

THE **BIG** PICTURE

GLOBAL CHOICES LOCAL RESULTS

THE ART AND CRAFT OF JAZZ ARRANGING AND COMPOSITION Master Class Notes

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GLOBAL questions

- What is the goal?
- What is the story?
- What is the synopsis?
- What is the plot outline?
- Who am I writing for?
- What is the work plan and when is the DEADLINE?

CONCEPT Work

(These issues should be reflected upon and clearly thought out before writing “note one”.)

1. What is the goal?

What are my specific musical goals in creating this composition or arrangement?

INSPIRED vs. HIRED

INSPIRED (Intrinsic Motivation):

- Exploration of a specific melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic motive
- Inspired response to a specific artist’s statement (not limited to **musical** artists)
- Recast existing material in a new context (e.g., reharmonization, new rhythmic groove, new timbral colours via new instrumentation, etc.)

HIRED (Extrinsic Motivation):

- External agent (“commissioner or publisher”) seeks a specific type of chart to fill a program slot, recording session slot or publication slot
- External agent is supporting your free musical expression. However, there are typically still external parameters “suggested” by the commissioner, e.g.:
 - Instrumental or vocal ensemble strengths
 - New treatment of specific source material
 - As above, specific style desired to accommodate concert program design

*Whether INSPIRED or HIRED, the writer’s creative process flows much more easily and effectively toward a professional work by carefully thinking through the **BIG PICTURE** issues.*

2. What is the story?

What kind of chart am I writing?

The CONTINUUM of CREATIVE INPUT

COMPOSITION _____ RE or DECOMPOSITION _____ ARRANGING _____ TRANSCRIPTION/ORCHESTRATION
(Total input) (Significant input) (Some input) (Minimal input, primarily transfer of medium)

- Where does my project fall on the continuum?
 - How far can I “tweak” the DNA?
 - **If this is an arrangement, RESPECT THE TUNE.**
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3. What is the synopsis?

Can I summarize the point of this chart in two sentences?

The writer should be able to summarize the concept of the chart in no more than 2 sentences.

- This provides clarity and focus in the initial sketch process.
- The concept can change “mid-stream” and **that’s OK.**
- Develop the concept from the perspective of the **conductor**:
 - “If I were the conductor, where would I program this chart in the concert design?”
- What is the central, unique concept undergirding this arrangement/composition?

In songwriting structural design, this concept manifests itself in the section of the song known as the “hook”.

CONCEPT SYNOPSIS EXAMPLES

JITTERBUG WALTZ is a contemporary, swinging treatment of the Fats Waller classic that features piano.

RECORDA ME is a new setting of Joe Henderson’s PAGE ONE jazz classic for medium-advanced big band

SOUVENIR is a lush, orchestral big band arrangement of Benny Carter's beautiful ballad that features piano.

ENTROPICAL PARADISE is a "high energy" Latin composition at the advanced level that is designed to serve as an ideal concert opener or closer.

4. What is the plot outline (timeline)?

What is the large-scale structural overview of the chart?

- Developing a concise "outline" allows the writer to see the "global perspective" (i.e., **the BIG Picture**). It makes it easier to identify the flow of the piece and see where the climax(es) is (are). This step of the pre-writing "concept work" is critical, especially for newer writers.
- The timeline helps to see what must be done to ensure the chart maintains the artistic balance frequently cited as "Unity vs. Variety".
- A general (but structured) sense of how the structure unfolds over time allows you to work to create an effective "plot line" or "arc". It reduces the probability of a piece that is too long (more common error) or too short or unbalanced (e.g., wide open spaces for improvised solos with little substantive ensemble writing).

EXAMPLE:

THE INTREPID FOX

Comp. Freddie Hubbard Arr. Eric Richards

Published by Belwin Jazz (Alfred Music)

CONCEPT: This up-tempo medium-advanced arrangement of Freddie Hubbard's 1970 classic from RED CLAY features Trumpet 2 and the saxophone section.

TEMPO/FEEL: M.M. ♩ = 240+/Straight ahead groove

TIME: ca. 5 - 6 minutes

PROGRAM: Opener, central anchor, or closer.

FORM: AABA (melodic form); Solos: modified variant on A
LAYOUT

INTRO: Full Band into short free drum solo

GROOVE (11): Drums sets up straight ahead groove in rhythm section. Band layers in.

A1 (28): Saxophones, Trumpet 2 & Guitar on head

A2 (2nd X): + Brass commentary (HARMON trumpets, OPEN trombones)

B (51): Parallel 11th chords-OPEN brass

A3 (59): Saxophones & Trumpet 2 on head. OPEN brass commentary (more assertive)

(75): INTRO Reference to setup Solo Section

SOLOS:

Chorus 1 (81-102): Backgrounds as desired: sparse, comping trombones derived from opening rhythm section groove @ m. 11. Sparse melodic references in saxophones and trumpets.

