

Jazz Doublebass Lesson Plan

By Matthew Hall, doublebass player and teacher

- I. Precycle: The primary goal is to achieve a comfortable level of familiarity on the bass, utilizing the following criteria:
 - A. Tone production-teaching each student that sound production is the first and most vital aspect of learning an instrument. The student will be encouraged to develop first, a full and pleasant sound on the instrument, and secondly, to develop a personal sound as he or she desires according to personal taste.
 - B. The student should learn and have a complete understanding of both Major and minor scales, with an emphasis on good intonation and fingering positions most natural to each individual student.
 - C. Music reading will be taught, with the primary focus being on bass clef notation.
 - D. The student should begin to use the bow to achieve a maximum level of intonation, as well as preparing to handle a diverse style of musics later.

Materials:

- The first volume of Simandl etudes, for bowing and shifting practice.
- The student will be encouraged to find melodies or songs which he or she likes, and we will work on them and learn to play them melodically and with good phrasing.
- The student will begin to learn blues forms and choose melodies to learn from the list of classic blues repertoire. The Essentials of walking bass will be taught.

- II. Cycle I: The student will obtain mastery of the two most common and all encompassing jazz forms, Blues and Rhythm Changes, as they feature the chordal structures and forms found in nearly every jazz song.
 - A. The student will learn chord theory, as it relates to jazz and western music styles, with an emphasis on playing within the jazz idiom. Chord structures will be taught, with a heavy emphasis on ear training and learning to recognize the sounds of many chord qualities.
 - B. Jazz walking bass style will be thoroughly explored, and the student should be able to demonstrate an ability to play within any key on both blues and Rhythm Changes.
 - C. Melodies will be learned for the aforementioned styles, and should also be played in every key.
 - D. Music reading will continue, and sight-reading will be practiced regularly, as well as learning to read in treble clef.
 - E. The student will use applied knowledge of chord and scale theories to develop meaningful and personal solos within the jazz style.

Materials:

- The Real Book
- A wide selection of Jamey Aebersold play-along recordings
- various pieces for sight reading practice.

-One or two pieces from the classical double bass repertoire, such as Eccles, Dragonnetti, or Bottesini

- III. Cycle II: This cycle will focus on advanced techniques for bass, as well as modal and non-traditional jazz forms.
- A. The student will learn, by memory, the most common and often played jazz standards, showing an ability to play them with ease in any key.
 - B. Bowing techniques will be employed to play melodies, solos, and accompaniment.
 - C. Sight-reading and chord theory will continue to be taught, with the student learning to play more outside of the traditional chord structures.
 - D. This cycle will be more custom-tailored to the individual student's desires, relative to their goals as a musician and the style in which they want to perform.
 - E. Composing original music will be greatly encouraged. The student should be able to easily perform a one-hour concert of jazz standards, original compositions, or any mix they prefer. The concert should be well-organized and thoughtfully prepared.

Materials:

- Modern jazz compositions found in the New Real Book series
- Transcriptions of songs the student finds and wants to play. The student should do all of the transcription work, with assistance when necessary
- Classical bass repertoire will be studied for reasons of technique. A good method are the cello suites performed on bass.