

# Unit 4: Ensemble Musicianship

Content Area: **Music**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**  
Length: **ongoing**  
Status: **Published**

## Brief Summary of Unit

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This unit emphasizes sustained, focused development of the core instrumental skills necessary for successful performance within a jazz ensemble setting.

Revised August 2025

## Standards

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ELD standards: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit>

MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Cr3a	Evaluate and refine varied draft musical works based on appropriate criteria, including the extent to which they address identified purposes and contexts.
MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Cr3b	Share varied, personally developed musical works (individually or as an ensemble) that address identified purposes and contexts.
MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Pr4a	Develop and apply criteria to select varied programs to study and perform based on an understanding of theoretical and structural characteristics and expressive challenges in the music, the technical skill of the individual or ensemble, and the purpose and context of the performance.
MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Pr4b	Examine, evaluate, and critique, using music reading skills (where appropriate), how the structure and context impact and inform prepared and improvised performances.

## Transfer

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VPA.1.1.12	All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.
VPA.1.2.12	All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.
VPA.1.3.12	All students will synthesize those skills, media, methods, and technologies appropriate to creating, performing, and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

## Essential Questions

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- • How does the way we rehearse affect our performance?

- • How is the notation of the arrangement helpful to an ensemble?
- • What are the performance objectives of a jazz ensemble?
- Why is the physical arrangement of an ensemble important and how does it change in a particular venue?

## Essential Understandings

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- • choosing appropriate literature is essential to a successful performance.
- • each musician has a responsibility to the ensemble, musical and otherwise.
- • increasing their awareness of musical literature will positively affect their ability to perform in any ensemble.
- • understanding their part in relation to the entire ensemble is as important as understanding their part as an individual.
- what or who to focus attention on during a given performance.

## Students Will Know

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- • how to identify the performance needs of varying jazz venues.
- • how to identify, isolate and improve musical objectives within a rehearsal.
- • the advantage of studying and performing jazz literature as it pertains to each performers continued improvement.
- • the importance of having an increased awareness of other sections and performers within a jazz ensemble.
- • why developing a plan for performance is different each time, even when performing the same literature.

## Students Will Be Skilled At

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- Changing their performance based on the changes made by their fellow bandmates.
- Improving group performance through isolation and repetition.
- Leading and participating in an effective ensemble rehearsal.

## Evidence/Performance Tasks

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- • describe the musicianship of recording artists in each of the major classifications of jazz music (ragtime, Dixieland, swing, bebop, cool jazz, hard bop, avant-garde, fusion, contemporary).
- • discuss the differences in performance venues and programming for each unique “gig.”
- • evaluate and critique their performances using devised criteria: written; verbal.
- • participate in group discussions of the essential questions.
- • perform in public.
- • rehearse jazz literature within small and large group settings.

## Learning Plan

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- • Create warm-up activities to reinforce necessary considerations that are specific to each musical performance.
- • Discuss performance considerations pertaining to physical space and venues prior to performing and/or rehearsing for a concert.
- • Discuss the essential questions and key concepts prior to reading, rehearsing, listening or performing jazz literature.
- • Group learning activity – Have students create background figures for improvised solos.
- • Group learning activity – Have students rehearse literature in large and small group settings.
- • Have each student improvise on each song in a rehearsal setting.
- • Identify and discuss essential areas of instrumental proficiency that influence the performance of jazz.
- • Identify and experience acoustical considerations that are unique to the jazz ensemble set up.
- • Listen to standard recordings jazz literature prior to performing or rehearsing a new “chart” for an audience.
- • Perform for each other and for the public. .
- • Sing – “scat sing,” or recreate elements of rhythm and melody away from musical instruments.
- • Writing exercise—Have students reflect on a performance from the performer’s standpoint.

## Materials

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- Smartboard
- Student instrument
- Various rehearsal and performance spaces

## Suggested Strategies for Modifications

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### [Jazz Band QSAC Accommodations and Modifications](#)

- • Enhance arrangements by adding intros, interludes, etc. featuring more experienced students.
- • Have the less experienced students perform using basic improvisational techniques such as chord tones only, or scales.
- • Have the more experienced students perform the lead parts, and the less experienced students perform the supporting roles.
- • Require more advanced students to apply advanced improvisational techniques such as chromatic approach, etc.
- • Simplify parts for less experienced students as necessary.

