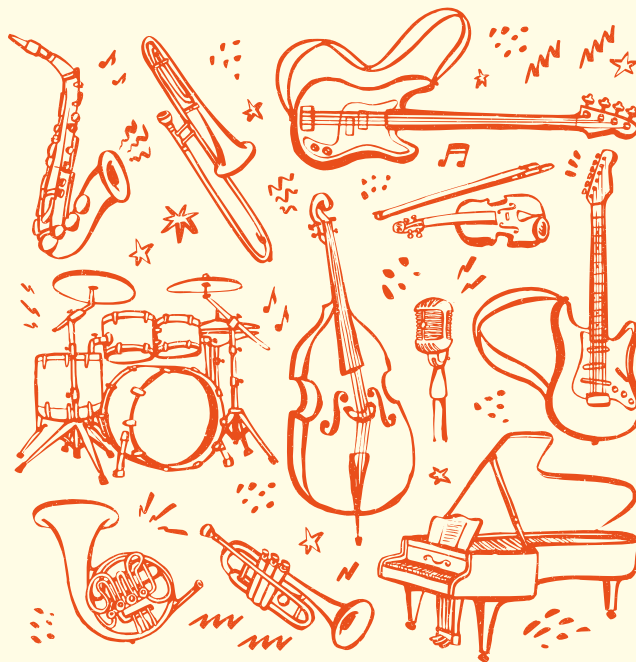


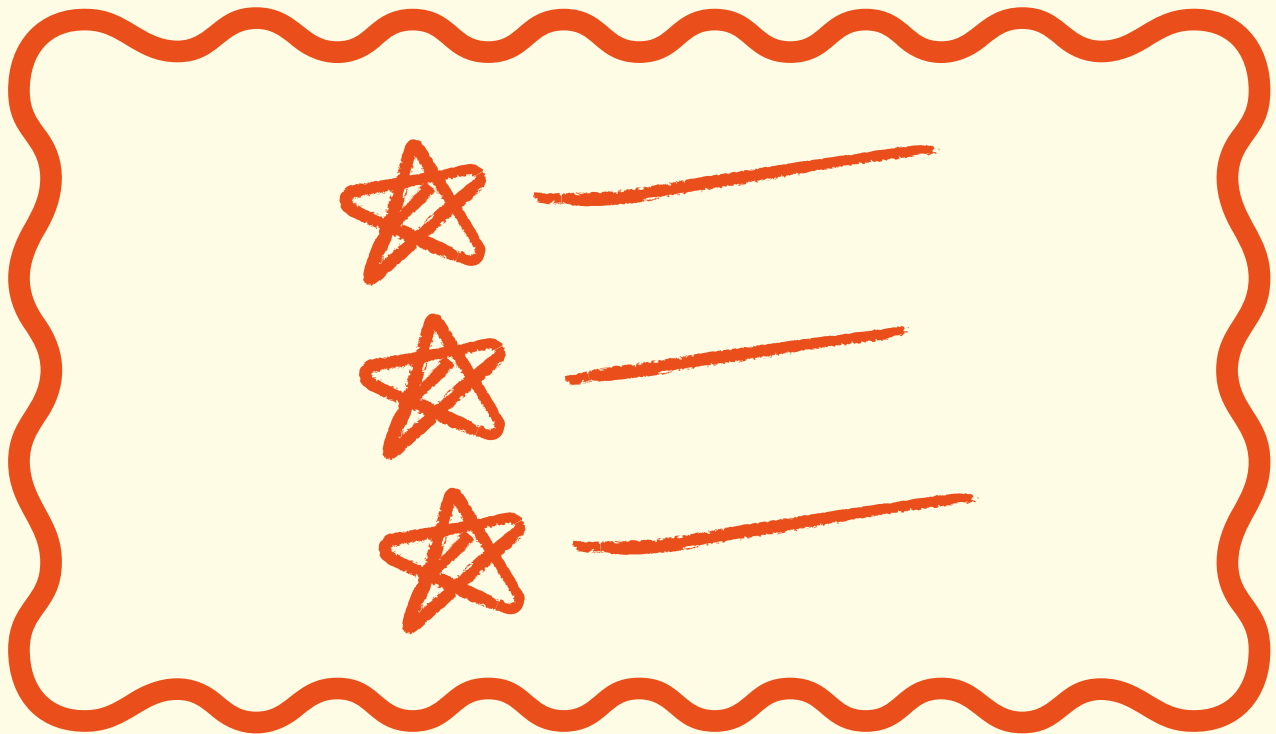
NYJO

***Working with
Ensembles of Mixed
Instrumentation***



CREATED BY FLO REDMONDS

Learning Objectives



The objective of this worksheet is to understand how different groups of instruments can be used in ensembles, and the different roles they might cover.

Instruments can be used in a variety of combinations across genres to create a different sound and to fulfil different requirements. For example, *big bands* were created with so many players to be able to play jazz loud enough in a dance hall.

In this worksheet, there are two activities to be completed, a mini quiz to test your understanding of the covered material, and an index with keywords and definitions.

Activity 1 - Listening

The aim of this activity is to listen to a piece of music, be able to identify the instruments involved, and understand the role they have in an ensemble.

Listen to each of the tracks listed below, and answer the questions.

