one sitting furthest in front should listen to the one sitting directly behind them, since the one sitting behind does not hear the other in front of them (concerning musicians in different sections, playing together). Similarly, if a trumpet and a sax play a passage together, the sax must listen to the trumpet since the trumpet does not hear the sax (since he or she is sitting/standing in the back).

If I was to outline a way of listening for a tutti horn player, it would look like this:

40 % Drums
40 % Lead
20 % Yourself

What are you listening for? Answer: All the four fundamental parameters mentioned in chapter 1, The Rules: Timing, Phrasing, Articulation and Dynamics. Do not forget articulation since this is an underestimated parameter. There lies an unconscious feeling in many musicians that what they primarily listen to is timing (and possibly also dynamics); that in a way can be considered the easiest parameter.

The kind of dynamics that are integrated within phrasing is much more complicated than the fundamental dynamics; like, for instance, playing eight bars loudly and later eight bars softly. Since timing is the parameter that most musicians automatically listen for and dynamics are the easiest to handle, my recommendation is: "Do not forget phrasing and articulation!"

2.40 The most common mistake made by the horns

The most common mistake a horn section in a big band can make articulation-wise (as opposed to technical, timing, reading mistakes and the like) **is to play a long note where it is written as a short one**. The opposite, where one plays a short note when it's written as a long note is not as common. This is due to the fact that short notes are one of the most important and difficult issues a horn player has to deal with (see chapter 1 ***Articulation, Ones and Zeroes***). Mention this fact to any band and you will notice improvement. Tell them:

"We have now been playing about 400 long notes where there should have been short notes; you must look out for ones and zeroes!" This is an adequately teasing provocation that can yield good results.

2.41 Playing straight (uniform) notes

Playing in this manner is more important than one may think, but can easily be regarded as boring when telling it to a band. The reason why playing straight notes is important is because it is much easier to get a horn section sounding tight, and it is much easier to follow a lead using this style of playing. If, for example, the lead player uses a big vibrato (great amplitude) it will be more difficult to balance the sound. It is more likely that such a horn section will sound unbalanced and therefore not tight (see ch. 5, ***Sculpturing the ensemble sound***). Also, intonation is more difficult if no one in the band is playing straight notes. This is my opinion. The preference of whether playing straight or with vibrato has changed throughout history. In the earlier days it was common to play with vibrato on all horns. Nowadays it is more common to play rather straight, especially in the brass.

2.42 Never be afraid of playing "wrong" notes

There is no way of communicating with an audience if you are constantly worried about playing "wrong" notes - the audience will hear your fear and it will make them nervous. You need to continuously work with yourself mentally and push yourself to "go for it" and to be daring, or else it is impossible to make good music. This is particularly important in a situation where you have not rehearsed enough for an upcoming concert. Then it is all about throwing yourself out there, giving your all, taking some risks and sometimes even making a few minor mistakes. This is as opposed to taking a step backwards and not being able to deliver an experience. It is better to deliver a lesser experience than no experience at all.

You tend to learn new pieces faster if everyone is courageous. If you yourself play a part incorrectly, and your mate besides you plays correctly in that same spot, you learn from them "Oh, that is how it is supposed to be played!" You learn from each other, on the condition that everyone is brave. You have to be brave and accept making a few mistakes, (see chapter 1, ***Phrase on the very first run-through***). Hopefully then everything will work out during the concerts.

2.43 Courage

Courage is important while playing big band music, not to say all types of music (as mentioned above). If the lead player in an amateur band misses an entrance for example, it is not uncommon for the other musicians in the section to stop playing. Instead, it requires courage to grab hold of the situation. The same thing applies for the bass player (and actually the whole band) if the drummer makes a bad fill and "falls", timing-wise.

Also, my point is that when rehearsing a new piece, everyone will learn it faster if they bring their part out. You actually learn from both other peoples' mistakes and their achievements. If the person next to you is playing correctly and you happen to be playing incorrectly, you learn from that person and vice-versa, as mentioned above. You learn from other players' mistakes too: "Now I can clearly hear that this is the wrong way to play it!"

If the band is about to give a concert and they feel that they only know the material to lets say 85%, they really have to take chances and not play cowardly. That will give the audience a much greater experience. Even if you can only play 90% of the material correctly, you can at least deliver this part convincingly.

2.44 Expression

Most musicians are aiming to make some type of impression on their audience, seeking to avoid that

greatest of insults - an indifferent public. A strong expression is needed to make a strong impression, and you need a strong output to create a strong input. I usually describe it as having to reach to the 14th row, seeking to erase the unconscious perception of many musicians that music sounds the same at a distance as it does from where they are playing (sitting). It is usually necessary to exaggerate in order to make an impression. For example, if a short note is to be played, it needs to be shorter than you think, if it is to be heard as short from a distance. A short note sounds longer, the difference between piano and forte is diminished, a crescendo is reduced at a distance and so on. I have included some rules on this in The Rules chapter above. I think it is possible to compare the presentation necessary to an old-fashioned theatre performance played before there were microphones on stage, and the actors had to exaggerate. The opposite of this is TV and film acting where the expression is neutral, natural and reality-based throughout. Most amateur musicians tend towards the latter style, but I believe that we in music must use the former, exaggerated motions in order to make an impression on the audience.

2.45 Give and take energy

Energy is one of the most important concepts in experiencing music. When a band plays well, it sends energy to the audience who in turn will receive a positive experience, and then return the energy back to the band. The opposite is true if the band's manner of playing exudes insecurity or lack of energy, for instance if you play behind the beat (or far back). The result is a loss of energy for every little sixteenth-note you lose in tempo. If the band seems to drag, the audience tenses up both physically and mentally. A conflict arises, and the listener starts getting frustrated, seemingly with a subconscious desire to go up on stage and energize the band. Conversely, if everyone in the band has the same timing and phrasing that feels alive, a rush of energy will appear instead. A listener who is not a musician has difficulty in deciding what is wrong, but feels nevertheless with his or her entire being that something is not quite right. Therefore, energy lies for the most part in timing and phrasing.

Should the band make mistakes at regular intervals, more and more distress is created in the audience each time it happens. Without really knowing it, the audience becomes more and more worried, seemingly waiting for the next mistake. This loss of faith in the band will not create a positive experience.

2.46 What you give is what you get

Great musicians exude a lot on stage and get a lot back from the audience. If you are up on stage and you are afraid of playing an incorrect note, "squeak", play out of tune etc., you cannot expect to give the listener a great musical experience, and ultimately you will not get anything back in return (applause). If you want to give something to the audience you must use your whole persona with feeling, intellect, body, muscles, etc. in order for the audience to get a great experience. In other words: if you get off the stage and cannot feel in your body and soul that there was much of an effort involved, it is probably true that you have not committed yourself enough to create a wonderful experience. "Commitment, effort and courage are required!"

2.47 The "clarinet girl"

This is yet another symbol for energy and attitude. I am sure you have all been to a spring concert where children perform on stage for their parents. A little girl walks up on stage with a clarinet as big as herself. The only reason she is there is because her parents and her teacher wanted her to be there. Her body language shows just this. She tries to tune up, but the note cracks and she just wants to walk away. She might even start to cry. How will this affect the audience? They will probably also want to go home because they feel embarrassed. When she starts to play they are just sitting there waiting for her to make a mistake.

By this metaphor, I want to explain that everything you do on stage: play, think, feel, smile or laugh, does in fact affect your audience. Therefore you have to walk up on stage with a will to spread the joy that you yourself hopefully feel for the music. There is an interesting fact that researchers have revealed regarding a person that is delivering a speech: what she or he says is a minor part of the total experience compared to what is delivered by body language, tone of voice and the like.

2.48 "Muhammad Ali"

I often refer to the term "Muhammad Ali" when trying to describe how solos should be played. In

my interpretation the concept says "I have to come through, I have to be heard!" Many musicians are too humble or too cowardly, depending on how it is interpreted, when they play a solo. Regardless of whether it is written or improvised, they do not come through. My comment then is "More Muhammad Ali". Taking it to extremes, a weakly played solo might as well not be played at all, since it is not fulfilling the intentions of the composer/arranger when writing the piece. In other words, it is very important to come through in all types of solo efforts – to be courageous.

Playing a tutti part in the ensemble is a bit different. Here you must be perceptive and adaptable to the maximum, continuously listening to the lead and the drums.

2.49 Ask the soloists to stand up while playing a solo

Do this even during rehearsals. During concerts this is definitely a given. The benefits with letting them do so even during rehearsals is among others things that the other musicians get a chance to hear the solo voice clearly, which makes you understand and learn the music faster. The soloist is also forced to take a greater responsibility and gets to practice in being brave. Tell your musicians also to start with pick-ups to their solo, which is yet another exercise to really take advantage of.

Sometimes inexperienced musicians do not stand up even when they play an improvised solo at a concert. It is very common for musicians not to look up at the audience when they have finished playing, and not to thank them for the applause. Many musicians even make facial expressions and show their dissatisfaction with their performed solo that did not turn out the way they had hoped. This is not only unacceptable but actually very unprofessional. Instead, you should ask your musicians to step up towards the soloist microphone in front of the band, rather than standing still by their own place in the section. They should make their approach ahead of time and then bow and thank the audience for the applause afterwards, and not to show in any way their possible dissatisfaction with their solo. You could even ask them to think about how they want to bow and thank the audience. They may perhaps even want to create their own "gimmick", their own way of thanking, almost like some football (soccer) players' gestures when they score a goal. Some musicians usually hold up their instrument. It is of course up to each individual to choose what they want to do, but bear in mind the need to respect and to care about the audience, whom most of the time have paid money to attend the concert.

2.50 To swing or not swing

To swing or not swing; that is the question. Some musicians say that it makes no difference if it drags (or rushes) a bit as long as it swings. Seldom do they define what "swing" is, but on the other hand, perhaps no one definitively can. I believe it is a fatal flaw to drag (or rush) because of the loss of energy and faith that the audience experiences. It is highly unlikely that anyone in the audience would actually check the band against a metronome to determine if they are maintaining a consistent tempo. However, if their overall experience was a very positive one, then chances are the band did not drag or rush much, if at all.

My guess is that most musicians think of a swing as being a lot about timing – where you are placed on the beat. Certainly this is a very important part, but there is more to it than that. I would say that your swing lies very much in phrasing – that different notes are emphasized differently (see ch. 1 ***Energy Levels***). The fact that different notes have different energy values, emphasis or meaning is highly important to swing. This is why you could say that what is least effective, phrasing-wise, is to emphasize all notes alike. It is about the polarization between emphasized and de-emphasized notes (or parts of the measure). For example: in almost all African-American music - Jazz, Blues, Pop, Rock - the second and fourth beat are emphasized more than the first and the third (see ***The Vertical Perspective***, ch. 1).

Sometimes the four parameters (timing, phrasing, articulation, and dynamics) run into each other. When you are emphasizing different notes it is primarily by using articulation. I still view the Energy Levels as part of phrasing. I like to think in terms of longer courses of events rather than just one specific note having a higher Energy Level, because it is being articulated in a certain way. One accentuated note equals articulation and a series of accentuated notes equals phrasing, basically.

Articulation and dynamics also run into each other, for instance when a single note is accentuated with the help of articulation. An accentuated note is mainly the result of the attack being dynamically stronger than on an unaccented note. An attack is not simply articulation, phrasing, or dynamics. It is all of them at the same time.

To one extent swing is about articulation – how to play a note, whether it is a double-bass, piano or a trumpet. Some types of articulation swing more than others. The Machine Gun seldom or never swings (see ch. 1). Articulation is a part of a musician's "sound", and some musician's sound swing more than others.

In a "living" phrasing some notes are louder than others, dynamically speaking, which means that even phrasing and dynamics may run into each other. All four parameters seem to influence swing. I would like to add other aspects that makes music swing, for instance that one does not drag or rush. I would also like to add personality and a will of communication. I think most people find musicians with good timing, phrasing, articulation, dynamics and a unique way of playing as extraordinary swingers.

2.51 Choice of repertoire

Choices of repertoire are very important decisions for the band's musical development as well as overall profile. My opinion is that through keeping a relatively high level of difficulty, totally speaking, you can attain certain advantages. If musicians change repertoire too seldom or play a repertoire that is too easy, they stop improving and become lazy. Try to find repertoire that has the right level of difficulty, which includes some pieces (not all) that needs to be rehearsed for weeks and maybe months before they are ready. This type of piece I call "project-pieces". Not all pieces can be project-pieces. If you try to perform a concert with only this type of material, the band will probably collapse from nervousness and fatigue. Instead, you should try to find a balance between easier material and project-pieces, although many bands have no project-pieces at all.

What musicians will gain by working with this type of piece is:

- To be able to learn new material easier and faster.
- Become better readers.
- Become stimulated to practice more.
- Increase of ambitions and enthusiasm.
- Proficiency in specific difficulties like odd meters and unusual rhythms.

The other part of repertoire choice involves the band's profile. It can include playing music by the director or band members that happen to be composers/ arrangers. It could even be about a specific era or style; for example the '30s, Count Basie or "cross-over". It is very important to keep in mind that the band's repertoire profile will surely determine how many gigs you are likely to get. If the goal is to play a lot of gigs then you should make a certain type of choice, but if the goal is to maintain a high artistic integrity then perhaps you would make a different choice. Every band needs to think about these two aspects.

It is not unusual that bands and directors do not think their choices through well enough. Putting a repertoire together with your favorite pieces without considering them together as a whole, and how they go together within the context you are about to be part of, is a very common mistake and may result in a lack of variation in tempo and style etc., which in turn bores the audience. Playing for audiences that dig a completely different music style than the one you have chosen to play may result in an audience that decides to leave the show. All of the above mentioned should be taken into consideration when making a choice of repertoire. This is not to say that you either choose one way or the other; usually there is a compromise between several aspects that will give you the best result. If the band is about to perform a concert where the greater part of the audience will not be accustomed to the bands' normal style of music, then do not just play what you think the audience would want you to play. However, do not just play the kind of music that only the band likes. Try finding a good artistic- audience compromise.

2.52 Overcapacity and General Overcapacity

***Overcapacity* means that the band manages to play a specific piece even during difficult circumstances such as a bad day, though this does not apply to every piece of the concert.**

If you are working on a piece that is just within the limit of what the band is actually able to do, moments of mistrust and doubt can occur. Often long, unproductive discussions about how a certain spot should be played or if the piece is too difficult are initiated. Most of the time unimportant details are discussed. Comments like "it does not swing!" or "this does not feel right!" are heard many times over. These discussions do not lead anywhere, so it is better if these judgements are made by only the director.

In these situations I usually say to the band that when we learned the piece technically, everything that did not feel OK emotionally will disappear automatically. I have seen this happen many times myself. Overcapacity means that the musicians should be able to play the piece comfortably even if they have a bad day. If the piece has been rehearsed in a good, methodical way, overcapacity can be achieved (see e.g. ***The Slow Motion Method*** 2.9). My point is that achieving overcapacity in a piece is possible even if it seemed way too difficult at the beginning.

***General Overcapacity* means that the band manages to play every piece at a concert in a satisfying way, even during difficult circumstances such as a bad day.**

It is a big step from overcapacity which only means that you can play a specific piece OK, but the band does not have the capacity to play every chart satisfactorily within the same concert. General Overcapacity means that you have reached a higher capacity; a threshold where you are able to play all charts OK at a concert, and even better time after time.

From not being able to play some of the pieces OK you have passed two stages: first to Overcapacity and next over to General Overcapacity (see also ch. 3.9 *Musical fitness*).

2.53 Intonation

Introduction
Intonation does not lie amongst any of those musical parameters that I prioritize as the highest since my pedagogy mostly focuses on:

1. General musical understanding (The Rules)
2. Timing and Phrasing (see chapters. 2.17. ***Always prioritize Timing and Phrasing***).

Are some things less important? Isn't everything important? You cannot pursue the motto that everything is equally important, as there will not be enough time. My philosophy is that you must always prioritize. Prioritizing is perhaps the most important thing a director does. In large ensembles there is basically always a lack of time. I consider things like music reading and intonation better suited for individual practicing. These things are hugely time-consuming and according to my view, not a particularly effective disposition of time for an ensemble to devote themselves to intonation exercises. My opinion is that intonation exercises for the entire band should be done continuously in order to reach audible results, which is often limited due to lack of time. Prioritizing interaction within the ensemble is of great importance and this is something that usually requires a lot of time. If instead of intonation you prioritize as described above;

1. General musical understanding (The Rules) 2. Timing and phrasing (and articulation), will result in the band quickly sounding good. The probability of the individual musician then becoming inspired to go home and practice more, individually, on things like intonation and music reading, increases substantially. I believe that intonation is primarily about individual, long term practicing. I know there are some pedagogues that do not share my point of view on this subject, but then again there are others that do.

Intonation is a subject that can very easily cause frustration and confusion, especially in amateur bands. A number of times I have heard a band try to tune up and in the end just sounding worse than they did before they started. A horn player who does not play/practice almost everyday will unlikely be able to tune perfectly. Therefore, speaking about intonation with amateurs needs to be done very

sensitively. What happens if the director says (in front of the entire band) "Your D is flat!" In my opinion there is great risk that this band member will play very softly and cowardly the rest of the rehearsal. There is also a risk that this person will quit the band. Intonation is a sensitive subject. This person may not even know which note is his/her concert D, and may have even less of a capacity to judge if it is flat or sharp. That is why it is not good to point to one single scapegoat in public if a section is not tuning well. This particularly concerns bands at youth and amateur levels. You could possibly give this person the following advice, which many amateur musicians could surely benefit from:

Tune in the same dynamic level as most often is played, preferably *mf - f*

Many musicians blow softer when they are tuning because they are afraid that the band will hear if they cannot tune well. If you tune up in ***pp*** it is unlikely that you will tune in ***ff***. One of the reasons is that amateur players breathe very differently when they are playing ***pp*** from when they are playing ***ff***. If some of the players are tuning in a loud dynamic and some in a quieter one, there will very likely be a difference in pitch between these two groups. This is one of the explanations as to why bands sometimes sound better when they have not tuned up. Another reason is that they get nervous when they are tuning (especially right before a concert) and play in a totally different manner than when normally playing.

Check your instrument using a tuner

All instruments are different, and you have to get to know your own instrument. If you go through your instrument carefully and check where every individual note is situated intonation-wise, you will find that some tune worse than others. If you know your "problem notes" you can compensate a sharp or flat note with your embouchure or alternative fingerings (e.g. sax) and a trigger (e.g. trumpet). Buy an electric tuner; it is good to have one. Or, borrow one over the weekend and spend some time investigating your own instrument's "problem notes".

Begin the rehearsal with playing orchestra exercises, chorales etc

This is very useful for the intonation and moreover a good practice. It gets the band started and can replace a normal tune-up procedure. This is, however, not a practice I use very often since my pedagogy focuses mostly on other parameters, and you do not have time to do all you wish to do (see introduction ***Intonation*** above).

Before a concert tune up individually at the piano with help from the piano player

If you do this in peace and quiet you will feel much more secure and confident, and therefore play better in general. This is something you could do before a concert, or even just casually at a rehearsal. In addition the piano player can help you tune up better.

Do not tune up in separate instrument groups/sections without the director

It is quite common with different groups of horn players in amateur bands to tune up in separate rooms or corners before a concert. This usually does not have good results. The lead player will usually tune up with the piano or a tuner and then will tune individually with each member of his/her section. Since there are three different lead players, each might provide slightly different pitches to their section if they did not tune accurately. Another instance that complicates things even more is that the musicians are nervous just before the concert. They often blow their instrument in a different manner than in the ensemble and become even more nervous when they hear that their tuning is not good. Moreover, the entire group is gathered around each other and can cause a performance anxiety (without intention) with the one who has not gotten it right yet. I recommend for less experienced ensembles (mostly youth):

1. "Standard tune-up" section by section with the help of the piano (loudly). Help each other, but do not devote too much time if tuning is not perfect. It usually only becomes worse before a concert where people are nervous.
2. The director helps out by checking everyone individually with or without a tuner.
3. To not tune at all. This, paradoxically

enough, often gives the best result in less experienced ensembles. I believe it is due to two factors:

A. The individual musician does not change too much against his/her normal way of playing - embouchure position, etc.
B. You avoid the performance anxiety within the individual musician if the tuning does not go well.

Tune slowly, note-by-note, to difficult-to-hear chords

Sometimes it can be difficult to play some horn voicings in tune; particularly close or "tight" voicings. String quartets are known to tune a particular voicing slowly so that they can hear each other and adjust accordingly.

It is helpful to have a digital piano with an amplfier play the exact horn voicing at a loud volume and then have the horn section members individually play their note of the voicing with the piano. At first let the pianist play the chord alone so that the horn players can hear how it is supposed to sound.

The scope of this book is not to address intonation issues in detail. More information about intonation overtones can be learned by reading a good book on traditional music theory or ear training (also see ch. 1, ***Good balance facilitates intonation***).

