

Jazz in America • The National Jazz Curriculum Test Bank 2 - Elements of Jazz

Select the BEST answer

1. Most consider the most essential ingredient in jazz to be
 - A. time
 - B. jazz "sounds"
 - C. improvisation
 - D. harmony
 - E. chords

2. For a musician to improvise, he/she should
 - A. play a lot of notes
 - B. have a musical vocabulary covering a wide variety of musical styles
 - C. be able to play very high
 - D. be able to sing
 - E. be able to read music

3. Improvisation is
 - A. spontaneous combustion
 - B. spontaneous composition
 - C. playing without rehearsal
 - D. preplanned composition
 - E. dissonant harmonies

4. Rhythm can be defined as
 - A. the speed of the beat
 - B. the element of music dealing with time
 - C. accenting notes that normally are not accented
 - D. two or more notes played at the same time
 - E. a metronome marking

5. A regular pattern formed by a series of notes of differing duration and stress is
 - A. improvisation
 - B. a chorus
 - C. the head
 - D. rhythm
 - E. conversation

6. Jazz rhythms
 - A. can be simple or complex
 - B. can only be played on drums
 - C. do not determine the feel of a song
 - D. are always constant
 - E. are easy to measure

7. Tempo defines
- A. the speed of improvisation
 - B. the amount of players in a band
 - C. the speed of the beat of a tune
 - D. the pattern of the beat
 - E. the groove of a tune
8. In jazz, the tempo
- A. never changes from tune to tune
 - B. is usually quite fast
 - C. is usually quite slow
 - D. may range from very fast to very slow
 - E. there is no tempo in jazz
9. A slow jazz tune is called
- A. burning
 - B. a ballad
 - C. allegro
 - D. a swing tune
 - E. a march
10. Circle the phrase or phrases that best describe swing:
- A. A dizzying pattern of notes and tempos
 - B. A slow, hypnotic rhythm
 - C. A stream of notes in a long-short, long-short pattern
 - D. The liveliness and/or rhythmic lilt of the music
 - E. complex harmonies
11. Which of the following contribute to jazz's uniqueness as compared to most popular music?
- A. It's a very new music
 - B. Its overuse of exotic instruments
 - C. You can tap your foot to it
 - D. The varied use of simple and complex rhythms, interwoven with each other into one cohesive sound
 - E. The use of a recurring chord progression that serves as the structure of the tune
12. Which instrument is not usually associated with jazz?
- A. Flute
 - B. Guitar
 - C. Trumpet
 - D. Saxophone
 - E. Bassoon
13. An instrument's sound in the hands of a jazz musician
- A. can vary greatly
 - B. varies very little as each instrument has its own particular sound regardless whose playing it
 - C. always has a crystal clear, "pure" tone
 - D. often emulates the human voice
 - E. A and D

14. In terms of sound, jazz musicians
- A. find one tone, or "color" they like and never change
 - B. alter the sound of their instrument as the mood strikes them
 - C. do not think the actual "sound" of the instrument is that important
 - D. always try to sound like new musicians with completely different tones each time they play
 - E. let the instrument decide
15. What distinguishes jazz musicians apart from other jazz musicians?
- A. the amount of notes they play
 - B. how fast they play
 - C. their distinctive sound
 - D. nothing, they all strive to sound alike
 - E. A, B, and C
16. The definition of comping is
- A. the rhythmically syncopated playing of chords
 - B. giving something away, such as tickets
 - C. comparing musical notes
 - D. taking a solo
 - E. each member of the band plays the same chords
17. Whose role is it to comp the chords?
- A. the drummer
 - B. the saxophone player and/or bassist
 - C. the bassist and guitarist
 - D. the pianist and/or guitarist
 - E. the saxophonist and/or trumpet player
18. How many notes are usually played simultaneously in jazz chords?
- A. two
 - B. four to seven
 - C. three
 - D. nine
 - E. eight to ten
19. Harmony is defined as
- A. two or more notes played one right after the other
 - B. two or more notes played at the same time
 - C. four or more notes played at the same time
 - D. people singing the same notes together
 - E. a synonym for melody
20. In a jazz composition, the main purpose of harmony is to
- A. create a variety of simple and complex rhythms
 - B. evoke emotions and moods in both performers and listeners
 - C. accompany the written melodies
 - D. give all the musicians in a band the chance to play the head
 - E. bring dissonance to the music

21. Form can be considered
- A. the arrangement of notes on the page
 - B. complicated chord progressions
 - C. a musical blueprint, or basic structure of a song
 - D. the opposite of syncopation
 - E. the notes played by the drummer
22. One time through the chords of a tune is called
- A. a chorus
 - B. harmony
 - C. a melodic progression
 - D. the arrangement
 - E. a vamp
23. The "head" is
- A. the bandleader
 - B. the featured soloist
 - C. the melody
 - D. the chorus
 - E. the metal part on a drum set
24. What is meant by the expression, "Taking the tune out?"
- A. performing the tune before a live audience
 - B. deciding not to play the tune
 - C. playing the tune twice, in different variations
 - D. repeating the chorus for the last time, ending, or completing the tune.
 - E. change the order of the solos
25. The arrangement is
- A. where each band member will stand on the stage
 - B. how the instruments will be held
 - C. the order in which players will take their solos
 - D. the size of the ensemble
 - E. musical instructions that determine which instruments play what when

