

# MUJS 3610, Jazz Arranging I

## General Information

MUJS 3610.001, Jazz Arranging (3 credits, offered only in the fall semester)

Required of all jazz majors

***Class Time – MW 11:00 – 11:50, TH or Fri Lab as scheduled***

Professor: Richard DeRosa (on faculty leave); Kevin Swaim (substitute teacher).

**Course description:** Introduction to arranging for the small jazz group. Specific technical and expressive exercises are assigned to help the student develop the writing skill and concepts necessary to realize comprehensive arrangements for various size small jazz groups.

**Course prerequisites:** MUJS 1360, 1361, 1370, 1371 (Jazz Fundamentals), 1470 (Intro to Jazz Recordings), and MUTH 1500 (Music Theory)

**Required text:** **Basics in Arranging**, Paris Rutherford - available at the bookstore in the Student Union building.

## Suggested books

Essential Dictionary Series (Orchestration, Notation, Music Dictionary) - Alfred Music; Bill Dobbins – Jazz Arranging and Composing: A Linear Approach

**Course objectives:** To introduce basic arranging concepts for musicians who are primarily performance majors: overtone series, transposition, range, registers, texture (monophonic, polyphonic, homophonic), counterpoint, harmonic voicings, form and development, writing for the rhythm section, manuscript preparation (in pencil and in digital notation via Finale or Sibelius).

**Learning outcomes and other requirements:** there are **two recording projects** that must be approved by the Teaching Assistant within your lab. Each project is usually an arrangement of a standard or jazz tune for a specified instrumentation. *Due to the unusual circumstances from the Coronavirus, it will be impossible to record these projects with live musicians. Therefore, the student is required to submit the following: a transposed score and a MIDI demo. The aural representation can be done minimally with a simple Sibelius or Finale playback but rhythm section parts must be represented. Chord symbols and slashes are not properly represented with silence. The student must ultimately create a bass line, chord voicings, and a drum track. These need not be elaborate; supply enough information to represent either the written notes or chord symbols as indicated in the score.*

### **Topical outline of content:**

1. Arranging basics – Overtone series, range, register, transposition, writing at (and away from) the piano, manuscript preparation.
2. Monophonic texture – instrument choice with regard to range restrictions and expression; blend and balance with collective instruments; unison vs. octaves.
3. Polyphonic texture – counterpoint in various forms: melodic, harmonic, bass line.
4. Homophonic texture – 3-voices to 5-voices for various horns in a small jazz group.
5. Orchestrating for the rhythm section – writing bass lines, top line melody for guided harmonic outline, written voicings, master rhythm parts.
6. Creating formal elements – intro, ending, transitions between large sections.
7. Manuscript preparation – concert sketch score, transposed score, individual transposed parts, master rhythm part and individual rhythm parts.
8. Prepare two recording projects that incorporate all monophonic, polyphonic and homophonic textures. Formal aspects must include an introduction and ending. The required recording projects will be submitted as MIDI demos with a complete representation of the rhythm section parts (actual musical sound must represent any chord symbols and slashes)

### **Guidelines/suggestions for greater learning:**

Students must participate in order to achieve an effective level of accomplishment. In addition to maintaining weekly assignments, the student must listen to music that reflects the current objective. An analysis (of the writing, not the performance) of the music must occur in regard to tonality, range and register, melodic/harmonic and rhythmic analysis, counterpoint, texture, and development. Performances in any ensembles also provide an active environment to observe and/or influence the writing process. Students should also interact with other students or teachers who play different or less familiar instruments to learn more about potential performance problems and/or characteristics.

### **Guidelines for methods of student assessment:**

The **homework assignments** are to be viewed as “practice” sessions in preparation for a recording project. Each assignment is evaluated in labs and returned to the student for self-study. If the student’s work is unsatisfactory or even less than excellent, the student may redo and re-submit the assignment for another review. The final review determines the grade for that assignment. For the aforementioned reasons, late submissions of homework cannot be tolerated.