2.54 Encourage and inspire

At the same time you tell your musicians in clear and concrete terms how they should play, it is essential that you inspire and encourage them emotionally. This is vital for shaping a good feeling in the band and for the desire of its members to work hard. It took me a long time to discover that professional musicians also need encouragement almost as much as amateurs do. I thought that their great knowledge and experience had given them the strength and self confidence that made this unnecessary. Not true. Everyone needs inspiration and encouragement. It is too easy to get caught up in all the technical details such as rhythms, chords and crescendos, to the exclusion of the emotional. There are times when you need to encourage the band even if you are not completely satisfied with the result. You gain nothing by pushing the details at the expense of a good feeling and atmosphere. Rather, if you make sure that everyone is in a good mood and having fun, that last wrong note or missed beat will in the long haul work out automatically. It is about finding a balance between goals and high ambitions, and joyfulness and playfulness.

2.55 Sounding good is the biggest Inspiration

Despite the above assertions about how important it is to encourage the band verbally with positive remarks, I believe it is even more important for the inspiration and the joy of playing, that the ensemble sounds good and that one has a good and extensive activity. "Everyone wants to be part of a band that functions!" Therefore, it is even more important to be a good director; determined, effective and strategic in order for all band members to be satisfied. A good and determined pedagogue with a fast working tempo receives the very the best musical results.

I hope the ideas and methods presented in this book will contribute to improved musical results in many ensembles, for example through:

Delimitation 2.21

Loops 2.22

Always prioritize Timing and Phrasing 2.18

Sing hard Rhythms 2.19

Use a Metronome 2.8

The Slow Motion Method 2.9

Dissolvent 2.34

Rehearse the Beginning and End first 2.18

Use Phonetic Descriptions for Short and Long Notes 2.20

Divide the Band 2.6 (horn section rehearsals with drum machine)

Calculate Rehearsal Time for each Piece 2.31

Use a Timer 2.32

and more...

The other side of the leadership for a band, to be strategic, involves issues like:

Planning the Rehearsal 2.1

Band Set-up 2.2

It can not be stressed enough how important the strategic, administrative and logistical part of the leadership is.

2.56 Get angry

As a director you also have the right to make demands and even get angry when such things as the working morale or discipline are too low. You are the leader and possibly an employer, and without you there will be no concert. Should one member constantly disturb the work of the group, it is your duty to put a stop to it. The problem affects everyone and no one wants to be part of a band where there is chaos and inefficiency; where the work takes twice as long due to disturbances. It is best to have a serious, calm and private talk with the miscreant after the rehearsal. A correction conversation on the phone the following day is also a good idea.

2.57 Planning the season

Bands benefit from having yearly concerts and tours. If you succeed in building a tradition, the practical work will be easier each following year. You know what to do, know when to start planning and the like. In this way you create a goal for your activity and you program your members:

"In December we will have our Christmas concert as usual!" It is very good to have at least one fall concert and one spring concert. Even better would be to have one concert in October and one in December, then one concert in March and one in May, or similar. This will bring momentum to the activity, and a name and audience for the band.

2.58 Aim, goal

It is very common for a band to have a falling curve of development, morale and more due to too small an activity. If you do not have constant new projects and concerts the band might easily stop improving. Then members will perhaps quit the band or at the very least stop participating in rehearsals. To break this trend you need to continuously have new upcoming concerts and projects planned. If, during a semester you fail to plan a major concert, for example with a guest artist, you can instead plan a concert with only the band. You will probably not get as big of an audience, but the overall planning will not incorporate that much work and costs. It does not matter if the audience only consists of friends and relatives, as the important thing is that there is a goal: to play good music and keep the activity and excitement running.

At a concert of your own (without a guest vocalist/artist) you have the opportunity to play more challenging music and bring out the band's favorite charts, which might not always appeal 100% to an average audience. You also have the opportunity to play what I call "project pieces" which might take half a year to learn, but are much more challenging and will improve the band much faster. This is something that all bands need.

2.59 First meeting with a new band

If you are meeting a band for the first time and your job is to improve the quality of the band, it is evidently much more useful to work with general and transferable knowledge rather than specific. Try to find the band's weakest spots and work on them, in a way that's like using ***"The Chinese Checkers Principle"*** (ch. 3.6). With a youth or inexperienced band this will often involve teaching them how to articulate a good "Jazz Tenuto", play "Dat" with a good Energy Release, the basic rules of phrasing (Energy Levels, Follow the line of the phrase, etc.), to be able to play loud, and more. Here it is important to take your time making sure that everybody thoroughly learns the basics. It is no use rushing through several charts. The most important element is the general knowledge which is also transferable to all other charts in the same style and tempo. Remember that all basic, transferable knowledge you acquire in one piece saves time in others. So, the time spent on learning transferable knowledge is time well spent.

Experienced and professional bands rarely have many problems with reading music, rhythms, timing and etc. Improving a band like this often involves working with deeper understanding about phrasing, structural listening (understanding the role of your part in any given moment), balance within the sections and more. Perhaps you need to work with an individual musician (many times it's the drummer, bass player or one of the lead players).

Summary of Rehearsal Methodology

1.

- Decide the day and time, and book a rehearsal room well in advance (preferably months).

- A good rule that, strangely enough, is not understood by many musicians is "If you cannot make the rehearsal you will not get the gig. Find a substitute!"

- The director should have sent parts and recordings of the charts to all members of the band well in advance. Nowadays the most common and effective procedure is to put both music (PDF) and recordings (MP3) on the internet.

- When setting up the band it is important that the drummer be positioned in the center, not more than 4,5 m away from any band member. Sit in a square (***Band setup*** ch. 2.2).

- In the beginning of a rehearsal it is a good idea to divide the band into two respective groups; horn section rehearsed by the director and the rhythm section by themselves. Halfway through the rehearsal the entire band meets up and can devote the time more to run-throughs and wholeness.

- Begin the rehearsal with a suitable piece, preferably an up-tempo piece without too many technical problems, with a range that does not include too high a register and where the brass do not have too many long notes.

- Sectional rehearsals with the horns should make use of a drum machine. It is an excellent opportunity to improve the timing of the horn players and also makes the entire rehearsal more time efficient.

2.

- If the piece is new, try to get an overview of it as soon as possible; this is done by working with the most difficult spots (after a run-through). Otherwise, it may not be possible to play the entire piece through without needing to break. More often than not you won't have enough time to rehearse all of the difficult spots, but it is good if you have time to play the most important ones (the most difficult).

- If you have played the piece before, move directly to the difficulties, singing them first (if necessary) and then play them in loops. Start in a slower tempo, gradually getting faster and faster, then finishing with the full tempo, preferably in no more than in 3 to 4 steps. ***Use The Slow Motion Method*** (2.9) if you have to.

- Have every section play its most difficult passages even though the most difficult passages may be in one specific section. Otherwise, the other sections will feel frustration from not having played enough. This does not apply when you find yourselves in an extreme lack of time, then you are forced to go on to the most urgent needs.

- Round up by playing the entire piece. This primarily aims to give everyone an understanding of the wholeness, playing solos and the like. Then the details are learned by delimiting the hard spots, rehearsing them in loops and explaining why the problems occur (through knowledge of The Rules). After having played the entire piece through you are sure that everyone has gotten to play their most important passages (and that it worked, hopefully).

- It is also important that at all times you tell the band what you are aiming for, that you have a plan for the rehearsal. Then they will understand that you have a well thought out game plan and this will win their confidence.

3.

- The absolute most common error that big band musicians make is to listen too much to themselves instead of listening to what is most important: the lead, the drums, and the band as a whole. (***Structural listening*** ch. 1).

- Encourage the musicians to be courageous even though they may not feel 100% safe themselves, technically or rhythmically. Always mention that it is more important to "play music", or phrase rather than just "play a bunch of notes correctly". This applies even when you have not fully learned a piece.

- Try to inspire the band both by praising them (often!) and to continuously create new projects and challenges that develops the band. A band that continually develops also has more fun, and therefore gets to keep their fellow band members.

3. General Issues regarding Learning

3.1 "The only way of correct motorial learning is performing correctly repeatedly"

When you are working with a new piece, the initial work is done with the help of analysis and thinking. When we play the same piece at a concert we must, as I call it, have "transmitted" our knowledge to a lower awareness that partially lies in our spine (the prolonged segment) so that it becomes like a reflex. Most of us cannot read/analyze simultaneously as we are making music. Only very proficient and experienced musicians can manage to do this and only because they have experience from comparable things (rhythms, phrases) before.

In order to play the piece well at a concert we must have "transmitted" the knowledge, which in this case basically means that we know the piece by heart, not needing to read the music. When we play a part we know, this is exactly what we are doing. We use our part somewhat like reminder notes, in order to remember which phrase is coming next. You know the actual phrase, as it is a kind of reflex that does not require deliberate thinking. Your body has learned it through performing it correctly repeatedly. This is why it is ***important to practice slow enough to avoid making mistakes.*** Each time you make a mistake the body starts a process of learning the mistake.

3.2 "The Blindfold Method"

A logical conclusion of the above stated is to learn as much as possible by heart already during practice. An effective way to accomplish this is to use a blindfold, or just close your eyes. In the same way as the blind learns to hear better than the seeing, you tend to become more sensitive to what you hear if you shut off your other senses. If you look while practicing you will also take in unwanted impressions, for instance a curtain with glaring colors, dust on the floor (which you feel you just want to clean right away), or a letter from the tax office (that you would rather not think about when practicing). By closing your eyes you increase your sensitivity in both your feeling and hearing. These are the most important senses in music, not your sight.

I experience better results when I use this method. I learn faster and I am aware that I feel every grip alternation more distinctly and become more sensitive to possible mistakes that I make, such as with hand position, embouchure etc.

3.3 "The 100 Method" and "The 10 Principle"

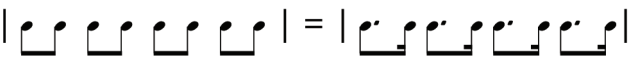
When attempting to learn a new piece or phrase, you can use these "principles". Here I try to outline some principles, not announce an absolute truth. But, I am very certain that these principles work and can be a huge help for the individual musician.

"The 100 Method" means that one can put a "value", i.e. a number of times a specific phrase must be practiced (by a specific individual) in order to be learned correctly. Let us assume that a certain phrase needs to be played 200 times in order to have learned it correctly. However, if you, for example practice the phrase too fast, or get too distracted, you must "abide" according to *The 100 Method*. Each time you make a mistake you deduct twice on the number, since one learns the errors when a mistake is made. This you may use as a principle because there is an underlying positive thought for the individual musician. You know that if you practice a certain number of times correctly, you will definitely reach the goal. You could think, after having played the phrase correctly 100 times: –"Now half of it is done, I will soon master this!"

The meaning of *"The 10 Principle"* is that you should not practice a passage 200 times correctly, mechanically, but you should vary it. Although you play the phrase correctly over and over again mechanically, after a few run-throughs it will no longer have the same effect, when you "turn on the autopilot". In order for you to maintain your concentration at all times you should in fact use The 10 Principle; never play the phrase exactly the same way more than 10 times before you vary it. The simplest way to vary a passage is to add or to deduct notes. If the passage consists of ten notes, then first you play the phrase as a whole, later shorten it into five notes (the most important/most difficult). After

a while, you change to six notes, then seven, then three, four and so on. Another way to maintain your focus is varying the rhythm; changing the rhythms of the passage. A classic exercise is to "dot"; if you are playing a rhythm that only consists of eighth-notes, change the rhythm to dotted eighth plus sixteenth-note, over and over again.

Fig. 65



3.4 You learn while you sleep

If you have been practicing efficiently for a long time (i.e. slow and carefully without making mistakes), you may still find yourself in a situation where you are no longer improving. If you put away the instrument and get a good night's sleep, you will probably experience that things have happened during the night. You feel that your knowledge has matured and reached a higher level. This, just as *The 100 Method*, can be used as a comfort when your practicing experiences a setback. You know that you will progress day by day although you do not notice it every single moment. You could get the same effect after taking a break; it does not have to be after a full night's sleep. Sometimes it is important to find something completely different to occupy yourself with and take a break from practicing. Then you will get this effect, and reach a kind of maturity of knowledge.

3.5 Let the music mature before a concert or a recording

It is very common to rehearse shortly before a concert. Then you risk not reaching the maturity effect mentioned above. It is a good idea to rehearse and get familiar with the material long before the recording (concert). The best procedure would be to:

1. Rehearse and make yourself familiar with the material, then let it rest/mature.
2. Rehearse again, and perhaps do a concert or go on a tour. Then let the music rest/mature again.
3. Rehearse again, freshen up your knowledge additionally and then record the album.

3.6 "The Chinese Checkers Principle"

The *Chinese Checkers Principle* is good to use in order to accelerate the improvement process. It is very simple:

"Practice what you do not know, not what you already know!"

Practice on your weakest area(s), not on what you already know. Unfortunately, it is very common that musicians do practice on what they do best, since it is more fun when it sounds good. In the game of Chinese Checkers there is always a marble furthest back and it is almost always that one you tend to move. A good move often results in that the last marble is suddenly in the front (inside the nest). This is why I decided to call it the Chinese Checkers Principle. Musically speaking it means that your previous weak spot suddenly is your strongest, since you have used the Chinese Checkers Principle.

Apply the Chinese Checkers Principle both on your own practicing and on band rehearsals. If you practice on your currently weakest parts, then an aspect such as your phrasing will advance in the hierarchy, and something else becomes your weakest part. This is a good working method, as you know all the time what to do and what to search for, namely "what you know the least!"

3.7 "Scotoma"

If researchers discover that Jesus was Chinese we would refuse to believe in it for a long time, because we are so used to the traditional view and we would probably need to hear the evidence many times before we were convinced. In musical terms, "*Scotoma*" means that you disregard facts, in this case the written part, because of old deep-rooted standards. For example: it is very common when you play a piece you have heard many times, that you play it as you remember it, and not how it is actually written in the part (mainly rhythmically). A vivid example that I myself have experienced many times is the Glenn Miller chart "In The Mood". Every inexperienced band I have met played it wrong rhythmically at several different spots.

"Watch out for this phenomenon when playing popular and/or often-played material!" For example, if the band has learned a piece incorrectly, this will not disappear unless you start all over again from

the beginning, reading it correctly numerous times, and in a slower tempo.

3.8 The "Contrary Effect"

If you would say to a band: –"You are dragging!" chances are that they will rush. If you tell them to play louder then they will probably play too loudly. When you are working with The General Method it is useful to remind the band of the risks of the "Contrary Effect". If one asks for something, for example a timing that lies on top of the beat, you very often get too much, so that an opposite problem arises. If this has happened a few times already tell the band before they play next time: "Now when I say that you should not drag, chances are that you will instead choose to rush. Think of the Contrary Effect!" The fact is that if you tell them this before they play, and it turns out you were correct, then the band's confidence in you increases. Or, they may play it correctly because you told them to think about The Contrary Effect.

3.9 Musical fitness

There are roughly three stages in the process of learning new pieces:

1. To learn the basics of the piece, technically, rhythmically, etc.
2. To learn one particular piece well enough to play it correctly each time (*Overcapacity*).
3. To be able to play every piece correctly at a concert, when the material has a high degree of difficulty (*General Overcapacity*).

Stage 1: probably most musicians have encountered. Stage 2: you might fail with if you do not set sufficiently high demands on yourself or your band, or if you are rehearsing/practicing in the wrong way. The most common way of practicing incorrectly in individual practicing is that you practice faster than you should, and therefore learn the errors you make (see above). If the director does not have the correct knowledge to conduct a rehearsal, which is quite common, you will also fail.

In order to learn Stage 3, you must work continuously with demanding material. It is good if you can play down this work, making the band accustomed to the actual process of working with demanding material. When introduced for the first time, the band will probably protest or react against this. Then it is up to you as director to be persistent and determined to pursue your plan.

By keeping up a fast tempo during rehearsals with a clear strategy, you will (according to my own experience) make the band "forget" the things that felt unfamiliar, difficult and doomed to fail. You must not forget that it is a natural instinct in most people to be afraid of the new and unfamiliar. It is the responsibility of the bandleader to be able to drift through new projects with the help of energy and enthusiasm. This job becomes a lot easier if you use the principles, advice and recommendations discussed in this chapter and in chapter 1, The Rules

3.10 Working with demanding material makes you "grow" musically

If you are working with material that is either too easy, or with the same material all the time, you tend to not improve as rapidly as you would if working with more advanced material. First of all, you are not learning anything new, and secondly, your level of concentration falls if you play without having to meet any challenges. On the other hand, advanced material can create discouragement and frustration because you do not have the energy to be completely concentrated at all times. Create a natural balance in the repertoire between easier and more advanced material, making sure you always have materials that set higher requirements on concentration, but which on the other hand develops the individual musician and the band faster.

What happens when you are working with new material is that you create your own "bank", "folder" or "palette" with new rhythms, note/key combinations, phrasing etc. Later on this bank is used when you are reading new charts and the old patterns are recognized/remembered, which in reality allows you freedom from just reading, analyzing, counting etc. You begin recognizing patterns and play them like reflexes. This is why an experienced musician is said to be able to "read anything". If you would put this musician to a test you would notice that as soon as they come to something completely new it would become a lot harder, and the musician risks making mistakes while playing. However, this might be an incorrect statement, since there is hardly such thing as something completely new to a really experienced

musician, as almost anything can be derived from old patterns. Besides, the musician is trained and used to the actual working process, i.e. to quickly analyze rhythms etc.

As mentioned above, musicians develop technically and musically from working with demanding material. They also quickly get accustomed to working hard, to "dig in" into the working process without protesting "This is too difficult! This is a bad arrangement! We should concentrate on the old charts!" Unfortunately, these kinds of reactions are quite common.

My advice to you as a director is to not listen too much to the reactionaries that you will find in all bands. Rather, make your own judgment of what is too difficult and what is a good balance between demanding and less demanding material in relation to the time available.

3.11 Why do many musicians dislike the analytical part of music?

Most people associate music and art with emotional experience and wholeness. There are a lot of people who have a musical talent - what you could, in an everyday language call traditional musicality (a good ear, good rhythm, etc..). This talent is not always paired up with the analytical talent necessary for reading, for methodical practice, for composing music, etc. Most musicians are interested in music and getting inside the music for emotional reasons: perhaps they are passionate about a certain style, for example "Guitar Blues". When later confronted with technical or reading problems it feels bothersome and exhausting. These musicians do not want music and problem-solving to ever belong together.

Many musicians have the opinion that you should not intermix problem-solving and analysis in making music. This is of course a utopian view. The idea of entirely separating problem-solving and analysis from making music will not work in most forms of music. Without it, Bach's fugues, advanced big band arrangements and more would not have existed, nor would we be able to play them. Unfortunately, both talents are needed, both analytical and traditional musicality at least within the areas where notated music is used.

For musicians who think of using problem-solving and analysis as boring, bothersome, stupid or unnecessary, we must find ways around this attitude. I believe the best thing to do is try to find the absolute fastest and most effective working process, and then accustoming the musicians to it. This is the kind of process that I, in the very best way I can, have tried to portray in this book. The strongest incentive for people to work hard with music is when they see results; that the fun begins when you know the piece (see 2.55 ***If it sounds good that is the greatest inspiration***). Try to find the fastest way to reach your goals!

3.12 Notes are not music

Notes are not music, and we all know that, but many times we play as if we didn't know it. You must strain yourself in order to "find the music" within the notes. In my opinion you can find much of the music in phrasing. To a large extent phrasing includes other musical aspects: timing, dynamics and articulation. In chapter 1 we discussed these aspects and found a set of keys "to the music". (See also ***"Swing or not swing***, above)

I usually say that notes have "different values", and by that I mean primarily different levels of accentuation/emphasis. This is perhaps the most important key to finding the music and perhaps the rule most often broken. Inexperienced musicians often play entirely without phrasing. Why do they do that? It is because they do not know anything about phrasing? Perhaps no one has taught them how to use it while playing, and they do not have the Overcapacity that is needed? Once you have Overcapacity you have energy left over for phrasing and music, not just for reading and synchronizing muscles (grip alternation). The first step towards good phrasing is to know which notes to emphasize. This is what I have tried to discuss, together with a set of simple rules in chapter 1, Phrasing (Energy Levels and more).

The most common process is that the musician first wants to get acquainted with the notes and then with "the music" later on. It is rational that most musicians feel this way, but my point is that there are a lot of advantages gained by already linking the phrasing to the music at the beginning of the learning process. "You cannot see the forest for the trees". By this I mean that you do not understand

the importance the notes have in the musical whole if you play entirely without phrasing. The teamwork in the ensemble then becomes more difficult, since you do not understand the importance of the musical phrases the other musicians have. If you are sitting in a section and you make a mistake, then the person next to you can learn from your mistake whilst you can learn from your neighbor if they are playing the piece correctly, and vice-versa (see ***Phrase on the very first run-through***, ch. 1). Courage is needed to be able to phrase on the very first run-through. That is one of the reasons why courage is so important (see ***Courage is important*** 2.43).

Certainly a lot of practice is required to phrase on the very first run-through, but phrasing at the first run-through is not unobtainable in my opinion once you have learned the phrasing rules in Chapter 1 as reflexes, like the reflexes grip alternation actually has. The whole idea is that musicians at a young age should get the chance to learn these phrasing rules so that they occur naturally as reflexes in their music.

