Université de Montréal

L'improvisation jazz en tant qu'enrichissement artistique pour le trompettiste principal de big band swing moderne

Jazz improvisation as an artistic enhancement for the modern swing big band lead trumpet player

par

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***Ron Di Lauro** a été mon directeur de recherche jusqu'à sa retraite, et il a continué à occuper ce rôle jusqu'à ma soutenance de l'examen de synthèse.

Résumé

Le rôle de la *lead trumpet* dans un grand ensemble de jazz est hautement spécialisé et nécessite des études approfondies. Cette recherche explore le processus d'amélioration de l'art musical d'un *lead trumpet* de grand ensemble de *swing* moderne en plongeant dans l'étude pratique de la tradition jazz. Elle englobe une large gamme de ressources, comprenant une compréhension approfondie de l'histoire des grands ensembles et du rôle spécifique qu'ils jouent au sein de l'ensemble.

Ce travail se concentre principalement sur la fourniture d'exemples techniques spécifiques tirés de la théorie jazz, du répertoire, de la littérature sélectionnée pour la trompette jazz et de la discographie pertinente, comprenant des références audios et visuelles. De plus, il présente une analyse des performances de deux *lead trumpet* de renom ayant marqué l'histoire de la scène jazz en jouant dans deux époques différentes avec le Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra. Cette analyse vise à souligner les avantages de la connaissance de l'improvisation jazz. L'objectif principal est de démontrer que cette étude peut grandement bénéficier au *lead trumpet* d'un orchestre de jazz, en complément de ses compétences techniques et musicales existantes.

De plus, cette étude constitue une ressource précieuse pour les étudiants et professionnels aspirant à jouer le rôle de *lead trumpet* au sein d'un ensemble de jazz. En offrant des perspectives sur les aspects pratiques de l'étude de la tradition jazz, elle fournit des conseils et un soutien à ceux qui cherchent à développer leur expertise dans ce domaine spécialisé.

Mots-clés: trompettiste principal, big band, jazz, improvisation, musique

Abstract

The role of the lead trumpet in a jazz big band is highly specialized and requires extensive study. This research explores the process of enhancing the musical artistry of a modern swing big band lead trumpet player by delving into the practical study of the jazz tradition. It encompasses a wide range of resources, including a deep understanding of big band history and the specific role it plays within the ensemble.

This work primarily focuses on providing specific technical examples derived from jazz theory, repertoire, selected jazz trumpet literature, and relevant discography, which include audio and visual references. Additionally, it presents a performance analysis of two prominent lead trumpet players who made history in the jazz scene by playing in two different eras with the Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra. This analysis aims to highlight the benefits of jazz improvisation knowledge. The main objective is to demonstrate that this study can greatly benefit the lead trumpet player in a jazz orchestra, complementing their existing technical and musical skills.

Furthermore, this study serves as a valuable resource for aspiring students and professionals interested in performing the lead trumpet role within a jazz ensemble. By offering insights into the practical aspects of studying the jazz tradition, it provides guidance and support for those seeking to develop their expertise in this specialized field.

Keywords: lead trumpet, big band, jazz, improvisation, music

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Dedicated to my father Alcides Lenhari, my mother Dirce Lenhari (In memorian), my wife Graziela Esteves and my daughter Alice Esteves Lenhari.

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Lastly, the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the *Université de Montréal* fills me with immense joy. Pursuing my studies at such a prestigious institution is a dream come true.

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Introduction

The term Modern Swing Big Band

It is important to note that when referring to the modern swing big band, we are discussing the style of interpretation that was established from the rise of bebop in the 1940s and everything that followed, influencing subsequent genres1. However, nowadays composers tend to flirt more with classical music. It is pertinent to clarify that the term "Modern" is distinct from "Contemporary," assisting in better classifying the style proposed in this work.

Justification for the study

From the beginning of my journey as a trumpeter, what inspired me musically the most were recordings of big bands, and I always felt drawn to the art of playing in a trumpet section. As I began to study more seriously and dedicate myself 100% to music, I started engaging with various big bands in the region where I lived and studied.

Over time, I observed that the lead trumpeters I admired the most in this style were musicians who also devoted themselves to the study of improvisation. I always wondered: Why do these guys, who have some knowledge of improvisation, appeal to me more when playing than those who have no interest in jazz studies whatsoever?

The more I immersed myself in the world of big bands in São Paulo, Brazil, the more I realized that musicians who had no connection with improvisation study, despite sometimes having more technical skills and control of the instrument, lacked artistic refinement and musical perception in interacting with other section musicians (blend, tuning, articulation) and the entire band (time-feel, dynamics). Many times, these musicians played loudly and high, but they lacked sensitivity to interpret an arrangement. They often played octave above passages that were not coherent.

Based on these personal observations, I began to dedicate myself to the study of improvisation, with the aim of improving my performance as a lead trumpet player, even before accessing articles

[1] It will be discussed more detailed on Chapter 3.

or theses or studying with some of the most important lead trumpets in the United States, such as Bob Shew, Nick Marchionne, Bryan Davis, and Laurie Frink.

This compilation of moments from my career, playing in many trumpet sections in Brazil, always made me think it would be interesting to delve deeper into why I had this perception of situations. From the moment I decided to pursue my master's degree, I knew that my next research topic would be improvisation as a tool to enhance the performance of the lead trumpet in a big band.

Improvisation vs Interpretation

The question about the difference between improvisation and interpretation may arise when we talk about lead trumpet performance. Wouldn't the interpretation of a particular piece be what makes the musician execute such an arrangement satisfactorily? The answer is yes; however, what we aim to highlight in this work is that, despite the importance of studying interpretation and being able to perform excerpts convincingly through such study, the practice of improvisation is more than just important; it is a tool that brings the performer to a higher level on the scale, adding depth.

While interpretative studies of styles are indeed important, delving seriously into the study of improvisation provides a broader aesthetic range within the style to be executed Therefore, when we refer to the study of improvisation, we include the study of interpretation under the same umbrella. This connection is both present and necessary because a jazz musician can play all the fanciest notes on the chords and still not sound good if their interpretation is not cohesive with the style.

We can cite Berliner (2009):

> […] Similarly, once improvisers fix in their memories the features of a piece's road map, they need no longer mark their changing positions within its piece's form by consciously imaging chord symbols. Rather, they can instantaneously gauge their progress by band's collage of sounds and the relative positions of sounds on their instruments. This frees their full attention for the precise details of their own parts as they move confidently, creatively and in tempo through the piece's harmonic course[…] Not surprisingly, the jazz tradition generally elevates aural musical knowledge, with is associated powers of apprehension and recall, to the paramount position." (Berliner, 2009)

One point to keep in mind as a lead trumpet player is the uniformity in the way we perform our parts. After finding a musical manner to interpret the music, it is vital to maintain unity and

predictability to allow other musicians to adapt to your style. This, in turn, enables them to be guided with confidence.

Therefore, in my view, improvisation is an important tool for enhancing the creative/artistic aspect of the lead trumpet player, and it is what I will point out in this paper. It brings to the forefront coherent and relevant interpretations aligned with the style proposed by the arranger/composer.

This work aims to demonstrate the research conducted during the doctoral program at *Université de Montréal*, focusing on the role of the lead trumpet player in a big band setting and how improvisation can enhance their performance in this specific role.

In recent years, research on the lead trumpet player of a big band or jazz orchestra has advanced. However, there still needs to be quantitative academic material specifically dedicated to studying this role. Most of the existing research is based on empirical evidence.

It is worth noting that numerous studies in the literature are dedicated to improving trumpet technique, range, and strength, as well as studies focused on improvisation and style. However, there is a need for more resources specifically aimed at the lead trumpet player in a jazz ensemble.

Being a lead trumpet player encompasses more than having a proficient high register, often called *high chops*, within the musical community. The demanding role of a lead trumpet player in a big band requires technical preparation (dynamic range, *tessitura*, sound quality, dexterity), mental readiness (temperament, leadership skills, camaraderie), and musical competence (knowledge of style and phrasing).

Today, the lead trumpet player must possess a comprehensive understanding of the performance sphere. They need to master techniques to play high and powerful notes while also being able to contribute to the band's appropriate swing. In the past, playing in the high range of the instrument was considered a specialty reserved for selected trumpet players.

However, with the increase in the number of musicians and technical resources, more trumpet players can now perform in this range. As a result, the emphasis on this role as a *specialty* has diminished, and it is now considered a *standardized* role.

The contemporary lead trumpet player is expected to execute high and extremely higher notes and sometimes incorporate improvisation.

