

# Jazz Night School - Ensemble Levels Matrix

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Elements:	1. Time	2. Improv	3. Stylistic	4. Knowledge of Song	5. Musicality	6. Ear	7. Harmonic Knowledge	8. Technical Facility	9. Jazz History	10. Repertoire	11. Reading / Notation	12. Cross-Instrument Skills
Levels:												
Jazz Lab	1. Working on keeping time.	2. Minimal or no improv experience.	3. Minimal or no stylistic abilities.	4. Minimal or no song form awareness.	5. May be new to musicality concepts.	6. May have minimal to no ear skills.	7. Limited scale or harmonic knowledge.	8. May have considerable limitations to sound production and technique.	9. May have minimal or no jazz history knowledge.	10. Minimal or no songs memorized.	11. May have minimal or no reading and notation skills.	12. May not have experience on other key instruments.
Level 1 - Beginning	1. Can keep time, comfortable at slower tempos.	2. Can attempt improv in few most-common keys/scales, C, F, Bb, getting intro to compositional improv.	3. Introduction to stylistic abilities for swing, bossa-nova, ballad.	4. Minimal or no song form awareness.	5. Learning ensemble listening skills and use of dynamics.	6. May have minimal to no ear skills.	7. Learning major, harmonic minor, and blues scales, II V I's in major and minor, and blues harmonies.	8. May have some limitations to instrumental technique—but can play at least one octave range of Level 1 scales and major and minor triad arpeggios in at least keys of C, F, Bb at 60 bpm for quarter notes, eighth notes, and eighth note triplets; Chordal instruments can play basic chords in most common keys; Drummers can play ride cymbal swing and straight eighth note patterns with hi-hat on 2 and 4 at 120 bpm.	9. May have minimal or no jazz history knowledge.	10. Learning methods to memorize, few songs memorized.	11. May have minimal reading and notation skills.	12. May not have experience on the other key instruments (voice, drums, piano).
Level 2 - Intermediate 1	1. Can keep steady time in sync with others, comfortable with moderate tempos.	2. Comfortable improvising but in a limited range of contexts, working on compositional improv.	3. Working on stylistic abilities for swing, bossa-nova, ballad, jazz waltz, and half-time feel, trading fours.	4. Familiar with basic song forms.	5. Playing melodies as phrases (making instrument sing), listening to ensemble, appropriate and musical dynamics.	6. Working to develop ear skills (learning to recognize pitches in a key, intervals, chord types, harmonic progressions, and rhythms).	7. Comfortable with blues, major, and harmonic minor scales, major and minor harmonic progressions, learning chord tones of all chords.	8. Able to execute at least moderate levels of instrumental technique—can play at least two octave range of Level 2 scales and major7th, minor7th, and dominant7th chord arpeggios in concert keys of D, G, C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, at 90 bpm for rhythm values up to eighth note triplets; Chordal instruments can play jazz/rootless voicings for all chord types in most-common keys; Drummers have at least basic stick and brush technique for tempos from 60-180 bpm (swing and straight eighth), have basic limb independence to comp on drums while keeping time, developing ability to play rolls, can trade fours.	9. Should have at least a overview understanding of jazz history and awareness of at least ~10 jazz icons, especially of musician's instrument.	10. Memorizing most songs that are played in ensemble, 10-30 songs memorized.	11. Able to read notes and chord symbols well enough to aid learning music, able to notate enough to add to charts/leadsheets or document simple ideas.	12. At least some simple experience on the other key instruments (voice, drums, piano).
Level 3 - Intermediate 2	1. Can keep place in song form (aware of harmonic rhythm) and use up-beat/syncopated rhythms.	2. Consistently able to execute compositional improv, playing "what you hear", approaching "comfortable" in all keys.	3. Getting close to having stylistic abilities for swing, bossa-nova, ballad, waltz, double-time and double-time feel.	4. Uses song melody and form knowledge to shape playing and improv.	5. Expanding phrasing/articulation palette (range of expression), and working on appropriate and varied comping.	6. Learn most songs by ear (melody, root motion and most chord types) and can learn solos from recordings by ear.	7. Learning modal and rhythm changes harmonies, comfortable with blues scale and major/sweet blues scale, mixing minor scales (melodic, natural, dorian, harmonic), chromatic scale, can do roman numeral analysis, identify guide tones and chord tones of all chords, learning chord scales.	8. Instrumental technique at least approaching intermediate levels—intermediate defined as knowledge of and ability to play full instrument range scales including Level 3 scales and augmented triad, maj7, maj6, min7, min6, min7b5, dom7, dim7, aug7, dom7sus4, minMaj7, chord arpeggios in all keys at 90 bpm for rhythm values up to sixteenth notes; Chordal instruments can voicelead jazz/rootless voicings for all chord types in all keys using multiple voicing options/versions; Drummers can transition to/from brushes/sticks/mallets, solo over song form, moderate mastery of at least five to ten rudiments, developing stick control (sound consistency and range of tone), working on rudimental etudes such as Charley Wilcoxon's "Modern Rudimental Swing Solos", can demonstrate limb independence, play shuffles, multiple brazilian feels, jazz waltz, calypso, transition to/from double-time feel, and play tempos from 50-220 bpm.	9. Should be developing comprehension of the major eras of jazz and some of the icons from each, able to recognize some artists and genres by ear.	10. Memorizing all songs played in ensemble and usually as the first step, 20-50 songs memorized.	11. Able to sightread simple notation at moderate tempos, able to write/notate a chord chart by hand, able to transpose a chord chart by hand.	12. At least approaching basic functional skills on the other key instruments (voice, drums, piano)—see next level for details.

