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*Synergy Jazz*  
FOUNDATION

# PROVIDING JAZZ RESOURCES FOR IOWA'S EDUCATORS

A Word From The President

## JEI President's Message

Autumn greetings to the membership of JEI! It is with great pleasure that I begin my reign of terror... er, term as your President. I owe a great debt of thanks to the members of the Executive Board for assisting me with this transition; Rod Pierson, Steve Shanley, Kyle Engelhardt, Myron Peterson, and Jeff Schafer. Gentlemen, I have your phone numbers, and I'm not afraid to use them! Also, please joining me in thanking the members of the Advisory Board, and in particular the newest volunteers: Paul McEntaffer, who will be handling the web page, and Mike Pritchard, who kindly agreed to cover the Festivals and Clinics during my term as President.

### JEI Advisory Board:

[Paul McEntaffer](#), Website

[Mike McMann](#), Educational Materials/  
Content

[Steve Shanley](#), Mentorship

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[Colleen Hecht](#), MS Jazz Affairs

[Erin Wehr](#), Elementary Jazz Affairs

Inside this issue you will find articles from members of the Advisory Board designed to give you some direction and guidance as marching band winds down and jazz band cranks up. Topics covered include selection of literature, resources for middle school improvisers, and preparation for Jazz All-State auditions. The contacts above are for you to use. Do not hesitate to contact us directly with questions, comments, or suggestions of topics you'd like to see

covered in future issues. Above all, this is YOUR organization.

### Jazz All-State

One of our primary charges as an organization is oversight of the All-State Jazz Ensembles. I am pleased to announce the guest conductors for these ensembles in 2013: 1A/2A, Dr. Christopher Buckholz, Professor of Trombone, University of Northern Iowa; 3A, John Wojciechowski, Chicago area freelance saxophonist and music instructor at St. Charles North High School; 4A, Dr. Thomas Matta, Professor of Jazz Studies, De Paul University, Chicago. Please visit the website for biographical information about these fine musician/educators.

Bob Washut has once again created the audition etudes, which are posted on the JEI website for easy download. There you will also find reference recordings of the etudes performed by the jazz faculty of UNI: Chris Merz, saxophones; Randy Grabowski, trumpet; Chris Buckholz, trombone; Matt Andreini, vibraphone; Bob Washut, piano; Bob Dunn, guitar; Jonathan Schwabe, bass; and Nic Addelia, drums. In an effort to generate more audition submissions from rhythm section players, the first page of each rhythm section part is entirely scored. Bob Dunn has kindly provided frames for guitarists to assist them in learning idiomatic voicings for use in the etude. As always, the second page of the etude provides further challenges for both wind and rhythm players, and is required for those auditioning for the 4A band (optional for all others). See the website ([www.jeiowa.org](http://www.jeiowa.org)) for deadlines, details and requirements for audition discs. Best of luck to your students as they prepare audition recordings!

And of course, best of luck to all of you as you make the transition from outdoor music to indoor music.

## News from the Past President

Submitted by Rodney Pierson  
[rpierson@westmusic.com](mailto:rpierson@westmusic.com)

Fall is now upon us and Jazz is rightfully gaining attention and focus in your classrooms. Stepping into my new role as Past President has required me to reflect on how I should best use my time in support of JEI. Through my numerous years in servicing your Music Programs and working in partnership with the Music Industry at large, I have experience with and wish to offer help with building our resource and financial support base.

I am asking you all here to share with me your ideas for how and where to support Jazz Performances along with any localized centers of cultural influence in your area. Area grant foundations and their direct contacts would also be appreciated. Once we have an understanding of existing resources, it will allow JEI to better plan with our existing sponsors in order to, ultimately, help you promote Jazz in your area. Please make a point of thanking all businesses and institutions who are offering financial and in kind support to JEI. You can link to their organizations through the “sponsors” tab at [www.jeiowa.org](http://www.jeiowa.org)

On a separate note,

Having been personally involved with the All State Jazz Ensemble selection process for many years now, one recurring thought come to mind. With so many Jazz bands in Iowa participating in a myriad of competition and festival opportunities every year, it would seem that there would be more schools and individual students participating in the audition process. I know for a fact that there are a number of talented students out there not being brought to light, thus they miss an extraordinary musical experience. We have always invited the very best Jazz Artists to direct the groups and Educators insights through clinics and workshops. A partial list of past JEI All State Jazz Ensemble Directors can be viewed on the website.

There’s nothing more pleasing than following the paths of Iowa’s future Jazz leaders/ musicians, MANY of whom participated in an All State Jazz Ensemble.

Don’t hesitate to send those recordings our way...your participation and support is appreciated!