3.13 Avoid all discussions concerning charts until you can perform them well

When working with a new piece, comments about the piece not being a good one or too difficult often appears. This can be destructive. The criticism is usually not that relevant, which you will find out once you have begun working progressively with it in an effective way. It usually does not require that much time before the criticism is proven to be wrong. That is why the director must make these kinds of decisions (whether or not a piece is good) with the band and its individuals at heart. Sometimes it could be better to switch to another piece, but most of the time you can resolve the problems that exist in order make it sound good and make the music self-evident. Eventually the criticism and opinions will slowly fade out.

Tell the band to save their opinions until they can perform the piece well. It seems unfair towards a composer/arranger to give up that easily. For a beginning arranger to receive such a criticism can be disastrous, and on top of that, not giving him/her an opportunity to hear their piece played correctly.

Four Phases of Musical Knowledge

Below I have constructed a model for describing the process of learning a piece of music. This can be used to make musicians in a band understand where, approximately, they are in the process of learning it. This is only a model and does not aspire to be the "truth".

Phase 1	*Phase 2*	*Phase 3*	*Phase 4*
Sight-Reading	**Getting 75-90% of the notes right, "most of the time"**	**Getting 90% of the notes right, "almost all of the time"**	**"Interpretation" (awareness, "playing music, not notes" - and "getting it right" every time)**
As most musicians know there are people that can sight read "almost anything". However there are extremely few that can "make music" at once, unless the level of the music is very simple.	All too many musicians are satisfied with reaching this level. My opinion is that this level is not even close to "making music".	This is a high level, but always strive to the next ("Interpretation"), since it's the only level were music is truly made, as compared to "playing notes".	To be able to reach this level a musician needs a lot of knowledge, time and ambition. However, it's always worth trying to reach this level since the satisfaction of doing so is so great.

4. Practicing The General Method

I have chosen to divide this description into the following parts:

- 4.1 Procedure
- 4.2 Basic version (independent of level and age)
- 4.3 Beginners, young band or actual beginners, for example 13-20 year-old.
- 4.4 Amateur band, meaning musicians (generally adults) who has played an instrument for 10 years or more and in a big band regularly for minimum a couple of years, often more
- 4.5 Professional band, freelancing professional musicians
- 4.6 Example of most important rules
- 4.7 Most common problems and their solutions

Naturally it is very difficult to provide an exact model, step by step, of the best way to rehearse in every given moment. My aim is to describe my thoughts about how I would act in a specific situation. The section Procedure is a very brief and simplified description of a standard scenario. It aims to be a survey, easy to understand and to remember.

Using The General Method includes prioritizing general knowledge and musical awareness when teaching the ensemble the actual piece (specific knowledge). If, for example, the band is incapable of playing loud, even when desired, this is an example of a general knowledge, since it will affect just about every chart the band would play. The same goes for the rhythm section (or the entire band) playing far back on the beat. If you can make them play on the beat, lots of pieces will sound better, generally speaking. These examples are mentioned in contrast to teaching the sax section to play "correctly" in a series of difficult passages, without informing them of the general rules that are transferable to other pieces (*"The Specific Method"*).

During the course of the rehearsal you should continuously recapitulate The Rules when something happens. Frequently ask the band "What happened there?" "Which rule shall we focus on right here?" This is part of the core of The General Method. Use the whiteboard repeatedly and write the names of *The Rules* and the graphic figures. This will make the musicians learn them faster and better.

For example, if the band drags in a fast chart, say: "Remember the rule about fast tempos dragging!" or if the band is rushing on a series of syncopations you should say "Here you will have to remind yourselves that syncopations are always rushed!" (the *Rule of Galloping Syncopations*). Repeatedly asking the band what the problem is at that very moment is a part of the self-analysis which helps the players understand the method.

4.1 Procedure

A

First time the actual Chart is played:

1. Run through the piece and locate the difficult spots. It is a good idea to skip conducted introductions or intros that only involve a few musicians; play those at the end.

2. Rehearse the difficult spots in loops (all of the band), in a slow tempo that everyone can handle. If there are hard rhythms, sing them first, with either accompaniment from a "click" by the drummer or the director could hold the metronome up in front of the players so that everybody can hear it. When everybody seems to know the rhythm fairly well, then sing it an additional few times so that this knowledge becomes "deeper".

3. Explain with the help of *The Rules* why things keep going wrong, why certain notes are too early or too late.
   Explain the 2-4 most important things to think about right here, and which rules to stick to.

4. If the band does not know *The Rules* perfectly, ask repeatedly:
–"Which rule applies here?"
–"What does rule X mean?"

5. If the band has big general problems; not being able to play loud or if they have very little knowledge about phrasing for example, you should go through every rule that is applicable in that situation; in this case Dissolvent (loud) and Energy Levels (phrasing). Choose a part of the piece suitable for applying The Rules mentioned and work for a while on that spot, preferably until deemed satisfactory.

6. When a passage works, you select the next difficult spot and work in the same manner. The new spot does not have to be located close to the first one.

7. Finish with a run-through of the entire piece. Sometimes you might want to temporarily delete a few repeats just to get through the piece and quickly get an overview.

8. If you are in a hurry, which is often the case, do not rehearse solo backgrounds which are usually easier to play. Most of the time the run-through of the entire piece will work anyway.

B

Having played the piece before:

1. Go directly to the most difficult spot of the piece and rehearse it in loops (the entire band), even if you did this at the first rehearsal. This is done at every rehearsal until everything is perfect. Then, move on to the next hardest spot, and so forth.

2. Remind your musicians of which rules are applicable in a certain passage, which is the same as telling them which things are the most important to focus on right then and there. Then, move on to the next hardest spot until you have gone through all of the hard spots.

3. Finish with a run-through of the entire piece after reminding the band about which rules are the most important to focus on in this particular piece.

4.2 The basic version

The scenario for this version is that you, the director hear the band for the first time:

1. First Time

First time you hear the band, ask them to play something that they have rehearsed for a long time which is current.

Listen actively for (first of all):

* Timing
* Phrasing
* Articulation
* Balance in the different sections
* The drummer (most important member of the band). Listen for where he or she is placed on the beat, if he or she swings, understands the music, can make good fills, follows the dynamic levels of the piece and etc.
* The lead trumpet player (the second most important member of the band).
If he or she is capable of leading the horns and his or her own section, if the player has good timing and phrasing, has a good enough range, volume and more.
* The lead sax player (the third most important member of the band). If he/she can lead his or her section, if this person has good timing and phrasing, has enough volume and more. In the sax section, the alto is the softest sounding instrument (except for the soprano which is even softer) and many times has difficulties being heard well enough. This is especially true if the lead player is not playing on a suitable mouthpiece (preferably metal, or a brighter ebonite).

2. After the first run-through
Here you praise the band for playing well and ask to hear the piece one more time to get to know them better (and then evaluate what needs to be done). It is also very good to start the rehearsal by playing a bit, since that is the reason for the individual musician to be there in the first place. Say; –"Before I say anything, I want to let you play for a while. After that I will talk!"

3. After the second run-through
Hopefully you have gotten to know the band by now, including their strengths and their weaknesses. Unfortunately, rehearsing a band is a problem-oriented issue, meaning you focus on their weaknesses since that is where you will begin the work. Always start with the main weakness of the band (see ch. 3.6, "***The Chinese checkers principle***").

4. *The General Method* mainly concerns teaching The Rules **(ch. 1)**
This is not done by going through them one by one, from beginning to end. On the contrary, you will teach The Rules according to upcoming needs, while following "***The Chinese checkers principle***". If the band's biggest weakness is distinguishing between short and long notes, you will teach The Rules; ***Ones and Zeroes, The Rooftop accent rule, Short notes*** and more. If the piece you are rehearsing includes a lot of syncopations and you think that the biggest problem is rushing them, then teach ***Galloping syncopations, Nestico's 3 and 4 offbeat rule, Short syncopations (offbeats) should bounce***. Continually write the names of The Rules on the whiteboard. After having played the chart twice I usually start with writing about 4-6 rules on the board.

The Rules best to begin with:

* ***The Brick*** and ***Energy-release***
* ***Energy Levels***
* ***Crescendos (mainly the "Holmquist-model")***
* ***Most important notes of the phrase…***
* ***Follow the line of the phrase***
* ***Legato Prohibition***
* ***The Energy-Barometer*** (if the rhythm section or the entire band stays too far back or on top of the beat)

Writing and explaining the *Brick and Energy-release* on the whiteboard should be the first thing you do. The next thing is to explain Energy Levels. First write the examples of each level on the whiteboard (see Phrasing, Fig. 18-23 above). Then make a 2 cm (3/4 in.) horizontal line for each level. Draw the notes that have a higher Energy Level higher up, and the ones that have a lower Energy Level further down, according to their levels (see Fig. 24a). The other way is to write numbers on top of every note for each Energy Level, respectively (see Fig. 24b).

4.3 Beginner bands (children, youths and adult beginners)

Here you have to work in loops a lot, with just a few bars at a time. Often loops of 2-4 bars are used, already on the first attempt. This procedure is used because players on this level of experience (or lack of) will make the piece collapse within a few bars, in any case.

On this level it is important to sing all the hard rhythms (see ch. 2.19 ***Sing hard rhythms***). First the director sings the rhythm to the band with conviction and an almost exaggerated phrasing. When the players have learned to sing the phrase fairly correct, then sing it a few more times so that learning becomes deeper (see ch. 3.1 ***The only way of correct motorial learning is performing correctly repeatedly***). When singing, try to get your students to sing the phrasing and accents distinctly, almost in an exaggerated manner, just as you did in the beginning when teaching the phrase. For example, if you sing a rhythm where they usually rush, try to sing it "laid back" (at the back of the beat). At the same time as working with hard rhythms you have to explain what and why things went wrong. This is done through The Rules, for example: –"Don't forget the ***Being late on the offbeats of 1 and 3 rule***!" –"You are playing with too small ***Distinction of Attack***!"

Regarding learning The Rules, this will of course take more time with children and youths. You should always first ask them "What happened there? What rule shall we focus on here?" Continue to repeat The Rules until everybody knows them by heart. With this category of students you also have

to be more thorough when explaining The Rules, and also check that they understand what you are trying to teach them. Rarely do they tell you if they do not understand. Use the whiteboard and draw the explanations: the names of The Rules, graphic models of crescendos, and more. Note! You cannot be sure that 14 year-old's know what syncopations, downbeats and offbeats are. Teach them!

Working with The General Method includes being thorough and persistent to achieve the results you want. For example, if the trombone section has difficulties playing a series of long notes, then work on the basics of playing uniform, balanced chords and sustained notes to their full value. Do this until it sounds good. Of course, you should not go too far, but in my experience young people (just like older people) like it when they sound good, so therefore it is OK for them to work a little extra. Besides, young musicians seldom complain about playing too much or too long, which happens in older age groups. You have to use your own judgement and be sensitive regarding how long you can rehearse the same phrase or section of the piece. Some things have a tendency to sort themselves out.

It is not necessary for this group to get through the entire piece, but hopefully at substantial part of it, perhaps from the beginning to the solo section. The reason being to create a perspective, let it mature to the next rehearsal and also because it is more rewarding. But at this level it is even more important to give the students a deeper learning by playing only a few bars at a time. Many clinicians/directors are afraid that their youths will find this boring. Nevertheless, my view is that they will appreciate when it sounds good, and therefore see the advantages of this way of working, just as grown-ups do. It is good advice for the director to point out "when we rehearse in this manner we will learn the piece much more thoroughly (acquiring general knowledge) than if we would just superficially play it through with a lot of mistakes! Furthermore we will learn the next piece faster!" If things work out, the knowledge we acquired will be transferred to all pieces of the same character/genre. It is important to praise the band when they play well; "Fantastic, now you know how to play it! This is what it should sound like in all similar charts!" One example of a rule that is easily transferred to most other pieces is ***The Percussive note rule*** (see ch. 1). It works in a majority of different charts but even musicians on a high level are often unaware of it.

Working with young, inexperienced players, it is not as important to begin with the hardest part of the piece, since they experience almost everything as being difficult. You might start from the beginning and work with the general issues that come along. Perhaps first teach them to play a *Brick* (see ch. 1), a long, straight, uniform note with a shape similar to a brick which should be sustained the entire note value and ended with an Energy release. This is a good example of what a beginner should be taught in the first place, since you know for sure they do not manage it, at least not the entire band. I still have yet to encounter this. You can save a lot of time by conducting, making gestures, shouting; 1, 2, 3, 4 off! time and time again, if your players sustain a note too long (or too short which is more frequent). Young musicians often get lost timing-wise, meaning that they are unable to find out what beat they are on, for example the first beat of the bar which is so extremely important. In this situation you can shout out loudly "1" or "1, 2, 3, 4", preventing things from collapsing.

Generally speaking it is very important to rehearse at great speed, but even more so when it comes to children and youths. Teenagers, as well as younger people, have a limited attention span and limited patience. It is all about maintaining a fast tempo in learning, where they feel that they learn new things constantly, to keep their attention alive. They need to play a lot, but it is better to use loops (see ch. 2.22) than to repeatedly play the same piece through again and again. Looping is one of the most efficient procedures of learning while repeated play-throughs are one of the least, especially for younger players. The fact that they play a lot helps them to maintain their concentration and prevents disturbing chatting. If only one or two sections have played loops for a while it is very important to let the other sections play as well. In this case you do not have to play the same phrase or passage as the others, but instead choose a passage that is more important (difficult for them) for this particular section.

Young musicians need extra encouragement, appraisal, stimulation and inspiration. When you get your students to play in a way that you are satisfied with, give them lots of appreciation. Personally I feel that it is difficult to be appreciative if there is

not enough reason for it. My goal, through effective, purposeful and thoughtful rehearsing, is to reach the status of a good sounding band. Then it is easy to be appreciative.

4.4 Amateur bands

This is the level that is most similar to the Basic version. Here the need for playing in loops is not as great since music reading and musical understanding is much more developed. Teaching The Rules takes less time. The question of what went wrong where needs to be asked less frequently than in a beginners band. You can launch more rules in a more limited amount of time. You can bring in one rule at a time relatively quickly, wherever there is a need for it. Application of The Rules always takes time, though. You can successfully use loops here, also giving the individual musician frequent chances of getting things right. One example could be a band that does not emphasize accents and syncopations enough, meaning they are not phrasing sufficiently (***Energy Levels*** ch. 1). When making your musicians aware of emphasizing a syncopation more than a downbeat (the basics of phrasing), they might feel a little uncomfortable, and it might take some time for them to get used to it. Then it is important to mention that it always takes some time to learn things you are not used to. (see ch. 1, ***Things to remember when introducing…***). In this type of band everyone can understand The Rules but it still takes time to learn to apply them. If this was not the case then every musician would be on a very high level (which, unfortunately, not everyone is). You have to repeat The Rules over and over again until you can hear that everyone gets it and can actually apply them.

At this level the principle of rehearsing the hardest parts should be addressed first, since these musicians can play a certain amount of features correctly without rehearsing, solely with the help of their experience. Start prioritizing, which is one of the most important things a director does, constantly. Prioritizing means Delimitation. Delimitation is part of the essence of The General Method (see ch. 2.21, ***Delimitation***)

4.5 Professional bands

In this type of band the role of the director is quite different than in the other two types. Here the director is more of a "supervisor", boss and conductor, than anything else. Professional musicians have much bigger egos than youths and amateurs, generally speaking. This is something natural and in many aspects something positive. But, at the same time, it is, in my opinion, also the greatest challenge in leading and rehearsing professional bands.

In this case I would presume that the ego is a kind of professional pride. The professional musician has spent much time and hard work collecting all the knowledge that he/she possess. Although, there is a significant difference regarding different age groups. For me as a director, I find that older professional musicians (established) require more work. Over time people establish habits, musical and other. It is difficult to make an individual musician play in a certain manner if they have spent many years playing differently. In a worst-case scenario this particular musician perhaps does not want to adapt to the manner of playing that the director dictates. In this situation the role of the director lands on a human level, instead of on a musical one; "Can this musician continue to play in this band?"

Established, successful musicians also have higher demands on details besides the music, than younger and less established musicians do. It could be about wages, tour bus, hotel rooms, rehearsal schedule and more. If the director has to focus mostly on these things, it takes time and focus away from the actual music. These details mentioned above are clearly important and they actually affect the musical result, although there is a big difference from youth and amateur bands where these things influence the result a lot less. Conclusion: The director of a professional band often has to pay attention much more to details aside from the actual music (much of these example are valid also for youth and amateur bands too):

* Send out sheet music (or pdf documents. via mail) and recordings (on internet) well in advance.
* Get a good rehearsal room (big enough, good acoustics, central location and more).
* See that 100% of the band members are present at every rehearsal.
* The director decides who solos on which piece, with an extremely careful evaluation regarding artistic qualities in combination with democratic fairness.

* Plan the rehearsal minute by minute, rehearsal order, begin with the right piece and more (see also ch. 2.31-33 Rehearsal Method).
* Make sure to carefully plan your travels; tour bus, hotel rooms and meals in the best possible manner.
* Try to get the highest possible wages for all involved.

Regarding musical learning, you can use play-throughs as a rehearsal method much more often in a professional band than in youth and amateur bands. You can and should rehearse more specifically. Professional musicians (hopefully) have a well-developed technique, intonation and music reading. But it is not always the case that the director experiences the same interest and focus on ensemble playing, especially regarding phrasing and what I call ***Structural listening*** (see ch. 1).

Many players are much more focused on jazz improvisation than ensemble playing. Many times the director has to be a good diplomat to inspire this type of musician to focus more on the ensembles, and to practice his/her part. Here in the professional band there is less demand for rehearsing hard rhythms and technically difficult passages, which gives more time for comprehensive views and artistic interpretation. At this stage it is especially important for the director to be strong and persistent with his musical intentions, since this is much more difficult in a professional setting, for the above mentioned reasons.

Obviously you can use The General Method and The Rules on professionals too. Even if they never heard about any of these "rules" they still know most of these things more or less subconsciously. If you present The Rules to a professional band they will start thinking more alike than before, which is an advantage. For the director The Rules can act as a link to presenting your musical intentions. If you want more Distinction of Attack, long or short Foreplay, a certain type of crescendo (Basie or Holmquist), playing on top- or further back on the beat (Energy barometer). All these things can easily and distinctly be explained when there exists a language = The Rules. It is good advice not to use loops more than necessary, preferably only on extremely difficult passages (technically, rhythmically). In most cases it is better to explain and sing your intentions, and to play passages of 4-16 bars repeatedly but with breaks in between (no loop). Using The Rules and procedures like loops too often might bore the band, and some members could possibly feel that you are interfering with their musical/artistic integrity. But, I think it is very important to introduce the method to your band and to use the language/terms. This will make your rehearsals more effective, and hopefully you will have better results.

4.6 Examples of the most important Rules:

(The Rules that most often needs to be reminded of)

Timing:

* ***Galloping syncopations***
* ***Energy Barometer*** (connected with ***The Basie myth***).
* ***Too late on offbeats of 1 and 3***
* ***Points of direction and "Imaginary Points of Direction"***
* ***Subdivision***
* ***The transformation of the Jazz Triplet.***
* ***Law of least resistance/Timing***

Phrasing:

* ***Energy Levels***
* ***Seek the Short Notes of the Phrase (The short notes of the phrase should be emphasized the most)***
* ***Follow the line of the phrase.***
* ***Most important notes of the phrase***
* ***Roof top accents***
* ***Bring out what is between the notes.***
* ***The Subordinate clause-rule***

Articulation:

* ***The Brick***
* ***The Anthill***
* ***Distinction of Attack***
* ***Energy release***
* ***"Legato Prohibition" (Semi-Legato and more)***
* ***The Long Background-Note Rule***

* ***The "TAH-Syndrome"***
* ***The Phrasing-Slur Problem***

Dynamics:

* ***Structural listening***
* ***Percussive notes***
* ***For a crescendo to be heard….***
* ***Crescendo using the Holmquist model***
* ***The Reversed crescendo rule***
* ***Inverted Accent***
* ***It is impossible to phrase at a too loud dynamic level***

With knowledge of these rules you will do quite well rehearsing a big band. If you study your musicians "relationship" to these rules you will find a lot of things to work with.

The primary goal is: Musicians knowledge about The Rules and their execution.

4.7 The most common problems and their solutions

Problem
The band can not read the rhythms.

Solution
Delimitate! Choose a few bars at a time (around 1-4) and sing the rhythms in a slower tempo. Sing in loops again and again. At first it should be sung by the director with a distinct and almost exaggerated phrasing, emphasizing the important notes. Use phonetics for short and long notes - *Doo* or *Dat* - to clearly point out the short and long notes. When your musicians have grasped the rhythm (and the phrasing) relatively well, then sing another few times to receive a deeper learning (see ch. 3.1 ***The only way of correct motorial learning is performing correctly repeatedly***). Learning rhythms without playing your own instrument is governed by the same principles as motorial learning with the instrument: it must be done correctly repeatedly.

After singing the rhythms, you play the same phrase on your instrument using the same procedure. Often you have to "back off"; meaning to slow down the tempo. The reason for this is because it is harder to play something on your instrument than singing it, generally speaking, since you also have the motorial problem of pressing down a key or a valve at the exact right moment to think about.

