

The IAJE Jazz Curriculum Guide

AN IAJE/MENC PARTNERSHIP

It is simply unprecedented in its focus, its scope, and its parentage. Fifty individuals from five countries volunteered to combine their efforts—some for the majority of a six-year period—to answer their colleagues' and their own requests for IAJE assistance in developing courses in jazz education and identifying learning outcomes appropriate for the experience levels of the individuals being taught. The result of their long and hard work is *Teaching Jazz: A Course of Study*, a landmark text to be published this fall by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) as a companion to its existing curricular guides for wind and percussion, strings, choral, and general music.

From the initial meeting held in conjunction with the 1989 IAJE Conference in San Diego, it was agreed that IAJE should proceed in generating such a curriculum guide that could serve as a model for any school district. This guide would identify a sequence of outcomes for various ages and/or ability levels of music students. The foreword of *Teaching Jazz* describes the process that followed. (Note that because the book is still in final editing at JEJ press time, the exact wording of any quoted excerpts may yet be subject to change before publication.)

Teachers with proven records of teaching success in the area of jazz education were selected to participate in the vocal, instrumental, and general music task forces. As work progressed and the scope of the projects increased, a growing team of educators spent six years developing materials simple and concise enough to be helpful for teachers as they plan instruction. Additional professionals read rough drafts and responded to questionnaires.

The final document was never intended to be an "international" course of study; instead it offers teachers a model for the development of sequenced learning outcomes that meet their local needs. It also provides the novice teacher with guidance to start a jazz-oriented program in conjunction with any existing program. It is organized in six levels: from Beginner (Level I) to Advanced (Level VI). It can be utilized at any age or grade level and is designed so a student and teacher may work at their own pace....

IAJE hopes that teachers will find this document helpful in administering se-

quenced music instruction that results in easily measurable learning outcomes in jazz education.

Contents of Teaching Jazz

An overview of the book's contents (see sidebar) shows it useful for both novice and experienced educators. While not every music program can offer a comprehensive jazz curriculum, programs with even a single jazz component will benefit from the information *Teaching Jazz* presents. The section "How to Use This Curriculum Guide" summarizes the contents.

Many educators have requested IAJE support in outlining some of the **Rationales for Jazz Education**. This opening segment of the guide discusses many of the aesthetic and practical elements of jazz music and the instructional process. Other educators may wish to proceed directly to the **Scope and Sequence of Instruction**, a comprehensive grid summarizing a suggested approach to jazz instruction across the curriculum and through six levels of experience. A more detailed discussion of the ideas summarized in the grid is presented in the **Teaching Recommendations and Suggestions** that follow it. The [notated] grade clusters parallel those of other MENC curriculum guides.

The instruction of grades K-3 is usually addressed within the related but differently focused scope of general music curriculum. For this reason, a distinct **Jazz in General Music** segment offers insights into the jazz education of the very young and inexperienced.

Specific techniques and concepts targeting **Jazz in Instrumental Music** and **Jazz in Vocal Music** are explored in additional portions of this document. The Curriculum Guide concludes with a listing of **Resources for Jazz Education** which should prove useful to any instructor.

Here are brief excerpts from the chapters that follow:

Rationales for Jazz Education

It is critical that jazz education have a clear and precise philosophy based upon the aesthetic values of jazz. The aim of jazz education

Teaching Jazz: A Course of Study

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by Antonio J. García

should be to develop in students a sensitivity to the expressive qualities of jazz and to provide opportunities for musical growth through creating, performing, and perceiving jazz. To this end jazz education must be consciously aware of the depth of human understanding available to students through jazz education as aesthetic education....

Scope and Sequence of Instruction

Teaching jazz improvisation and ensemble performance is most effective when explored via the art form's many aspects. The comprehensive chart on the following pages is meant to be read as a whole. It classifies the jazz curriculum into eight main categories [see *Contents sidebar*] that attempt to meet the challenge of teaching what is historically an oral and aural tradition.... Each horizontal level (I-VI) represents a sequencing of material. Grade levels associated by MENC publications with this sequential division represent one possible application to age groups. However, this chart is not intended to be strictly related to age, as the variables of scheduling, class size, and abilities and experiences of students are critical factors. Whatever the organization of classes might be, these levels should be helpful as a guide for sequencing of instruction....

Teaching Recommendations and Suggestions

Topics in this chapter are based on information found in the chart in the preceding section. An in-depth discussion of each topic is beyond the scope of this book. Rather, this chapter offers a brief summary of points to keep in mind when implementing the items on this chart. (For more information, see other resources listed later in this guide.)