## News from the Vice-President

Submitted by Steve Shanley  
[steve.shanley@gmail.com](mailto:steve.shanley@gmail.com)

This time of year I often get requests for help with jazz band literature selection, so I thought I might share some of my most common suggestions:

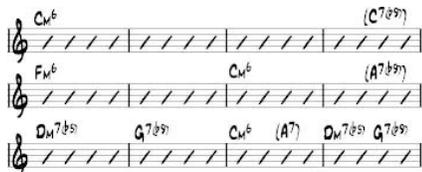
**Begin the year by reading a lot of music.** I began my first few years of teaching with detailed plans for all the literature I would play throughout the year. While I look back and admire my dedication and organization, I realized this locked me into some decisions that were not in the best interests of my students. Over time, I discovered the value of beginning each year by sight-reading a lot of different music. This not only helped my students develop their sight-reading abilities, but it also had some other benefits. Beginning the year with easy music allowed the students to develop a more confident and positive approach to jazz band (it can be a little discouraging for students to start the year by attempting that Grade 6 saxophone soli you want them to play for a contest in February...). Reading through many different pieces also gave me the opportunity to teach or reinforce basic concepts that tended to vanish over the summer. And finally, it gave me a really accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the group. Two of the most important considerations in choosing music for any type of group are the strengths and weaknesses of the players. We may begin the year thinking we know what those strengths and weaknesses are, but I found my predictions were sometimes wrong. I have found no downside and many positives to beginning the year with sight-reading.

**Consider the chord changes first—not last.** It is very tempting to select a chart because it is based on one of your favorite standard melodies or because the shout section is really hip. But if the chord changes are beyond the abilities of your players, you

can probably find a more appropriate piece. This applies not only to the improvising instruments but also to the piano and guitar parts. I continue to be discouraged with the willingness of some companies to publish charts with Grade 2 ensemble parts and Grade 4 chord changes, because they trick directors into purchasing music that is probably not completely appropriate for their groups. How can you determine the difficulty of chord changes for your students? This is pretty easy: if you don’t understand the chords or how to approach soloing over them, your students probably won’t either (unless they take private improvisation lessons with someone else). It is disappointing to listen to a band whose director chooses music with challenging chord changes, gives the students very little help navigating those changes, and then appears discouraged with the improvisational capabilities of the students. If improvising is not a strong part of your teaching, I highly recommend developing those skills on your own. The Jamey Aebersold workshops are excellent (and serve students of all ages), or you might consider taking improvisation lessons with a local professional or experienced band director.

**Devote a decent portion of your program to improvised soloing.** Jazz band is a great opportunity for students to develop skills not often found in other parts of the band program. In some cases, it is the only time students can play in an ensemble with one person on each part. It is also likely the part of the band program where students can play in a group with a rhythm section. While both of those are valuable, the most important distinguishing characteristic of jazz music is improvisation. Because improvisation was central to the development of this art form, we are doing students a major disservice when we select a musical program with little opportunity for improvised soloing. Every piece in your concert does not necessarily need extended sections for improvising, but the overall program should provide plenty of chances for the students to be creative.

**Play quality literature.** This is tricky and subjective, but it is important to consider. Just as we hope the math teachers will select a high quality curriculum for their algebra classes, we should select the best possible curriculum for our jazz bands. The literature we choose will be the foundation for much of the teaching in our jazz band rehearsals. I wish I could tell you that every published piece of jazz



“Consider the chord changes first  
- not last”

band music is high quality, but that is not the case. Sadly, many companies will publish low quality music simply to make money. If you are uncertain about the quality of a jazz band chart, there are a few approaches you can take. Feedback from respected jazz musicians and educators is helpful, and most of them are more than willing to offer their thoughts on a piece or to give you a list of their favorite charts. Another approach, though not exactly scientific, involves searching for recordings of a potential piece. If you are able to find a number of recordings (on iTunes, YouTube, etc.) of really good bands playing the piece, it is more likely considered a higher quality chart. If the only recordings you can find are the publisher's demo and some really bad bands on YouTube, then it may not be a great choice. Again, that approach is not perfect, but it can give you a starting point if you have no other options.

Jazz literature is a favorite topic of mine, so please feel free to email me ([sshanley@coe.edu](mailto:sshanley@coe.edu)) any time if you want bounce some ideas off me. I would also love to hear which charts are your favorites. Happy programming!