When singing the hard rhythms you can use the drummer as a "click". I prefer a closed hi-hat and it should be beaten hard so everybody can hear it. Another alternative is that the director uses an amplified metronome so it can be heard clearly.

Problem
An inexperienced band has numerous **general** problems with rhythms

Solution
Explain the terms ***Subdivision*** and ***Points of direction,*** using the whiteboard to illustrate. Sing the rhythms with a phrasing that is as distinct (accents) as possible, with almost exaggerated emphasis on the important notes.

Problem
A brass section (or entire horn section) is unable to play loudly. Often it is the brass section that has this issue. The brass section's capability of playing loudly affects the entire band, not just the saxes.

Solution
Do the ***Dissolvent procedure*** (see ch. 2.34), make them play loud for a while!

Problem
The band has a practically non-existent knowledge of phrasing.

Solution
Teach your band the basics of ***Phrasing*** (ch. 1):

1. Energy Levels
2. The Syncopation rule
3. The most important notes of the phrase
4. Follow the line of the phrase
   and more...

Draw the Energy Levels (of a specific phrase) on the whiteboard and explain how important phrasing is to make the music come alive. Take a phrase from the piece on which you are currently working and write both the notes and Energy Levels on the board (see ***Energy Levels*** ch. 1).

Problem
The musicians in the band have difficulties learning some technically hard spots, for example in a chart with a fast tempo.

Solution
Start by checking that there are no rhythmic and/or phrasing problems. Do this by singing the phrases in a slow tempo. If this is OK, then move on to the technical issues by setting a slow tempo on the metronome, one that everyone can handle. Delimitate the hard passage(s) to a loop preferably of no more than eight bars, probably less (2-4). Now use the procedure ***The Slow Motion Method*** (see ch. 2.9) and play loops of around 4-6 bars (2-4 times each). Gradually increase the tempo by around 4 bpm each time. Use the metronome to check that your "count-offs" are in the exact bpm that you wanted.

This entire process is dependent upon the exact count-offs using the metronome. If you count off in the wrong tempo then the next play-through becomes a waste of time. If it is too fast, the players are incapable of playing the phrase and if it is too slow, you lose time by staying too long on the slow tempo. Continue the process up to full tempo, or to the level you can manage in one rehearsal. You will find that you may often increase the tempo by more than 4 bpm at a time, after rehearsing for a while.

I have never met a musician who has "perfect time", one who would always be able to find the exact tempo without the metronome. This is why it is so important to use the metronome in this procedure.

Problem
The band (mainly the horns) rushes on straight quarter-notes and syncopations.

Solution
Teach The Rules: ***Rushing on straight quarter-notes*** and ***Galloping Syncopations***. If there are very young and inexperienced players in the band, you have to make sure that everyone knows what a syncopation is. Otherwise you have to teach them.

Problem
Your band is not sustaining long notes to their full value.

Solution
Conduct and shout 1, 2, 3, 4 "off" if it is a whole-note (see ch. 1, ***Sustain long notes to their full value***). In rehearsing a young and inexperienced band, you usually have to remind the players many, many times before they learn to sustain a long note consistently. Also work with ***Energy releases*** and ***Inverted Accents***. It is very important to make all the band members understand these terms.

Problem
A rhythm section that plays without guts and is often dragging.

Solution
Use the metronome when you do a "count-off". Later, when stopping the band, hold the metronome up in front of everyone so they can hear that the tempo has slowed down (or sped up). Explain how important it is to maintain a tempo and not to drag or rush (see ***Energy Barometer***, ch. 1). Another procedure is to stop the band after only a couple of bars of playing when they do not get the tempo exactly (see ***Law of least resistance – Timing***, ch. 1). Explain these phenomena and that they are extremely common: not getting the tempo immediately or slowing down after a while. This is what they should focus on, to prevent tempo fluctuations from happening.

Problem
The horns are not following the drummer, tempo- and timing-wise.

Solution
Remind the drummer that he/she is the main boss of the band and also "conductor" of the band. The drummer should not drag even if the horns do. He/she should "run them over"; it is the drummer's timing that rules. Remind the horn section that the drummer is the boss of timing and dynamics and that the horn player who does not play with the drummer, timing-wise, "is wrong".

Problem
Bad timing on fast moving lines, and entrances are often late.

Solution
Remind the band about The Rules: ***Too late on the offbeats of 1 and 3, It is always hard to enter on time after a rest, Play through the rests, It is impossible to phrase at too loud of a dynamic level, Bring the volume down in unison*** and ***Mental accent*** (ch. 1). Using a Mental accent at the beginning of a new phrase results in a better timing.

Problem
The band has learned a piece totally incorrectly, rhythmically speaking, many times being a Latin chart.

Solution
Then you have to start the entire learning process all over and learn the rhythms correctly. Sing them first and use the terms: ***Subdivision, Points of direction*** and ***Start signal*** for help. Explain the terms and write the hard rhythms on the whiteboard and analyze them, especially regarding Points of Direction and "Imaginary Points of Direction".

Problem
Some musicians in the band are playing short and long notes in the wrong places due to an old-fashioned and inadequate notation.

Solution
Explain the term ***General accents*** (ch. 1). This term teaches when an accent should be short or long regardless if the notation is inadequate. If all musicians in the band know that a certain type of accent should be played short, no matter if it is notated as long, they will play alike, which is the goal.

Problems with balance
The lower parts play too loudly and do not listen to the lead.

Solution
Remind the band about the common mistake of listening too much to yourself and not enough to your lead player and drummer (see ch. 2.39, ***Do not listen too much to yourself***). The lead should "float" on top of the rest of the section and never have to experience competition which impedes him or her from developing an artistic phrasing. I would like to describe the ideal balance situation as all parts being equal, except for the lead which should be 20% louder, symbolically speaking.

Problem
The horn players are not performing their crescendos simultaneously or with the same curve.

Solution
Repeat how the procedure of a ***Crescendo using the Holmquist Model*** works. Here, the crescendo should begin after 50% of the note value, which makes it easy to begin the crescendo simultaneously and to obtain the same curve in the crescendo. Also tell the band that the climax should be reached at very end of the note. As mentioned earlier, one of the most common mistakes regarding crescendos is to reach the climax too early. Important! Diminuendos are often executed too early as well, so refer to ***The reversed crescendo rule*** (Holmquist Model).

Problem
If your musicians play all the right notes with fairly good timing but very little expression, how do you get them to play in a more exciting way?

Solution
Explain the term ***The Vertical perspective*** and how important it is to work in the vertical plane to make your music exciting. Many times this concerns the need of obtaining good phrasing, so you should also remind them about ***Energy Levels*** and the most important rules for phrasing (see ch. 1). If the band is playing further back on the beat or right on the beat and you want them to be on top of the beat, then explain the ***Energy barometer*** one more time and point out how important the position of the beat is for the experience of the music.

Problem
Accompanying and non-melodic parts are played too loudly and insensitively.

Solution
Explain the terms ***Structural listening, Protect the melody, Distinguish between melodic and rhythmic music*** and ***The Long Background-Note Rule***. The essence of most of these terms is to understand, in any given moment, which part is carrying the melody and what role your own part has. "Do I have the melody or an accompanying part in this section? It is "unmusical" to "run over" the melody/theme!

Problem
The band is having difficulties reading rhythms with sixteenth-note notation.

Solution
Write the hard rhythms on the whiteboard and analyze the complex spots. Very often it concerns phrases where there are entrances on the second and fourth sixteenth-note of the beat. Explain that you are often ***Late on the second and early on the***

fourth sixteenth-note of the beat. Write small vertical arrows on all ***Points of direction*** and mark the hard spots (2nd and 4th sixteenths).

Problem
A fiery debate arises as to wether who, in the band, is playing too loudly or not.

Solution
Explain the term ***Good Phrasing solves most problems with Dynamics***. If a loud dynamic level is notated, and the player is not over blowing to the point where he/she has lost 100% control of tone production and proper phrasing, then he/she is not playing too loudly. On the other hand it is very common for the electrified players to turn up their amplifiers too much. This you can change easily.

Conclusion: "If you have a well planned phrasing and controlled tone production, you will seldom play too loudly! "

Problem
You, the director, are having problems locating the error(s) but you think it is coming from the horn section.

Solution
Dismantle the music by letting one horn section at a time play, preferably with a "click" from the drummer, so that you can hear everyone in the section. Now you should be able to hear the source of the problem(s). For example: a balance problem (some musicians "over-blowing") can make the error seem rhythmical in nature. But, when you have dismantled the music you will surely locate the problem and be able to solve it!

5. The Roles of the Different Bandmembers

5.1 The Drummer

"The drummer is the boss of the band". What does that mean?

There lies a certain amount of truth in this statement. The drummer is the "big boss" of the band. He or she is primarily in charge of timing/tempo and dynamics. It is primarily their ride cymbal and hi-hat to which the other members of the band must adjust. Moreover, the drummer is the conductor of the band in the sense that he or she - in advance - relays to the others what is going to happen. For example, it could be to set up an entrance of the horns by making a "fill" and/or a crescendo. This is done by adding something before the other players enter, just like a conductor makes a "blind beat" before conducting the beat where everyone enters.

The drummer should also provide inspiration. If, for example, the horns are dragging (playing behind the beat) then he/she can "whip" them up a little. He/she can also remind the horns that there is a soft section coming up, by making a distinct diminuendo. Furthermore, the drummer can make the form of the arrangement more obvious to the horn players by performing different kinds of fills or "kicks" at about every double-bar and for every important horn entrance.

What is the Drummer's most important Task?

Apart from swinging, playing good time, and maintaining the tempo, the drummer's most important task is to guide the band through the form of the chart. Therefore he/she should, at the first run-through, make a topographical map of the chart in his/her mind. This is an overview of the form, or at least the most important parts of the form. The reason that I relate it to a topographic map is because it concerns a great deal to dynamics with high and low points. The climax of the piece is often also the dynamic high point. The drummer should be in charge of the dynamic development of the chart, and should tell the others beforehand what is going to happen. The form of the chart might consist of a dynamic level of ***p*** except for two spots, for example, letters C and G where it's ***f***. The drummer needs to memorize these and clearly show the band what is going to happen at every moment. Many times there are only a few spots that stand out and need to be accentuated. In nine cases out of ten, a preparation (a fill or likewise) is needed at such a spot. *The drummer must clearly outline the form of the arrangement to the band!*

What are the most common mistakes Drummers make?

The most common mistake among inexperienced drummers is that they do not show the band what is going to happen next in the chart. Probably because they have not structured the form in their heads themselves. Instead they become surprised: "Oh no, this is the place where it should have been loud!" Tell your drummer that the second time he/she plays the piece he/she should have the "map" of the form ready, or at least a sketch of the most important parts of the form. Hopefully, dynamics and important horn parts are clearly notated in the part, but often this is not the case. If he/she needs to ask something, which is then marked in his/her part, let this person do so before you play the chart once more.

Another common mistake among drummers is that they are many times not precise enough in their fills or at the end of drum solos. Many drummers do not have a range of possible fills to choose from for different purposes. Frankly, they do not have enough knowledge about the idiom. Most of the times the fills incorporate too many strokes. "Ask your drummer to simplify his/her fills!" At the end of a drum solo the drummer has to be so clear (and simple) that no band member will misunderstand when to enter.

How is a good Fill constructed?

Since the function of the fill is primarily to help the others enter correctly at the next phrase, then first of all the fill needs to be distinct and obvious. I like to use a metaphor to illustrate this. I tell the drummer "Here's a bunch of egoists (the horn players) who only care about one thing; being helped to enter at the next phrase. They do not care for a second if your fills are hip, artistic and so on!" A good fill does not incorporate too much information. Even one stroke

can be a good fill, but 2-4 is more common. More than four strokes are seldom necessary. All the same, many drummers make fills with 10-15 strokes, which many times confuses the band.

The fill contains two parts:

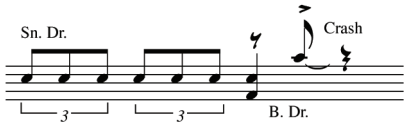
1. The strokes leading up to the horn entrance. Very often these are performed on the snare drum (perhaps also on the toms), and the downbeat right before, on the bass drum.
2. A stroke on the first note of the horn phrase, very often with the crash cymbal.

If the horns enter on a downbeat, they want to hear a stroke on the downbeat before. But if they enter on an offbeat they still want to hear the downbeat, this time an eighth-note before their entrance.

Example:

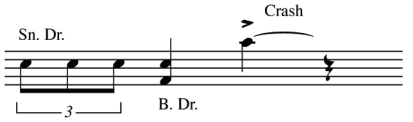
* If the horn players enter on the offbeat of 3 they want to hear the downbeat of 3 (Fig. 66a).

Fig. 66a



* If the horns enter on the downbeat of 3 they want to hear the downbeat of 2 (Fig. 66b).

Fig. 66b



This is why it is so important for the drummer to memorize the phrases of the horns and the phrases of the lead trumpet player in particular. Otherwise he or she does not know whether to make the fill on the downbeat of 3 or the offbeat of 3, for example. This is something that many drummers fail to do. As a director you should make your drummer aware of this when you notice that he or she does not know where the horns enter exactly. Go through all the important entrances with the drummer and let him/her make necessary notes.

What is meant by "The Harold Jones Trick"?

Harold Jones played drums in Count Basie's band in the 60's and 70's. He is the drummer on the famous LPs "Have a Nice Day" and "Basie Straight-Ahead" among many others. The charts from these albums have probably been played more by bands all over the world than any other big band arrangements. This is one of the reasons why so many musicians have heard Harold play. One of his trademarks was that he was extremely steady and distinct. One thing which he did repeatedly was that he marked the first and last note of a horn phrase with the snare drum and strike a crash cymbal (once or several times) at the high point of the phrase. He used the snare drum particularly for the short notes of the horns, while the crash cymbal could mark both short and long notes, many times at the high point(s) of the phrase. If the last note was short he would probably not strike it with the crash cymbal, since the sound would be sustained even after the horns stops playing. More likely he would use a short sound like the snare drum for a short final note of the phrase. This way of making the phrase more clear and distinct is what I call the The Harold Jones Trick, even if there are many, many other drummers that have used the same principle.

What happens when the Drummer does not prepare an Entrance of the Horns correctly?

The most common mistake is, as mentioned above, that the drummer does not have a map, an overview of the chart, in his/her head and therefore is unable to guide the horn players, and help them find their entrances. This affects their way of playing. If the drummer has prepared the entrance correctly then the horns will play with more confidence and inspiration. On the other hand, if he/she has not prepared it properly, what might happen is that some horn players even fail to enter at all. Likewise with dynamics, if the drummer plays ***f*** when the part is marked ***p*** nobody can actually compete with him and the entire band will then sound loud.

How can we solve the issue of the Drummer not knowing the form well enough?

You could go as far as asking the drummer to memorize all the horn phrases or at least the lead trumpet part. Perhaps they won't be able to do this on every chart, but asking them to do it increases their awareness of how important it is to know where in particular the brass enters. An important detail is that the director should send the sheet music and a recording of the charts that are about to be played to all members of the band. Nowadays the best option is to put the recordings in a separate file on the internet, that only the band members have access to (see ch. 2.1 ***Planning the rehearsal***). This should be done in good time before the first rehearsal of the

new charts. The director should also make sure that everybody listens to the charts, but most importantly that the drummer does this. Furthermore it is good to listen to the pieces once more at the rehearsal, before playing them. If there is no CD player available in the rehearsal room, the director should bring one. Then a short section of the chart should suffice as a reminder, mainly about the groove.

What should the Drummer do before the second run-through of the Piece?
He/she should make a note of all the horn entrances, especially the brass, if not notated in his/her part already. It is impossible to make a good fill to an entrance without knowing exactly when it is supposed to happen. Let the drummer take some time to make these notes before the second run-through. Preferably he/she should have listened to the piece several times and memorized as much of it as possible (if there is a recording available).

Which is the best advice for a Drummer that wants to learn a new Idiom?
Perhaps the best way for a drummer to learn a new idiom is to transcribe a piece that is regarded as a classic in the genre. It is better to transcribe one chart stroke-by-stroke than several charts casually. What he/she learns from this is to create a palette of useful fills that can be used in most pieces of the same idiom. To transcribe one chart this way can make them a "new" drummer. Another good way of learning a new idiom is to "brainwash" yourself by listening to music from this particular idiom constantly during an extended period of time, until the idiom feels natural for them.

What should the Director do when the Horns are not following the Drummer's Timing?
Tell the band: "If you are not with the drummer then you are in the wrong place (timing-wise)!" When it comes to timing, the drummer rules. The only thing you can actually do is switch drummers; there is no point in starting long, fruitless discussions about who's timing is "right or wrong". This a generalization, but if all members of the band have this attitude it will be easy to work and the band will sound tight.

One of the biggest mistakes a big band musician can make is to try to correct a drummer's timing or a section leaders phrasing by thinking "He is dragging, so I will rush a little to correct the tempo!" You can never make the band sound tight and homogenous if certain members have this attitude.

If the Band drags what should the Drummer do?
If the horns are late in their timing, the drummer should "run them over" and not submit to their tendency to drag. This can sometimes be a difficult task. It is also good if the drummer can tell the horns about their timing tendencies in a particular section of the piece or in general. The horn players usually have great respect for the drummer's opinions about timing since he/she is head of this department. This can also be a good substitute for the director's "nagging" about these things.

In slow-tempo ballad playing with brushes, it is a good suggestion to let the drummer play an almost unnaturally loud hi-hat, since that is just about the only thing (except for the bass) the rest of the band can rely on timing-wise, in this specific situation (see ch. 1 ***Timing***).

5.2 The Bass Player

Why doesn't the Bass Player have as much saying as the Drummer does in a Big Band?
In a big band, there is not as much democracy as in a small group. Timing-wise, the bass player should follow the drummer, not the other way around. While in a small group there is more of a give-and-take, in a big band the drummer rules alone. Similar to other human activities like the business world or the military, a larger group will need more governing "from the top". In a group of up to 5 to 6 musicians the drummer and the bass player could perhaps be considered as equal. But, in a larger group the drummer should be "the boss". This is my point of view, but it is not shared by all pedagogues. Some assert that the bass player is equal to the drummer in a big band. I do not share this view at all. The fact that the drummer is the boss of timing simplifies many things. A lot of discussions between different sections of the band about whose timing you should follow, are being avoided. Even for the bass player him/herself it can bring a sense of security knowing that his/her role is primarily to follow the drummer, at least timing-wise. Then no doubts about the task exist. An exception from this "rule" is, for example, long solo-sections without backgrounds. Then the usual interaction between bass and drums should occur, just like in a small group.

Is Double-bass sufficient in a Big Band?
A modern big band bass player should preferably play both double-bass and electric bass, and switch when the style/genre calls for it. If the band only plays traditional swing big band jazz then double-bass is sufficient. But these days most big bands play such a varied repertoire that it is highly desirable for the bass player to play both types of basses. It is an advantage if bass players' skills are on the same level on both types of basses and the different styles/genres that they represent. Very often the electric bass is connected to beat music like Funk, Pop, Rock, Soul and the like. It is important that he/she has equally good knowledge of these genres as well as for playing traditional swing on the double-bass. You could assert that double-bass is a more technically difficult instrument. Many players who are specialized on the electric bass have less technical skill on the double-bass, and a general lack knowledge of swing music. But, it is also very common that a typical swing double-bass player lacks knowledge of beat music.

Conclusion: It is a big advantage for the entire band if your bass player's knowledge is evenly distributed between both instruments, and between swing and beat music.

What are the most common mistakes Big Band Bass Players make?
Four common mistakes made by bass players are:

1. Not following the drummer, timing-wise, generally speaking.
2. Playing notes too short and/or indistinct, muddy attacks.
3. Playing too far back on the beat, dragging compared to the drummer.
4. Turning up the amplifier too loud and having too much of the low frequencies in the EQ.

In older jazz, shorter notes are OK, but here we are focusing on the style of playing from the 50's onward. Tell your bass player to think of the quarter-notes as having a full note value, tenuto. A good "trick" is to pretend that there are no barlines, just an endless stream of driving quarter-notes. Concerning timing, it is common that the bass player drags and falls behind the drummer (more common in Scandinavia than in the USA, for example).

Another common mistake today is that bass players are too loud and that their sound contains too much low bass EQ. Often you need to ask the player to turn the volume down on the amplifier and remove some of the lowest EQ on the equalizer. If the bass is too loud on stage it becomes very difficult to play together, to get the band to sound tight. The bass sound "is everywhere" and the vibrations plant themselves into the stage floor. Other musicians feel that they cannot hear themselves at all, and that all they hear is a gigantic bass.

In a big band it could be desirable for the bass player to have a volume pedal, to be able to modify the volume while playing without having to make a short stop and turn the knobs of the amplifier. Although this is, unfortunately, very rare.