The term *jazz music* is broad and is encompassed in various styles other than swing; Latin, funk, and rock music can all be categorized as jazz styles, but each has its unique nuances that must be faithfully performed.

According to Gunther Schuller (1925-2015) in his book *Musings* (1999):

> […] there are several types of swing, and although in the various historical periods of jazz various kinds of rhythmic phrasing, rhythmic feeling, rhythmic conceptions have been explored, it is also true that such conceptions were then adhered to by great majority of musicians working at any given time […] (Schuller, 1999)

After this statement, it is essential to say that this research will focus specifically on the *swing feel* that has been firmly established since the middle 1940s, mainly with Count Basie and Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestras.

According to McNeil (1999), before bebop, the way jazz works were articulated was different:

> The main problem in defining swing is that it has meant different things in different eras. In the thrities to early forties, swing was defined as a 12/8 feel, with frequent accents on the downbeat. Some people still define swinging in terms of 12/8. Unfortunately this definition has not been true for over fifty years. A 12/8 feel was commonplace in the swing era[...] (McNeill, 1999)

A Brief Literature Review

In the first chapter, we will discuss the historical background of big bands, explaining their development up to the present day because we believe this subject is pertinent for the player to perform in a cohesive manner. For this matter the books *The Jazz Book: From Ragtime to the 21st Century*, from Berendt, J. and Huesmann, G. (2009) and Mark White's book, *The Observer's Book of Big Bands* (1978) are two valuable sources for research.

The second chapter will be dedicated to explaining the role of the lead trumpet in a big band setting, highlighting important aspects that require focus, such as sound, range, and equipment.

For a better understanding of that the Dan Miller (1969-2022) website, articles by Mike Vax, Saunders and Moore, and the Doctoral Essay from August Haas were well used as a basis for my point of view.

The third chapter will be divided into two parts. In the first part, we will explore how the study of improvisation can enhance the artistry of the lead trumpet player's performance, demonstrating the application of the tools explained in the chapter through visual and auditory examples. We use as a research tool Roger Ingran's book *Clinical Notes on Trumpet Playing* (2008), the Donald Albrecht thesis, *Lead trumpet style: A stylistic analysis of modern lead trumpet playing through the examination of five prominent lead trumpet players (2021),* Bob Shew articles, *Playing Lead Trumpet in a Big Band Setting,* and *Developing a Trumpet Section,* and Call's article from the ITG Journal (2021) *Leading the way: The role of jazz improvisation in developing stylistic lead trumpet playing* and the Paul Berliner's book, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (2009). The Albrecht thesis and Call's article are very close to the subject of this work, but one is just focused on some analysis of a few lead trumpet players' interpretation and the other one is just showing the historical relationship of the improvisers with the lead chair.

Utilizing the thesis from Albrecht and the Bob Shew's articles, in the second part of the third chapter, we will analyze the performances of two lead trumpet players who have left a significant mark on the Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra: Snooky Young (1919-2011) and Earl Gardner (1950-). Specifically, we will examine their rendition of the shout chorus[2] in the tune *Groove Merchant*, composed by Jerome Richardson and arranged by Thad Jones (1923-1986). The analysis will include recordings from two different periods: a live show by the Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra in 1968, featuring Snooky Young on lead trumpet, and a studio recording from 1999 on the album *Thad Jones Legacy* by the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra[3], with Earl Gardner playing the lead trumpet part.

We have selected these two musicians to analyze and compare their performances in order to highlight the impact of jazz improvisation mastery on a more expressive interpretation of the musical genre being examined. Snooky Young, renowned for his improvisational skills, will be contrasted with Earl Gardner, who did not possess the same level of improvisation prowess. By examining their performances, we aim to identify and explore the differences between their

[2] A shout chorus is traditionally the pinnacle of the big band chart. It's a tutti where the whole band plays together, usually developing the themes, motifs and harmony that came before it. (Rogers, 2020)

3 After Thad Jones moved to Denmark in 1979, the Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra became just the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra and after Mel Lewis's death in 1990, the group continued to perform at the Village Vanguard and was renamed Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.

approaches, emphasizing the significance of jazz improvisation in achieving a more expressive interpretation of the music.

Please note that all transcriptions of partition have been done by the author, unless stated otherwise.

Chapter 1 – A brief historical explanation of the Big Bands

Before starting to talk about the big bands, it is worth citing Leonard Wyeth (2008):

> The term "Big Band," referring to Jazz, is vague but popular. The term generally refers to the swing era starting around 1935, but there was no one event that kicked off a new form of music in 1935. It had evolved naturally from the blues and jazz of New Orleans, Chicago and Kansas City. (Wyeth, 2008)

In this section of the work, we will provide an overview of the history of big bands from the early 20th century onwards, with the aim of enhancing historical knowledge of the specific style on which we are focusing. This style centers around the swing feel of big bands, particularly from the post-swing era to the mid-1970s. Developing an understanding of the historical context of big band jazz is crucial for studying lead trumpet playing, which is the primary objective of this work. This comprehensive view serves as a foundational starting point for our research.

When a trumpeter possesses the historical understanding of how big band music developed and morphed into the music known today, "it allows the lead player to stylize music with accuracy within the historical context". (Albrecht, 2021)

At the beginning of the 20th century, the music scene in New Orleans witnessed the rise of jazz bands, which served as a precursor to the formation of Big Bands. "In New Orleans, it was common to encounter small bands comprising instruments such as trumpet, cornet, clarinet, trombone, and various rhythm section instruments" (Call, 2021). A notable figure from this era was Jelly Roll Morton (1885-1941), a renowned pianist. In his recording of *The Chant* in 1926, elements of the distinctive sound associated with Big Bands were already present, despite the piece being classified as *New Orleans Jazz*.

When King Oliver (1885-1938) (Fig. 18), a trumpeter who was a great inspiration to Louis Armstrong (1901-1971), handed over the musical direction of his band to Louis Russel (1902-1963) in 1929, it began to present characteristics of a big band.

However, with Fletcher Henderson (1897-1952), the sound of Big Bands was truly consolidated, and slowly and gradually, the groups formed the sections. "Finally, the formation known today was conceived with the band organized by Don Redman (1900-1964) in the early 1930s" (Berendt & Huesmann, 2009).

We can attest this Redman's importance by quoting Britton and Schuller (1987):

> Of the several devices that Redman perfected, one was the fragmentation of the band into timbral choirs - a particular Redman favourite was the clarinet trio - and utilizing these choirs in terms of the old "call and response pattern. (Brittton & Schuller, 1987)

Typically, a big band comprises twelve to twenty-five musicians, organized into four sections. The saxophones/woodwinds section includes two alto saxophones that can also play soprano, flute, and clarinet; two tenor saxophones that can play flute, clarinet, and soprano; and a baritone saxophone that can play flute, clarinet, and bass clarinet. The trumpet section consists of four trumpeters who also play flugelhorn. The trombones section comprises three tenor trombones and one bass trombone. Lastly, the rhythm section consists of piano, double bass, drums, guitar, and sometimes percussion.

It is important to note that big bands were initially formed with the intention of providing music for dancing. As mentioned in Mark White's book, *The Observer's Book of Big Bands* (1978):

> Orchestras for Dancing' there had always been. But 'Dance Bands' and later the 'Big Bands' owed almost nothing to the gavotte, the minuet or the mazurka, and perhaps only a little to the waltz. They owed a great deal, however, to ragtime, which was well and truly in existence by 1897; also to the increasing use of syncopation (developed by and from ragtime, with nuances added later by jazz pianists); and in particular to the first published sheet music for 'Dance Band Instrumentation '(1911) of the popular tunes of the day. (White, 1978)

This formation peaked between the 1930s and 1950s, a period known as the Swing Era. Notable leaders of big bands during this time included Woody Herman (1913-1987), Artie Shaw (1910-2004), Benny Goodman (1909-1986), Count Basie (1904-1984) (Fig. 19)., Harry James (1916-1983), Duke Ellington (1899-1974), Les Elgart (1917-1995), Larry Elgart (1922-2017), Tommy Dorsey (1905-1956), and Glenn Miller (1904-1944).

In 1945, with the end of World War II, the large ballrooms that hosted big bands saw a decline in popularity due to the emergence of a new musical wave that competed with the swing sound: bebop. Bebop gained prominence first in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Musicians preferred performing in small groups at jazz clubs, with improvisation being the primary focus and appreciation for these ensembles.

In 1944, Billy Eckstein (1914-1993) established what would be recognized as the first big band dedicated to bebop, featuring Dizzy Gillespie, Fats Navarro (1923-1950), and Miles Davis (1926-

1991), who were the three most famous trumpet players of the time. However, Eckstein's band disbanded three years later, and Gillespie went on to form his own bebop big band.