All assignment guidelines are issued as a *minimum* for satisfactory accomplishment. The more creative and inspired student is encouraged to progress beyond the minimum as desired.

In general, the grades for the **recording projects** are based on the content of the work and the professional appearance of score and part preparation. It is the student's responsibility to make an accurate and expressive MIDI recording.

**Grade determination** - each recording project is worth 30% (totaling 60%) of the semester grade. Homework assignments and class participation comprise the remaining 40%. Attendance, attitude, and diligence may factor favorably towards a higher grade.

## WEEKLY AGENDA

**Week 1** (Aug 24) - Lecture: overtone series, arranging at the piano and its potential hazards, monophonic texture, transposition of standard big band instrumentation.

Assignment - take the melody, *Tune Up*, and write it out in the proper clef and key for each of the instruments discussed in class.

(Due Friday, Aug 28)

(Aug 26) Set up Labs and plan to meet on Friday, Aug 28.

**Week 2** (Aug 31) - Lecture 1: **Monophonic texture** - find the appropriate key and register when setting a melody for various instruments and voices.

Assignment 1 - take the melody, *Wave*, and answer the questions provided with regard for instrument/vocal assignment. (Due Friday, Sept 4<sup>th</sup>)

Lecture 2: **Monophonic texture** - unison vs. octaves.

Discuss range of the instruments plus weight and balance as it affects and enhances expression.

Assignment 2 - orchestrate only the melody of *Stella By Starlight*. Instrument choices should be based on mood or emotional expression as determined by color, range, dynamics, and weight. Also indicate default (not arbitrary) dynamic markings as suggested by register. (Due Monday, Sept 7<sup>th</sup>)

**Week 3** (Sept 7) - Lecture: Monophonic texture - unison vs. octaves; options and necessities.

Assignment - use the “unison” soli passage based on Sweet Georgia Brown. Assign the instruments (saxes/tpt/tbn) accordingly to preserve the proper feeling of buoyancy, technical proficiency, and excitement. *Avoid the bass register.* (Due Monday, Sept 14<sup>th</sup>)

**Week 4** (Sept 14) - Discuss counterpoint - **polyphonic texture**.  
Melody w/distinct bass line - *Little Brown Jug, Footprints, Birdland*

Assignment - Use this contrapuntal technique and arrange a tune by adding a “melodic” bass line (ostinato or not). Work on a grand staff in concert pitch. 12-16 bars is sufficient. (Due Monday, Sept 21<sup>st</sup>)

**Week 5** (Sept 21) - Melody w/distinct ‘comping’ pattern - *All Blues, Maiden Voyage*

Assignment - Use this contrapuntal technique and arrange a tune that incorporates a specific harmonic accompaniment. Write your sketch in concert pitch. Place the melody on a single staff and use a grand staff for your ‘comping’ sketch. 12 -16 bars is sufficient.  
(Due Monday, Sept 28<sup>th</sup>)

**Week 6** (Sept 28) - Melody vs. countermelody - *Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker Quartet*  
Lecture/demonstration using *Have You Met Miss Jones?* as an example (sample sketch provided).

Assignment - With this contrapuntal technique, take a melody from a standard tune, add a countermelody and indicate a simple bass line. Write your sketch in concert pitch. Use a single staff for the melody and a grand staff for the countermelody and bass line. 8-16 bars is sufficient. (Due Monday, Oct 5<sup>th</sup>)

**Week 7** (Oct 5) – Present *Night and Day* as a model for the recording project.

Assignment - **(Mid-term Recording Project)** Utilize all (or at least two) of the contrapuntal techniques to create a full arrangement. Submit a transposed score (make a PDF copy if your Lab TA uses a different digital notation program). Submit a complete MIDI demo that includes an adequate representation of the rhythm section parts. (Due Wednesday, Oct 14)

**Week 8** (Oct 12) - Lecture/demonstration on chord voicings (**homophonic texture**). 3-note voicing techniques using *Don't Blame Me* as an example (sample sketch provided).

Assignment 1 – analyze *Don't Blame Me* and perform it on piano during your lab.