5.3 The Piano Player

What is the Role of the Piano Player in a Big Band?
The role of the piano player is very individualized. Most often the piano player is the band member that has the most solos, and therefore it is very important that he/she is a good soloist. The piano player can also take liberties like no one else in the band, possibly with the exception of the drummer. He/she can make fills in the middle of a tutti and other places. Listen to Roland Hanna, who played with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band and, of course, to Count Basie who did this a lot. To accompany solos is also an important task. At this point the piano player is transformed into a small group musician where the most important thing is to be sensitive, and listen to the intentions of the soloist. Another important task for the piano player is to play solo introductions and to accompany singers. To be able to accompany singers well, you have to be sensitive to the intentions of the singers, and obviously it is good if your piano player has experience doing this. In piano intros there is an opportunity to manifest your own personality. If it is a written intro, it is a good thing if the player is a good reader and well-prepared (which is not always the case, unfortunately).

What are the most common mistakes a Big Band Piano Player makes?
It is very common that the piano player is either a good improviser or a good reader/ensemble player. The ideal situation is of course to have somebody who

is good at both. When it comes to reading music, piano players, guitarists, and bassists are not as used to this as are horn players, especially concerning articulations, to differentiate between short and long notes (see ch. 1 Ones and Zeroes). Many times the rhythm section plays long notes where there should have been short notes, but it can also be the opposite. When the rhythm section and the horns have phrases/lines together, I usually recommend that the rhythm section players listen to the horns rather than the other way around. The horn players are more used to thinking about articulation, phrasing, length of note value and such things, and in a way they have more means of expression regarding these parameters (***Phrasing***, ***Articulation***).

How should the Piano Player cooperate with the Guitarist?

It is very important that piano and guitar are placed close to each other, both at rehearsals and in a concert. If they are not able to hear each other then it will be difficult to communicate. If the guitarist and the piano player do not communicate with each other there is a big risk that they will play/comp in the same manner, so that they "collide". I strongly recommend that they talk about how they should play, for example "I'll comp at letter E, you take L…..!" Or, "You can have this ballad alone!" This type of verbal communication is very good. But it is perhaps even more important to be sensitive and to listen to the other musicians while playing, as in all musical situations. Worth noting is that there is a difference in register between guitar and piano. The piano has an upper register that the guitar does not have. Sometimes it can be a good idea that the pianist sticks to the upper register and the guitar takes care of the lower (or middle). You can also divide the roles rhythmically: "I'll play more sustained chords, and you can comp rhythmically...!" This is perhaps the best and most common division of roles.

5.4 The Guitarist

What is the role of the Guitarist in the Big Band?

The role of the guitarist is much like the role of the piano player (see above). However, in traditional big band music, it is not as common to allow the guitarist to have as much freedom, fills and similar. Usually the guitarist stays more in the background in swing music, than in other types of music: Pop, Rock, Soul. etc. It does not have to be this way in a modern big band, as is not a definitive "rule". But, if the guitarist wants more space, it is even more important to have good communication with the piano player. The need for listening to jazz and learn different types of jazz could be even greater for guitarists than for other instrumentalists since they often have a background in other styles/genres. As with the bassist, the guitarist must have broad knowledge of different genres.

What do you do if the Guitarist consistently plays too loudly?

This is a very common phenomena in modern big bands. Everyone that has an amplifier has a tendency to play too loudly (guitar, piano, and bass). Very often the guitarist has a background in beat music. For example, in a rock band the guitarist is used to hearing him/herself much better than what is possible in a big band. Sometimes we are talking about volumes that equal the total volume of the entire horn section. Obviously this will not work. In these situations I usually tell the guitarist (but also the pianist and bassist), that in a tutti, an individual saxophone player does not hear anything of what he/she is playing. This perspective could at best make these players lower their demands of hearing themselves well at all times. The guitarist should get a special stand for his/her amplifier which will direct the sound towards his/her ears. Then they can hear themselves better without directing too much of the guitar sound towards the rest of the band. It is a good suggestion for the guitarist to get a volume pedal (just like bass players). It is more common among guitarists to have one than among bass players. There is perhaps also an even greater need for guitarists to have one.

How do you "comp", Basie-Style?

In the style of Count Basie, which is probably the most played style of big band music, my opinion is that the guitarist should try as much as possible to assimilate Basie guitarist Freddie Green's style of playing. This is a very difficult task partly because these days most guitarists use a completely different guitar than Freddie did. He used a an essentially acoustic guitar with very thick strings which made his sound more rhythmic than harmonic. Most often he played only on the top three strings. The most common mistake modern guitarists make when they try to imitate Freddie's sound is that their sound is too "ringing" - sustained too long.

Preferably you should strive for a more dampened and more rhythmic sound. This is accomplished by dampening every stroke with the left hand. Young guitarists today often have not heard the Basie band or Freddie, and this fact makes it even more important to play this music for them. You could also give them a CD (or several) to take home to study.

5.5 The Horn Section

Who is the "boss" of the Horn Section?

The lead trumpet player is the "boss" of the horn section. In a tutti he or she is the one to listen to. One of the most common mistakes a horn section makes is not listening enough to the lead, and instead, concentrating too much on themselves. The lead trumpet decides alone, with the exception of the director, everything concerning phrasing and articulation. A tutti player should not start a discussion with the lead player about phrasing and similar matters during the rehearsal. All discussions should be held between the lead player and the director. Possibly, the tutti player could talk to the lead in a sensitive manner during a break or after the rehearsal. When a new piece is played, the lead player's job is to attain an overview of the piece as quickly as possible, and create good phrasing and articulation which she or he can stick to consistently. To be consistent is one of the most important tasks there is for a lead player. A tutti player should follow the lead exactly, being careful to follow articulation as well as timing and dynamics. You could almost go so far as saying that it is more important to follow the lead than actually playing well yourself.

What are the most common mistakes a Horn Section can make?

Two of the most common mistakes (except for reading mistakes, rhythms, etc.) are: dragging behind the beat (meaning the ride cymbal and hi-hat) and not listening enough to the lead. Mostly, saxes and trombones are not listening carefully enough to the trumpet lead in a tutti. A little less common is not listening to your own lead player in a sax or trombone soli. I tell my students that playing a few wrong notes is no problem, as long as they follow the lead exactly (hopefully the timing and phrasing of the lead is good!). In particular, if the chart has dense chords it is almost impossible for an audience to perceive a wrong note. The important thing is to blend in the section and not assert your own personality, which is the extreme opposite of what you must do in a small improvising group. You should also follow the articulation of the lead, which is something that is been discussed much less than timing and phrasing. Timing-wise, it is extremely common for the horns to fall behind the rhythm section, and especially behind the drums. Most bands continuously need to work on "locking in" with the drums.

I have heard many good musicians "play to themselves", meaning that they play everything cleanly and correctly but without blending and listening to the lead. From an ensemble-playing point of view, it is better to have a musician in the band who is not as technically skilled, but who blends and listens, than the opposite - a "better" musician who is "playing to himself". Sometimes you can talk to this type of musician and see improvements, but very often it is difficult for a musician to change and become more flexible, especially for a skilled and established musician.

What is most important for a Horn Player?

As mentioned above, many musicians are mostly focused on playing right notes which affects the other parameters: timing, phrasing and more. In my and many other musicians' point of view, timing is probably the most important factor in big band music. I want to change priorities from what is most common (see ch. 1 ***Changed priorities…***). The most common first priority is to play all the notes right, even when sight-reading, which we all know is very difficult. In my opinion, this priority is to a great extent made unconsciously, and this is something I would like to change.

This is my order of priority:

1. Timing
2. Phrasing
3. Articulation
4. Dynamics
5. Playing the right notes

I tell my students when sight-reading that wrong notes are forgivable as long as their timing is right. This is, of course, a slight exaggeration, but true to a certain extent. The reason for saying this is to make a point of how important timing is. Anyone

can learn to play a technically difficult phrase by spending enough time practicing it. Unconsciously, players think "I will play in my own tempo, this is too fast for me to play all the notes right!" What makes a band tight is mainly the synchronization of timing and phrasing.

How do you make a Horn Section sound "tight"?

You make a horn section sound "tight" by making them think alike, to make the same priorities, to be aware of their role in the band, listen to the lead and so on. My pedagogy is concentrating on teaching the basics, the "laws of nature" of music and to make the musicians understand why they are making the mistakes they make. (See ch. 1 ***The Rules***). In this chapter I wish to point out the inherent mechanisms of different phrases. In a certain type of phrase you will usually rush (a series of syncopations for example), while another phrase will make you drag. I call it putting out "traffic-signs". Caution! "Here you will make a mistake if you do not pay attention!" If you are aware of these mechanisms you can deal with them and avoid making the same mistakes. If all the horn players would learn The Rules and how to use them, then you will have a tight horn section. However, you should never forget the importance of having sensitive ears and learning how to listen and adapt. This goes for all types of music.

Who should listen to whom in a Unison?

When there is a unison there is no lead, so who should listen to whom when sitting in different sections of the band? The principle is, that the player who can hear the other one better, should listen and adapt. For example, if a melody is played by a trumpet and an alto saxophone, the altoist should listen to the trumpet player, since the trumpet player cannot hear the altoist. The same goes for the bari sax and the bass trombonist. The bari player hears the bass trombone player well, but the bass trombonist cannot hear the bari sax player, in which case the bari player should listen to the other.

If all players in a section are playing in unison, then everyone should listen to each other and no one should dominate. One exception is the sax section where you should tune "from the bottom", the lower instruments. If the altos and tenors are playing in unison the tenor sound should somewhat dominate.

What kind of Sound is most effective in an Ensemble?

You often talk in positive terms of how "big" and "fat" a sound a certain musician has. In this case you are probably talking about jazz soloists and small group musicians. A "big" sound can be a great asset to a musician in manifestation of his personality and style. In the ensemble this kind of sound can, at times, be a disadvantage. A big sound can be harder to control and blend into a section. It is more difficult to work with a group of players with very different sounds. There is also more energy in a section with players who have a more centered sound, compared to a "big", "fat", and round sound.

In Duke Ellington's famous sax section the different members had extremely different sounds. The sound of the section was truly unique and fantastic, but at the same time the individual voices stood out from each other a great deal. Perhaps the major difficulty is to balance sounds that have very different qualities. Sometimes it sounds like a certain player plays with double the volume, but it is actually just a big difference in tone quality that makes this player stand out. If someone has a very different sound then all the listeners' attention might fall on him or her. It is not good if this part stands out so much that the attention is shifting from the lead melody to the lower part. Sometimes you might have to ask this musician to play extremely softly so as not to stand out. In other words, it is simpler to work with a band where the members have similar sounds. Whether a band director chooses to have players with similar sounds (easier to work with) or musicians with more personal sounds (which is more difficult to handle), this is both an artistic and a practical issue.

Why is it easier to use only straight, uniform (non-vibrato) Tones when you want the Band to sound tight?

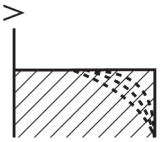
Three definitions of what a straight, uniform tone could be:

1. No vibrato
2. No dynamic fluctuations
3. No phrase-ending diminuendo

My opinion is that it is easier to make a band sound tight if you avoid all of the above. Generally speaking it is more difficult to accomplish a homogeneous sound in the entire horn section with

everyone using vibrato. Dynamic fluctuations create unbalance in the collective sound. If every horn player uses phrase-ending diminuendos, then they probably will not make them simultaneously. To not execute different aspects of the music similarly and simultaneously is a big part of the definition of not playing tight. Fig. 67 below shows how individual musicians' different phrase-ending diminuendos could look like, graphically:

Fig. 67



What does "sculpting the Ensemble-Sound" mean?

This means making all the horn players think, play, phrase and the like, in a way that no one stands out. This involves correcting the balance of the sections, but also to remind about how important it is to listen to the lead. It is not possible to shape the ensemble-sound and make everybody play and phrase alike, if no one listens and adapts to the lead. You also need to adapt to the lead sound and articulation-wise, not just timing and phrasing-wise. You have to make your musicians aware of the importance of articulation, which involves how to begin and end a note (see ch. 1, ***Articulation***). Most musicians are more focused on where they begin a note than where and how they end it (see ch.1, ***The Long note/short note paradox, Energy Levels, Inverted Accent***). It is very important to make your musicians aware of the importance of ending a note at the same time. How to end a note is knowledge usually foreseen.

In which situations is it common to drag or rush?

Regarding timing, the most common tendency for all instruments is that fast tempos drag and slow tempos rush. (see ch. 1, Timing). Awareness of this fact makes players work harder in monitoring themselves constantly. Telling your band members that they are dragging can make them tense, both mentally and muscularly, which in turn makes them rush (although there is an exception). In this situation the director should tell them that it is not a matter of playing faster, but simply to concentrate on steady time. Tell them to ask themselves these questions: "Am I there?" "Am I playing with the drums?" "Am I dragging in this fast tempo?" Then again, they should play by "using their heads", not their muscles.

Other situations that clearly affect the tendency to drag or rush are: weak dynamics, diminuendos, and improvised solos. Weak dynamics and diminuendos have a very clear tendency to drag but improvised solos very often rush.

Crescendos do not have as clear tendency timing-wise as do diminuendos. Crescendos can both drag and rush depending on the situation.

How can you make a weak Horn Section play more aggressively and authoritatively?

A good way of developing your horn section is to make everybody, especially the brass, play very loudly for a while (see ch. 2.34, ***Dissolvent***). This can make a lot of hang-ups disappear, especially in an amateur band where the level of the individual players is very differentiated. Therefore it is good to make the players, preferably one section at a time, play very loudly for a while and forget about everything else. This can improve the individual player's physical relationship to his/her instrument. A person who is playing too softly all the time due to low self-confidence can, apart from better self-confidence, also gain better breathing technique and posture which go hand in hand. Courage and self-confidence are very important.

How do you increase the Self-confidence of the individual Band members?

You approach a musician and give him/her a sign that you want to hear more from them. Preferably you do this while the entire band is playing. You should avoid lecturing individuals as much as possible in front of the band (for example, that they are playing too softly). But, avoiding it completely is not a solution. When you can actually hear them for the first time, quickly compliment them, regardless of what it sounds like. This will make their confidence grow very quickly. You should keep complimenting them even if their playing is not very good and avoid criticism, for example, "You are always early on the offbeats!" Instead you can try "Now I hear all the parts very well. Now it sounds like a real section!"

Food and coffee breaks are good opportunities to give feedback to an individual with bad self-confidence. When you do, it is good to focus on their best qualities; nice tone or technique, and only partly talk about existing problems. Although, you should not be afraid of giving constructive criticism.

As long as the criticism is constructive most people are able to handle it. But it is equally important to tell them their good points too.

How do you correct bad balance in a Section?
At a sectional rehearsal you can divide the section for a moment, for example in groups of two (sometimes three), who are not supposed to sit next to each other. This way it is easier to distinguish exactly how each person is playing. When you have heard everyone and know their way of playing, you tell them what the balance is like and who needs to play louder and who needs to play softer. Try to do this without sending a message that it is bad to play softly. Sometimes it is difficult to make a certain part be brought out as much as another. Then you should keep on giving them positive feed back on what they managed well; for example, a nice sound. At the same time you tell them that when you could hear this specific player the most, the section sounded at its best. Say: "Now it's perfect, the balance was great!" You should also tell them that it is OK to play wrong notes, as long as you play with conviction and with courage (while trying to get as many notes correct as possible).

Courage is important in Big Band playing. What does that mean?
Lack of courage is one of the reasons for the common mistake of not bringing out what comes between the notes: accents, bends, glissandi and more (see ch. 1, **Phrasing**). The reason for this is a fear of standing out. Courage is also very important when entering at a difficult spot. Many times musicians look to their neighbors, wanting them to take the initiative. At these occasions you should support one another. Look at each other, nod and maybe count bars together (if necessary), silently of course. Courage is very important when playing improvised solos or written melodies, but also in any individual part that is somewhat exposed.

How do you make a Big Band play softly?
A big band should be able to play loudly, but also very softly. The most common situation today is that the volume never becomes really soft. One reason is that most bands nowadays are electrified. Horns can never conquer big amplifiers. This lays a great deal of responsibility on the bass, guitar, and keyboard not to turn up their amplifiers too loud. Of course, the main responsibility is on the director to tell them to turn their volume down, if necessary. The "electrified" section usually has a much higher demand of hearing themselves while playing than the horns do. It is good advice to tell them, for example, how little the lower parts in the saxes can hear themselves in a tutti, which is practically nothing (as mentioned above).

As usual, the drummer has a very important role, and as mentioned above, no one will play softly unless he/she is doing so. The drummer is the boss of dynamics and he/she is the one to lead the dynamics. One issue, when trying to get a horn section to bring down its volume, is that the loudest instruments come down more than the weaker ones. The trumpets usually come down the most and the saxes the least. My theory is that since the saxes hardly hear themselves in a tutti, they feel very good hearing themselves a little bit when the dynamic is ***mp*** or less. Therefore they do not want to come down as much as the trumpets, relatively speaking.

For example, when ***mp*** is written in the parts, tell the players to think one dynamic level softer, especially if they have just come from playing longer sections on a louder dynamic. Since soft dynamics are more rare in this form of music, it feels right to exaggerate the few that occur. This is a very good procedure for arrangements that easily become "flat", dynamically. I call this procedure: ***Exaggerated weak Dynamics***

Conclusion, soft Dynamics:,

1. **Make sure that the electrified instruments do not play too loudly.**
2. **Remind the band that the drummer is the boss of dynamics (and timing).**
3. **See to it that the softer instruments come down as much as the louder ones (in a p or a diminuendo).**
4. **Exaggerate the softer dynamics by at least one dynamic level (Exaggerated weak Dynamics ch. 1).**
5. **Teach the band good phrasing. This will make many problems with dynamics disappear, at least in the horns (see ch. 1 Good Phrasing solves most problems with Dynamics).**
6. **Be persistent in telling the band to keep getting softer until the music is quiet enough.**

5.6 The Trumpet

The different registers of the trumpet are far from uniform. Most trumpet players can play much louder in the middle and upper register, up to a certain level, than in the lower register. Therefore, the lower trumpet parts are usually the hardest to play, since the player who plays 4th (or 5th) should match the volume of the lead player (even though he or she often plays one octave below in a weaker register.) In a way, they would need to play louder than the lead to be heard equally well. Many amateur bands place the parts in order of playing capability, which means that the strongest player plays 1st and the weakest player plays 4th (or 5th). The weakest player then plays the hardest part. One suggestion is to switch the two bottom parts, so that the player with the most power in the low register plays the bottom part. In many professional bands the soloist is placed on the bottom part so that she or he can rest for a while from straining high notes. However, this might be somewhat in contradiction with what I mention above.

Lead Trumpet

Lead trumpet is a subject all its own. Playing lead trumpet involves a physical strain that is very close to breathtaking athletics. The upper register of the trumpet is very exhausting, breathing and embouchure-wise, and there are very few trumpet players who can play a difficult repertoire with ease. Almost all lead trumpet players occasionally "hit the wall", which means that they are suddenly incapable of playing another note. The fact that lead playing in itself is so physically demanding makes it more difficult for the lead player to also be musically/artistically responsible for the horn section. The lead trumpet is the person to decide on phrasing, among other things, and other matters that distinctly influence on the entire horn section.

In a trumpet section, it is always an asset to have several people capable of playing lead. The reason being is that many times it is too straining for one player to manage an entire concert without "hitting the wall". However, the ideal situation is to have only one player who plays lead trumpet, and the other horn players learns to follow him/her. But, if you divide this responsibility on several players, I recommend that you switch lead on pieces that are a little bit different in character, for example ballads or charts with a different groove (beat instead of swing). You should also try to stay very consistent with who is playing lead on which chart. The reason being that the lead to a great extent influences the entire horn section, and the tutti players must be used to the way a certain player plays lead. You could also let the lead rest for one piece (not playing at all), which could give new energy to the upcoming charts.

What is most difficult for the Trumpets?

In my view, big leaps in a short amount of time, to play in a relaxed manner in the upper register, and stamina (being able to play for a long time) are some of the hardest aspects of trumpet playing. Big leaps are technically difficult since you might easily hit a wrong note. The trumpet melody (theme) in Sammy Nestico's famous "Switch in Time" sounds like it was easy, but a few leaps of a fourth, augmented fourth and a fifth makes it difficult to play, at least for amateur trumpet players. When the saxes play the same melody a few bars earlier, these difficulties cannot be heard.

When a trumpet player climbs up the register he or she often wants to play louder and louder to hit the right notes easier, but very often it becomes less and less controlled. The upper register is difficult and few players master it, simply put. What makes a certain player master it better than others is, in my opinion, to a great extent thanks to a better breathing technique. A good breathing technique also increases your stamina since it releases the pressure from the lips. Courage is, once again, very important. This time it means not being afraid of the upper register, not being afraid of hitting a wrong note, and having a great deal of self-confidence.

At sound checks or dress rehearsals, the director should tell the trumpet section, and especially the lead player, to rest (temporarily stop playing) if needed. This is particularly important if the band is making a sound check or a dress-rehearsal that (unfortunately) occurs the same day as the concert. One suggestion is that they start with resting on unison and secondly at spots that they are sure they can handle; spots that they personally do not need to rehearse. Letting the lead trumpet player rest on unison is something that could be practiced in general, especially if you have five trumpet players in the band.

Mutes

Mutes are very useful in big band music. The four most common are: straight, cup, bucket, and harmon. This order is the same as the degree of volume that is possible to produce, with straight being the loudest

and harmon the softest. Intonation-wise, the cup and bucket are almost neutral, although some players feel that they can become a little flat. On the other hand, straight and harmon mutes make the instrument sharp. A straight mute you usually play a little sharp, but the harmon will play very sharp. This fact makes this mute hard to play, especially in the low register. Below middle C it is very difficult to play in tune with a harmon mute, since it is very difficult to get the notes to sound.

