Vocal Jazz 101: Teaching Jazz Style to Singers

Resources


Complete listing of SATB, SAB, SSA, TTB music with ordering information & samples. All difficulty levels and a description to help with programming.

Norm Wallen Arrangements – Ellensburg, Washington
Peerless Nerd Publishing Norm.wallen@gmail.com
Transcribed arrangements: SATB, SAB, SSAA etc. Order information & samples- All music is fully written out (including instrumental parts).

Kirk Marcy – Edmonds Community College (Lynnwood, WA) director of “Soundsation” – CD’s Available and some music available
Email: kmarcy@email.edcc.edu

Dave Cazier – Columbia Basin Community College, Pasco, Washington “Freeform” – CD’s and Ensemble Music Available
www.caztunes.com

www.jazzbooks.com Jamey Abersold Play-along rhythm section recordings and method books & videos

Rhythm Section Software: Band in the Box www.pgmusic.com
Quickly input chords for professional sounding playback and printable parts

App - Ireal pro https://irealpro.com/
A rhythm section on your phone! Printable parts piano, guitar tabs...

Youtube Performances

Suggested Composers for beginning groups:
Ken Krantz
Kirby Shaw
Style Lesson #1
(Always start with a classical choral warm up)

1. Starter on the board: Rhythm only -- What tune is this?

2. What element of music determines style?

3. Listening example/singers who cross over (Youtube)

4. Today we're going to learn a song together. Doxy is a tune by Sonny Rollins and I picked it out of a fake book. The form is AABA written over the chord progression of another jazz song called JaDa. The composer was in England doing a tour and he named this tune after a sandwich spread called Doxy (mayonnaise etc.).

Rhythm
Students analyze the rhythm paying special attention to m. 10-12.

Syllables
Du is a closed vowel on the beat; Ba is an open vowel on the syncopated part of the beat –

We discuss consistency – syllables match the same melodic phrase—we don't keep creating new syllables as we go. There is “meaning” behind the nonsense syllables. We practice the rhythm together with the syllables as a class being careful to swing and accent (snap the upbeats) the syncopated beats. I ask the students to internalize the beat. I ask them to slap their legs, stand & stamp, swing arms etc. in order to help them feel the syncopation...in rehearsal.

Melody
Students analyze the melody line with careful attention to accidentals

Piano
The students sing the melody on neutral syllable [nja or mai] so the melody is light and in the mask – in one & two bar blocks.
I point out the tricky melodic changes at m. 8.
Slowly we put the syllables with the melody & rhythm.
Discussion of Form: (discovery method) 16 bar song
Look for similarities/repeats and differences in the melody/chords
AA – two 4-bar phrases 8 bars
B – 4 bar phrase – different chords & melody
A – 4 bar phrase

Let’s do it! (circle?)
Class sings the melody with syllables with Piano
Class sings the melody with Rhythm Section with good style
Dynamics & phrase shaping – 1st, highest, last --bridge contrasting loud
Pianist plays the melody while the rhythm section plays chords
Singers learn TAG and final CHORD
Pianist changes to chords and singers are on their own.

Act it Out
Have students exchange measures (2X2 or 4X4) using “act it out” as if
there were words – Question/Answer– a conversation – animate!
Face each other in two’s or three’s -- ham it up & have fun
Guide class by calling out switch

Improvisation:
Here’s a different approach to learning how to improvise:
Take the pieces of Doxy and start your “library”
Phrase the scat into 4 bars each with:
Statement, Repeat, Contrast & Wrap up-- AABA
Discuss terms & application: sequence, augmentation, diminution

Final Performance
Form of the Entire tune – Intro, Head, Improv., Head, Tag
While someone is scatting, everyone else needs to be...

QUESTIONS?
Rhythm Section: Rhythmic precision, dynamics that mirror the group
Rehearse them with group

Unconventional Conducting! Reminders, entrances, cut offs as needed.
A Cappella Jazz Ballad

Style – defined with harmony and rubato interpretation

Goodbye Love by Ken Kraintz: found on website:


A slow tune doesn’t use rhythmic swing but does have Jazz Harmony and limitless options for phrasing.

Beginning

Marked pp – the chord should be marked “f” with a gliss up to the next note – then open to the chord. Implode the d (good)—
Crescendo through the Bye ---
Completely Rubato – light dipthong on the release.
Intonation on the unison – breath accents on the “lonely word” cresc.
No breath – in the night – light aspirated t – release together.

Repeat second phrase with the same approach.

Thin & Fat dynamics – unisons to chords
phrase shaping first, highest, last – more sound
Jazz Band techniques -slurs
Breath Accents esp. on triplets

Rubato must make lyrical sense – not necessarily rhythmic sense
Breaths must make lyrical sense –

Questions?