Fill in the blank with the correct answer

1. Jazz's most essential ingredient is _____.
2. Improvisation is _____.
3. Jazz improvisation is very similar to _____.
4. In order to be able to improvise a musician needs to have the ability to play by _____.
5. A jazz musician needs to have a musical _____ covering a wide variety of styles.
6. Rhythm is the part of the music that makes the listener want to _____.
7. The element of music dealing with _____ is referred to as rhythm.
8. Jazz rhythms can range from simple to _____.
9. The speed of the pulse is referred to as the _____.
10. Extremely fast tunes in jazz are called _____.
11. _____ is the accenting of beats that are normally not accented.
12. _____ is a difficult to define rhythmic concept.
13. Jazz players strive for a tone that is generally more _____ in nature.
14. The buoyancy, rhythmic lilt, and liveliness of the music is referred to as _____.
15. The most common instrument associated with jazz is the _____.
16. The _____ is the most common brass instrument in a jazz group.
17. The rhythm section is made up of _____, _____, and _____.
18. A jazz musician's particular sound is part of his/her _____.
19. Two or more notes played at the same time constitutes _____.
20. Another name for harmony is a _____ or a _____.
21. Jazz chords usually consist of _____ to _____ notes played simultaneously.
22. A series of chords is known as a _____.
23. The term "comping" comes from the words to _____ and to _____.
24. The way in which the sections of chord progressions in a tune are grouped determines the _____ of the tune.
25. Each time through the chords of a tune is called a _____.

Please answer true or false to the following questions

1. Improvisation is, perhaps, jazz's most essential ingredient. T F
2. Improvisation is written ahead of time. T F
3. Improvisation is not similar to regular conversation. T F
4. In order to improvise well, a musician needs to be technically able to play his/her instrument well. T F
5. It is not important for jazz musicians to use their ears when playing. T F
6. Rhythm is the element of music that deals with time. T F
7. A tune's groove is also called the "feel" of a tune. T F
8. Tempo refers to all chords of a tune. T F
9. Fast tempos in jazz which are called "burning." T F
10. The accenting of beats that are normally not accented is known as syncopation. T F
11. "Swing" is an easy to define rhythmic concept. T F
12. If a jazz performance is rhythmically cohesive and has a buoyant upbeat feeling, it's known as *swinging*. T F
13. Jazz players strive for a clear pure tone. T F
14. The most common instrument used in jazz is the flute. T F
15. Every jazz musician has his/her own particular sound which is part of his/her musical signature. T F
16. The rhythm section is comprised of piano, bass, and saxophone. T F
17. The trumpet is the most common brass instrument found in jazz. T F
18. Two or more notes played at the same time constitute harmony. T F
19. Another word for harmony is measure. T F
20. Jazz chords are usually four to seven notes played simultaneously. T F
21. Another name for chord is timing. T F
22. A series of chords is known as a chord progression. T F
23. Pianists and saxophonists comp the chords. T F
24. The way recurring chord progressions of a tune are grouped is called the *form* of the tune. T F
25. A chorus is never played by a jazz group. T F

Match the words in the columns correctly

- | | | |
|--|---|-----------|
| 1. chorus | A. a pattern formed by a series of notes of differing duration and stress | 1. _____ |
| 2. spontaneous composition | B. the composed melody of a tune | 2. _____ |
| 3. Swing refers to... | C. the accenting of beats that are normally not accented | 3. _____ |
| 4. the speed of the pulse | D. a jazz musician needs to be able to play by ear. | 4. _____ |
| 5. saxophone | E. that is more "vocal" in nature. | 5. _____ |
| 6. part of a jazz musician's "signature" | F. the most common jazz brass instrument | 6. _____ |
| 7. improvisation | G. rhythm | 7. _____ |
| 8. changes | H. "the changes" | 8. _____ |
| 9. another term for extremely fast | I. harmony | 9. _____ |
| 10. Jazz chords are usually... | J. comping | 10. _____ |
| 11. rhythm | K. one time through the chords of a tune | 11. _____ |
| 12. "comping" | L. the way in which chord progression sections of a tune are grouped | 12. _____ |
| 13. stressing the notes that are on the upbeat | M. form | 13. _____ |
| 14. Jazz players strive for a tone... | N. "burning" | 14. _____ |
| 15. jazz term for chord progression | O. a series of chords | 15. _____ |
| 16. In order to improvise... | P. jazz's most essential ingredient | 16. _____ |
| 17. trumpet | Q. a jazz musician's particular sound on his/her instrument | 17. _____ |
| 18. form | R. comes from the words "accompany" and "compliment" | 18. _____ |
| 19. syncopation | S. tempo | 19. _____ |
| 20. a tune's musical blueprint | T. a music's buoyancy, liveliness, and cohesiveness. | 20. _____ |
| 21. two or more notes played at the same time | U. improvisation | 21. _____ |
| 22. the "head" | V. 4-7 notes played simultaneously | 22. _____ |
| 23. the time element of music | W. the most common jazz instrument | 23. _____ |
| 24. who does what for each chorus | X. arrangement | 24. _____ |
| 25. rhythmically syncopated playing of chords | Y. syncopation | 25. _____ |

Essay Questions

1. What is improvisation? How is improvisation similar to regular conversation? Explain why improvisation is jazz's most essential ingredient.
2. Why is rhythm such an integral part of jazz?
3. Define the term "swing." What importance does "swing" play in the performance of jazz? Why is this ingredient so essential?
4. How does jazz harmony differ from harmony found in other musics? Why is the knowledge of harmony crucial to the improviser?
5. What is form? What are some common forms in jazz? What is a chorus? What is an arrangement?