On all mutes you have to play a lot louder than what is written in the part, since the arranger usually notates the general dynamics (meaning the same for the entire band regardless of mutes i.e.). If ***p*** is written, then play two dynamic levels higher, at least ***mf*** , and if ***mf*** is written then play ***ff*** , and so forth (see ***Mute-rule***, ch. 1). It is not easy to play ***ff*** in a section of the piece that is very beautiful or has a light character. This might be felt as being a bit schizophrenic, therefore the director oftentimes has to point out the importance of playing louder when using a mute.

A mute will also affect timing, at least with the harmon, and tone-production takes more time than playing without one. It takes time before the characteristic summing sound occurs. Therefore I have often had to ask trumpet players to play more on top of the beat when playing with harmon mutes. When using the other types of mutes, this phenomenon is pretty much non-existent. This also applies to the trombones.

5.7 The Trombone

The sound of the trombone is much more uniform in different registers than that of the trumpet, but there is a big difference between the bass trombone and the tenor trombone. The sound is quite different even if played in the same register. The bass trombone can easily stand out too much in the section. If all four trombones are playing in the middle register, for example, the goal is to have four equal parts. But, since the bass trombone has a larger bell and wider bore, the player has to play much softer here, so as not to stand out. Often the bass trombone is much louder than the 3rd who, in many respects has the least thankful part, just like the lowest trumpet part. It is very difficult to match the bass trombone with a smaller instrument. Most of the times the 3rd part is playing in a less effective register than the 1st and 2nd. As best as you can, try to get a good balance between the 3rd and the 4th.

The bass trombone player should have a mental on/off switch. He/she should be able to switch between two ways of playing:

1. The low register: where he/she often plays roots or has a quite different part than the other trombones do, many times together with baritone sax (see ch.1, ***Play louder in the "Root-register"***). It is common that players are too soft here.

2. The middle and upper register (often) in a close position chord situation:
   Here he/she is often too loud, the reason being that the bass trombone has a larger bell and wider bore (as mentioned above), but perhaps also because this player is used to having an individual role.

The lead part is physically very demanding just like in the trumpet section, and can sometimes need help. It is better to give away the lead to someone else consistently (on the same charts) than to do it when you are about to "hit the wall".

What is most difficult for the Trombones?
Much of what is said about the trumpets is also true about the trombones: big leaps, stamina and the like. But, a trombone has much more difficulties, technically, to play fast moving lines since it takes more time to move the slide than to press a valve. Another big difference is that since the trombone has no exact positions for each note, the intonation is more similar to the violin than to the trumpet. How accurately a trombonist will play in tune depends on his/her ear. Sometimes you may want to tune to certain sensitive chords slowly, like string quartets often do.

The low notes of the trombone create "under-compression" (especially the bass trombone) and need a lot of air, opposite to the trumpet which most of the time creates "over-compression". For this reason the bass trombonist many times is forced to breathe more often than the rest of the section. Generally speaking, you should decide on breathing with the lead player, not with the bass trombone player, who sometimes needs to use their own breathing cycle.

5.8 The Saxophone

The saxophone also has a much more uniform volume (not sound) in the different registers than the trumpet does. The lead part is one of the most important parts in the band. Many times the lead has difficulties reaching out distinctly enough because both the tenor and baritone are louder instruments. You could say that the saxophone family is loudest at the bottom, and gets softer the higher the instrument: bari–tenor–alto–soprano. If the lead has difficulties reaching out it might be a good idea to suggest a change of mouthpiece to a brighter one. This way the player does not have to use so much force and concentration on blowing, and is able to concentrate on the artistic aspects of music such as timing, phrasing, and more. Many lead players do not like the idea of switching mouthpieces to one that they think sounds much less attractive. But, it is two very different aspects of playing; playing lead sax in a big band or playing in a small group, the latter with where sound is an important aspect of your artistic profile. When playing in big band it can be very practical to choose a typical lead mouthpiece. The lead part should be distinctly heard throughout the section, but it is all too common that 1st tenor or baritone dominate. In unison the lead should not dominate (see ch. 1, ***In unison there is no lead***). Also in unison, some feel that the tenor sound should dominate, especially in the lower register. Many times the altos are playing too loudly (forced) in unison, which is especially unattractive in their lower register where unison with tenors are most often found. The lead player is used to leading and naturally finds it more difficult to stand back (in a unison or a tutti, for example).

Vibrato?

Vibrato is in my opinion very important in the sax section. In traditional big band jazz (swing) I think it should be used consistently when not playing in unison with the brass. Using vibrato in the brass section was more common back in the older days, but modern brass sections do not use it as much. So, if the brass is not using vibrato, for example in a tutti, the saxes should not do it either. You should adapt your vibrato to the style/genre of the chart that is being played at the moment. Roughly you could say that a faster vibrato with a smaller amplitude was used in earlier styles (ex. the '20s-'40s) and a slower vibrato with a greater amplitude is more common today (from the '60s-'70s on). It is good advice to listen to recordings and analyze the different types of vibrato used in different styles, for example "Glenn Miller-vibrato" or "David Sanborn-vibrato".

Vibrato is acquired with practice. The easiest way of practicing it is to make a slow bend and then release it. Gradually, repeat this process faster and faster, and then gradually slow it back down. I call it "The Chainsaw" because it might actually sound like one if done thoroughly and with a great amplitude. Doing this practice, you feel what needs to be done with your lips and mouth cavity to make a vibrato happen. Often it takes a lot of persuasion to make a modern sax section play with vibrato. It is very common that one or two members of the section use it while the rest do not. Then you have to ask everybody to support the lead (who is probably doing it), and sometimes that takes a while. The sound of the sax section becomes much warmer and rounder when vibrato is used.

What difficulties does a Saxophone Player encounter?

It is easier to play fast moving lines on the saxophone than on any of the other horns, and it much easier to make big leaps, as mentioned above. On the other hand it is much more difficult to make clear "edgy" attacks. The attacks can often be blurry which causes energy loss. It is pretty much a question of awareness of articulation. Ask the saxes for better attacks by pointing out the similarity to an actor (in the old style) that speaks with an almost exaggerated a-r-t-i-c-u-l-a-t-i-o-n.

Another difficulty for saxophonists is the demand for doubles on flute and clarinet. Many times these doubles are needed in modern big band music and at least one of these doubles are preferable. Nowadays it is standard practice for the lead to play soprano, and even flute, since the lead part is oftentimes written for either. Therefore it is important to have a certain level of proficiency on these doubles. The most common doubling division is: altos/flutes - tenors/clarinets - baritone/bass clarinet, and it is better if altos double on flute and tenors on clarinet, than the other way around. If you want to learn a new double, be sure to get a good teacher right from the start. It is much more difficult to teach yourself, as it often means a much longer road to travel towards proficiency.

6. The Director

6.1 Musically proficient

A good big band director should be musically proficient, preferably able to play an instrument decently, and, even most importantly, should have played a great deal of big band music. Being a good organizer to a high extent influences what the band sounds like. Having good knowledge of music notation largely influences how the music will be played. A general knowledge of big band music, and having listened to and rehearsed big bands is of course an advantage. It is also an advantage if the director is a wind player rather than a rhythm section player, so that he or she can better provide knowledge about articulation (no disrespect to the rhythm players). If you want to become a director of a big band, but you have a gap of knowledge in any or all of the above areas, you can:

- Learn The General Method.
- Listen to a lot of good big band music, preferably different eras and styles.
- Get scores and recordings of the band's repertoire and study them carefully.
- Study big band arranging.
- Get a book about notation. There are a number of books available that are neither thick nor heavy!
- Take lessons in conducting. You do not need to become a Herbert von Karajan, but learn the basics.
- Get a more inspiring instrument teacher.

6.2 Pedagogical, psychological and strategical

In this section I would like to provide a very broad definition of being pedagogical, which among other things includes planning ability and strategic thinking. It is not enough to tell the band that they play "incorrectly". You must also be able to explain what is being played incorrectly and how they should correct it. This is what I try to teach in chapters 1 (The Rules) and 2 (Rehearsal Methodology). In this case, being pedagogical also means that you feel sympathy for the people behind the instruments. Is it pedagogical to scold someone in front of the entire band? Not really. Such an incident might prompt that person to quit the band. Moreover, the atmosphere/spirit of the band might suffer. Sometimes you may feel like you want to scold an individual or perhaps the entire band. But, if such an situation occurs, then perhaps you made some kind of pedagogical mistake that led to this situation.

Examples of pedagogical mistakes:

- To **not** be able to musically explain why a section of the piece never sounds good.
- To choose a rehearsal room that is too small and/or has poor acoustics, which exhausts everyone very quickly.
- To set up the band in an improper configuration.
- To let the band rehearse two hours without a break.
- To rehearse on the same piece for too long, or with only one section of the band.
- To choose the wrong musicians and substitutes.
- To **not** renew the band's repertoire often.
- To **not** use a drum machine at sectional rehearsals with the horn section.
- To **not** have enough concerts per season.
- To **not** manage to put together a good concert program.
- To **not** be able to handle possible guest artists/singers in a professional manner.

- To **not** generally understand the band's needs and how the members think. This includes understanding about rehearsal scheduling, hotel accommodations, providing interesting and fun music, drums substitute, etc.

6.3 To feel and act as a leader

Self-confidence is important for the task of being a good leader. It can be achieved partly by having knowledge of the above criteria. But there is also a personality aspect. If you feel that you are not the leader type, take a course in leadership (as there are plenty of them), and don't forget to:

- Dress like a leader
- Feel like a leader
- Speak like a leader, loudly and clearly, but not in a too familiar way
- Praise and inspire your musicians
- Be sensitive to the needs and opinions of the band members
- Be consistent, which is important in order to gain confidence
- Do not let the group persuade you into things you do not want yourself, especially regarding important issues like repertoire, for example. But you should listen to the group's wishes as regards to time for food breaks during a tour, etc.

A good way of making important decisions for the band is to call on about three of its members to take "samples" of the opinions in the band. This is better to do via phone, one-on-one, rather than asking someone in person when others are listening in. Choose three people who represent various groups as far as opinions are concerned, as this increases the chances of making a good decision. Sometimes it is more important to make a quick decision than a good one. Let it be up to your experience and feelings to decide when to do so.

6.4 To be able to organize

It is very important for the big band director to be both musically and organizationally adept, which many, unfortunately, are not. Ideally, the director would delegate someone else to be responsible for sheet music, rehearsals (rooms/time), concerts, tours and economy, etc. But if the director is responsible for all these things, he/she must not forget that even a musically skilled big band will sound bad if organization fails; lost charts, incomplete attendance at rehearsals, etc. Try being just as skilled in organization as in music.

6.5 To be able to put together a good concert program

To be able to put together a good concert program is much more important and more difficult than you would at first believe. It can be crucial how a concert is experienced (by the audience) and for a band's artistic profile and status. You cannot just put together your favorite pieces and play.

Things to think about:

- Contrasts must exist with regard to tempo, dynamic levels, and perhaps also keys.
- Do not program the most difficult pieces at the beginning. It takes a while before the band gets comfortable, so several difficult piece in the beginning is not a good idea, as it creates apprehension.
- The first and last pieces are the most important. The first piece sets the tone for the entire concert. A fast but not too technically difficult piece usually works well here. The last piece is what is left in your ears after the concert. Place the most audience-oriented piece at the end.
- Try varying different tempos and also generally "weak" and "strong" charts; strong chart – weaker chart – strong chart – weaker chart, etc. If you just played a chart that was a little more reserved, follow it by a more audience-oriented chart. Personally I think ballads fit better at the end of a concert, and I would suggest it being 2-3 pieces from the end of an hour long festival concert. You will have to adapt to different types of concerts.

- I usually vary different genres, and for example, I do not play three Latin or beat pieces in a row. But sometimes it can be effective to apply a theme, for example 2-3 short ballads together, although I myself seldom use this strategy (one might not have the right charts for making up a theme).

- If you perform the same program many times, you can sometimes change the order in the program to get a variation. Then, the band plays better.

- Check that the lead trumpet does not get all the physically straining pieces in a chunk, and especially not at the beginning of the concert program.

The following are two suggestions of a kind of "intensity curve" for the development of the concert. Intensity is defined here as the level of the audience response. The piece that the audience likes the best gets the highest value. Fig. 68a represents a shorter concert approximately 1 hour and Fig. 68b a longer concert approximately 1 hour 45 min.

Fig. 68a

Fig. 68b

As you can see, it is all about building up until the end, reaching the final peak. If the concert is long, one or more smaller peaks will be needed somewhere in the middle. (see Fig 68b)

6.6 To represent the band vis-à-vis organizers, the media and audience

Example: Before a corporate gig, when you are asked to meet with the manager of that big company, you should adapt to their way of speaking and dressing. Dress yourself in a suit rather than in jeans and a T-shirt, as long as it feels natural. Be proud of your band and what you do, and do not feel inferior to anyone, even if it is a famous artist, journalist or manager of a big company.

When meeting with the media, prepare yourself for the type of questions that may be asked of you, so that you are as clear as possible when you reply. Try leading in questions on what you want to tell about the band. Otherwise those questions might never come up. Before an interview, ask the journalist what he or she already knows about the band. Sometimes, they have not done any research on the band, or know very little. Fill in the gaps by telling the most important things that you want to bring forth in the interview. A good way of getting newspapers to write what you want is to write an article/manuscript for the newspaper. More often than not they will gladly accept such an article, especially if they are short on time. However, this primarily refers to the smaller, regional newspapers.

If you happen to meet someone from the audience who says that this was the best concert they have ever been to, but you think that this was your poorest performance in three years, do not tell them that. Just accept the compliment; otherwise you may upset the person. Always be polite and courteous if anyone approaches you and wants to talk after a concert, even though you may be very tired, and would rather just go to the dressing room and relax.

Carefully note the contact information of the people that approach you after a concert, and who could possibly mediate a gig or another important contact. Even though you are often tired after a concert, this is not something you can afford to miss!

6.7 To create a good atmosphere in the band

To have strong organization is very important for the atmosphere of the band. If a chair is empty during the rehearsal or if the food breaks during a tour are poorly planned, dissatisfaction is created. If you are having a bad day, do not show it when you arrive at the rehearsal. Always try to be happy and friendly, but at the same time consistent and effective.

Other things you can do:

- Be sure to change repertoire regularly.

- Plan many, and preferably fun, gigs.

- Be sensitive to the band's needs and wishes. Discuss the repertoire and the type of gigs they want to do. Plan shortened rehearsals if they are unusually tired, etc.

- Get a rehearsal room that has good acoustics and ample space even if it actually costs too much.

- Have a band party about once a year, as it strengthens the group morale.

- Invite a guest clinician. It is a way to create a variety to your own "nagging" at rehearsals that the band has heard a thousand times before. By doing this, you actually show that you are a mature person, sure of yourself and abilities, and you feel no competition against yourself.

- Solve conflicts smoothly and at an early stage. If an individual member creates big problems, it could be time to replace them.

- Arrange a party after an extra-important gig. It is a way of showing your appreciation to the musicians.

- Take a course in leadership.

7. Arranging for Musicians

Musicians could also benefit from knowing a little bit about traditional big band arranging. It can influence the way they play by increasing their understanding of how an arranger thinks. It would also give them information about which note of the chord they are playing, or with whom in the other sections they are playing unison or in octaves with, etc.

For musicians interested in big band arranging, I strongly recommend the book "Inside the Score" by Rayburn Wright (Kendor Music). However, in this chapter I only want to provide a very brief description of traditional big band arranging. There are two fundamental techniques, one for faster passages that you could call "Classic Basie-Style" and another for longer note values such as a series of whole-notes, which Rayburn Wright calls "Chorale Writing".

7.1 Basie Style

The classic Basie-Style is very often four-voiced. If you have 4 trumpets and 4 trombones, everyone in their respective section each has one note. You could say that the trombones copy the trumpets exactly but one octave below. Therefore, the 1st trumpet and 1st trombone will have the same notes but in octaves, and the same goes for 2nd trumpet and 2nd trombone, and so on. This is the reason why the seating is the way it is in a classic big band set-up (see chapters. 2.2, ***Band set-up***). In this arranging technique the saxophones are placed in the same octave as the trombones with the 1st alto doubling the 1st trombone, and the baritone sax is one octave below them. The 2nd alto then gets the same note as the 2nd trombone, 1st tenor has the same notes as 3rd trombone, and the 2nd tenor is the same as the 4th trombone (see Fig. 69).

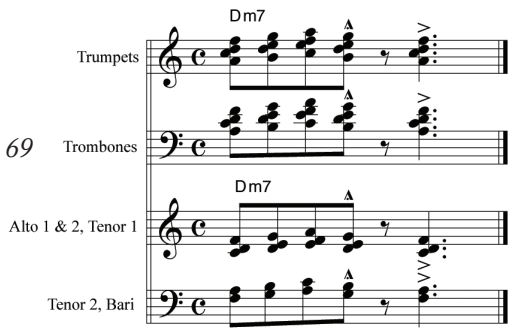


Fig. 69

7.2 Chorale writing

In longer note values you first put the trombones on the most important notes: the 3rd and 7th of a chord. These two chord tones determine if the chord is major, minor, dominant 7, or Maj 7. These notes very often end up in 2nd - 4th trombone parts and in the 3rd-5th sax parts (tenors and bari), if it is an open voicing. As you can see it depends on if the bass trombone is playing the root in the lower register or a note in the middle register. Roots in resolution chords or other important chords with longer note values are often doubled with the baritone sax (see Fig. 70).

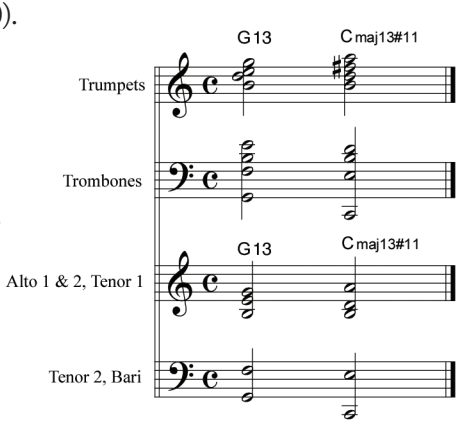


Fig. 70

In a higher register, the trumpets are often voiced with the 1st and 4th parts in octaves. Between them, the 2nd and 3rd are voiced within an interval of a third or a fourth so that a triad is formed, with the melody in octaves. The trumpets seldom end up on the 3rd and 7th of a chord, but are more often on variants of the root, 5th, 9th and 13th. In this technique the saxes are configured so that they have notes from both the trombone and trumpet voicings. Tenors (and bari) are often put on the 3rd and 7th, baritone on roots together with the bass trombone, and the altos on some of the trumpets' notes, often with the 1st alto one octave under the lead trumpet (see Fig. 71).

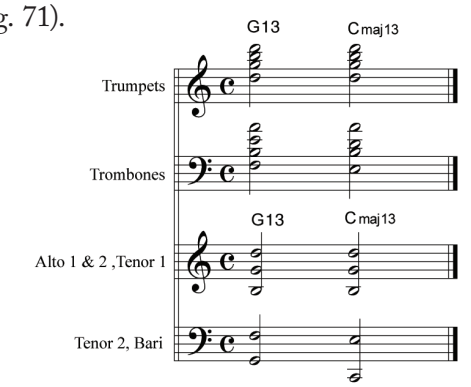


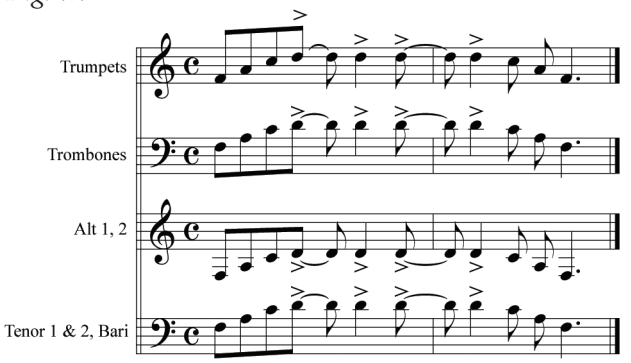
Fig. 71

In more complex arranging à la Thad Jones, Gil Evans, and Bob Brookmeyer, the chords often contain more notes, with an average of 7-8 different tones in every voicing. But we will not engage ourselves to these techniques here. Thad Jones and Bob Brookmeyer's techniques are presented well in the book "Inside the Score". It should be mentioned that because these arrangers' voicings contain so many notes, their arrangements are more difficult to play. Intonation can be a problem and they often contain phrases that are melodiously and technically very difficult to play, especially in the lower voices.

8. Notation Psychology

How a piece is notated largely influences how it is played. I would like to straighten out a few things here that usually tend to cause a lot of confusion. In older notation primarily from the '30s–'50s, there lies a great deal of confusion in the notation of shorter notes, example (see Fig. 72):

Fig. 72



You are correct in saying this kind of accent means full note value. This kind of notation often leads to one part of the band playing short and another playing long notes, which in turn results in a lot of confusion. This is one of the deadly sins for a band who wants to play tight together (see ch. 1, ***Ones and Zeroes***). This cannot be emphasized enough!

