

Career Opportunities in Jazz Education
How to Find, Prepare for, Apply for, and Land a Job in Jazz Education
JB Dyas, PhD

Venues

- I. Universities, Colleges, and Conservatories
 - A. Comprehensive list of universities, colleges, and conservatories (with their respective contact info) currently offering jazz programs can be found:
 1. in the annual October issue of DownBeat magazine –
<https://archive.maherpublications.com/view/23800709/83>
 2. on the Hancock Institute’s Jazz in America website (includes link to each school’s website)
<http://www.jazzinamerica.org/JazzResources/JazzEducation/College>
 - B. College Music Society – *<http://www.music.org>*
- II. Performing Arts High Schools
 - A. Comprehensive list of performing arts high schools can be found online at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Schools_of_the_performing_arts_in_the_United_States
 - B. Arts School Network – *<https://www.artsschoolsnetwork.org/our-membership>*
- III. High Schools and Middle Schools
 - A. Most American high schools, as well as many middle schools, have at least one jazz band.
 - B. Many American high schools offer jazz combo as well.
- IV. Independent and Non-Profit Music Education Organizations
 - A. Dozens throughout the country. Examples include:
 1. B’Town Jazz, Bloomington, IN – *<http://btownjazz.org>*
 2. Colburn School, Los Angeles – *<https://www.colburnschool.edu/community-school/by-program/jazz>*
 3. Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, Los Angeles – *www.hancockinstitute.org*
 4. Jazz at Lincoln Center Jazz Academy, New York – *<http://academy.jazz.org>*
 5. Jazz House Kids, Montclair, NJ – *<http://jazzhousekids.org>*
 6. Levine Music, Washington, DC – *www.levinemusic.org*
 7. New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), Newark – *<https://www.njpac.org/arts-education>*
 - B. National Guild for Community Arts Education –
<http://www.nationalguild.org/MemberSearch/Member-Directory.aspx>
- V. Summer Jazz Camps
 - A. Dozens throughout the country. Examples include:
 1. Jazz House Summer Workshop, Montclair, NJ –
<https://jazzhousekids.org/programs/montclair/jazz-house-summer-workshop>
 2. Litchfield Jazz Camp, Washington, CT – *<http://litchfieldjazzfest.com/jazz-camp>*
 3. Stanford Jazz Workshop, Stanford, CA – *<https://stanfordjazz.org>*
 - B. Comprehensive list of summer jazz camps can be found in the annual March edition of DownBeat magazine
<https://archive.maherpublications.com/view/884657324/58>
- VI. Music Stores and Teaching Studios
 - A. Examples
 1. Sam Ash (franchises throughout the country) – *<https://www.samash.com/learning-center>*
 2. Guitar Center (franchises throughout the country) – *<http://www.guitarcenter.com/Services/Lessons>*
 - B. Private lessons
 - C. Jazz and rock combos
 - D. Workshops
- VII. Houses of Worship
- VIII. Home Studio
- IX. Other
 1. Boys and girls clubs
 2. Musician Union locals
 3. Jazz festivals and associations
 4. Civic organizations
 5. Private learning centers

Skill Set and Credentials

I. Eminent Jazz Recording Artist with Impressive Discography

Examples include:

- A. Terri Lyne Carrington (Berklee)
- B. Ingrid Jensen (Manhattan School of Music)
- C. Sean Jones (Peabody Conservatory)
- D. Bob Mintzer (University of Southern California)
- E. Terrell Stafford (Temple University)

Or...

II. Effective and Dynamic Jazz Educator, Band Director, Administrator, and Pedagogue

A. Accomplished and versatile jazz musician on your respective instrument

B. Functional player on all rhythm section instruments

1. **Piano**

- a. be able to comp two-handed voicings for blues in Bb and F, rhythm changes in Bb, and all tunes in Aebersold Play-Along Volume 54
- b. be able to play the idiomatic keyboard patterns for simple jazz tunes, e.g., *Cantaloupe Island*, *Maiden Voyage*, *Watermelon Man*

2. **Bass** (electric)

- a. be able to play a simple bossa nova bass line for easy jazz tunes, e.g., *Blue Bossa*, *Song for My Father*
- b. be able to walk a blues in Bb and F
- c. be able to play the idiomatic bass patterns associated with easy jazz tunes, e.g., *All Blues*, *Cantaloupe Island*, *Footprints*, *Killer Joe*, *Maiden Voyage*, *So What*

3. **Drums** – be able to play a basic swing beat (in 2 and 4), a bossa nova, a samba, and a basic rock beat

4. **Guitar** – be able to comp basic 4-note jazz voicings for blues in Bb and F and all tunes in Aebersold Play-Along Volume 54 (can be done with just a half dozen simple, but authentic, chord forms)

C. Be able to teach all levels, especially beginning and intermediate players.

D. Strive to have all your sessions be *active* sessions.

E. Private lessons

1. Do whatever is necessary so the student does not quit.
2. Be as encouraging as possible, never demeaning.
3. Don't spend valuable lesson time pontificating on why your student needs to practice more, be more disciplined, etc. Rather, spend the time on getting something *accomplished*.