- Chorus 2** (103-124): Increase energy by adding more assertive brass section figures (derived from trombone figures beginning in m. 81)
- Short Interlude** (125): Modal riff functions to dissipate energy and set up lighter feel for the beginning of the 4 horn soli with rhythm section.
- Small band SOLI:** (133 – 154) Lighter texture for 4-horn soli. Primarily voiced in 8ves (with one “splash” of harmonization @ m.m. 143-144!) builds to shout chorus
- SHOUT Chorus:** (155) Climax of chart. Maximum range demands within “medium-advanced” guidelines
- B recap variant:** (179 – 186) Variant on B. Drum solo over rhythm section figures. Brass layer in to add energy setting up final A statement.
- A Final** (195): Final restatement of A phrase in Saxophones, Trumpet 2 & Guitar. OPEN brass commentary as before.
- OUTRO** (211): Closing gesture – variant on distinctive introduction.

Not all of the details will be present in the initial draft of the timeline/outline, but there should be enough detail and structure so that the writer has a big picture sense (Global) of where things are going before starting to sketch the detailed notes and rhythms (Local). Again, if the concept changes while the chart is in progress, that is OK. Be flexible! However, update the timeline/outline. The whole point of the timeline/outline phase is to separate the “big picture” issues (e.g. form, architecture) from the details (e.g. voicings, rhythms et al).

If you consider the GLOBAL issues first (large-scale design), dealing with LOCAL issues (note choices, reharmonization, rhythmic variants, orchestration, et al.) should become much more manageable !

5. Who am I writing for?

- Professionals...semi-pros (many of whom are as good or better than so-called “pros”!)...college level players...a good high-school group...middle school? Know the real appropriate ranges and techniques for the instruments at these different levels.

Here are the Belwin Jazz guidelines for ranges by development level:

YOUNG Jazz Ensemble (Grades 1 – 2)

- Middle school

Instrument Ranges for Young Jazz Ensemble (Grades 1 – 2). The diagram shows three staves: Saxes (Alto/Tenor and Bari), Trumpet, and Trombone. The Saxes staff has notes for Alto/Tenor (G4, A4, B4) and Bari (B3, C4, D4). The Trumpet staff has notes for F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4. The Trombone staff has notes for B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4.

HIGH SCHOOL Jazz Ensemble

- Intermediate level material

Instrument Ranges for High School Jazz Ensemble. The diagram shows three staves: Saxes (Alto/Tenor and Bari), Trumpet, and Trombone. The Saxes staff has notes for Alto/Tenor (G4, A4, B4) and Bari (B3, C4, D4). The Trumpet staff has notes for F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4. The Trombone staff has notes for B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4.

ADVANCED Jazz Ensemble

- College and advanced high school level material

Instrument Ranges for Advanced Jazz Ensemble. The diagram shows three staves: Saxes (Alto/Tenor and Bari), Trumpet, and Trombone. The Saxes staff has notes for Alto/Tenor (G4, A4, B4) and Bari (B3, C4, D4). The Trumpet staff has notes for F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4. The Trombone staff has notes for B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4.

6. What is the work plan and when is the DEADLINE?

- Set-up a regular time to work on your project and **JUST DO IT**. This is a critical discipline to develop...you gotta write regardless of whether “the angels are singing sweetly in your ear today”! This is why it is so important to develop **CRAFT AND TECHNIQUE**.
- Use a calendar and work backward from your delivery date (deadline) to establish a realistic writing schedule. Be sure to allocate time for the following:
 - A day or two off to recharge
 - Music preparation
 - Mock-up preparation:

It is a fact of life that most clients expect a notation or sequencer based mockup of a new chart. Allocate time to mix and tweak the mockup once the writing is complete. Beware...easy access to powerful music technology can turn this into a **BLACK HOLE OF TIME!** (“If I spend just another 15 minutes tweaking the quantization, I can almost get this track to get close to swinging!”) Remember, the mock-up should sound reasonably professional, but remember...**human beings will play the final project**. Don't waste an inordinate amount of time trying to recreate a professional big band inside a sequencer or notation program. On a typical 5 -6 minute big band project, I allocate ca. 2 hours to “messaging the mockup”.

- You **may** find it more effective to work from a condensed sketch score first (rather than going directly into a notation program). This can be either hard copy paper with a mechanical pencil and eraser (recommended) OR within a notation program.
- Once the sketch is complete, **THEN** expand into the full blown arrangement.
- Pay special attention to your rhythm section writing. Work for a balance between structure and “slashes”. N.B. This balance is different for every level of player and even for every ensemble. Be sensitive to this.