Another common effect is that many musicians play notes that are "in between" short. This never works if you ask me. In my world only four kinds of notes exist, but in only two main categories; long or short (see ch. 1, ***The Long note/Short note paradox***). When your band plays arrangements from this era, discuss this phenomenon and say that, 'if it is written like that … you think like this'. Create your own rules through generalizing, for example: "All tied-over eighth-notes on offbeats should be played short, like 'rooftop' quarter-notes!" (see ch. 1, ***General accents***). This way, you can make everyone play alike without needing to work for hours rewriting every part with clearer accents.

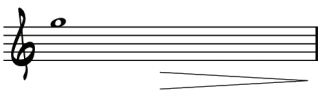
Keep an eye on indistinct notation in regard to short and long notes, since unfortunately, these also occur in modern arrangements but are mostly found in older ones (the 60's and earlier). An example concerning notation of short and long notes is, among other things, how the Thad Jones arrangements (published by Kendor Music) are notated. They are most often very clear with regards to the length of the notes (***Ones and Zeroes***). Study them and use them as a benchmark with regards to short and long notes.

Another problem is the notation of crescendos, as mentioned above, in chapter 1. For example, if you have a crescendo on two whole-notes, the crescendo, strictly visual, is notated as if it would begin in the same exact moment as the beginning of the note. This does not work. The listener must first consider "Aha, a new note!" at the indicated dynamic level (for example ***p***), and then, once established in the listener's ear, the crescendo may begin. This concerns both crescendos and diminuendos, equally common in both (see ch. 1, ***Crescendo using the "Holmquist Model", The reversed Crescendo Rule***). Ambiguous notation is part of the reason why it is so common to start and come up too early in a crescendo and down in a diminuendo. Despite being incredibly common, this seldom sounds good.

Fig. 73a

No!

Fig. 73b



Yes!

9. Live Situation Sound Engineering

If the band sounds good at the rehearsals, certainly you want it to sound just as good or even better on stage. It is about making good use of the resources in the band at the concert. Think of the following:

- Call the sound engineer about a week ahead and review what your needs are (see *Rider*, below)
- If possible, do not plan the sound check too close to the concert. A little rest before the concert is good for the musicians, especially for the horn players (especially brass). Try and keep the sound check short so as to not exhaust the musicians.
- Plan for plenty of time to eat before the concert. Also, calculate the traveling time with margins for unexpected events such as a flat tire on the bus, etc. Then you will still make it to the concert hall on time.

Rider

Here, a list follows of what to think about and the equipment and material needed for a big band concert, much of which can be stipulated in contract riders:

Sound Picture

If you do not have your own sound engineer, then it is primarily the director's assignment to collaborate with the available sound engineer in order to get a good sound. You will then meet new engineers at every new occasion. It is always important to be diplomatic. If you step on his/her toes they will not collaborate, which in turn will result in a bad sound. Always send a stage plot in advance and always try to make at least one long phone call with the engineer before the concert. Then you briefly explain your opinions about how a good "big band mix" should be and humbly ask if it is OK for you stand beside during the sound check. I have almost never experienced anyone saying no, but nevertheless it is important to be diplomatic. I usually ask if I can set the balance in order to show what I mean, while simultaneously showing respect for the engineer's professional skills. I usually tell them that I would like to present my ideas although I realize that he/she of course knows all of this. I simply say that I want to go through my program with general advice for a big band mix, although I am sure that they basically share my views. I make another phone call, say a day before the concert, to make sure everything is understood.

The advice below bases itself on that you have a microphone for each horn, which I consider to be the best but also the simplest. This is an opinion definitely not shared amongst all sound engineers. Many sound engineers say "We don't need any microphones for the trumpets (or whole brass), they will be heard anyway!" This is a total misconception.

The reason why you need microphones on all horn sections, not just the saxes, is that you want both acoustical (direct) sound as well as sound from the PA-system, from all of the sections. This is one of the biggest mistakes an engineer can make; letting some instruments be heard in the PA and not others. If some instruments are heard only acoustically from a longer distance and others are heard also from the PA at a closer range, there is clearly an unnatural balance. Most often there is too much of the weaker instruments (piano, saxes) in the PA sound, and too little of the louder instruments - mainly brass and especially trumpets. Another problem when not having one microphone per horn is that they will become too soft when using mutes (perhaps not heard at all).

If there are not enough microphones to have one for each horn, then the next best solution is to have two for each brass section (if four trumpets) and three for the saxophones (one for the lead and two for the rest). If there are five trumpets then you need one for the lead and two shared equally among the other four (like the saxes). Although this situation creates problems, such as when one musician in the section has a solo and the other musician sharing his/her microphone will not be heard when playing the solo backgrounds. The reason being that the soloist puts their mutual microphone right in front and close to him/herself.

The loudest horn in the band volume-wise is the lead

trombone. But, since the trumpets are in a different/higher range they might easily be conceived as "piercing", and louder than the trombones. Therefore most engineers lower the trumpets in the mixer thus creating an unnatural balance. It's better to change the EQ and use a compressor (quite strongly), instead of turning down the volume. To change the EQ, lower the higher frequencies and perhaps add a little of the bottom.

When there is a vocal artist involved, most engineers lower the volume of the trumpets radically. Instead it is much better to change the EQ of the trumpets (as mentioned above) and adjust the volume of the vocals with one finger on the vocal channel knob continuously, adjusting the volume up or down when necessary.

9.1 The Rhythm Section

Try to balance the rhythm section with the horns. Most engineers mix far too much of the rhythm section in the sound picture. In jazz charts, you can be quite light with the pianist and the guitarist unless they are soloing. At this point then they would have to be lifted up in the mix. If you can clearly hear every single note they play then they are too loud. The basic idea is that it is extremely difficult to get everything to be heard, so you must compromise. In beat charts (Rock, Funk etc.) you can turn up both piano and guitar slightly. With the bass, it is good if you cut out the lowest frequencies, especially in jazz. That will increase the clarity without having to turn up the volume. It is good to use two channels for the bass: one for upright and the other for the electric bass. Otherwise you must rearrange volumes and the equalizer each time the bass player changes basses. Guitarists, pianists, and bassists are often too loud from their own amplifiers on stage. If so, you must ask them to turn down, otherwise the sound engineer will argue that they are too loud to be included in the PA system. Still, it is important for the rhythm section not to be too loud on stage because then the horn players cannot hear themselves, and will play louder in an effort compensate for the volume, making them sound worse.

9.2 The Drums

The drums should always have a separate hi-hat microphone. This is usually provided without having to ask for one, but not always. You need to have a separate hi-hat microphone in order to get the sound of the hi-hat into the monitor for the horns, which is important. The ride cymbal and the hi-hat should be heard at all times. If you are standing in the mixer booth and see the drummer hitting the "ride", but you do not hear the strike, then it must be boosted in the mix. I have found that it is often good to place the overhead microphones closer to the ride and crash cymbals than most sound engineers would normally do. Many sound engineers set them up a meter (40 in.) away from the cymbals. Sometimes I have had to put them as close as 30 centimeters (12 in.) in order to accentuate the cymbals without getting too much sound from the remaining drum set, which of course also leaks into these microphones. It is important that you have two overhead microphones. If you do not inform the sound engineer of this request, then you may get only one stereo microphone, if not two microphones that are linked together in a cross. In both cases you are missing the opportunity to come down closer to both the ride and crash cymbal that stand on either side of the drum set.

9.3 The Horns

Remind all horn players to play at the same distance from their microphones. The saxes and trumpets are often heard considerably more since both have a more pointed sound. This is something that many players neglect (especially inexperienced ones). I recommend that the distance is not too close. If someone starts moving, then even a small amount of movement will become a big part of the distance seen as a percentage. For example, if someone should shorten the distance from 20 cm to 10 cm (8 in. to 4 in.), it will of course influence the balance in the section. I recommend a distance of about 30-40 cm (12-16 in.) from the microphone. Inexperienced musicians do not usually take notice of the microphone's presence, and constantly forget to put the microphone back into its original position after a solo. This can occasionally happen even with professional musicians.

9.4 Trumpets

You should cut some of the high frequencies and eventually increase the low a little bit, since trumpets can easily become pointed/edgy in a PA (as mentioned above). I experience this as if there is an on/off situation in PA sound. At a certain threshold level, performing-wise, things are heard clearly. But if you go beneath that level then practically nothing is heard. The microphone's "answer" in a way is that

if you play softly, they answer only a little bit, but if you play loudly then they answer relatively more than the actual increase in volume. The result is that, above all, the trumpets are heard too little in softer dynamics and too much in louder ones. This "on/off" situation is probably also the main reason that the lead trumpet often comes through too strong, especially in loud passages, and oftentimes should be mixed down a bit. This can be corrected by using a compressor, which I recommend. It is especially important to use a compressor on the trumpets (more than saxophones and trombones).

Regarding microphone stands for the trumpets: the boom should be turned away from the trumpet pointing ahead towards the audience, but the actual microphone is turned backward towards the trumpet (of course). I have never met a sound engineer who has done this without being told to, so remember to inform him/her of this.

9.5 Saxophones

Sometimes, depending on who is playing, you may need to increase the lead alto a little bit. The baritone sax should be brought down a bit, since the lower frequencies spread to the other microphones more easily (the same goes for bass trombone). The lower instruments "leak" more than the higher ones; it is a law of physics. The saxophone family reflects this law perfectly - the lower saxes sound louder and the higher ones sound softer, which you need to consider. Just like the trumpets, the saxophones can sometimes become too pointy in a PA system. Ask the sound engineer to use the equalizer to produce a rounder sound, and if possible to also bring down a little of the higher frequencies. A little reverb is especially good on the saxes, but not too much.

It is more common among saxes (than brass) that players position their microphones at different distances. Therefore it is more important to regularly check the placement of their microphones.

9.6 Trombones

Bring the volume of the bass trombone down just like with the baritone sax. Sometimes, you may have to turn down quite a bit since the bass trombone has a really strong ability to reach out into a PA system. The trombones lay in the middle register that is difficult to effectively bring forth by mixing, but in a good way. Sometimes it is difficult to mix the trombones correctly. At first, you may not hear them at all, but as you adjust the volume steadily up, they suddenly pop out as way too loud! The best way to get trombones in a correct volume is to either remove the trumpets or the saxes or both, and mix them together with another horn section and/or the rhythm section. The saxes and trumpets are often heard considerably more since both have a more pointed sound (although very different).

9.7 Sound engineers

Most of the sound engineers whom I have met mix according to the following misguided principles that **I want to dispute**:

- Too much rhythm section and relatively too little of the horns. Too much vocals if you have singers in the ensemble.
- Too much bass and too much of the low bass register. This is one of the most dangerous things that can happen. If the bass is too loud, you do not hear anything else.
- Too much bass drum, toms, and snare drum, and too little ride cymbal and hi-hat. The ride cymbal and hi-hat should be heard at all times throughout the entire concert.
- Too much piano and guitar, especially in jazz charts. In beat music you can mix them up a little more.
- Within the horns there is traditionally too much sax and not enough trumpet, relatively speaking. It is because the trumpets are perceived to be stinging and uncomfortable while the saxes are perceived to have a rounder sound and a lower register. Most sound engineers react by turning the trumpets down. It is good if you can retain the natural balance, where the trumpets dominate in a tutti. In a tutti played by a professional big band, the saxes should be nearly imperceptible (but not otherwise).
- In combining vocals and big band, a "war" arises, primarily between trumpets and vocals. Instead of just bringing the trumpets down, it is good if you can "follow" the vocals a little, i.e. moving the vocal channel knob up and down on the mixer table in relation to the volume of the backgrounds continuously during the concert (see above).

10. Before the Concert

Always have a short meeting before the concert. At this meeting, remind everyone about the most important things in each piece, plus things like how and when you walk onto the stage. Sometimes, it is better if the rhythm section walks onto the stage from the side that is closer to them, and the horns walk in from the other. Always remind them of things that can cause a big mess, for example a failed dal segno al coda, and other things that have not gone perfectly well at rehearsals. Another good thing to consider is the introduction of a playing/warm-up ban five minutes before the concert begins. It is easier to achieve an increased collective concentration if the atmosphere is quiet. The meeting must not last too long, as most musicians prefer to be left alone so that they can concentrate on the concert.

10.1 Things you need to remind about

- How everyone will find D.S. and Coda in their parts, if there have been problems during rehearsals.
- How the count-off is made, especially if there is a pick-up.
- Things that have not been 100% good at rehearsals, even playing-wise. Try to not have too many reminders of this sort since it can lower morale.
- If there is a singer or guest artist participating, remind the musicians to anticipate their possible oddities. With singers, ask everyone to mark their parts with "cue" words (the lyrics) at specific entrance and exit points. This, of course, should already have been done during rehearsals, but sometimes the singer/artist is not met before the dress rehearsal.
- Possible changes in the program, and, if it is extra urgent, to be ready to play between certain pieces. This means, for example, explaining between which pieces the artist might speak for a long time and where he/she does not speak at all.
- Last but not least: have a small "pep talk" to get the band in a good mood. For example, if it is the day after a successful premier and there is a risk of fatigue and less spark, then you can give praises for yesterday. Point out that we must try "to shine" in the same way as we did yesterday, even though it can difficult to do so.

10.2 No Alcohol – 0%

An obvious but nevertheless controversial rule is: No alcohol before concerts!

People who do not like this rule usually advocate "personal responsibility" or "self monitoring." Unfortunately, many of us have seen that this does not work. You must not forget that big band playing is precision work. Would you like to fly with an airline where the pilot's code of conduct consisted of "personal responsibility?" As a director, you may instead ensure that there is alcohol for those who want some, but after the concert. As a suggestion, you can ensure that the bar at the hotel is open a little later than usual so it does not close before the musicians get back from the gig. Or you can treat them to some beers as a reward for a good concert.

Another important function for the director is to take responsibility for unforeseen events. If, for example, a concert is postponed, or an important promise from the organizer is not kept, then it is the director's responsibility to negotiate compensation from the organizer such as higher pay or better food/accommodations, for example. Above all, the director's job is to ensure that the orchestra is well cared for which will, in turn, lead to a happier band and better performance.

11. Putting Together the Right Band

One way of putting together a band is to call the very best big band musicians you know of; to set up an "all-star" band. This has its obvious advantages. It will most definitely sound great, especially the solos, if you have collected together a bunch of star soloists. It does not, however, guarantee that the band will sound tight as an ensemble, or that the atmosphere in the band will be acceptable. This is a fact that should never be underestimated. An "all-star band" can work for shorter projects, but in the long run it is usually more important to assemble a band that also has "team players" who can subordinate themselves. There are a lot of examples of soloists that are not interested in ensemble playing. A good ensemble player follows the lead player (subordination) and continuously listens to the drummer.

In an amateur band it could be more important to have people willing to help out with practical things such as copying parts, etc. than to have skilled musicians. An ideal combination of people includes those who want to help out with the practical issues, good team players (ensemble musicians), good lead players, at least a couple of good soloists and most important; a good drummer. If there is anyone in the band more important than everyone else, it would be the drummer in my opinion, then secondly the lead trumpet.

It is never good if the director ends up doing all of the practical work. It often prevents him/her from taking care of more important duties - to conduct rehearsals and concerts, to renew the repertoire, finding new band members/substitutes, composing and arranging, etc. Having a "section leader" is a good thing to have in all bands; it does not have to be the lead player. It is better to choose someone who is cautious, reliable, and organizationally gifted. They should then get some kind of compensation from the band - more pay and the director's shown appreciation. Their responsibility includes calling around and forwarding information regarding rehearsals and concert times, preparing and organizing the stage before concerts, copying parts (librarian) and to be available in crisis situations during tours, etc.

There are too many examples of overworked big band directors. Having a section leader is a way to cure these problems. However, there are directors who want to do everything themselves because they think that they have better control of the situation that way. I think this is a big mistake. It is part of your job to delegate, which is one of the things a director should master.

When putting together a band it is good if at least two of the trumpet players are capable of playing lead, particularly if the band only has four trumpets, as the lead player may not always have the stamina they need. In these situations, it is good if someone else can enter and help out for a couple of bars or maybe a few pieces during a concert. My advice is that if the lead hands over a couple of pieces to someone else, it should be pieces of a different character, or out of the ordinary. Since all musicians play differently, the regular lead player ought to play all the difficult pieces, as the band is used to strictly following that person's unique way of playing. My suggestion is that he/she hands over a ballad or a piece with a different beat/groove. However, the very best situation is having a lead player who has the stamina needed to play all charts in a full concert.

12. New Band Members

As mentioned earlier, it is important when choosing a new band member that you not only look at the musical know-how, but also the attitude. If, for instance, there should come a new and very talented member to the band with a generally poor attitude, then you are perhaps better off having enrolled a less musically-skilled musician; someone with better social skills.

There are several criteria you should look at when choosing a new member: ensemble playing skills, improvisational skills, social ability, availability (meaning that the person in question is usually not busy with other gigs when you call them). Adaptability is important, in particular when you are not playing the lead. You might be able to play the entire piece flawlessly, but if you do not listen to your lead player it is still no good. It is about obtaining a good section, not a group of very skilled individuals.

12.1 Ensemble playing skills

Ensemble playing skills means having experience with ensemble playing, interest in ensemble playing, adaptability, reading ability, and instrumental technique. All of these features are certainly of great importance.

12.2 Improvisational skills

A player with *improvisational skills* is a great asset, but if the band already has a number of good soloists, perhaps another soloist is not what the band needs at the moment. It is also important that a musician's improvisational style follows the musical profile the director wishes to create for the band.

12.3 Social skills

A musician who constantly complains about wages, the quality of the tour bus, the schedule, etc... or is frequently disruptive in rehearsals is not an asset. Although the musician in question is skilled, these features are a big minus that might affect band performance negatively.

12.4 Availability

An established and very skilled musician can sometimes be the poorer choice than one who is less established but more readily available. Perhaps the more established musician will need a substitute more than 50% of the time. Often it would be better to look for a more reliable musician who almost never needs a substitute.

12.5 Adaptability

There are many skilled musicians who are good soloists, readers, have a lot of experience, etc, but who also lack one of the most important ingredients required to play in a Big Band: *adaptability*. It consists of being able to follow your lead player's phrasing and dynamics, to get along with others during rehearsals, and to generally spread good vibrations. A musician with these qualities has come a long way, and in many cases can be a bigger asset to a band than an unusually gifted soloist, particularly if it is a band that has a large number of rehearsals and concerts each year.

13. Substitutes

It is the director's job to decide which substitutes fit the band. It is not a good idea to let the band members decide who they want to call as a substitute. There is a tendency that they gladly dial someone that is often free and easy, but may not fit in the band. Perhaps they do this because they are lazy and do not want to make any more phone calls than necessary. Another reason could be that musicians sometimes deliberately dial substitutes who do not measure up to the same level they do. This way, they think they will not risk somebody else taking their place in the band. They are simply very cautious sending a substitute who the director will like better than themselves. This is very common in professional or semi-professional contexts and less common among pure amateurs. It is okay to let the individual musician or the section leader call the substitutes as long as you, the director, have approved the choice. Make a list of acceptable substitutes, so that the player needing a substitute will call the right person.

In general it is always good to have as few substitutes as possible. Otherwise there are always going to be problems in one way or another, especially if the band has a difficult repertoire. A good principle to follow as often as possible is that everyone who participates at the concert, including substitutes, should have played the material at least once. Many times the player who needed a substitute and the substitute himself will think that it is enough to simply send parts with a recording of the material. This is rarely true. On the other hand, everything usually goes well if the substitute has been able to play through the material once, and then had some time to look it through. Sometimes, an additional run-through of the material for the sake of the substitute player can feel very burdensome to the regular players since they already know the material. Therefore it can be tempting for the director to skip this run-through. But I advise all directors to not do this. If the concert does not go well, then everyone feels badly afterwards. It is no fun performing a bad concert, as the joy of making music disappears. Moreover, the band might get poor reviews, etc., thereby indirectly decreasing the opportunities of getting more gigs.

14. Professional Behavior in a Big Band

Rules

Rehearsal & Concert Attendance

MAIN PRINCIPLE:
ONCE YOU HAVE AGREED TO DO REHEARSALS AND CONCERTS THIS IS A MUTUAL AGREEMENT THAT SHOULD BE HONORED AT (almost) ANY COST.

Rule #1: **No rehearsal – No gig!** Never expect to get the gig if you can't attend the rehearsal. Never, ever think; – "It doesn't matter if I'm not there (only one person) if all the others are there!" The reason is, of course, that if everyone would do this, there would be no band. One person being absent makes the rehearsal less efficient since one part is not heard. Furthermore, it lowers the morale and makes other members think: "If he's not there, I might as well be absent too."

Rule #2: **Always inform the director *immediately* when you found out that it is impossible to attend a rehearsal or a concert!** (preferably weeks or in the worst case several days in advance). It is all too common that musicians inform the bandleader at the actual rehearsal that they need to leave earlier, or asks another member to inform the director that they are not coming – this is absolutely forbidden! Then, there is no time to find a sub or to reschedule the rehearsal.