- *Ear Training:* The ability to imitate ideas from others fosters the ability to recognize one's own ideas and realize them in voice or on an instrument....
- *Rhythm:* Rhythmic feel lies at the heart of any jazz—written or improvised....
- *Composition/Improvisation:* Good melodies are rooted in the principles of composition, and improvised melodies are spontaneous composition....
- *Jazz History:* Only with a perspective of one's predecessors and their accomplishments can an improviser mature as rapidly as possible....
- *Jazz Theory:* The creative right brain provides spontaneity and direction, but the methodical left brain provides the focus and accuracy essential to constructing a balanced solo....
- *Jazz Keyboard:* While the language of jazz is open to all instrumentalists and vocalists, concepts of melody and harmony are more visible on a piano or keyboard instrument....
- *Specific Instrumental and Vocal Skills:* For additional information regarding applications of techniques specific to instrumental

The IAJE Curriculum Committee

(cumulative as of the '95 IAJE Conference, which saw the last committee contributions to the text before approval in '96)

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or vocal jazz education, see the "Jazz in Instrumental Music" and "Jazz in Vocal Music" segments of this guide.

Jazz in General Music

Why teach jazz to young children? We can teach jazz and improvisation successfully to children from preschool through elementary grades. Historically, we have presented the concepts of music in a pre-reading setting whereby students learn to experience and enjoy the music, identify specific musical elements, and create their own music on a variety of instruments. From the first successful experiences, the children begin to identify musical symbols as a preparation for reading....

Jazz in Instrumental Music

The outline that follows is intended for use as a reference guide and is to be adjusted to the individual needs of the teacher or the music program. Constructed in parallel format to the corresponding portion of the *Teaching Wind and Percussion Instruments* guide, this segment should be useful to all music educators, providing supplementary information and a practical guide to comprehensive jazz instrumental instruction.

The "Individual Performance and Listening Skills" section shows individual skills applicable to each instrument.... The "Ensemble Per-

formance and Listening Skills," while taught as individual instrumental skills, must also be presented in the context of ensemble skills.... The "Musical Concepts" and "Historical Information" sections complete this portion of the curriculum guide, offering a well-rounded perspective for the student's study....

Jazz in Vocal Music

The placement here—towards the end of this guide—of information specific to vocal jazz is not any reflection on its importance. Indeed, careful readers will have noted by now repeated emphasis on vocal improvisation skills for instrumentalists, as well as continued exposure to the vocal jazz masters.

This section appears where it does because it is the consensus of vocal jazz educators that much common ground is shared between vocal and instrumental jazz. For this reason, teachers of both genres should examine this guide *in full*—not merely looking for assistance within their most familiar territory. The "Scope and Sequence" chart illustrates a wealth of experiences that should be part of quality jazz instruction for all students; the final category, specific "Vocal Skills," lists initiatives that are more indigenous to the vocal jazz track. These are the points focused upon in this portion of the guide....

Resources for Jazz Education

The materials listed [see *Contents sidebar*] represent a wealth of resources now available to educators and students. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, as many excellent resources have been omitted and more are published each year....

Unparalleled IAJE Effort

The list of IAJE's all-volunteer Curriculum Committee (see sidebar) demonstrates just how inclusive this process has been, gathering the input of educator/artists of many geographic regions and musical genres, most of whom responded to the annual, open invitation to join the Committee at the IAJE Leadership Conferences. Some members of the Committee contributed a particular wealth of material, as did additional IAJE members unable to attend the meetings but forwarding their contributions via mail and faxes. The Committee also benefited from the support of IAJE Presidents Bunky Green, Dennis Tini, and Chuck Iwanusa and their Executive Boards.

While many members of the Committee are indeed members of MENC as well, the composition of *Teaching Jazz* was entirely an IAJE effort. Under the leadership of the IAJE Curriculum Committee's then-Chair, Dr. Thom Horning (who headed the effort through the majority of the six-year journey), meetings dur-

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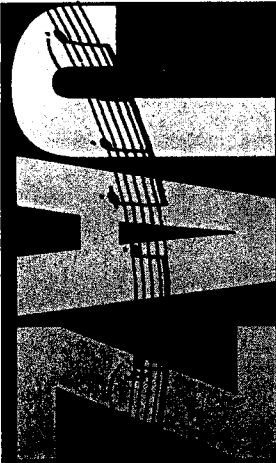
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ing the initial years focused solely but necessarily on the complex debate as to *how* to organize and present a unified pedagogical approach toward an art form that is so personal and so varied. In 1993 a grid centralizing such an approach ("Scope and Sequence of Instruction") in the format of the MENC string curricular guide—and a chart outlining instrumental skill outcomes ("Skills and Concepts") in the format of the MENC wind and percussion guide—were presented and adopted as the groundwork around which the text would be constructed. Joined with a collection of loose data ranging from teaching suggestions to jazz resource lists, the resulting 100-odd pages became "version 1.0" of *Teaching Jazz*.

