Jazz Ensemble Auditions

The Iowa State University Jazz Ensemble Program consist of two full traditional concert jazz bands; Jazz I (Mus 113a; T-Th, 2:00-3:30 PM), and Jazz II (Mus 113b; M-W 7:00-8:30 PM). In addition to the two jazz ensembles, there are opportunities to perform with department jazz combos (Mus 321). Participation in the music department’s jazz ensembles is open to both music majors and non-music majors by audition. Students who successfully audition will be placed in an ensemble based upon ability and openings.

Playing jazz requires specific musical skills. The audition for the jazz ensembles is designed to measure the ability of a student musician to satisfactorily read music, play with a good sound, and to assess abilities in improvisation. The audition is in two parts: round one and round two.

Round One Auditions
All new students, and students who have not previously successfully passed the jazz ensemble audition must take part in the round one auditions and play for members of the music faculty. The Sunday audition is a preliminary audition. This audition is held on the Sunday afternoon before the first day of class. (Returning students who played in the ensemble the previous semester, or those with permission of the instructor, need not audition in the first round)

The purpose of this first audition is to assess a student’s ability to play an instrument and to determine his or her background in jazz. During this audition students will be asked to:

1. Play a prepared piece that demonstrates to the faculty their best playing. The selection is entirely up to the student and can consist of, but is not limited to, a classical solo or the head from a jazz standard, a play-along CD, or an original composition.

2. Students will be asked to improvise B-flat or F blues with a play-along CD (students who wish to demonstrate advanced skills may bring with them a play-along CD of their own choosing).

3. Students will also be required to demonstrate their sight-reading abilities by performing music selected by the faculty (bass players, guitar players, and pianists will be asked to read chord changes and demonstrate appropriate voicing or bass lines in swing, Latin, and funk/rock.) Drummers will be asked to read and play appropriate grooves in swing, Latin, funk/rock, and demonstrate their ability to play drum fills.

The results from the round one audition will be posted on the bulletin board outside of Dr. Bovinette’s office-Rm. 245. Selected students should report to the next audition round.
**Round Two Audition**

All students, both new and returning, must participate in the second round audition. This audition is a closed audition open only to those new students who successfully passed the first round of auditions, and whose names have been posted on the bulletin board outside of Dr. Bovinette’s office. This audition is held on Monday at 7:00 PM, the first day of class. During this audition/rehearsal, new students will be placed within their respective sections of the jazz band with returning students to assess their ability to balance, blend, play in tune, and display proper style. Soloists will improvise with a live rhythm section. Rhythm section players will be placed in various combinations to determine clarity of sound, to determine their ability to drive the ensemble and to comp changes for soloists, and to assess their ability to function cohesively with the other members of the rhythm section.

**Jazz Combos**

Jazz combos provide extra opportunities for students participating in the jazz ensemble program to develop their improvisation skills. The above Jazz Ensemble auditions will serve as the auditions for the jazz combos. Students should understand that playing in one of the jazz bands may be a pre-requisite for performing in the department combos. All auditioning students, especially rhythm players, should be prepared to rehearse and perform with an assigned combo as determined by the combo director.