

There are MANY reasons why directors should submit audition recordings for this program. Here are a few.

- At the very *least*, the students will become better players through the process
- May get the opportunity to play with other talented HS musicians
- May get the opportunity to play for a highly esteemed jazz educator/musician
- May give them that “spark” they need
- Since auditions are recorded, there will be a little less pressure
- Recording yourself and evaluating is always a great learning/teaching tool
- May give them more confidence if recording is well received.
- It is a great opportunity for the students!

There are some issues like scheduling that can make it difficult, with some activities being scheduled during IBA. That is an issue we have been looking at for years, but unfortunately have not been able to come up with any better solutions.

We are hoping to clarify the process a little, as well as offer suggestions on putting the recordings together. If there are still questions, or if assistance is needed, please visit the webpage or contact a member of the Resource Panel. We want to make sure every student has an opportunity to audition for these groups.

### **Part 1: Major Scales**

This is kind of the “no-brainer” part of the recording. It might be wise to record these now (around All-State time) while they are at their peak.

### **Part 2: Etudes**

Given to show the overall versatility of your student. There is an obvious blanket of appropriate articulations, phrasing, and tone covering all 3 etudes, but each one has certain focus points.

- 1) Swing: Showing appropriate triplet subdivisions, giving certain notes more “weight” than others. Dr. Washut wrote a swing etude set in a Basie-ish style, so hooking your students up with some of those recordings might be a good introduction.
- 2) Ballad: The first obvious thing here is going to be tone and the player’s ability to shape the phrases, show good dynamic contrast, etc.
- 3) Latin: Very rhythm-oriented. Articulations will generally be one of the focuses of this etude.

### **Part 3: Improvisation (optional)**

Usually the scariest or most unfamiliar part of the recording process. This may be why some haven’t submitted recordings in the past. Many don’t feel comfortable doing it or teaching it. That is okay! Hopefully these tips will help out a bit:

Using the blues scale is a possible tool that students can easily latch on to, and can be very effective. HOWEVER, to avoid having that “blues scale” sound that is limited to 6 notes, maybe introduce a few more notes to the blues scale (the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Maj 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>). This will give them a few more choices. That scale is basically a combination of the blues scale and the major pentatonic scale. (For a copy, visit our webpage). Once they have that down, work on getting them to hear when certain notes are more appropriate than others. For example, that major third (i.e.: D in a Bb7) chord lowers a half-step to become Db in the Eb7 chord. Getting them to hear the difference in the sound helps a great deal. *Tenor Madness* illustrates that very well.

This leads to the 3<sup>rd</sup>'s – 7<sup>th</sup>'s relationship. Go through the chord progressions and identify the 3<sup>rd</sup>'s and 7<sup>th</sup>'s of each chord. Voice them in a manner that shows the chromaticism (3<sup>rd</sup> lowers to become the 7<sup>th</sup> of the next chord, and the 7<sup>th</sup> lowers to become 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.) between chords. (See sheets on webpage)

For Bb Rhythm Changes, many of the same rules apply. Application of the melody, using the half-step motion between chords, finding common tones, etc. To start, identify the form for the students (32-bar, AABA). Then, have them start out using the Bb major scale on all of the 'A' sections. However, make sure they are able to identify that 'B' section. You can either have them use the mixolydian scales (major scale with lowered 7), or outline the chord tones (1,3,5,7,9). The goal is to give them a starting point. Then, hook them up with some recordings. The webpage features a list of tunes utilizing Rhythm Changes. See if you might find some recordings of those and pass them on to your students to play with. You will also find a practice guide on the webpage that shows some common tones/half-step motion. **WARNING:** it may confuse the issue more- so don't feel obligated to use them. It is just there as an option.

These are just a few ideas out of many that may work. The most important thing that you can do for your students, however, has nothing to do with practicing their instruments. Hooking them up with jazz recordings and getting them to listen will do more for them than any of the previously mentioned educational approaches. Find a recording of the tune they are submitting and let them "live with it" for awhile. Encourage them to play along with it and pick up some of the ideas the artist is using. This is NOT a suggestion to regurgitate a solo for the all-state jazz audition. It is merely a way for the students to develop "vocabulary".

On the actual recording process: Many are concerned with equipment and recording quality hindering their students' chances. The judges listening to the recordings will not discriminate between a hand-held tape recorder and a "studio" recording. Obviously you want to be sure that the recording is a fairly accurate representation of the musician's tone, but don't shy away from participating because of an equipment concern. I know many directors who record right in their office with one microphone. If for some reason you don't have any recording equipment, please contact someone on the Resource Panel.

Again, I encourage you all to submit recordings for the All-State Jazz Bands. We have heard plenty of great players from schools that have not participated in the past, and hope to bridge that gap. The students deserve a chance to audition for this great experience.