## Educational Resources

### Jazz Festivals

Submitted by Michael Prichard  
[prichardm@bishopheelan.org](mailto:prichardm@bishopheelan.org)

Here is a list of jazz festivals that are a great educational resource and experience for your students:

NIACC Jazz Festival Clinics  
NIACC  
Mason City  
January 17 and 18

Cherokee Jazz and Blues Festival  
Cherokee HS  
Cherokee

January 18 and 19

Iowa Lakes Jazz Contest  
Iowa Lakes CC  
Estherville

January 24 and 25  
[http://www.iowalakes.edu/music/jazz\\_band\\_contest/](http://www.iowalakes.edu/music/jazz_band_contest/)

Simpson College Jazz Festival  
Simpson College  
Indianola

January 31 and Feb 1  
<https://sites.google.com/site/simpsoncollegejazzfestival/>

Jazzmania XXXIV  
Central College  
Pella  
February 2  
<https://www.central.edu/finearts/forms/JazzmaniaEntryForm.cfm>

Jack Oatts Jazz Festival  
Earlham HS  
Earlham  
February 2

Morningside College Jazz Festival (HS)  
Morningside College  
Sioux City  
February 7 and 8  
<http://webs.morningside.edu/music/jazzfestival.htm>

Bluffs Jazz Festival  
Abraham Lincoln HS Councils Bluffs  
February 9

Tallcorn Jazz Festival  
UNI  
Cedar Falls  
February 15 and 16  
<http://www.uni.edu/jazzstudies/tallcorn/index.html>

High School Jazz/Show Choir Encounter  
Indianola HS  
Indianola  
February 16

Coe College Jazz Summit  
Coe College  
Cedar Rapids  
February 21-23  
<http://www.public.coe.edu/~wcarson/EntryForm.htm>

Great Plains Jazz Festival  
U of Nebraska-Omaha,  
Omaha, NE  
February 22-23  
<http://www.unomaha.edu/music/specialevents/jazzfest.php>

Indian Hills CC Jazz Festival  
Indian Hills CC  
Ottumwa  
February 23

Jim Coffin Jazz Festival  
Woodward Granger HS  
Woodward  
February 23

Hoover Jazz Festival  
Des Moines Hoover HS Des Moines  
March 2

Jazz on the Upper Great Plains  
Augustana College  
Sioux Falls, SD  
March 4 and 5  
<http://www.augie.edu/arts/camps-festivals-and-competitions/jazz-upper-great-plains-festival>

Bellevue East Jazz Festival  
Bellevue East HS  
Bellevue, NE  
March 8 and 9

Charles City Jazz Festival  
Charles City HS  
Charles City  
March 9

Coyote High School Jazz Festival  
U of South Dakota  
Vermillion, SD  
March 14

Gehlen Jazz Festival  
LeMars Gehlen HS  
LeMars  
March 19 and 20

Morningside College Jazz Festival (MS)  
Morningside College  
Sioux City  
March 22  
<http://webs.morningside.edu/music/jazzfestival.htm>

SDSU/Brookings Optimist Jazz Festival  
South Dakota State U  
Brookings, SD  
April 4  
<http://www.sdstate.edu/mus/outreach/optimist/index.cfm>

Iowa Jazz Championships  
CCCU @ Veteran's  
Des Moines April 18  
<http://iowajazzchampionships.org/>

## Jazz at the Middle School Level

Submitted by Colleen Hecht  
[hechtc@newell-fonda.k12.ia.us](mailto:hechtc@newell-fonda.k12.ia.us)

As you begin a new year of jazz education with your students, please remember to use our own JEI website! I have copied below the list of classroom resources that are available to you. The scale sheets can be printed off and used with your entire jazz band! As you teach beginning improvisation, try some activities with your entire group such as "call and response" between you, the teacher, and your jazz band. Stick with a designated scale at first, then work for more independence using the chord changes.

Another suggestion is to expose your students to as many versions of your music as possible. For example, if your students are playing "Now's The Time," find as many recordings as possible and email your students a different recording

each week. Include all types of recordings: the original Charlie Parker version, other jazz greats performing it, other JH band performing it, solo instruments - anything you can find to show your students that there are many different ways to play jazz. Listening to jazz will help students develop their own style.

### Classroom Resources

[Major Scales.pdf](#)  
[Mixolydian Scales.pdf](#)  
[Dorian Scales.pdf](#)  
[Major Pentatonic Scales.pdf](#)  
[Minor Pentatonic Scales.pdf](#)  
[Whole Tone Scales / Diminished Scales.pdf](#)  
[Chord Identification Treble Clef.pdf](#)  
[Chord Identification Bass Clef.pdf](#)  
[Chords Treble Clef.pdf](#)  
[Chords Bass Clef.pdf](#)  
[251 Exercise Treble Clef.pdf](#)  
[251 Exercise Bass Clef.pdf](#)  
[Rhythm Changes Exercise in C.pdf](#)  
[Rhythm Changes Exercise in Bass Clef.pdf](#)  
[Rhythm Changes Exercise in Bb.pdf](#)  
[Rhythm Changes Exercise in Eb.pdf](#)  
[Teaching Beginning Jazz Improvisation](#)  
[Jazz Piano Resources](#)  
[Latin Ensemble Basics Clinic.pdf](#)  
[Arranging for Big Band 123.pdf](#)  
[Iowa Bandmaster Jazz Improv Clinic.pdf](#)

