

Singing, Scatting and Living "In the Pocket"

Definition of "In the Pocket": When two or more people play musical instruments together, with or without a vocal accompaniment and are perfectly on-beat, never missing a note or going off tempo in any way.

Imitate...Assimilate... And Innovate.

Clark Terry

Don't reinvent the wheel. You must learn from what has been done before you in order to create something that's truly new.

Rhythm First

Move like you did when you were children...marching, dancing, jumping. Internalize. You **MUST** feel it in your body.

Keep the beat and rhythm going now.

YOU MUST LIVE WITH THE METRONOME (or a variety of drum set backing tracks).

To improve rhythm "feeling" skills, listen to jazz with serious amounts of "in the pocket" groove, such as Count Basie and Tower of Power.

Melody Next

Sing like children...make up songs, singing everything whether you **KNOW** the words or make some up.

Imagine being a horn and sing the licks.

Sing along to jazz recordings, trying to memorize melodies and imitate tones. Use vocal **AND** instrumental recordings.

(Demonstrate on corner pocket)

Written notes

Dig into jazz rhythm interpretation. Study changes in style regarding different artists, decades, lyrics, tempos and more.

Know about articulation and how to stress important notes in a melody.

Lyrics

Choral people know the importance of pronunciation. Words must be clearly said to be understood. Good technique is still important in jazz. BUT in jazz, one should just talk conversationally...yet sing. And use vibrato as an option, for soloists only, and usually just at the end of long notes.

Improvisation and Scat for beginners

1. Rhythm is most important. Feel it in your body!
2. Stick to really simple melodies, with 2 or 3 notes maximum. If it gets too complex, you might lose the pocket on your rhythm.
3. Listen to the chords, possibly analyze. Know the relationships from one chord root to the next.
4. Keep the form of the tune in your head, following along all the time.
5. Leave room between ideas. Remember that music is a mix of sound AND silence.

**LET GO. ALLOW AND EVEN INTEND TO MAKE MISTAKES.
Laugh at yourself. It's good for you.**

Youtube examples for your students:

Listen especially to Ella's "cadenza" for lots of rhythm floating through lots of different ideas around the key of G.

Ella Fitzgerald: One Note Samba in 1969

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbL9vr4Q2LU>

and later with Joe Pass

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xa5PO5BpfkY>

Listen to his different scat syllables and listen for story-telling ability.

Clark Terry: Mumbles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJuFDvH8wGs>

Listen to these two riffing and feeding off of each other's ideas.

Bobby McFerrin with Joey Blake

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rsUD1qBCrk>

Listen to Anita's great timing and how the syllables are secondary to the notes of the sax lines she is duplicating.

Anita O'Day: Four Brothers in 1963

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ON_XXg6t640

You should first watch Joe with the Count Basie Big Band. Then watch this video of L, H & R duplicating the horn parts. Also note Joe's mock-unhappiness.

Joe Williams & Lambert, Hendricks & Ross with Count Basie rhythm section

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNPHp0RBWYY>

How to actively listen to jazz recordings:

Listen at least 7 times...

1st: lyrics and melody

2nd: style of tune (swing, bossa, funk, mambo, samba, jazz waltz, etc.)

3rd: how many sections to the head (one time through the song)

4th: how many voices or instruments, who does what, solo vs. background

5th: count beats while listening and figure out the form (12 bar blues, AABA, ABAC, etc.)

6th: analyze chords

7th: pick one harmony part and follow it through the song

Feel free to contact me with questions or concerns!

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