In the 1950s, Ellington and Basie experienced declining public interest in big bands.

Despite this lack of widespread interest, classical music composers turned to jazz. In 1957, Gunther Schuller coined the term *Third Stream*, which referred to the fusion of classical music and jazz, becoming a new style. This genre would later become a major inspiration for current musical figures, including Schuller, Gil Evans (1912-1988), John Lewis (1920-2001), David Baker (1931-2016), and William Russo (1928-2003).

In the early 1960s, big bands emerged with a proposal for music influenced by free jazz, which was in high demand then. One musician exploring this path was Charles Mingus (1922-1979), who could seamlessly transition from gospel to blues to free jazz in a single piece, allowing musicians to express their individuality. He drew inspiration from the style of Fletcher Henderson to the eccentricities of Sun Ra (1914-1993), another free jazz composer.

Some experimental music, including electronic devices and exploration of new rhythms, emerged in this same period, and Don Ellis (1934-1978) was a meaningful name.

> His orchestra, which was active from 1966-78, achieved enormous popular appeal at a time when the influence of big band music was noticeably fading. Ellis's significance lies in his use of ground-breaking musical techniques and devices, new to the world of jazz. Ellis's innovations include the use of electronic instruments, electronic sound-altering devices, experiments with quartertones, and the infusion of 20th-century classical music devices into the jazz idiom. Ellis's greatest contributions, however, came in the area of rhythm. (P. Fenlon, 2002)

Despite the increasing popularity of small rock and roll groups in the early 1970s, the number of large orchestral productions in the big band format continued to grow, and it cannot be said that big bands were utterly obsolete. This growth was not only due to periodic increases but also to the fact that a tradition of almost five decades had been established. Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra was the most musically prominent big band during this period. According to Berendt & Huesmann (2009):

> Their two directors, the trumpeter and arranger Thad Jones, and the drummer Mel Lewis, did not make concessions to the rock spirit of the time, but still managed to attract a large audience and create a contemporary big band jazz that was innovative... Thad Jones's compositions and arrangements are magnificent works of surprising creativity, full of contrasts and unexpected turns. He opened up a new world of harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and technical possibilities for the traditional big band mainstream. (Berendt & Huesman, 2009)

Big bands led by Buddy Rich (1917-1987), Louis Bellson (1924-2009), Toshiko Akiyioshi (1929), Maynard Ferguson (1928-2006), as well as the previously mentioned Woody Herman and Count Basie, are some representatives of this era. In the 1980s, big bands continued to evolve and innovate. Eventually, large orchestras emerged that could creatively fuse rock elements with the established jazz tradition. For example, Bob Mintzer (1953) pioneered writing for big bands in a truly differentiated manner within the realm of fusion, with influences from jazz rock and jazz mainstream and brought something with a solid quality of jazz-rock aesthetics to the swinging music of big bands. Other representative names from this phase are Rob McConnell's Boss Brass, Illinois Jacquet Orchestra, American Jazz Orchestra, and Jaco Pastorius Big Band.

In the 1990s, bands began to revive the traditional sound, such as the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, led by trumpeter Wynton Marsalis (1961), which set out to play adaptations of jazz classics. New ways of exploring the sound of large jazz orchestras also began to emerge. Maria Schneider (1960), an assistant to Gil Evans, explores the colours created by blending woodwind instruments and various types of mutes for brass. Schneider's compositions abandon the concept of theme and chorus; they are given through the use of long melodic lines that create tension and relaxation, exploring sound mixtures and developing original timbres. Schneider's work can be classified as orchestral impressionism, of elaborate sound sculptures created through brilliant timbres and dramatic intensification.

Other crucial contemporary jazz big bands of the 1990s include Dave Holland Big Band, McCoy Tyner Big Band, Bob Brookmeyer (1929-2011) with New Art Orchestra, the aforementioned Mingus Big Band, and the orchestras of Argentine musician Guillermo Klein (1969), and Canadian Darcy James Argue (1975), both based in New York.

“The term *jazz music* is broad and can be applied to many styles. For example, Latin, Funk, and Rock music can all be categorized as jazz style*s*, but each must be performed with its nuances” (Christopher Tague, 2017).

We must remember to mention that big band music was and still is very famous overseas and influenced musicians all around the globe. Big bands led by Perez Prado (1916-1989), Chico

O'Farrill[4] (1921-2001) and Machito (1909-1984) were and are important names in big band Latin jazz music. The Danish Radio Jazz Orchestra, NDR Jazz Orchestra, WDR Jazz Orchestra, Vienna Art Orchestra, Concertgebouw Jazz Orchestra and Paris Big Band are essential European groups. Banda Mantiqueira, Banda Urbana, Spok Frevo and Rumpilezz keep the Brazilian rhythm tradition fused with the jazz harmony approach.

Following the aforementioned information, it is important to note that this research will specifically focus on the *swing feel* that became firmly established from the mid-1940s, immediately after the swing era, and continued into the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. This distinctive style was prominently showcased by the Count Basie and Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestras, who made significant contributions through their high-quality recordings and published repertoire.

The popularity of these bands led to a growing demand for exceptional musical material for listening and performance, and we believe that they played a crucial role in shaping the performance practices of the modern swing big band setting. Their influence on jazz big band music remains significant even to this day[5].

By examining the performances of these notable ensembles, this research aims to explore and understand the specific characteristics and techniques that contribute to the captivating swing feel in a modern jazz big band context. The insights gained from studying their repertoire and performance practices will provide valuable knowledge for aspiring musicians and professionals interested in mastering the art of swing in a contemporary setting.

[4] Now led by his son Arturo O'Farrill (1960-).

[5] These ensembles are still performing even though their founders are deceased.

Chapter 2 – The lead trumpet role in a big band setting

Function

As big band music played a crucial role in spreading jazz worldwide, the lead trumpet player holds a distinguished position within this ensemble. In a big band, several functions carry great significance. For instance, the drummer plays a pivotal role in establishing the rhythmic swing, with the ride cymbal often playing a key part in defining the subdivisions of the swing feel. On the other hand, the bassist is responsible for providing the harmonic foundation and maintaining the sense of time. Additionally, the soloists contribute to the music by creatively infusing their personal touch. It is worth noting that the trumpet section, usually formed by four trumpet players, has its hierarchical roles to be followed, and the lead player needs to be well supported by their colleagues and generally serves as a model for each ensemble member.

According to Chase Sanborn (2004):

> As a member of the trumpet section, your role is obvious: follow the lead trumpet. Listen to the lead player more closely than you listen to your own part. You should be a shadow, listening and phrasing together as closely as possible. This will create a section, rather than just a bunch of trumpet players in the back row. Being a good section player is as much an art as being a lead player, and your job is just as important to the music, so take it seriously. There are some common errors committed by section trumpet players. (Sanborn, 2004)

To illustrate more about the importance of the lead trumpet role is essential to quote another article, this time from December of 1969, written by Willian Withworth (1937-), called *Lead Player:*

> The lead players are regarded as an elite, because the difficulty of the job they must perform. To oversimplify it, some trumpet players play with taste but not enough strength, and others have the strength but lack the taste. The lead player must have both. He must be able to play constantly in the upper register - the most treacherous and tiring range of the horn - while providing interpretation of the arrangement that will be definitive for the rest of the brass section and sometimes for the whole orchestra. (Withoworth, 1969)

[6] It is noteworthy that trumpets tuned in B flat (Bb) are used to perform this function, classified as transposing instruments.

Sound

In his book *Fathers of First Trumpet*, Jason Levi (2009) argues that the lead trumpet plays a crucial role in the big band, requiring a clear and resonant sound with power, accurate tuning, and consistency. Furthermore, the lead trumpet player must possess dexterity and good judgment in interpreting the music.

According to Dan Miller (2015):

> The most important aspects of playing lead trumpet are to swing hard, play with a big, fat sound and stylistically lead the trumpet section and the band. It is essential for the aspiring lead trumpeter to study the phrasing, articulation and the stylistic nuances of the masters. (Miller, 2015)

W. Saunders (2010) emphasizes that "the sound of the lead trumpet should dominate over other instruments in the big band". Consequently, the trumpet player must produce a bright tone that allows the high partial harmonics to stand out and project effectively. Moreover, the musician can influence the trumpet's natural harmonic spectrum can be influenced by the musician, making them an essential variable in shaping the instrument's timbre.