## Elementary Jazz

"Learning the Language with a Fly"

Submitted by Erin Wehr  
[erin-wehr@uiowa.edu](mailto:erin-wehr@uiowa.edu)

Imagine you are in a class to learn a new language, and the teacher writes down a few "words" on the blackboard that you have never heard before. Let's say those words are ba, dee, qit, ko-day, and nume. After the teacher demonstrates the sound of each word, you are asked to practice speaking this language by yourself in front of the class by making sentences. You might be a little hesitant, so the teacher says, "Just try. Start with one word. Come on, you can do it. Just give it a shot." Many of us are likely to be self-conscious in this situation, being asked to do something that they don't understand in front of others, especially when these new words do not have any meaning to us yet. Asking a student to improvise in a beginning jazz band or any jazz setting without first building their jazz vocabulary is not much different. The problem here is that the teacher is asking you to learn to speak sounds that are without context, and then to perform them in front of other

students while you are still trying to grasp their meaning. The solution is to teach jazz like a language, through modeling, and starting with short "words and phrases" that later build into longer "sentences". We don't learn language from reading the alphabet, and we don't learn jazz from reading chords, scales, and tunes. Jazz vocabulary does not exist in a printed dictionary. Jazz meaning is musical, and must be modeled by someone who understands and can speak the language for the person who is learning the language using methods such as call and response. This brings us to our bigger problem. We have failed at the collegiate level in many cases to train elementary music teachers, and even many secondary teachers, to be able to teach jazz vocabulary confidently through modeling in classroom settings.

Fortunately, for those who have not yet found their jazz voice, there are new jazz education resources being printed faster than I can review them. Many of these elementary jazz resources provide recordings that include small building blocks of the jazz vocabulary, allowing teachers to present jazz without having to do the demonstrations themselves. My all time favorite is a book by Matthew Gollub called *The Jazz Fly*. The Fly, on his way to a gig, stops to ask directions and hears jazz phrases in the words of everyone he meets. Later, at the gig, he puts these phrases together to create a swinging jazz solo. The book is full of jazz vocabulary building blocks that would work to get students speaking jazz at any age, though realistically students above K-3 might think that they are above such a children's book. The recording with *The Jazz Fly* demonstrates each jazz vocabulary unit within the context of telling the story, allowing students to participate through imitation. The story is also told in swing rhythm to reinforce swing feel. Follow-up activities should include repeating the jazz phrases vocally first, then transferring to instruments such as percussion, barred instruments, and for older students even on recorder. Having the students practice conversing with a partner using their new jazz vocabulary will help them transfer the jazz vocabulary building blocks into longer sentences, and later into longer instrumental improvisations. *The Jazz Fly 2: The Jungle Pachanga* is also a fantastic resource using the same approach, but introduces Latin rhythms and some Spanish phrases. The web site listed below includes some lesson ideas.

Excerpts from *The Jazz Fly* can be found at this web site: <http://www.matthewgollub.com/jazz.html>.

## Coda

**Final Words  
From The President**

Submitted by Chris Merz  
chris.merz@uni.edu

As I begin my two-year term as President, I want to congratulate and thank Past President Rod Pierson and former Past President and current Vice President Steve Shanley for their outstanding contributions in charting a course for our fledgling organization. They have simultaneously made things easy for me by leaving us in such great shape, and set the bar very high by virtue of their fine stewardship. I hope that I can continue to steer the organization on the course set by these two outstanding musician/educators.

I hope to see many of you at the IMEA Convention in November. Together with West Music and P Mauriat, JEI is co-sponsoring two exciting presentations at this year's conference, scheduled back to back on Friday, November 16. At 6:00 PM, Mike Williams, lead trumpet player with the

Count Basie Orchestra, presents *Lead Trumpet in the Jazz Ensemble; Discipline and Technique*. More information about Mike is available at

<http://www.mikewilliamstrumpet.com>.

Following Mike at 7:00, Bob Reynolds, saxophonist with John Mayer, presents *Your Eyes are Hurting Your Ears: What the Industry Doesn't Want You to Know*. View Bob's website for more information on this amazing saxophonist:

<http://bobreynoldsmusic.com>.

Both clinics will be held in Benton Auditorium.

Finally, if you are planning to attend IMEA, please stop by the JEI booth between samples of cheesecake, and encourage a friend to join. We will be as strong as our membership, and as useful as you need us to be. I look forward to serving you over the next two years.

I'll be seeing you,

Chris Merz

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## Visit our website

[www.jeiowa.org](http://www.jeiowa.org)

Renew your membership by clicking [here](#).

I cannot play a lie. I have to believe in what I play or it won't come out.

Stan Getz