! REHARMONIZATION !

Creative (and **appropriate**) reharmonization is a critical factor in the most interesting and effective jazz arrangements for any medium. Arrangers must be absolutely **fluid, masterful**, and **current** in the language of jazz harmony.

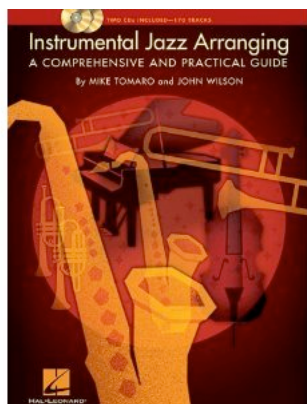
MUSIC PREPARATION

- Make sure your parts are clear and professional:
 1. **Don't make the font size too small.** If you're printing on 8.5 X 11, 7 staves on the title page and 9 (maybe 10) staves on all subsequent pages make for a good clear uncrowded visual layout. Go through every part from the perspective of a performer. Look for ways to improve the correlation of phrases with line breaks and page breaks.
 2. **Allow time** for page turns, double changes (saxophones), and mute changes (brass).
 3. **Put title and page headers on all pages of every part and every page of the score.**This will become painfully clear the first time you drop a pile of untaped parts on the floor five minutes before rehearsal and you have to try to sort out all the different pages. ☺

- Prufred... Proophreid...Proofreed...**PROOFREAD!** Don't pass it out until you've been through the score and parts a 2 - 3 times...**even if** you worked with a notation program. STUFF happens! An error-laden chart creates a bad impression with your players and **will** affect the read-through!

So...what resources are available to deal with learning all the stuff necessary to **do the work** in the Work Plan: scoring techniques, instrumental ranges and timbral characteristics, notational practices, etc.? Here are **FIVE** great places to start:

BOOKS



INSTRUMENTAL JAZZ ARRANGING

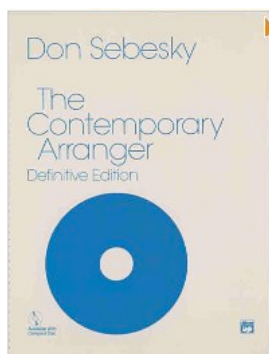
Mike Tomaro and John Wilson

Published by Hal Leonard

ISBN-10: 1423452747

Instrumental Jazz Arranging consists of a systematic presentation of the essential techniques and materials of jazz arranging. Authors Mike Tomaro and John Wilson draw upon 50+ years of combined teaching experience to bring you a book that addresses all of the basic needs for beginning arrangers. Topics include counterpoint/linear writing, jazz harmony, compositional techniques, and orchestration. All topics serve to address issues concerned with true arranging in great detail. The

book may be used in both individual and classroom instructional situations. The accompanying CDs - 170 tracks in all! - include many of the examples in the book, plus templates for assignments formatted for Finale.



THE CONTEMPORARY ARRANGER

Don Sebesky

Published by Alfred Publishing Co.

ISBN-10: 0882844857

An outstanding text by one of New York's premier composer-arrangers (and my personal hero/role model!) This book was my primary source for many years.



JAZZ ARRANGING TECHNIQUES

Gary Lindsay

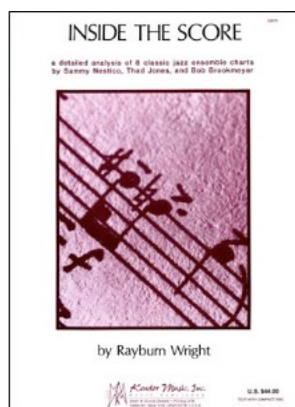
Exclusively available at <http://www.lindsayjazz.com/>

Jazz Arranging Techniques from Quartet to Big Band, presents all the tools and techniques of jazz arranging in an efficient and comprehensive format. This textbook, which can be studied either individually or in a classroom environment, includes a CD (mac/pc) with sixty-one audio examples corresponding to scores in the book and separate files of all the assignments.

Jazz theory and harmony, principles of jazz voice leading, voicing techniques, rules governing music calligraphy, chord symbol nomenclature, and jazz notation and articulation are presented in a very systematic (step by step) approach. Attention is given to the function of each instrument in the ensemble, including their range, register, transposition, dynamic capabilities, and idiomatic characteristics. Theories of balance and blend are provided with multiple recordings and scores.