Since the lead trumpet's role is to ensure its sound is heard even at lower dynamics, it should be characterized as big and full rather than solely strong. Thomas Moore (2008), in an article prepared for ITG[7], states:

> While I cannot give you a scientific explanation for the fact, our experiments have shown that an amateur player plays high notes with almost all of the power in the fundamental and very little power in any of the harmonics. On the other hand, when a semi-professional player plays notes above the staff, the fundamental contains the most power, but there is a significant amount of power in the first four harmonics. The interesting thing, however, is that when a world-class trumpet player plays above the staff, most of the power is in the harmonics, and the second harmonic can have more power than the fundamental. (Moore, 2008)

Robert Chapman (2002) clarifies that:

> The most important factor concerning mouthpiece resonance frequency is what it does to the tone quality. A higher resonance frequency will make for a brighter tone quality, while a lower mouthpiece resonance will result in a darker tone. (Chapman 2002 apud Frost, 2014)

To finish the sound subject, it is worth quoting Mike Vax (2017):

[7] Meaning International Trumpet Guild.

> Sound is key! Everyone in the section's sound must project at all volume levels. *Projection* is the real key to being heard at the back of a hall, whether you are playing loud or soft. In order to have effective projection, you must be blowing the air through the horn, not just into it. I think of my sound as a combination of air and energy. When I want to play higher or louder I think of blowing my sound farther away. Everyone in the section should concentrate on hearing the lead player and playing with them. (Vax, 2017)

Range

Over time, specific characteristics were established for the lead trumpet player based on the distinct styles and sound qualities of certain trumpeters, which are still followed today. Regarding utilizing the instrument's high register, Louis Armstrong can be credited as the pioneer among jazz trumpet players. "He discovered notes on the trumpet that were not known in the specialized literature of the early twentieth century" (Berendt & Huesmann, 2009) and throughout the history of popular music, arrangers and composers of prominent big bands composed their works while considering the musical and technical abilities of the musicians in their group. They would incorporate passages that showcased the musicians' strengths in their compositions. Duke Ellington (1899-1974), a renowned American band leader, provides a notable example.

Ellington's orchestra was more than a vehicle to practice and perform new compositions. Instead, his musicians inspired his music. "In rehearsal, Ellington would listen to the musicians practicing their own riffs and melodies, from which he often developed entire compositions" (Npr, 2008).

In decades past, playing in the super high region of the instrument could be considered a specialty of certain trumpeters. However, nowadays, trumpeters capable of performing such specificity are more common. Thus, "this specialist role has diminished considerably, as the technical ability of the modern trumpeter needs to reach the super high notes as well" (Haas, 2011).

During the early years of the big band era, encompassing the 1930s, the typical range required for lead trumpet players extended from approximately written high C to High E. However, there were exceptions where composers and arrangers wrote specifically for individual band members. In the case of Duke Ellington's orchestra, he had Cat Anderson (1916-1981) in his trumpet section, who was known for his expertise in playing very high notes. Ellington would dedicate passages to Anderson, allowing him to showcase his ability to play well above the usual range for a lead trumpet player of that time.

As mentioned earlier, aspiring lead trumpet players should be capable of playing high notes, at least around the high G range. Shew (n.d.) affirms that having an "excellent high register is indeed a requirement for a lead trumpet player, with the range extending at least up to concert F (above high C)". This observation remains consistent when examining scores for the first trumpet in big bands of professional musicians. Sometimes, the music may even call for playing in even higher registers. (Fig. 03)

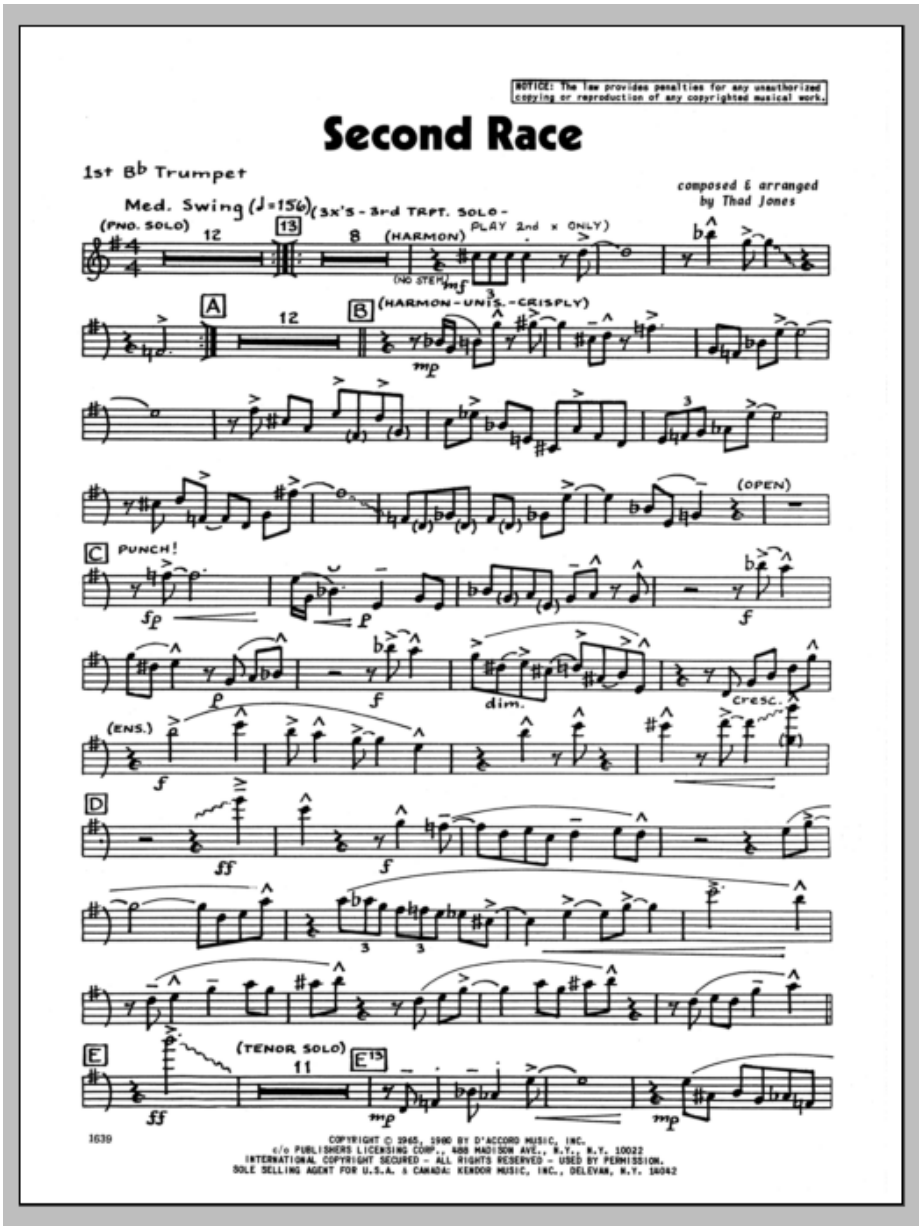

Figure 1. – First page of the lead trumpet part for *Second Race* (1966)

Composed and arranged by Thad Jones (1923-1986). Published by Accord Music INC.

Depending on the duration of the concert or show, which can range from one to three hours, the performance can become physically demanding for the lead trumpet player. This is attributed to the technical difficulties involved and the muscular demands required to fulfill their role effectively.

Haas (2011) mentions that the "lead trumpeter nowadays also needs to play the notes at the extremely high range, i.e. above the F concert note", which can be seen in the part presented below (Fig. 04)

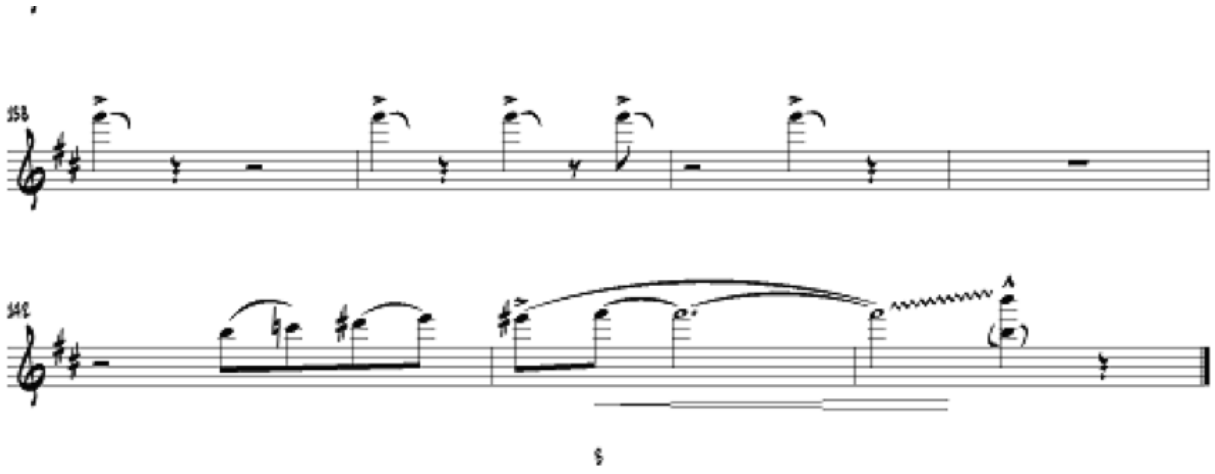

Figure 2. – Last few measures of Gordon Goodwin's (1954) composition *The Jazz Police* (2003).