Different things to think about include: **Melody, Harmony, Rhythm, Improvising/Improviser.**

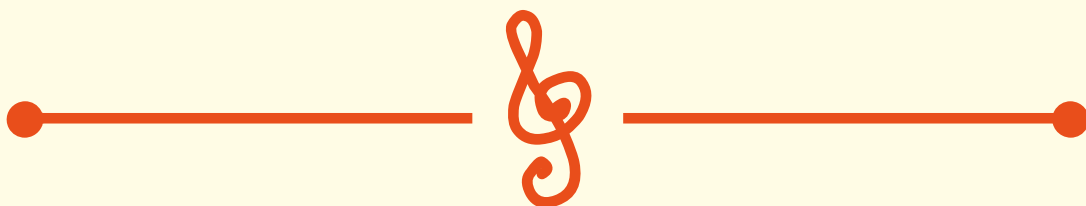
Track 1: Fete by the River by Binker and Moses

How many instruments perform in this track? _____

What would you call an ensemble with this number of performers? _____

What instrument plays the melody? _____

Are all of the instruments improvising? Yes / No



Track 2: Li'l Darlin' by Count Basie

What would you call this ensemble? _____

What instrument plays the intro? _____

When do you think this song was recorded (decade)?

Name five instruments you can hear in this song:

Track 3: Song For Bilbao by Michael Brecker

Are there any electric instruments in this recording?
Yes / No

What instruments are playing the melody?

When do you think this song was recorded (decade)?



Answers

Track 1: 2, duo, (Tenor) Saxophone, Yes

*Track 2: Big Band, Piano, 1950s, any of: Trumpet,
Trombone, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone
Saxophone, Piano, Guitar, Upright Bass, Drums*

*Track 3: Yes, (Tenor) Saxophone and (Electric) Guitar,
1990s*

Activity 2 - Percussion & Melody

In music our roles can often seem quite rigid, with bass players playing the bass line and frontline players performing the melody. The aim of this activity is to create a piece using only melody and rhythm, and understand how we can cover different roles to usual.

Therefore, it is encouraged to pick up a different role to what you might usually choose, for example a saxophonist would use body percussion instead of playing the melody.

Requirements:

Instruments can be used if desired, or instead body percussion and singing can be used.

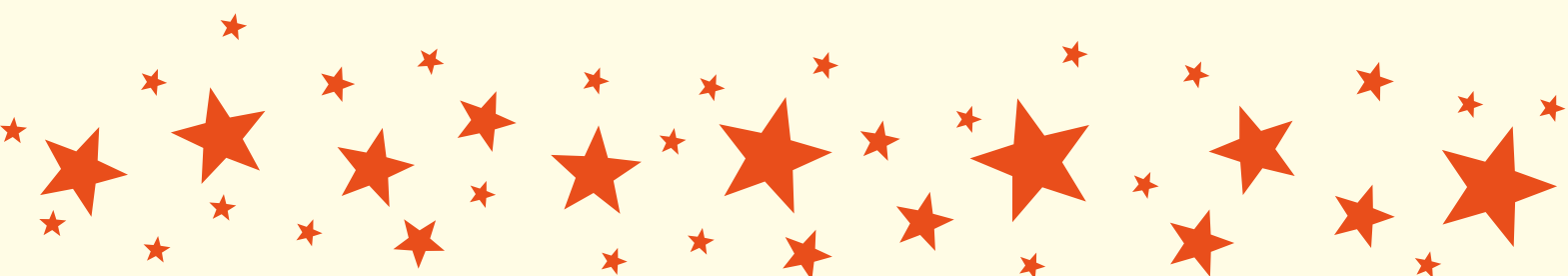
You will need at least two people.

Step 1:

Create a simple, repetitive rhythm. Aim for one to two bars, so it is easy to remember and replicate. There are many examples online if you search 'Simple rhythm patterns' or 'body percussion'.

A famous example would be the body percussion from 'We Will Rock You'. If creating one with body percussion you can use sounds such as claps, finger clicks, stomps and chest hits.

Make sure everyone is involved in some way!



Step 2:

Create a short, simple and repetitive melody that interacts well with the rhythm. If continuing with 'We Will Rock You', this is super easy!

Other good examples of repetitive melodies specifically for jazz include 'So What', which you can simplify, or 'Sonnymoon for Two'.

Step 3:

Put both parts together, and play in a structure where you have sections of just the rhythm, and then both parts together.

Step 4:

Have a go at improvising over the rhythm. If you don't have instruments, you can follow the steps below and either improvise by singing, or by clapping.

Here are three steps in increasing difficulty to try improvising over your piece:

Choose one note from the melody, and play improvising rhythms based on it.

Use more notes from the melody, ideally 3-4, and improvise based on rhythms in the melody.

Use any notes from the melody and improvise the rhythms.



Mini Quiz



1. WHO IS SONG FOR BILBAO BY?

- ☐ Binker and Moses
- ☐ Michael Brecker
- ☐ Count Basie

2. WHICH SONG HAD THE MOST INSTRUMENTS PLAYING?

- ☐ Fete by the River
- ☐ Lil' Darlin'
- ☐ Song For Bilbao

3. WHAT WORD DO WE USE IN JAZZ TO REFER TO INSTRUMENTS THAT USUALLY PLAY THE MELODY?

- ☐ Firstline
- ☐ Straightline
- ☐ Frontline

Answers

Michael Brecker, Li'l Darlin', Frontline

Key Words



Big band: A type of jazz ensemble that usually consists of ten or more musicians with four sections: saxophones, trumpets, trombones, and a rhythm section.

Body percussion: Using your body to create percussive noises.

Ensemble: A group of musicians performing together.

Frontline: Solo instruments that play the melody line or improvise.

Intro: An opening passage or section that may introduce the themes of the piece or set up the tune.





If you have any questions about the content within this worksheet, please contact us on projects@nyjo.org.uk.

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