

The Performance and Practice Routines of College Students Majoring in Jazz Studies

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This study is amongst the first to focus on college jazz musicians. A review of the literature indicates that most previous studies have focused on professional jazz musicians and non-jazz populations including music education. The purpose of the current study was to investigate the performance and practice routines of college students majoring in jazz studies. A questionnaire was developed and pilot tested to establish test-retest reliability. Prior to pilot-testing, the questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experts to determine content validity. The revised questionnaire was then administered to the population ($N=249$) of students majoring in jazz at a large university. A return rate of 85% was obtained.

Results indicated that students spent about 3 hours ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.46$) per day practicing by themselves and 1 hour practicing with a group ($M = 1.52$, $SD = 1.07$). On average, students were enrolled in one performance ensemble. Students reported playing approximately 2 jazz gigs and 2 non-jazz gigs per month off campus. The average pay per jazz gig was about \$75 ($SD = 29.51$) and the average non-jazz gig paid about \$92 ($SD = 43.00$). There were statistically significant differences in the amount of practice time between males and females and significant differences across academic status (freshmen through graduate students). Students (29.3%) reported “lack of reading skills” as their greatest obstacle to securing a spot in the top jazz ensemble in the college of music.

This study also provides additional information on student’s prior jazz experience in middle and high school, summer camps, community jazz ensembles and private jazz

instruction. Valuable baseline data is provided on this unique yet under-researched population.