Published by Alfred Publishing co, INC.

Equipment

The equipment used by a lead trumpet player plays a crucial role in achieving a high level of performance excellence. Specifically, the mouthpiece and trumpet chosen must possess certain characteristics that provide the musician with the confidence to execute specific passages effectively. According to Haas' (2011) doctorate research:

> Suitable equipment for lead trumpet players includes mouthpieces with a medium/small diameter, typically ranging from 15 mm to 16.80 mm in internal circumference (with some exceptions). The cup depth of these mouthpieces should be shallow to a significant degree, allowing for good sonic performance while maintaining the desired characteristics. In addition, the choice of trumpet should offer a level of air resistance that aids in the player's performance. (Haas, 2011)

In an interview with Haas (2011), Greg Gisbert (1966-), the lead trumpet of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra at that time, explained that the advantage when playing with a shallow mouthpiece in the high range is that it will minimize the energy expended and help maintain the airspeed for producing the notes in that register.

Numerous manufacturers of mouthpieces and trumpets are on the market to assist in the lead trumpet's performance. It is up to each musician to experiment with specific materials to conclude which instrument and mouthpiece will best suit their performance.

Chapter 3 – The importance of jazz improvisation for lead trumpet performance

The perspective of improvisation in a lead trumpet context

The relationship

The relationship between improvisation and lead trumpet playing may not be immediately apparent. However, improvisation skills can serve as a valuable tool for developing various technical aspects of a lead trumpet player's performance. It is through creativity and inspiration that talent and freedom flourish, and without freedom, art cannot indeed exist.

> One can therefore say that a form of improvisation in everyday life is a succession of rapid receptions of information, choices, and responses. The more accustomed we are to performing an action requiring improvisation, the more comfortable we will feel, and the more appropriate and fluid our responses will be. (Damian Birbrier, 2019)

In this chapter, we will delve into the realm of trumpet playing, exploring the significance of jazz improvisation knowledge in enriching the performance of a lead trumpet player in a modern swing jazz big band. By utilizing aural and visual materials, we will shed light on the importance of understanding improvisation as a fundamental element of jazz, a genre renowned for its artistic expression.

Studying the foundations of improvisation is crucial for any musician aspiring to be a jazz artist. In this study, the true essence of jazz is revealed, and the lead trumpet player can further hone their skills and contribute to the world of jazz music.

According to Berliner (2009):

> The popular definitions of improvisation that emphasize only its spontaneous, intuitive nature – characterizing it as the 'making of something out of nothing' – are astonishingly incomplete. This simplistic understanding of improvisation belies the discipline and experience on which improvisers depend, and it obscures the actual practices and processes that engage them. Improvisation depends, in fact, on thinkers having absorbed a broad base of musical knowledge, including myriad conventions that contribute to formulating ideas logically, cogently, and expressively. It is not

> surprising, therefore, that improvisers use metaphors of language in discussing the art form. The same complex mix of elements and processes coexists for improvisers as for skilled language practitioners; the learning, the absorption, and utilization of linguistic conventions conspire in the mind of the writer or utilization of linguistic conventions conspire in the mind of the writer or speaker – or, in case of jazz improvisation, the player – to create a living work. (Berliner, 2009)

Based on the preceding statement, it can be concluded that the musical performance of a lead trumpet player in a big band should be viewed as an improvisational practice. This is due to the dynamic conversation and interaction between musicians, which involves interpretation, cooperation, and the creation of captivating music that aligns with the stylistic context of the arrangement.

In the context of performing written arrangements, the lead trumpet player applies improvisational elements to bring coherence, excitement, and artistic expression to the music. This involves spontaneous musical decisions, adaptability, and a keen sense of interaction with fellow musicians. By infusing their own personal touch and responding to the musical cues and nuances in real time, the lead trumpet player contributes to the overall improvisatory nature of the performance.

Thus, the performance of a lead trumpet player within a big band encompasses both the faithful execution of the written arrangement and the spontaneous improvisation that arises through the collaborative musical dialogue, resulting in a captivating and stylistically coherent musical experience.

According to Jimmy Maxwell in his book *The First Trumpeter* (1988):

> Nuances and stylistic traits that are traditionally played in the jazz style are difficult to notate. This poses a major challenge for jazz ensemble directors and trumpet players when faced with interpreting the many different symbols used by jazz arrangers and composers to indicate a desired nuance. Jazz nuances were first found in the improvisations of jazz masters and have since become an integral part of the music, therefore, instruction on the interpretation of jazz nuances is vital to the jazz tradition. (Maxwell, 1988)

The primary function of the lead trumpet player is to faithfully perform the written music while also providing their artistic interpretation. This dual responsibility highlights the importance of applying stylistic knowledge, especially in jazz performance, where individualism plays a significant role, and this extends to the performance of the lead trumpet player.

While adhering to the written score, the lead trumpet player has the opportunity to infuse their personal artistic expression into the music. This involves making stylistic choices, such as phrasing, articulation, and dynamics, that enhance the overall musical interpretation and showcase their

individuality. By incorporating their unique musical perspective, the lead trumpet player contributes to the richness and depth of the performance.

Therefore, the role of the lead trumpet player encompasses both faithfully rendering the written music and bringing their own artistic interpretation, allowing for a blend of tradition and personal creativity. This approach enhances the overall musical experience and exemplifies the individualism that is celebrated in jazz performance.

In this Eric O'Donnell's (2011) statement, we can observe what he points out about the individualism subject:

> Finding your own voice on your instrument that is innovative, yet tied to tradition. As Dizzy states, this is the most difficult to master in that there are few musicians who have truly achieved a distinct and personal style. Cultivating your own voice in this music has it's own prerequisites. First you need to have a model and the drive and dedication to transcribe your favorite players. From there you'll have a basis upon which you can begin to add your own contribution. (O'Donnell, 2011)

Furthermore, we can attest in this other quotation from Call (2011) about the individuality of a lead trumpet playing:

> The role of the lead player in any instrumental section of a jazz big band is rather self-explanatory; they lead the section by ensuring everyone plays in a unified way. However, the role of a lead trumpet player goes a bit further. Not only does the trumpet section look to the lead player for stylistic guidance; members of the other sections, particularly the lead alto and lead trombone players, are expected to match their playing styles to that of the lead trumpet player. (Call, 2021)

When embarking on the study of improvisation, one of the most crucial aspects is developing an awareness of the musical form and the appropriate articulation for the desired style. It is equally important to have a conscious understanding of the harmonic and melodic progression. One effective tool for absorbing and improving the desired style is the practice of transcribing solos. Through this method, we can immerse ourselves in the music, actively listen to how it is played, and internalize the stylistic nuances.

We can cultivate a profound artistic and stylistic understanding by transcribing solos and repeatedly listening to them. This process allows us to become familiar with the intricacies of the style and incorporate them into our own lead trumpet performance. Through diligent practice and absorbing the transcribed solos, we develop a sense of connection and fluency with the style, ultimately enhancing our ability to perform authentically and artfully.

Roger Ingram (1957-), a notable lead trumpet player, says in his *book Clinical Notes on Trumpet Playing* from 2008:

> Learning how to listen to recorded and live music is one of the most valuable tools a musician can have. If you approach listening correctly, the results are much like taking a private lesson or attending a master class. (Ingram, 2008)

As musicians become more acquainted with the language of jazz, they develop an increased ability to recognize common patterns and rhythms in written music. This familiarity with jazz vocabulary becomes a valuable resource when encountering a new arrangement for the first time. Additionally, the practice of improvisation serves as a catalyst for students to confront and overcome obstacles in their musical development.