F. Administrative skills

1. Computer proficient (Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro, Finale/Sibelius)
2. Handouts, programs, etc. (design and execution)
3. Competent writer

G. Credentials

1. For high schools, performing arts high school, colleges, and universities – the more advanced degree from the more prestigious institution, the better.
2. The degree and school prestige level doesn't matter nearly as much in all other arenas.
3. The better player you are, the better.

Getting a Job

I. Applying

A. College and University Positions

1. Subscribe to College Music Society for a listing of virtually all college and university openings.
2. Apply to as many schools as possible, even if the job description is not a perfect fit.
3. Write impressive and grammatically correct cover letters, respectfully stating why you think their hiring you would be a good opportunity for both you and them; be succinct; make an impression.
4. Make sure your resume looks professional with standard formatting and no misspelled words. It should include:
 - a. Your name, mailing address, email address, and phone number
 - b. Education
 - c. Teaching experience
 - d. Performance experience
 - e. Recording experience/discography (if applicable)
 - f. Publications (if applicable)
 - g. Awards won (if applicable)
 - h. Professional activities
 - i. References
 1. include name, title (if applicable), email address, and phone number of each reference
 2. often the more famous the names, the better
 3. make sure you acquire permission from each potential reference to include him/her in your list of references
 4. be *certain* that each of your references will give you a glowing recommendation

B. High Schools and Performing Arts High Schools

1. Visit as many schools' websites as possible (of *all* the schools in which you may be interested in teaching); select "Employment" (or equivalent) to see listing of job openings.
2. Follow College and University guidelines above.

C. All other venues

1. Apply to as many venues as possible, sending a cover letter and resume.
2. Offer a *free* workshop to *all* possible teaching venues and institutions (including all colleges and universities) within reasonable driving distance from your home. Then, knock their socks off!

II. Letters of Recommendation

A. Often the more famous/prestigious the recommender, the more clout the recommendation letter will have.

B. Request recommendation letters at least six weeks before the due date. Know **for a fact** that your recommenders are going to say great things about you!

C. Send your recommenders:

1. a copy of the job description
2. an updated copy of your curriculum vita (CV), i.e., resume
3. any specific attributes that you have that directly relate to the job description that you would like included in the letter
4. specific instructions on how to submit their letters (e.g., online, via email or regular mail, etc.) and the due date
5. the exact name, title, mailing address, and email address of the person to whom the letter is to be written

D. Two weeks before the recommendation letters' due date, gently and respectfully remind your writers (via email) that, if they haven't already, to please submit the letter by the due date. Do the same three days before the due date.

E. Follow Up

1. Write a thank-you email to your writers.
2. Once you've gotten word that you've been invited for an interview/audition, send an email update to your writers, thanking them again for their help.
3. Once you're informed that you were offered the job, let your writers know and thank them again for their part in making that happen.
4. If you're informed that you have not been offered the job, let your writers know, thanking them again for their help and asking them if they would be willing to write recommendation letters again for you in the future.

- III. Interview
 - A. Be personable, animated, upbeat, and likeable at your interview, having your winning personality shine through; say nothing disparaging; never use any foul language; don't complain; say yes as often as possible.
 - B. Be thoroughly knowledgeable about the school, its jazz program, and the faculty members on your hiring committee.
 - C. Make it obvious that you would not only be a teacher of the first order, but an exceptional colleague as well, going well beyond what is expected or required of you.
 - D. Mention how you love to recruit!
- IV. Performance Audition
 - A. Pick a diversified, exciting, and impressive set list, comprising tunes that require no rehearsal with the house rhythm section, and that will blow everyone away!
 - B. Bring very readable lead sheets for each member of the rhythm section.
- V. Teaching and Band Directing Audition
 - A. Be organized
 - 1. Have a predetermined definite goal for each session, but be flexible.
 - 2. Provide students with handouts (color coded for faster accessibility), keeping the students' note taking to a minimum so they can participate *actively*.
 - B. Speaking
 - 1. Loud, clear, interesting
 - 2. Eye contact
 - 3. Humor (but not too much)
 - C. Band and combo directing
 - 1. Listen to the band perform what they consider their best tune
 - a. Make general comments with a positive spin.
 - b. Address weaknesses with tangible suggestions that will improve their playing immediately.
 - c. Rehearse those sections again with everyone seeing obvious, immediate improvement.
 - 2. Bring charts
 - a. Have several charts of different levels on hand, picking the one best suited for the level of the group at hand.
 - b. Follow steps on Big Band Directing Procedure clinic packet (<https://www.jbdyas.com/clinic-handouts>).
 - c. If bringing in an original chart, make sure that is playable by the band at hand, and that their performance of it will be very impressive by the end of your rehearsal.
 - 3. Demonstrate!
 - a. on your instrument (have it *easily* available)
 - b. on piano so that all can see you have piano chops
 - 4. Be dynamic and enthusiastic.
 - D. Classroom session
 - 1. Have a definite, *practical* topic (e.g., II V I's in minor).
 - 2. Provide a concept, examples that can be learned/completed in class, and a strategy for continuing.
 - 3. Be clear, interesting, educative, and entertaining.
 - E. Appearance
 - 1. Dress up.
 - 2. Look clean, well groomed, healthy, and fit.
 - F. General Tips and Do's & Don'ts
 - 1. Be likeable.
 - 2. Don't be opinionated; do have an open mind.
 - 3. Don't insist on anything extra (e.g., rehearsals, longer class periods, extra equipment, etc.).
 - 4. Don't discuss salary until after the offer is made; *then* negotiate (be savvy).
 - 5. Network
 - a. Join the Jazz Educators Network (JEN); attend their annual conferences; present clinics.
 - b. Join your local jazz association (e.g., California Alliance for Jazz); attend conferences; present clinics.

