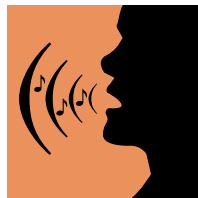
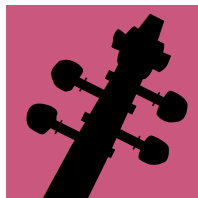
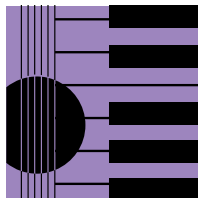


workshop



BRASS AND WOODWINDS

Introducing Jazz Concepts to Young Players

Teaching students to embrace jazz doesn't need to wait until they reach junior high or high school. Yes, playing jazz is quite different from playing in a concert band, and many students have trouble at first understanding what true jazz style is supposed to sound like. But any student, even a beginner, can learn how to swing once he or she understands fundamental articulations, rhythmic concepts, and basic instrumental techniques. We spoke to Chris Vadala, director of the jazz studies program at the University of Maryland School of Music, about how to introduce jazz to new musicians.

"I've always been a big fan of [jazz trumpeter] Clark Terry's concept of 'imitate, assimilate, and innovate,'" Vadala says. "This was his way of describing his own approach to improvisation. The best way for a young player to learn is to listen to performances by highly regarded jazz musicians. Students should imitate those sounds and styles, internalize and retain this information, and then innovate by

creating one's own sound using the things they've learned along the way."

As a part of learning to imitate jazz musicians' sounds and styles, Vadala suggests pointing out how rhythms in concert band are different from those in jazz arrangements. To do this, try avoiding traditional concert music counting syllables that start with the letter T. Instead, use syllables that start with D to sing jazz rhythms. As an example, Vadala prefers to use *doo* instead of *ta*, and when teach-

ing swing eighths he uses *doo-va* instead of *ti-ti*. He also recommends using sounds like *daht* or *dot* for longer notes or notes with a marcato accent and using *dit* for short staccatos.

In general, Vadala believes, younger brass and woodwind players overuse the tongue on almost everything they play. He suggests breaking them of this habit by playing scales or passages with an articulation that gives notes a closer connection to each other: "Using a *doo* or *too* tongue instead of *tat* or *tut* is an excellent way to open the door not only to jazz styling but also to more legato playing in concert band."

The second step in Vadala's introduction of jazz is to help students assimilate what they have begun to do while imitating others. After making them familiar with representative recordings, help students recognize and replicate the articulations that they hear, not only by playing them but also by transcribing them onto paper. Being able to both see and hear the music will help them to understand it more completely.

Once the groundwork of getting jazz articulations and swing rhythms into their playing repertoire has been accomplished, students can begin trying to innovate musically by creating their own improvisations that will push them along the road to being true jazz musicians.

—Chad Criswell