Horning met with the Subcommittee Chairs via a phone conference in the Fall of that year. They established the overall format of the book, distributing to the Subcommittees the formidable task of composing its substance. The Sub-Chairs in turn delivered their work in December to longtime Committee member Antonio García, who joined Horning as Co-Chair in 1993 and as the initial Editor of the book took the separate contributors' computer disks and unkeystroked material and edited them down to the 50-page "version 2.0" reviewed during the '94 IAJE Conference.

Over a two-year span Horning and García oversaw two more versions—each distributed to the Committee for continual input—before their other responsibilities dictated they hand off the leadership role to veteran Committee member and current Chair, Dr. Gordon Vernick, in 1995. In turn, the role of primary Editor passed from García to Art Martin and his wife, Pamela (who continued to refine the content), then to Dr. Vernick and his colleague, Dr. Geoffrey Haydon—the latter pair relentlessly finalizing the collection of missing informational resources required before publication. All five Editors and Horning continued to review the succeeding editions and offer their suggestions to Vernick, who delivered the manuscript to MENC this past Spring.

An Historic IAJE/MENC Cooperative Venture

It was a mere nine years ago that an MENC President published an editorial declaring that, in his personal view, jazz ensembles should be relegated strictly to extracurricular offerings:

...jazz ensembles are all worthwhile and defensible activities, but I would not call them essential to a student's education.... The experience of [jazz ensembles] has little to do with the task of making students musically literate and intimately aware of the rich cultural heritage that is theirs to experience and understand in music.... It is difficult to defend spending as much as an entire semester on such activities at the expense of important



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music learning that should be taking place....General music classes, choirs, orchestras, and concert bands are *basic*. Other musical activities, worthwhile and pleasurable as they may be, are not.'

Then-NAJE's President, J. Richard Dunscomb, promptly responded to the debate and reiterated the necessity for the growth of jazz education within the curriculum, recalling that in the late 1960s...

...MENC declared that jazz and its many derivatives was an important component of Western music and that much was to be gained by its study. It was further declared...that "to delimit concert halls, schools, and colleges to a steady diet of the 'masters' is as absurd as permitting only Euripides, Shakespeare, and Moliere to be performed in the theatre. Music education must encompass all music." ...We [in NAJE] have dedicated our careers to keeping [jazz] alive and well. We will not be deterred in these efforts.'

A remarkable evolution has occurred in the years since, the two organizations forming and nurturing a partnership, each educating the other and discussing the needs of its members (many of whom belong to both associations). As reported by Chuck Iwanusa's "President's Message" in the May '96 *JEJ*, MENC and IAJE have collaborated on Goals 2000, the National Summit on Music Education, a national teleconference on arts education strategies, and presentations for the most recent MENC In-Service Conference.

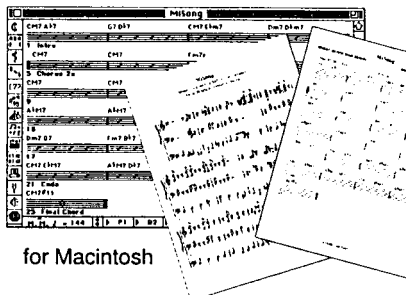
Addressing the General Assembly at the '96 IAJE Conference, current MENC President Dr. Carolyn A. Lindeman emphasized:

These joint efforts all center around one goal: to do everything we can to make certain that America's children have a quality music education in our schools; and how could that education be a quality one if it didn't include the study of jazz? Our new National Music Standards, which we are so proud of and which are being implemented across this country, call for students to develop competencies in improvising and composing and arranging and singing and playing; and the list goes on. All of those competencies are integral to a solid jazz education. So I pledge MENC's commitment to work with IAJE in any way we can, to reverse the tide of erosion in school music programs, and to work nonstop to ensure that America's Youth get what they deserve: quality music programs, music programs that include the study of all musics—certainly America's own music, jazz.