Assignment 2 - sketch an arrangement for three horns (in concert pitch on the grand staff) of Horace Silver's "Peace" using the harmonic techniques discussed in class. (Due on Monday, Oct 19<sup>th</sup>).

**Week 9** (Oct 19) - Reflection on recording mid-term recording project in class.

Monday lecture: Each lab instructor chooses a "best project" and presents it for the class. The chosen student arrangers are invited to say a few words about their process and address follow-up questions from fellow class members.

Wednesday lecture: 4-horn writing using spread (SATB) voicings.

Assignment – sketch an arrangement for four horns (in concert pitch on the grand staff) of John Coltrane's "Giant Steps". Be prepared to play your voicings at the piano at a slow but steady tempo; remember to keep two voices in each hand. (Due on Monday, Oct 26<sup>th</sup>)

**Week 10** (Oct 26) - Lecture/demonstration with 5-note "block voicing" (8ve doubled lead with Drop and Drop 2 techniques) using *Street of Dreams* as an example (sample sketch provided).

Assignment 1 – analyze and perform on piano the first 8 bars of *Street* during your lab.

Assignment 2 - sketch out an arrangement (in concert pitch on the grand staff) of *My Ship* (1<sup>st</sup> 'A' section only) using the harmonic techniques discussed in class. (Due Monday, Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>)

**Week 11** (Nov 2) – Lecture/demonstration on chorale style voicings; 5-note voicing techniques (independent voices) using *Blue in Green* as an example.

Assignment 1 – Fill in the Voicing Chords (Blue in Green) sheet using a 5-note density. (Due Friday, Nov 6<sup>th</sup>)

Assignment 2 - perform your work on piano during your Lab.

**Week 12** (Nov 9) - Analyze the arrangement of "The Nearness of You" for orchestration techniques that also include the rhythm section. In preparation for the final project, sketch out some ideas (in concert pitch on the grand staff) using the voicing and contrapuntal techniques discussed in class. All 5 horns do not have to play simultaneously. The group can be subdivided and feature a soloist at times. The rhythm section parts should be integrated with the horns at times - not always slashes and symbols.

Assignment - **(Final Project)** begin work on your final project. (Due Nov 30)

**Week 13** (Nov 16) - Lecture: composition – establish your point of view.

**Semester Break Assignment** – Take all of the writing aspects discussed this semester and create a **composition** to feature you or another musician prominently. The assignment is due at the beginning of the spring semester.

(Nov 20) Final Lab session – confer with your TA about your recording project.

**Week 14** (Nov 23) – Final class meeting. General Q&A about project preparation. Submit your final project (digital score, w/PDF copy, and a complete MIDI demo) by November 30.

*There is no final exam.* Your two recording projects carry the majority of weight in determining the semester grade. The homework assignments are also considered: good quality and adherence to the schedule will likely weigh favorably towards any adjustment to the semester grade.

### **Attendance policy**

The student will be held to the same standard as any professional (includes the UNT faculty, staff, and administration). Professional personnel on this campus must always account for an absence. Failure to do so will result in a severe reprimand or possibly a termination from the position. In the case of a student, withdrawal from the class may be warranted. Consequently, only an excused absence is acceptable (tour, sickness, academic conflict, other extenuating circumstances such as an unforeseen accident). Please do not show up to class with a communicable illness (including colds). The preferred method of any notification is via e-mail. Please notify the professor or your TA instructor ASAP. Class participation is necessary and lab attendance is essential to remain current with work assignments. Because the course is required to complete the BM degree, failure may likely cause a delay of one year to graduate. So please be responsible and make every effort to attend and get the work completed.

**Compliance with Federal Statutes:**

The College of Music complies with "The Americans With Disabilities Act", in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disability. If you have an established disability as defined in this act and would like to request accommodations, please see me as soon as possible.

**Scholastic Honesty Policy:**

Cheating, in any form, will result in an automatic grade of "F" in the course, the removal of the student from the course, and immediate reporting of the student's actions to the office of the Dean of Students and to the office of the Dean of the College of Music.