To illustrate, let us consider the study of a widespread melodic pattern in bebop (Fig. 05 and Audio 01). By engaging with this pattern, we gain a deeper understanding of the stylistic elements at play, particularly in the instrument's upper register, where control is crucial. Applying appropriate articulations becomes more achievable when we possess a solid grasp of jazz phrasing, even in the absence of explicit markings in the sheet music.

By studying patterns and integrating improvisation techniques, musicians can navigate musical challenges more effectively and maintain a cohesive and authentic performance approach. This combination of technical skill and interpretive understanding enhances their ability to bring the essence of jazz to life, even in complex or unfamiliar musical contexts.

“When a trumpeter possesses the historical understanding of how big band music developed and morphed into the music known today, it allows the lead player to stylize music with accuracy within the historical context”. (Albrecht, 2021)

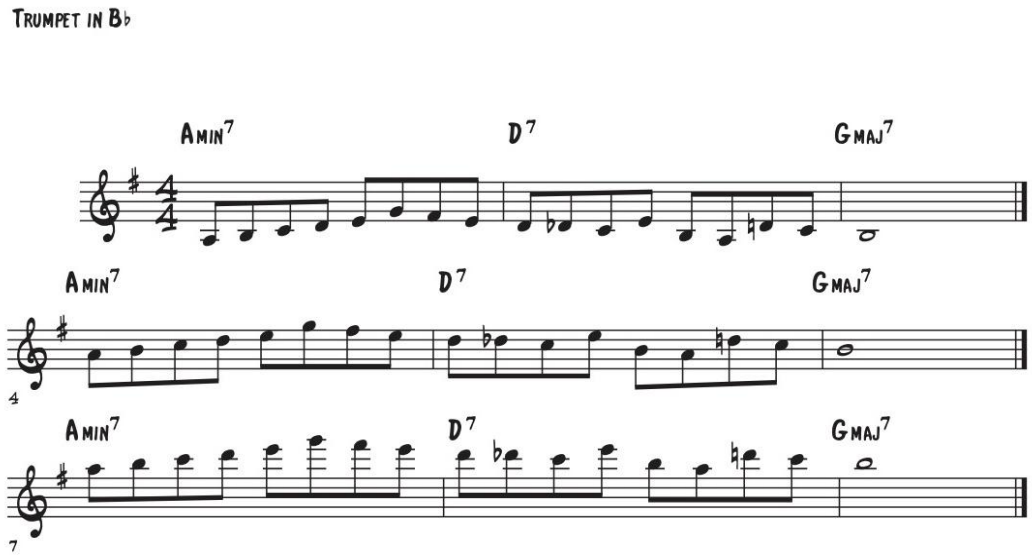

Figure 3. – Bebop Pattern

Audio 1[8]

It is ensured that the lead trumpet player has a significant role in a swing jazz big band. Bob Shew states in his article *Developing the Trumpet Section (n.d.)* that "one of the primary requisites for a lead trumpet player is being a good jazz player because the most musical way to play a lead part is as if it were a jazz solo in ensemble form. This is how to make it swing".

Speaking of swing, to simplify what it is, one could say that swing's presence or absence is instantly distinguished by jazz audiences as well. Hence, the musician either has the swing or he doesn't, but let's see how the Jazz in America glossary defines swing:

> 1. To swing is when an individual player or ensemble performs in such a rhythmically coordinated way as to command a visceral response from the listener (to cause feet to tap and heads to nod); an irresistible gravitational buoyancy that defies mere verbal definition. 2. A way of performing eighth notes in which downbeats and upbeats receive approximately 2/3 and 1/3 of the beat, respectively, providing a rhythmic lilt to the music. 3. A stylistic term to designate a jazz form that originated in the 1930s with the advent of the big bands (as in Swing Era). (Jazz in America Glossary)

Bebop is a significant milestone in jazz interpretation, as it solidified the stylistic approach to playing jazz music. Its influence on musicians has been profound and enduring, shaping how jazz

[8] Audio available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j4iNH838uLtyCIVro7UkXaCOQIAw5DP9/view?usp=drive_link. Audio performed and recorded by the author.

has been performed since that period. Even music created before the bebop era is often interpreted and performed in alignment with the bebop style.

The innovations and musical ideas that emerged during the bebop era, including complex harmonies, rapid tempos, and intricate melodic lines, have had a lasting impact on jazz musicians. The bebop *language* and techniques have become an integral part of the jazz vocabulary, informing how musicians approach improvisation, phrasing, and overall musical expression.

While jazz music of earlier periods may have been performed differently at the time, the bebop era set a standard for how jazz should be played. It established a foundation that musicians continue to build upon, incorporating bebop elements into their performances and interpretations of both, traditional and contemporary jazz compositions.

In summary, bebop's influence on jazz interpretation remains significant, shaping how jazz musicians approach and perform music, regardless of the era or style being explored.

It is pertinent to quote this passage from David Baker's book, *How To Play Bebop 1: For All Instruments The Bebop Scales and Other Scales in Common Use (1988)*:

> I think that one could say without fear of contradiction that bebop is the common practice of jazz. Very little music in popular idioms has escaped its influence and older styles that coexist with it have absorbed many of its characteristics and strengths.
> Almost all later styles - cool, hard-bop, funky, contemporary mainstream (4ths, pentatonics, angularity, etc.), thirdstream, fusion, etc. - have all borrowed liberally from the language, structure, grammar, gestures, etc. of bebop. (Baker, 1988)

In a performance within a modern swing big band, which encompasses the period from the mid-1940s to the mid-1970s, particularly with groups like Count Basie and Thad Jones big bands[9], the lead trumpet player, if they possess both improvisational skills and awareness, will imbue their part with a greater range of musical nuances. This enhances the overall listening experience and adds depth to the performance, as they have a broader palette of musical options to apply to the interpretation of the written music.

It is pertinent to quote Spera (1992)

> It is impossible to notate a jazz phrase exactly the way it sounds (especially the Bebop Style). All jazz styles should be learned through a process of osmosis, i.e., through the ear to the brain by listening to

[9] With beboppers already being part of the groups.

> great jazz music. Before playing a phrase, all jazz players should learn to sing it using the scat syllables. (Spera, 1992)

In the swing style of jazz, the written notation serves as a guide[10], but it is important to note that the actual sound produced during performance can vary significantly from what is written on the page. The written music only provides an approximation of how the music should sound when it is performed. Therefore, with their improvisational abilities and understanding of the swing style, the lead trumpet player brings the music to life by infusing it with the necessary swing feel, phrasing, and other expressive elements beyond the written notation.

This approach allows for a more dynamic and engaging performance, as the lead trumpet player's improvisational prowess adds an extra layer of musicality and creativity to the ensemble's sound. The result is a captivating and authentic rendition of the swing style that goes beyond what is simply written on the page.

Scot Barnhart (2005) attests:

> If the lead player is not a seasoned soloist, then he or she should defer to players in the section who are when comes to interpretation. This is because the language of the jazz soloist [is] the model for which the music is written… Every jazz phrase written down on paper for a section to play has come from an accomplished jazz soloist… These phrases should be played just as a soloist. (Barnhart, 2005)

The swing feel and articulation are crucial elements, perhaps the most important ones, for a lead trumpet player to establish the desired style and convey confidence, consistency, uniformity, and knowledge to both the band and the audience. Through these aspects, the lead player sets the tone and character of the music.

The variations in tempo play a significant role in capturing the essence of improvisation, and they greatly influence the lead player's approach. Understanding and effectively implementing the swing feel within different tempos is essential for creating an authentic and engaging performance. We can quote McNeil (1999):

> Swing - the rhythmic content and feel of a line - is totally dependent on accents, and accents depend on articulation patterns. Many people have tried to define swing but, for the most part, simply have come to the conclusion that it is the paramount importance. It is, of course, since choosing the right notes will not help a line played in an unswinging manner. The main problem in defining swing is that meant different things in different eras. In the thirties to early forties, swing was defined as a 12/8

[10] We suggest using the Davis, J. S. (1999). A standardization of jazz nuances for trumpet with accompanying compact disc [Dissertation]. University of Northern Colorado as a model.

> feel, with frequent accents on downbeat. Some people still define swinging in terms of 12/8. Unfortunately, this definition has not been true for over fifty years. A 12/8 feel was commonplace in the swing era, but the eight-note feel in contemporary jazz is even, with accents on the upbeat. These upbeat accents make a line of eight-notes sound uneven but do not, in fact, make them so. (McNeil, 1999)

We will highlight some notations using the dominant bebop scale further to illustrate the concepts of articulation and swing feel as applied to a written passage.

