**What’s the Jive about the Jazz?**

**A study of music educators' selection of repertoire for jazz ensemble programs.**

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Abstract

The Purpose of this survey study is to gather knowledge about the criteria that in-service jazz educators use when selecting repertoire for their jazz ensemble programs. A large body of existing research addresses considerations related to the selection of concert band and choral literature, but relatively few sources are available about teachers’ criteria when selecting jazz band repertoire. Jazz ensembles perform and are adjudicated in many of the same scenarios as concert and marching bands. Because of the lack of research concerning the selection of jazz repertoire, this study will present an important contribution. The research question guiding this study is as follows: What are the criteria instrumental music educators’ have been using when selecting jazz repertoire for their ensembles?

Participants in the present study include high school instrumental music teachers who are in charge of their jazz ensembles. The research site will be a large Jazz band competition circuit that includes schools in the Mid-Atlantic States. Schools participating in this circuit are comprised of both private and public schools of all sizes. All of the high schools have jazz ensembles that rehearse and perform throughout the year and have the opportunity to participate in the circuit’s adjudications and or competitions. Data will be compiled and analyzed for significant criteria such as a relationship of the importance of historical/cultural context and the selection of a certain style or genre. Implications about the methods of jazz educators’ efficacy in jazz education will be realized. Other implications such as the jazz ensemble as a vehicle for jazz education as well as other music education issues will be discussed. Recommendations for additional research will be made.

**Jazz Preferences**

* Style and genre closely followed by historical significance were the main criteria used by directors when choosing literature
* Least prioritized were cost and whether or not the selection was popular or known to students and audience
* Whether or not a selection had an audio recording available was also important to directors
* Most popular style chosen is Swing followed by Latin then a Ballad and last was Rock
* Even though the participants were all members and were selected from a competitive jazz band circuit, competition requirements were not a big factor when selecting their repertoire
* When asked to name their top five tunes they considered standards to a jazz repertoire nearly all mentioned repertoire performed by the Count Basie orchestra followed by Duke Ellington
* Director’s quotes on the importance of jazz repertoire and their students included the following:

1. “They are exposed to another style of music, and have to learn great responsibility as the only person who plays their part.”
2. “Students gain a deeper understanding of American culture and it's relationship to music.”
3. “Increased understanding of stylistic nuances specific to each style/genre; an understanding of the breadth of the music encompassed by the term "jazz"; increased literacy with reading syncopated rhythms; enjoyment and enrichment through the performance and exploration of a large body of cultural history.”
4. “They've begun to explore the American art form of Jazz in a meaningful way, with multiple performance opportunities and chances to build musical bonds with peers in our school and across our region.”