The most unique feature in Jazz Arranging Techniques is the way in which the many techniques are examined and applied. This book provides examples of techniques used in small and large ensembles and further explains in detail how to create voicings for four to six mixed horns (brass and reeds), five saxophones, four trombones, four trumpets, eight brass and full ensemble (brass and reeds combined). The over fifty scoring examples and four complete arrangements with recordings provide a wealth of material supporting the techniques examined in this text. Parts notation for rhythm-section is covered in great detail as well as methods of articulating horn lines, adjusting the balance and blend, etc..

With an approach that builds on earlier knowledge, Jazz Arranging Techniques is a very comprehensive textbook that provides an accessible yet thorough examination of jazz writing.



INSIDE THE SCORE

Rayburn Wright

Published by Kendor Music, Inc.

ISBN-10: 9991739661

THIS BOOK OPENED UP THE “INNER SANCTUM” OF BIG BAND WRITING TECHNIQUES FOR ME!

This is not a textbook, *per se*, but it is one of the most helpful resources available. Ray Wright has thoroughly analyzed eight classic charts from the pens of Thad Jones, Sammy Nestico and Bob Brookmeyer. The complete full score for each part is presented and the following elements are isolated and discussed: voicings, orchestration,

textures, melodic construction, climaxes, chords, etc. **The benefit of this book is that you can actually SEE real charts, and then listen to the CD to learn how the written notes translate into REAL music. Highly recommended.**

NET-BASED RESOURCES

JAZZ ARRANGING ONLINE

by Chuck Israels

This **FREE** online jazz arranging course was developed by the highly respected Chuck Israels, bassist (Bill Evans Trio)/composer/arranger/conductor/educator.

<http://www.northernsounds.com/forum/forumdisplay.php/107-Jazz-Arranging-Online-by-Prof.-Chuck-Israels>

ON THE JOB Training

- **ASK** full-time musicians, educators, students about:
 - Ranges
 - Articulations
 - Phrasing
 - Chord symbol notation
 - Drum set and percussion notation (really important)

Become “That Guy or Girl” if need be, but ask something about instrumental possibilities every time you are in rehearsal or socializing!

! SCORE STUDY !

THE MOST ENLIGHTENING ACTIVITY AN ASPIRING COMPOSER/ARRANGER CAN ENGAGE IN IS SCORE STUDY.

- Buy or borrow as many scores as you can find and go through them carefully and slowly with the recordings. Be nice to your educator friends and ask if you can borrow scores from their libraries! ☺
- Don’t move from one score to the next one until you are fairly secure that you understand most of the approaches used in the current score you’re studying. Drain every bit of knowledge you can from each score!
- Analyze what is going on at each significant structural moment in the score (e.g. “How is she/he getting that incredibly warm and luscious sound in the flugelhorns and woodwinds?”) Take notes on 3 X 5 cards if that is helpful!

LISTENING

Listening to writers whose music excites and interests you will inspire and educate.

If you combine this with score study, you will make great progress fairly quickly.

SUGGESTIONS

(in alphabetical order)

Michael ABENE

Manny ALBAM

Bob BROOKMEYER

Duke ELLINGTON

Gordon GOODWIN

John HOLLENBECK

Thad JONES

Jim McNEELY

Vince MENDOZA

Maria SCHNEIDER



Now what?

It's time to share your music with the world...

The FIRST READ-THROUGH

- Buy a handheld digital recorder and record the entire reading process (1st, 2nd, and/or 3rd read-throughs). It will be the best \$US 200.00 you can spend.

EXAMPLES: Roland R-5, Yamaha C-24, Zoom H-2

- Listen carefully and critically, but remember that the musicians are finding their way through the chart the first time. Problems that occur in the music **may** be a result of sight-reading issues.
- If possible, let someone else conduct so that you can focus on listening while going through your score.
- Once the band has been through the chart once (or perhaps twice), THEN ask if there are any questions (clams, questions regarding clarity or intent, doubles, mute changes, etc.)
- Once the band has a relative degree of comfort with the new chart, read the chart again. THEN begin to carefully listen to the structure, orchestration, and flow of your music. TAKE NOTES.
- After some time to decompress from the reading session (overnight?), go back to the rough recording and listen while going through your notes on the score. Did you achieve the sound you thought you were writing? Perhaps you didn't, but perhaps what you did end up with was better! (This **can** happen!)

REVISIONS

- Based on what you heard at the first read-through, carefully make your revisions in the score and parts. Pass out the corrected parts and enjoy your new creative contribution to the band's book! Start thinking about the next chart!

Finally, WRITE SOMETHING EVERYDAY...even if it's just a few measures. As composers and arrangers, we're all trying to build or maintain musical, intellectual, spiritual "muscles" (in the same way that one builds or maintains technique and endurance as a performer.)

Let me know if you have questions about anything we discussed today. I wish you great success as you continue your journey as a composer/arranger. Godspeed!