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Levels:												
Level 4 - Advanced 1	1. & 2. Can comfortably play tempos up to bpm=160 with 8th note melody improv in all keys (getting comfortable with be-bop melodic devices), utilize even 8th swing phrasing (may include doodle tonguing) and use of more complex rhythmic devices (hemiolas, quarter note anticipation, barline blurring).	3. Stylistic abilities: swing, straight 8th and bossa nova, ballad, waltz; working on afro-cuban and odd time signatures.	4. Can play songs in other keys and reharmonizations.	5. Capable of a range of expression and complementary comping.	6. Can learn by ear: difficult harmony, inner parts, and challenging solos.	7. Comfortable with modal and rhythm changes harmonies, most chord scales, tritone substitute dom7ths, learning special dom7 scales (lydian b7, altered, symmetric diminished, whole tone).	8. Able to execute at least intermediate levels and approaching advanced levels of instrumental technique—advanced defined as knowledge of and ability to play full instrument range of scales and chord arpeggios including Level 4 scales and maj7b5, maj7#5, an dom7b5, maj9, min9, dom9s(b9,9,#9), chords in all keys at 120 bpm for rhythm values up to sixteenth notes; Chordal instruments can utilize quartal voicings, upper structures in voicings, reharmonize and insert approach harmonies to chord progressions including use of major diminished scale voicings/harmonies; Drummers can play an extended solo transcription from a jazz drummer icon, can play tempos up to 260 bpm, afro-cuban feel (polyrhythms).	9. Knowledge of the chronology and components of each era in jazz history and their significant artists for most instruments, in depth knowledge of icons and significant but lesser known artists of musician's instrument.	10. 50-100 songs memorized, various styles.	11. Able to sightread notation and chord symbols for moderate difficulty music at tempos up to 120 bpm, able to write/notate/transpose leadsheets by hand.	12. Have at least basic functional skills on the other key instruments (voice, drums, piano)—can sing melodies, keep simple time on drums at moderate tempos, can play chords and scales on piano.	
Level 5 - Advanced 2	1. & 2. Can play tempos up to bpm=200 with 8th note advanced harmonic improv, able to place time ahead, on, or behind the beat.	3. Stylistic abilities include afro-cuban and odd time signatures.	4. Can play songs in all keys, and know lyrics to most of their repertoire.	5. Working on harmonic content of comping driven by melodic content of the moment.	6. Can repeat notes/melodies on instrument (or singing with solfege or other nomenclature) upon hearing.	7. Comfortable with all chord scales, special dom7 scales, major & minor diminished, and bebop scales, learning advanced melodic/harmonic devices (polytonality, pentatonics, tetrachords, side-slipping), and reharmonization techniques.	8. Able to execute advanced levels of instrumental technique—can play full instrument range of scales and chord arpeggios including Level 5 scales and dimMaj7, maj7#11, min11, dom7#11, dom7b13, dom13th chord arpeggios in all keys at 150 bpm for rhythm values up to sixteenth notes; Chordal instruments can use cluster harmonies/voicings, drop 2 & 4 voicings; Drummers can play tempos up to 300 bpm, odd time signatures (5/4, 7/4, 9/4), execute metric modulations.	9. Have studied and learned how to "play in the style of" a continuum of artists of musician's instrument, have studied and learned to play in the style of each major jazz era, and have become knowledgeable of the personnel from studied recordings.	10. 100-200+ songs memorized.	11. Able to sightread notation and chord symbols for difficult music at tempos up to 160 bpm, able to write/notate multi-part scores and transposed instrument parts by hand, able to transpose by sight.	12. Can function on the other key instruments (voice, drums, piano)—can sing melodies, can keep basic but good time on drums, can comp chords and play songs on piano.	

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