

Success at College Jazz & General Music Auditions: Process

Practical advice by **Jeff Rupert**, Director of Jazz Studies, University of Central Florida

Prior to an Audition

- It's okay for a student to email or call a director/auditioner to ask for specifics. Check the website first; they will most likely be directed there.
- Be leery if the student is not invited on campus prior to the audition.

Day of the Audition: What To Expect

- Usually there is some sort of general meeting prior to auditions. Parents get information. Often there are administrators and counselors there to answer varied questions.

The Simple Things Get a Student Off To a Good Start!

- Set up and warm up prior to entering audition.
- Dress neatly.
- Shake hands and look people in the eye.
- Blow/play a couple notes – it's okay!
- Get to business.

The Audition

- The audition itself is usually short (10 minutes).
- Auditions include a prepared piece or two.
- Be ready to have a play-along on cd or media player.
- At UCF, our faculty is there to play with auditionees. Lead Sheets are not usually required, unless the tune is out of the ordinary.

Repertoire (see below)

- Remind student to have their gear ready prior to walking in the room.
- Drum sets, piano, amps are provided.
- Guitarists make sure to have a cable.
- Drummers have your own sticks and brushes.
- Horn players have your instrument out, ready to play.
- Doubles: have them handy, but don't expect to play them (you may be asked).

Repertoire Ideas (Contrasting Compositions)

- *Recordame* by Joe Henderson. Uses modal harmony (first 16), and tertian ii-V-I's on the last 16 bars.
- *Groovin' High* by Dizzy Gillespie. Utilizes ii-V-I's along with alternate resolutions, and resolution to a dominant chord.
- *Solar* by Miles Davis. Excellent tune utilizing tertian harmony.

- *Minority* by Gigi Gryce. Minor and major tonalities, tertian harmony.
- *Softly as in a Morning Sunrise* allows for modal approaches on the A sections, with tertian harmony on the bridge.
- *Yardbird Suite* by Charlie Parker. Major harmony on the A sections, minor tonalities using a minor chord as a i or ii chord on the bridge.
- *Half Nelson*. Great tune for tertian harmony and deceptive cadences.
- *Joy Spring* by Clifford Brown. Cadential harmony in three keys.

Scale Studies

- Major
- Minor (jazz "melodic" and harmonic)

Optional but Important Bebop Scales

- 7th scale
- Bebop major
- Bebop minor (Barry Harris refers to this as the minor 6 diminished scale)

Optional

- Diminished scales (half/whole or whole/half)

For Drum Set Players

Be ready to play varying styles (see rhythm section links for aural examples)

- Medium Swing
- Up Tempo Swing (Either with brushes or sticks)
- Samba
- Bossa Nova
- 6/8 Afro Cuban Style
- Funk

Overlooked: Eartraining

- Interval identification: all intervals within an octave
- Chord qualities (optional but important): major, minor, maj7, min7, dominant 7.

Sight Reading!

Students should be prepared to sight read a simple piece or etude probably no longer than 16 bars.



Saxophonist **Jeff Rupert** is a YAMAHA performing artist and founder of Flying Horse Records. He is Pegasus Professor, Trustee Endowed Chair and Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Central Florida. He is a frequent HAPCO Clinician at jazz clinics and camps. He has performed at venues including the Blue Note, Birdland, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Tokyo Forum, the National Concert Hall of Taipei, Taiwan as well as jazz festivals in Europe, Israel, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Info: <https://music.cah.ucf.edu> | Facebook @JeffRupertSax

Success at College Jazz & General Music Auditions: Listening

Practical advice by **Jeff Rupert**, Director of Jazz Studies, University of Central Florida

Crucial Steps Years or Months Prior: Listening

Have your students work on listening prior to an audition. See accompanying recommended discography. A large part of any performer's conceptualization stems from aural imitation (regardless of style).

RHYTHM SECTION RECORDINGS

Kelly at Midnight, [The Wynton Kelly Trio](#)

Great example of bass/drums/piano.

Ramsey Lewis Live in Chicago, [Ramsey Lewis Trio](#)

Excellent interaction, buoyancy.

Tranes Blues from the album *Workin'*, Red Garland & Miles Davis.

Great piano comping. Red plays everything ahead an eighth note.

Let's Cool One, Philly Joe Jones with Clark Terry and Thelonious Monk.

Drums: **playing quarter notes on the ride**, and great left hand (snare) vocabulary. WOW!

Jumpin' at the Woodside, Basie with Rufus Jones on drums

Great rhythm section in a big band. Watch interaction and time feel of the rhythm section- bass and drums connected, with Basie and Freddie Green.

Ready and Able, George Benson.

Great guitar comping. (you can turn one speaker off, and just hear guitar and drums.

If I Were a Bell from the album *Relaxin'*. The Miles Davis Quintet.

Paul Chambers' bass playing. Red Garland also plays all the chords ahead an eighth note on this recording too.

Kenya, Machito and his Afro Cubans.

Afro Cuban Jazz: Afro feel (similar to cha-cha) transitions to a Mambo.

Wild Jungle, Machito and his Afro Cubans.

Mambo.

Playing funk, **James Brown's** band is the go-to for everything. Listen to the space in the rhythm section. Ostinato figures in all the instruments. Space is golden.

[Trio Da Paz](#)

This recording typifies rhythm section playing for a Bossa Nova, which loosely translated mean new beat or new flair.

SAXOPHONE RECORDINGS

Sonny Stitt

[Scrapple From the Apple](#)
[Stittsie](#)

Hank Mobley

[Hugore](#)

Dexter Gordon

[Scrapple From the Apple](#)

David "Fathead" Newman

[Hard Times](#)

Lester Young

[Lester Leaps In](#)

George Coleman

[Pretty Blues](#)

TRUMPET RECORDINGS

Louis Armstrong

[Dream a Little Dream of Me](#)

Clark Terry

[Boo-Dah](#)

Cootie Williams (with Ella Fitzgerald)

[Duke's Place](#)

Fats Navarro

[The Squirrel](#)

Blue Mitchell

[Stittsie](#)

TROMBONE RECORDINGS

JJ Johnson

[Afternoon in Paris](#)

Curtis Fuller

[Hugore](#)

Kai Winding and JJ Johnson

[Trombone for Two](#)

John Allred

[Blue Monk](#)