Exceptions

If musician receives a long, very profitable tour, many more gigs or one extremely well paid gig, compared to the one(s) offered by the big band, then he/she should phone the band leader and discuss the situation.

Exception #1: **Always offer to phone a substitute that the bandleader chooses!** The bandleader should not have to do any extra work caused by you.

Exception #2: If you can make the tour/gig(s) and only will miss one out of several rehearsals: **The musician will have to find a "rehearsal-substitute" agreed by the bandleader and, if needed, pay him or her!** This may seem unfair but it isn't. You made an agreement with the bandleader and you broke it because you wanted to earn more money, so now you have money to pay your replacement. No costs should be left to the bandleader (band). It would be quite unfair for the bandleader to have to do extra work because you broke an agreement.

Exception #3: **Sometimes the musician should offer to pay the costs of the trip for a substitute that lives in another city, or other costs connected to having a "sub" etc.** According to the principles above you should do all the work and pay all the costs since you broke the agreement.

Rehearsal Behavior

Rule #1: **Always arrive at least 10-15 min before starting time!** That's how long it takes to assemble your instrument, get in position etc. If you are a brass player, allow yourself adequate time to warm-up.

Rule #2: **Always apologize when you are late!** You are disturbing the rehearsal plus leaving one chair empty which inevitably is less inspiring for the other musicians. Arriving late is a lack of respect towards the bandleader and the members of the band and disrupts the focus.

Rule #3: **Be focused!** Save the small talk for the intermissions.

Rule #4: **Bring a pencil that has an eraser on it, and notate all important things discussed during rehearsal!**

Exception #1: **Phone or text the bandleader what time you will arrive if you are late!** Do this even if you think you will be only 5 minutes late.

Exception #2: **In a worst case scenario a pen could be used instead of a pencil!**

Rules

Rule #5: **Mobile phones should be switched off and put away!** They disturb the rehearsal. There is no time to waste in a big band rehearsal - it is so difficult to get bands together in the first place.

Exceptions

Exception #1: **Phone calls that are allowed during rehearsals should literally be a matter of life or death (childbirth, death, funeral, wedding, etc.).** The same applies to checking text messages and emails in smartphones.

Substitutes

Rule #1: **The bandleader decides which substitutes that should be used!** If the bandleader asks the musicians about advice that's a different issue.

Rule #2: **Always call the best possible substitute!** It is very common that musicians propose subs that often are available, but not at the highest level of musicianship, because then they don't have to make so many phone calls. Many musicians - afraid of losing their job to a better player - will call subs at a lower musical level than themselves.

Exception #1: **In an emergency, when there is no time to talk to the bandleader, then the musician should call the best possible choice** (a choice that the bandleader would agree on).

Concerts

Rule #1: **Always arrive even earlier to a concert than to a rehearsal!** It is always good to get to know the place beforehand; dressing room, rest rooms, where to warm up, where to find food and drink, etc.

Rule #2: **Plan extra time for finding a venue where you have never been before!** If you don't find the place in time you might miss the concert. Always make sure to check the best way to get there and the exact name and address for the venue (so you can ask people how to find it).

Exception #1: **If you still are late you have to; 1. phone 2. text the bandleader and tell what time you will arrive as accurate as possible!** At the same time, try to warm up or prepare as much as possible on the way (maybe even change clothes…).

Mutes, Doubles (flutes, clarinets, fluegelhorns etc.)

Rule #1: **Always bring mutes and doubles to the rehearsal!** It is very difficult to rehearse if trumpets play open where they should be (if trumpets play open where they should be using a mute) using a mute or if saxes are trying to play transposed flute parts, etc.

Exception #1: **If you don't want to bring all doubles or mutes, call the bandleader and ask what is needed for the coming rehearsal!**

General Attitude

Rule #1: **Try to help out fellow band members as well as the bandleader!** Often, the drummer will need help moving his drums from the bus to the stage. Also, a good way of gaining favor with the band leader is by helping with general stage preparation, such as setting up music stands and mics. All of the things listed above can improve band morale.

Exception #1: **Under certain circumstances, you might not have enough time to help with setup.** Example: If you are having embouchure problems, you may need more personal warm-up time than usual.

Exception #2: **Rhythm section players don't need to help with music stands, etc!** Since they have much more to prepare than horn players.

15. What is a Good Band?

What is a good band? This is a question that can certainly have a lot of answers. I consider a good band one that is fun to listen to, but more importantly it is a band that will give you the feeling that they are playing together and thinking alike. It is not good with many wills pulling in different directions. On the other hand, the band does not need to sound completely polished or pedantic - that could even be a disadvantage. There must be an endeavor toward a "direction" or musical statement that instills an understanding in the listener; "Aha, that's what they mean!"

It is much more exciting when a particular band has a unique profile that sets them apart from other bands, and their vision and endeavor shines through in their music. Of course, the ensemble playing is a crucial component of big band music, and here it is vital to "let the music live". Above all, that musicians should not simply play a bunch of notes. They should constantly try to "find the music" within the notes. This is not always that easy, as reading music is quite an analytical task that, to a certain extent, stands in contrast to musical creativity and improvisation. Since modern big band music has become much more complex and demanding, it can be very difficult for an individual player to play their part perfectly in an ensemble passage and then instantly switch gears mentally to stand up and take a long and creative improvised solo. However, in a truly good band you will find both crisp and distinct ensemble playing and skilled and inspiring soloists.

16. The End

I hope that as a reader, you will find this book helpful and inspiring. I aim to contribute to an increased interest and heightening of the educational level within this style of ensemble playing. It is extremely important in this time and age where a lot of music is made with the help of sequencers and sampling and not so much with the aid of traditional instruments. Generally speaking, young people of today have less patience and a greater need for immediate gratification. I have a dream and hope to educate future pedagogues to achieve quicker and better results within this form of music. I believe that the speed in this progress is our most effective weapon in the competition with computer-produced music. It requires time, high aspiration and determination in order to reach that high level, which today's young musician does not always have. It is my ambition to present effective teaching methods that can inspire musicians of the future to find their musical lives within this art form. I hope that The General Method can be a part of this development.

It is possible to hire my services as a lecturer or workshop instructor in order to teach The General Method. I'm travelling more and more around the world, working with a lot of big bands and lecturing about The General Method. These workshops or clinics can also be combined with concerts and artist - appearances.

In my own artistic activity one of my most recent project has been to create what I call "Big Band Minimalism", modern big band music inspired by the compositional techniques and ideas of minimalist Steve Reich. I refer to it as a new musical "sub-genre" and it sounds quite different from traditional big band jazz. This music and my earlier production will be available for free downloads on my home page: matsholmquist.com. In 2012, I launched a project called "A (minimalist) Tribute to Wayne Shorter" featuring Dave Liebman and my own big band. Feel free to contact me about anything regarding music!

Wish you a creative life!

Mats Holmquist
mats@matsholmquist.com

Reviews of the CD (Caprice Records)

"A Tribute to Chick Corea"

Mats Holmquist Stora Stygga - Big Bad Band

"The soloists, which include trumpeter Peter Apslund, tenors Robert Nordmark (well featured on "Times Lie") and Henrik Westerberg, pianist Daniel Karlsson, Par Grebacken on soprano and clarinet, and guest Henrik Frendin on viola during two tracks, are uniformly impressive. However it is Holmquist's inventive arrangements, which are a logical extension of Corea's original performances, that are the real stars. Recommended."
*******1/2 Scott Yanow, Allmusic.com***

"Chick Corea has been one of the jazz world's most prolific and influential composers for more than three decades, and the best one can say about this impressive salute by Mats Holmquist's Stockholm-based Big Bad Band is that his music has seldom sounded more enchanting. I don't know if Corea has heard this, but if he has he must be grinning from ear to ear. Simply put, it's a marvelous salute, teeming with rich orchestral colors, playful rhythms and exemplary blowing by everyone concerned" ... "For those who appreciate Chick Corea and admire superlative big bands, it doesn't get much better than this.
Jack Bowers, All About Jazz

"His (Holmquist's) sense of harmonic refinement, complexity of sound and tension in melodic lines is triumphant; this is fresh big band music where worn-out routine thinking is banned"
Nya Wermlands-Tidningen

"But Mats Holmquist is the right man to transform Corea's melodies and mixed Latin pulse to exciting and dynamic arrangements for a fully grown orchestra. Fun, worked-through music. It is impressive what big band guru Holmquist has been able to find in his favorite's (70's) compositions."
Sydsvenska Dagbladet

"This band of eighteen competent musicians is swarming with different angles of incidence" "There are bold combinations of surprising instruments" "The writing is bold with dense sounds..." "You have my admiration, Mats...."
Dagens Nyheter

MATS HOLMQUIST STORA STYGGA & DAVE LIEBMAN – A ("minimalist") TRIBUTE TO WAYNE SHORTER

"You are an amazing arranger. I loved the work you did on Wayne and it's about time somebody paid tribute to Wayne in a large ensemble setting. Liebman and the entire band sounded great and you should feel very proud of this project."
"We are into new composers and especially ones with your gift. I really enjoyed your arrangements."
Dick Oatts *(Artistic Director and lead alto player Vanguard Jazz Orchestra – former Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra)*

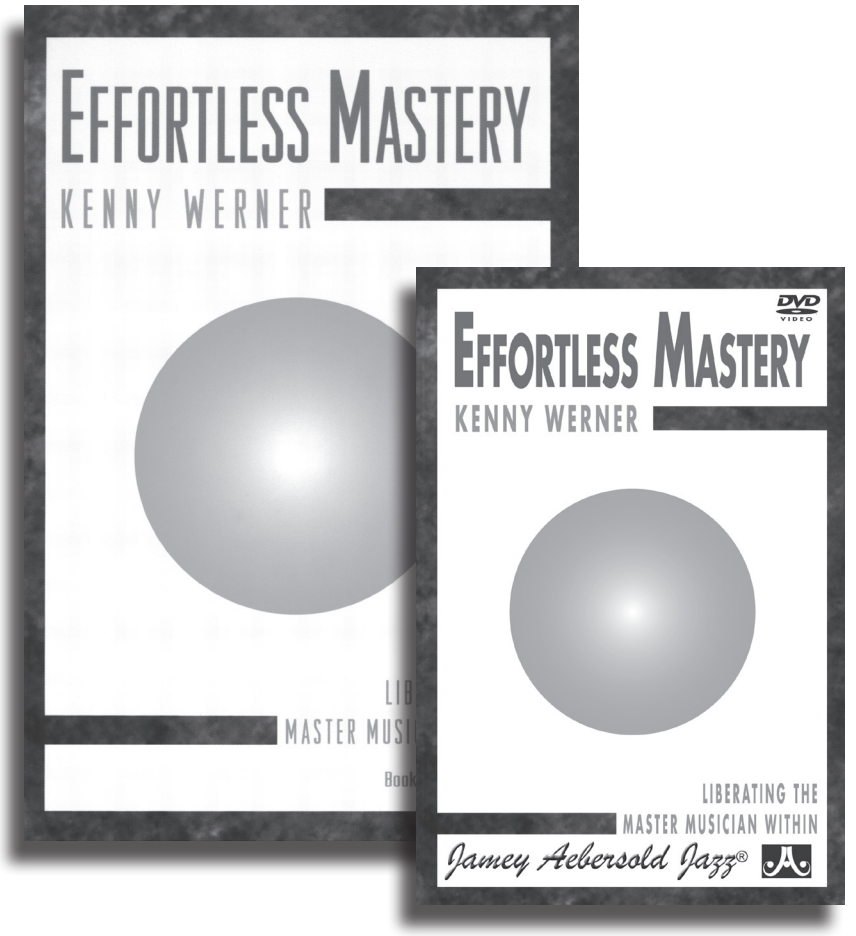
"The best I've heard in several years"
Göran Olson *(former booker/artist manager - Stockholm All Star Jazz & Blues Festival)*

"Thank you Mats for an astonishing concert. Those sounds! You have to stay in Sweden or at least come back a few times a year. I say world class! "You have to go back to the 70's when Thad Jones & Mel Lewis played in Stockholm to be able to hear something similar. Mats Holmquist should not give up his artistry in Sweden"
Pontus Götell *(Jazz Club Director - Sweden)*

What a fantastic concert! Mats Holmquist- what a genius!
Ulf Daneklev *(trombonist)*

EFFORTLESS MASTERY

by KENNY WERNER



This best-selling book has helped thousands of musicians to overcome apprehension, self-doubt, and other hindrances to natural, joyful performance. Kenny Werner puts you on a course to effortless mastery, where playing music is a simple as drawing a breath. Includes a CD designed to initiate positive thought.

Also available is a DVD of Kenny explaining his ideas and concepts before a packed house in New York City. Through his highly acclaimed and proven techniques, one can remove the technical and psychological barriers to creativity that afflict us all and liberate the master musician within.

"If you've played for 30 years and hardly ever enjoyed it, if you've constantly pointed to other players and thought they possessed something you didn't, or if you've practiced for years and never really improved, read on."

"The world is made up of two kinds of people: The ones who play the right stuff and the ones who are looking for the right stuff."

"You will find yourself far more free and powerful if you assume that all the notes you play are the most beautiful sounds you've ever heard."

"Mastery is playing whatever you're capable of playing ... every time ... without thinking."

"Mastery is available to everyone."

"As fear pollutes the environment for creativity, it also inhibits effective study. The mind play havoc and the ego has a picnic. You want to be a great jazz player, for example, and your mind tells you it must be done by a certain age. If you're 18, it must be done by 21. When that doesn't happen, you give it until 25. By 25, it's 30 ... and so on. If you're 35 or older, you feel 'the parade has passed you by.'"

PRODUCT CODES
BOOK/CD - EM
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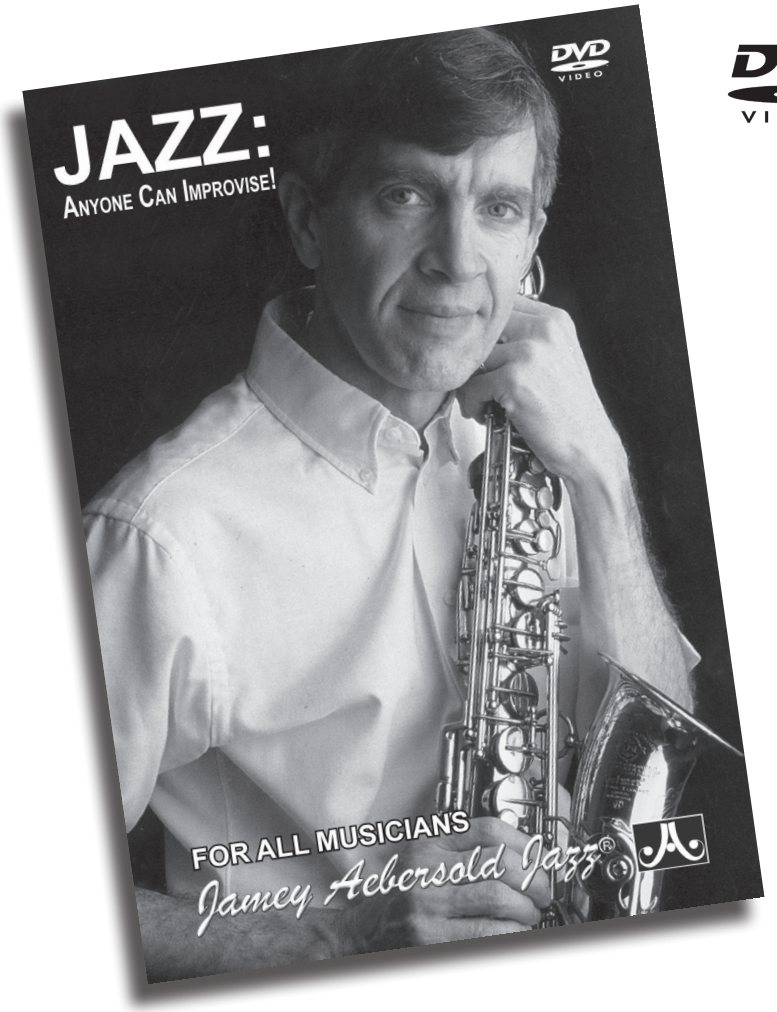
JAZZ:
"Anyone Can Improvise!"
by JAMEY AEBERSOLD



DVD VIDEO

This nearly two-hour long DVD features Jamey at the piano explaining and demonstrating the fundamental techniques used by all great jazz improvisors. Topics covered include chord/scale relationships, keeping your place, patterns, the blues and pentatonic scales and their application, what and how to practice, articulation, memorizing songs, and much more. This DVD not only provides the technical information essential to getting started on improvisation but also serves as an overview of the entire creative process in terms that even a non-musician could understand. Jamey also provides much needed motivational material and discusses the philosophy of man's need to be creative. A complete presentation!

This DVD is closely aligned with the world famous Volume 1 "How To Play Jazz" and Volume 24 "Major and Minor" Play-A-Longs (see below.)

The visual, hands-on demonstration makes their concepts easier to grasp. Jamey even plays along with tracks from those two Play-A-Long volumes, showing proper application of scales to chords and essential practice techniques.

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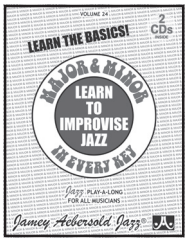

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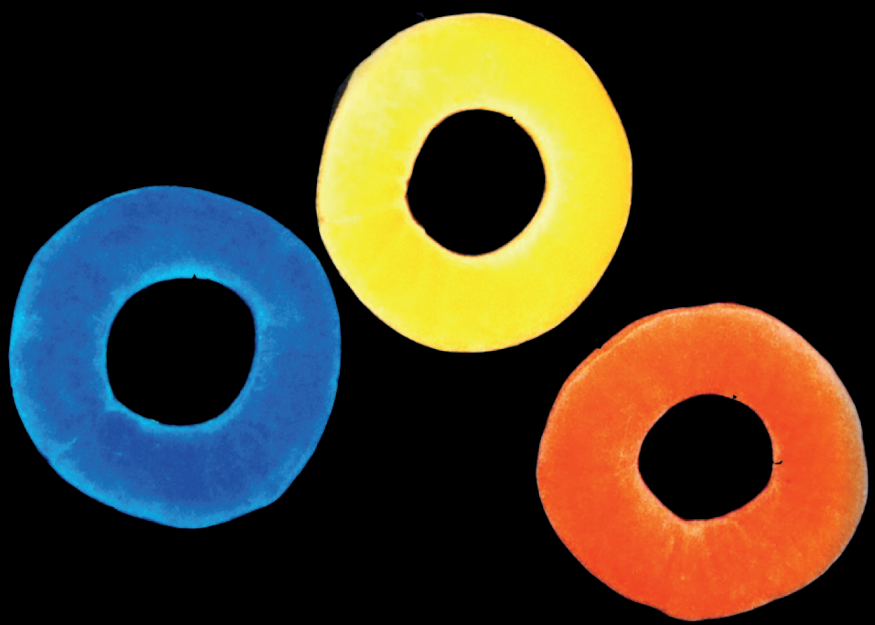
The most common method of rehearsing a big band is what I would call the specific method, where you rehearse the difficulties that are specific for the piece on which you are working. In other words, you play through the piece in its entirety, then rehearse the rough spots over and over, without explaining to the band why something may not be working. With this book, I launch a new methodology that I call "The General Method," which is built upon the idea of making the musicians conscious of the "natural laws" of musical developments and phenomena. Anyone can incorporate these easy-to-remember rules. For example: when musicians are aware that a series of syncopations (offbeats) very often are rushed, then they can apply this rule not just to a specific piece, but to all pieces of the same style/genre/tempo. The "General" knowledge is transferable! My hope is that this terminology will gradually work its way into the vocabulary of all musicians, so that the world of music, or at least our part of it (African-American music) will be given a common language.

Mats Holmquist



Mats Holmquist is a composer, arranger, and big band leader of Swedish origin currently working as artistic director of China's leading big band, JZ All Star Big Band, in Shanghai. He has earned two Master of Music/Composition degrees: one from the Royal College of Music, Stockholm, and the other from the University of North Texas. He has performed with his own big band and small group at international jazz festivals in Montreux, The Hague, San Sebastian, Pori, Aarhus, Oslo, Stockholm, Riga, and others. His big band, "Mats Holmquist Stora Stygga - Big Bad Band" has performed with most major Swedish vocal artists at concert halls and festivals all over Sweden and abroad. This group has performed for President Bill Clinton, the German President in Berlin, the Swedish Royal family, and many others. As a leader, Mats has composed and arranged music for four albums of his own, and Stora Stygga is the only Swedish big band ever to receive a review of 4½ stars from the leading music website **allmusic.com**. As a clinician with 30 years of experience, Mats travels more and more internationally, conducting big band clinics using The General Method. He is also founder/director of the Swedish National Youth Big Band. His next CD, "Big Band Minimalism" is an attempt to create a new musical "sub-genre" that could be described as a fusion between modern big band jazz and the minimalism of Steve Reich. Two more CD's are planned: "A (minimalist) Tribute to Wayne Shorter" featuring Dave Liebman, and a tribute to Herbie Hancock. Mats also orchestrates and conducts strings for Sweden's world famous pop group, Roxette.

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