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MENC had indicated to IAJE several years ago that it would be interested in publishing *Teaching Jazz*, once created. The opportunity to see such a text made available directly to the 65,000 MENC members as well as to IAJE members had provided the IAJE Curriculum Committee with renewed inspiration to accomplish its goal. As a result, MENC is providing the final round of edits (with IAJE oversight) and is publishing *Teaching Jazz* at no cost to IAJE, a remarkable demonstration of MENC's increasing recognition of and now dedication to the continual improvement of jazz education. IAJE President Shelly Berg remarked, "IAJE has its roots with MENC, and we share common goals for music and music education. The curriculum guide, *Teaching Jazz: A Course of Study*, is exemplary of the kind of cooperation essential to the advancement of these shared goals in the current economic and social climate. The music community can only be enriched by this kind of partnership."

Future Goals

As MENC President Lindeman recently said, "MENC and IAJE's partnership is alive and well! The new publication, prepared by IAJE and published by MENC, is yet another example of this partnership. *Teaching Jazz: A Course of Study* is a great, new addition to the MENC *Course of Study* series and puts jazz firmly in its

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proper place in the school curriculum. This collaboration promises to be just the beginning of many such projects."

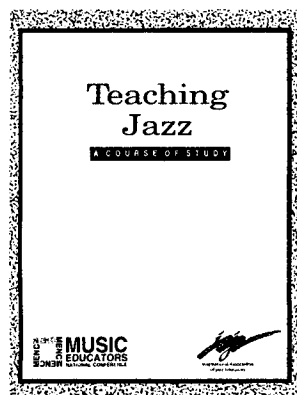
Dr. William F. Lee III, IAJE Executive Director, agreed that much has evolved since teachers first began to address jazz in a curricular form:

A half century has passed since the birth of jazz education in formal academia. Many treatises have been developed concerning the history of the art, jazz nomenclature, ear training and transcription, methods for arranging and composing in the idiom; and elaborate guides to improvisation have been published. The IAJE/MENC publication, *Teaching Jazz: A Course of Study*, now provides a hitherto-unavailable guide for all instructors. This guide, like curricula, is a beginning statement and will need to be amended, expanded, and revamped periodically. The IAJE members who worked so diligently to provide us with this document are heartily congratulated.

IAJE extends a well-deserved "Thank You" to all involved in bringing this far-reaching project to its published stage. However, the final step of the plan still awaits: *your* putting this book to use in the very best ways possible. Get it, read it, present it to colleagues who may not be aware of it! Make the listening lists come alive for your students! Demonstrate to your administrations how this jazz curriculum guide—and your own curriculum—should share importance with those for string, choral, wind and percussion, and general music! Explore ways that jazz education can meet the musical goals of the National Standards! In short, take full advantage of the resource that this unique, collaborative effort has provided to you.

Footnotes

- ¹ MENC *Music Educators Journal*, December 1987.
- ² March 2, 1988 Dunscomb letter, later reprinted in the *NAJE Jazz Educators Journal*, April/May 1988.



Antonio Garcia is an Associate Professor at Northwestern University, where he directs the combo program, Vocal Jazz Ensemble, and teaches jazz and integrated arts curricula. In 1992 he was a nominee for CASE "U.S. Professor of the Year." He is Editor of the IAJE Jazz Educators Journal, Illinois IAJE President, and Chicago Host Coordinator for the '97 IAJE Conference. Co-Editor and contributing author of Teaching Jazz: A Course of Study, his past service includes roles as International Co-Chairs for Curriculum and for Vocal/Instrumental Integration. A trombonist, pianist, and avid scat-singer, he has performed with Ella Fitzgerald, George Shearing, Mel Tormé, Louie Bellson, and many more. His music has aired on national TV and radio and merited grants from Meet The Composer and agencies affiliated with The Thelonious Monk Institute, with three originals recorded on CDs by Rob Parton's JazzTech Big Band (Sea Breeze) and published by Kendor, UNC Jazz Press, and Doug Beach Music. Tony is a board member of The Mid-West International Band & Orchestra Clinic, a coordinator of the Illinois Coalition for Music Education, a Bach/Selmer trombone clinician, has presented instrumental and vocal jazz workshops in Canada, Europe, and Australia, and is a widely published author in a dozen jazz and education periodicals.



JOE L. GARCIA II

TEACHING JAZZ: A COURSE OF STUDY

Teaching Jazz: A Course of Study is scheduled for release this fall, available upon publication by calling MENC (800/828-0229, daytime hours, credit card orders only, \$14.60 IAJE or MENC members • \$18.25 non-members). Quantity orders may receive discounted prices; so consider the applications of this text to not only your own course preparation but to music education courses, jazz pedagogy curriculum, and even to advanced students looking for an inspirational reference book.

IAJE members attending the upcoming Conference in Chicago are invited to join and work with the Curriculum Committee on Wednesday, January 8, 1997.

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