This will showcase various alternatives for interpretation and performance. By exploring different articulation techniques and infusing the swing feel into the passage, the lead trumpet player can bring out the desired musical expression and enhance the overall musical experience.

> In jazz swing music, a jazz articulation is used, this jazz articulation is a pattern of tonguing and slurring between given notes. This is different from traditional classical articulation where every note is tongued unless instructed differently. This jazz articulation is also not commonly notated within the part and is left up to the discretion of the player. This pattern is very effective when playing a series of eighth notes at any tempo. In general, the slower the tempo, the more that it feels like a triplet, wherein at a faster tempo, the notes and articulations straighten out and smoothen out. This aspect of jazz articulation is synonymous with all jazz trumpet playing; and is not dictated by the lead trumpet player, however sometimes lead trumpet players will decide to slur a whole line and omit the use of a jazz articulation at all. (Albrecht, 2021)

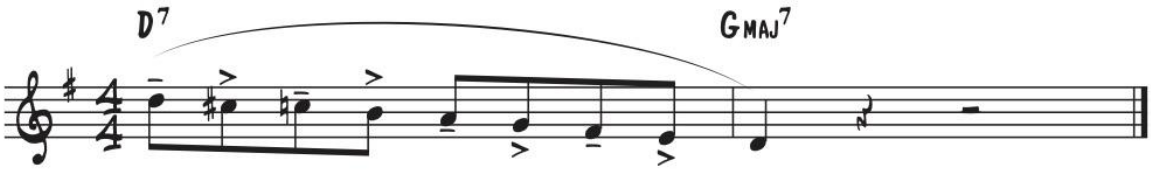

Figure 4. – Legato-tongued and accented upbeats for slower to medium tempos.

Audio 2[11]

[11] Audio available at:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/16fwyf4QNYy6ozlha1jEeBY5iUeowdPZr/view?usp=drive_link.

Audio performed and recorded by the author.

Figure 5. – Slur to tongue to slur for a faster medium-up tempo.

Audio 3 [12]

Figure 6. – Slurred with tongued pivot points in fast passages.

Audio 4 [13]

As discussed in the previous chapter, big bands as we know them today were a natural evolution, and the role of the lead trumpet player emerged as a specialized position. However, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the playing of jazz soloists heavily influenced the style of lead trumpet playing. It is well known that many celebrated lead trumpet players throughout history have also been exceptional jazz improvisers.

When we delve deeper into the roots of lead trumpet playing, we find that it draws inspiration from the improvisational approach of jazz soloists. The skills and techniques developed by these soloists

[12] Audio available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zYjVhd_dr9onGMKXgZLFtZWFVAVGflFY/view?usp=drive_link Audio performed and recorded by the author.

[13] Audio available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vd45cwBXvldKI-Qo0VBMLaq2-bKmrI3y/view?usp=drive_link Audio performed and recorded by the author.

have greatly shaped the style and interpretation of lead trumpet players. This connection between lead trumpet playing and jazz improvisation is no secret in the music community.

The ability to improvise is a valuable asset for a lead trumpet player, allowing them to add their personal touch and creative flair to their performances. The influence of jazz improvisation on lead trumpet playing can be heard in the melodic phrasing, expressive nuances, and rhythmic variations employed by skilled lead players.

By understanding the relationship between jazz improvisation and lead trumpet playing, we gain a deeper appreciation for the artistry and versatility of these musicians.

Their ability to seamlessly blend written music with spontaneous improvisation contributes to big band music's dynamic and engaging performances.

Illustrating the application of the tools

Through the influence of innovators like King Oliver and the ground-breaking contributions of Louis Armstrong that the foundations for playing jazz trumpet were established, serving as a guiding light for trumpet players, especially those entrusted with the role of lead trumpet in big bands.

According to Call (2021):

> Louis Armstrong's sense of swing and beautifully aggressive style of playing the trumpet essentially set the pace for all future jazz trumpet players. By holding such a dominant and powerful role in these smaller bands, it was easy and natural for the trumpet to become a lead instrument for jazz big bands. (Call, 2021)

We will now present three improvised solos transcribed by the author of this work.

These solos showcase several elements that are characteristic of a typical big band lead trumpet performance, including a strong sense of time feel, hard swing, expressive vibrato, shakes, technical precision, impressive range, and commanding power. These qualities contribute to a captivating and authoritative performance within a big band setting.

As the lead trumpet player often performs strictly written parts and encounters situations where no articulations are indicated, it is essential to incorporate the knowledge of style acquired through active listening and attention to stylistic details.

We will present these three solos in two versions: first, without any notated articulations, and second, with the closest possible articulations as interpreted by the soloist. This demonstrates how with a solid understanding of the style, influenced by great soloists, we have the necessary tools to interpret the first version (without notated articulations) similarly to the second version (with notated articulations).

This presentation does not aim to provide an analysis of the solos; rather, it serves, as an illustration, to highlight the significance of style knowledge in effectively translating the written notation into a performance. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the musical style to accurately convey the intended musical expressions pointed out on the sheet music.

The solos

In one notable solo (Fig. 09, 10 and Audio 05) by Louis Armstrong on the song *Jubilee*, composed by Hoagy Carmichael (1899-1981) and Stanley Adams (1907-1994), we can observe several distinctive characteristics commonly associated with a performance by a big band lead trumpet player. The solo was recorded by Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra for Decca in the album *True Confession*on January 12, 1938, in Los Angeles.

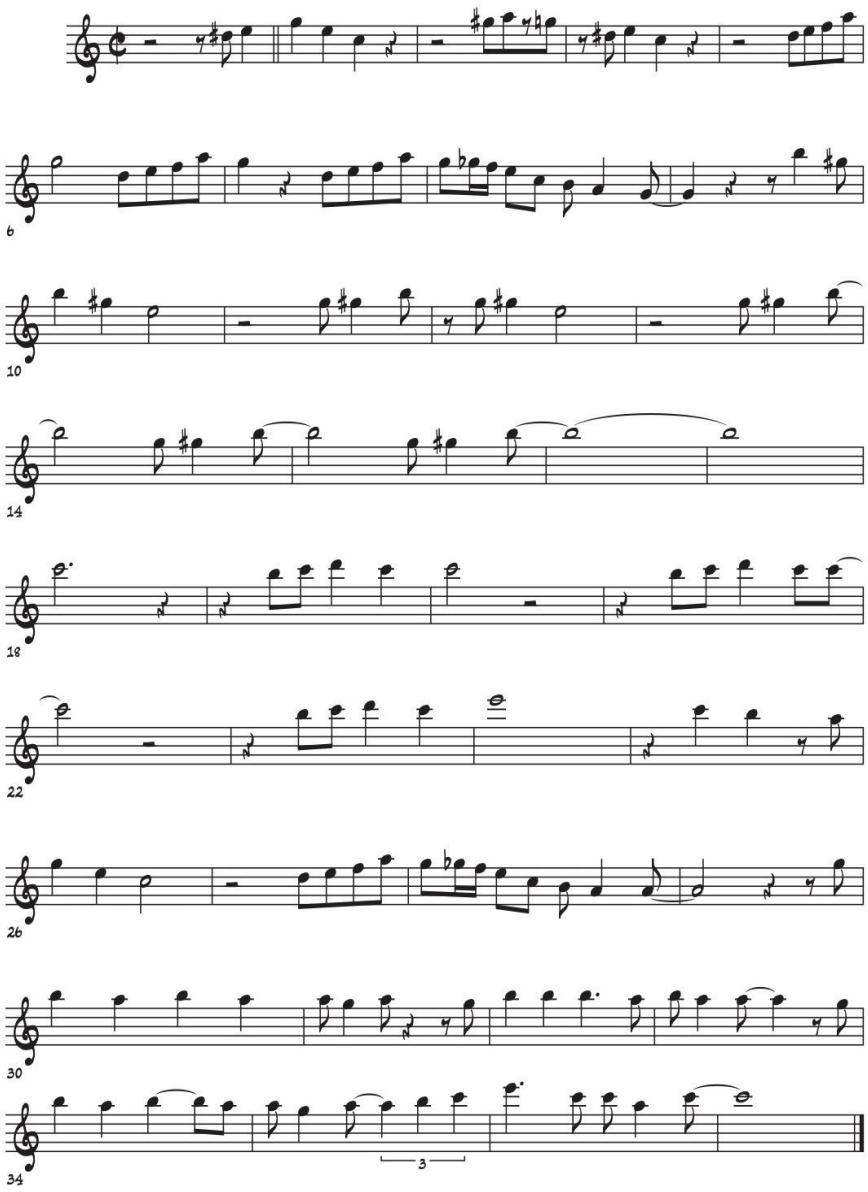

Figure 7. – Louis Armstrong Solo on *Jubilee* (1938) without musical notations.