MOST IMPORTANT

- I. Learn to play and teach as well as possible.
- II. Be entrepreneurial.
- III. Do **everything** to the nines.
- IV. **Impress everyone who has the potential to help you.**
- V. Remember: If you want to know how well a jazz musician plays, listen to them play. If you want to know how well a jazz musician *teaches*, listen to their *students* play.

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Dr. JB Dyas has taught jazz to students of all levels in a wide variety of venues, including middle and high schools, performing arts high schools, summer jazz camps, colleges and universities, jazz institutes, and more. His jazz pedagogy clinic packets and videos can be found free online at www.jbdyas.com. Formerly the executive director of the Brubeck Institute, Dr. Dyas currently serves as Vice President for Education and Curriculum Development at Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz at UCLA.

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Suggested Resources

1. Piano
 - a. Jazz Piano Voicings Mnemonics (JB Dyas) – <https://www.jbdyas.com/clinic-handouts>
 - b. *Jazz Piano Voicings for the Non-Pianist* (Mike Tracy) *
 - c. Jamey Aebersold Play-Along Volumes 1, 54, and 70 *
2. Bass
 - a. “Linear Bass Line Construction” (JB Dyas), DownBeat – <https://www.jbdyas.com/articles>
 - b. “Linear Bass Line Construction, Part 2” (JB Dyas), DownBeat, August, 2007 – <https://www.jbdyas.com/articles>
 - c. How to Construct Walking Bass Lines clinic packet (JB Dyas) – <https://www.jbdyas.com/clinic-handouts>
3. Drums
 - a. Volumes 54 and 70 Maiden Voyage Drum Styles and Analysis (Steve Davis) *
 - b. *The Ultimate Play-Along for Jazz Drummers* (Steve Davis) *
4. Guitar
 - a. *Easy Jazz Guitar - Voicings and Comping* (Michael DiLiddo) *
5. Tune Learning
 - a. “Methods for Fighting the Epidemic of Tune Illiteracy” (JB Dyas), DownBeat – <https://www.jbdyas.com/articles>
 - b. “Methods for Fighting the Epidemic of Tune Illiteracy, Part 2” (JB Dyas), DownBeat
<https://www.jbdyas.com/articles>
 - c. Tune Learning clinic packet (JB Dyas) – <https://www.jbdyas.com/clinic-handouts>
6. Reading
 - a. *Melodic Rhythm for Guitar*, William Leavitt (good for all treble clef instruments)
 - b. *Reading Contemporary Guitar Rhythms*, M.T. Szymczak (good for all treble clef instruments)
 - c. *Developing Sight Reading for All Bass Clef Instruments, Volumes 1 & 2*, Gaston Dufresne *
7. Teaching Venues
 - a. Colleges and Universities
 - DownBeat, annual October issue – <https://archive.maherpublications.com/view/23800709/83>
 - The College Music Society – <http://www.music.org>
 - Jazz in America – <http://www.jazzinamerica.org/JazzResources/JazzEducation/College>
 - b. Summer Jazz Camps
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 - c. Performing Arts High Schools
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 - Comprehensive List on Wikipedia –
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Schools_of_the_performing_arts_in_the_United_States
 - d. Public School Districts
 - Comprehensive List on Wikipedia –
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_school_districts_in_the_United_States
 - e. Community Arts Organizations
 - National Guild for Community Arts Education –
<http://www.nationalguild.org/MemberSearch/Member-Directory.aspx>
8. Resume – <https://resumegenius.com/how-to-write-a-resume>
9. How to Get a Job in Jazz Education
 - a. “Living the Dream – How to Get a Job in Jazz Education” (JB Dyas), DownBeat –
<https://www.jbdyas.com/articles>
 - b. How to Get a Job in Jazz Education clinic packet (JB Dyas) – <https://www.jbdyas.com/clinic-handouts>

* Can be ordered online at <http://www.jazzbooks.com>