Audio 5[14]

[14]Audio available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cShP-7Tc2Z0nFo7YQQBU709KlDpTJOQQ/view?usp=drive_link Carmichael, Hoagy and Stanley Adams, *True Confession / Jubilee*, Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, Shellac 10" 78 RPM, Decca, 1635, 1938.

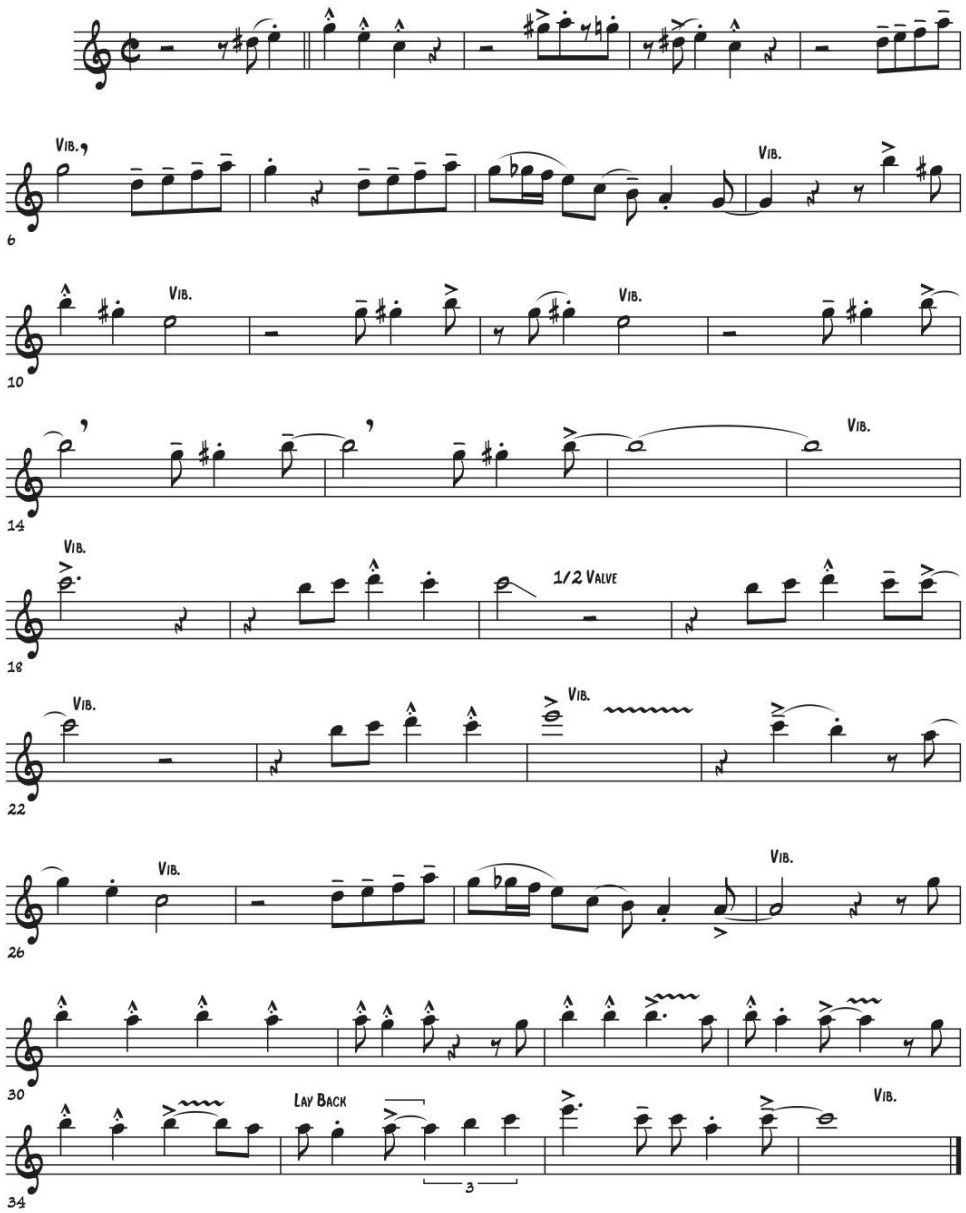

Figure 8. – Louis Armstrong Solo on *Jubilee* (1938) with musical notations.

Audio 5[15]

Snooky Young[16] (1919-2011) is widely recognized as one of the pioneers of lead trumpet playing. His remarkable skills can be heard in his solo (Fig. 11, 12 and Audio 06) on the Duke Ellington

[15]Idem.

[16] In the next chapter, we will see the Young's style as a lead trumpet player more detailed.

composition *I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart*, featured in the album *Snooky and Marshall's Album*, released in 1978.

In this solo, Snooky Young exemplifies his mastery of swing and incorporates influences from the iconic Louis Armstrong. His lines are infused with a powerful swing feel, and he skillfully integrates Armstrong-inspired elements such as expressive vibrato, precise attacks, and a keen sense of time. Young demonstrates his ability to play with tempo, effortlessly executing laybacks and seamlessly returning to the groove, resulting in a captivating sensation of floating above the rhythm section while maintaining a strong and swinging presence.

Listening to Snooky Young's performance on this track, we can appreciate his profound musicality, technical prowess, and the significant impact he had on shaping the art of lead trumpet playing. His contributions have left an indelible mark on the genre, inspiring generations of trumpet players to follow in his footsteps.

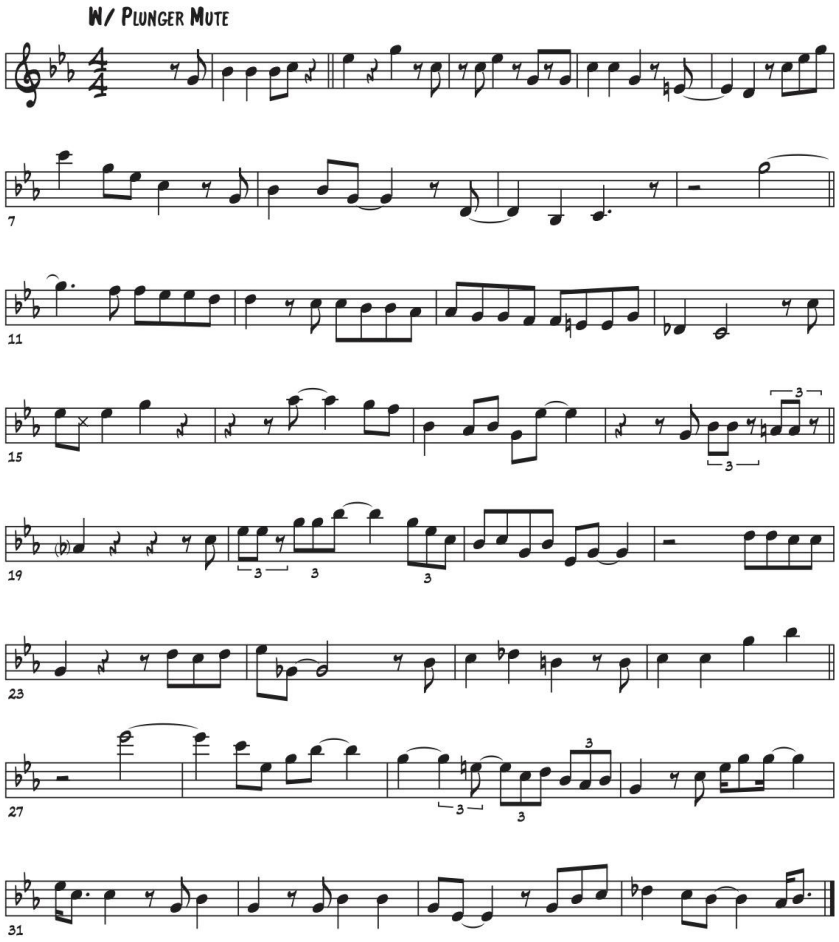

Figure 9. – Snooky Young Solo on *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart* (1978) without musical notations

Audio 6[17]

[17] Audio availabe at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hLF7_k54jBvo83loEFbRwUXYK9RXQ8J2/view?usp=drive_link Ellington, Duke, *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*, Snooky Young, Marshal Royal, Freddie Green, Ross Tompkins, Ray Brown, Louie Bellson, and Special Guest Scat Man Crothers, LP, Concord Jazz, CJ-55, 1978.

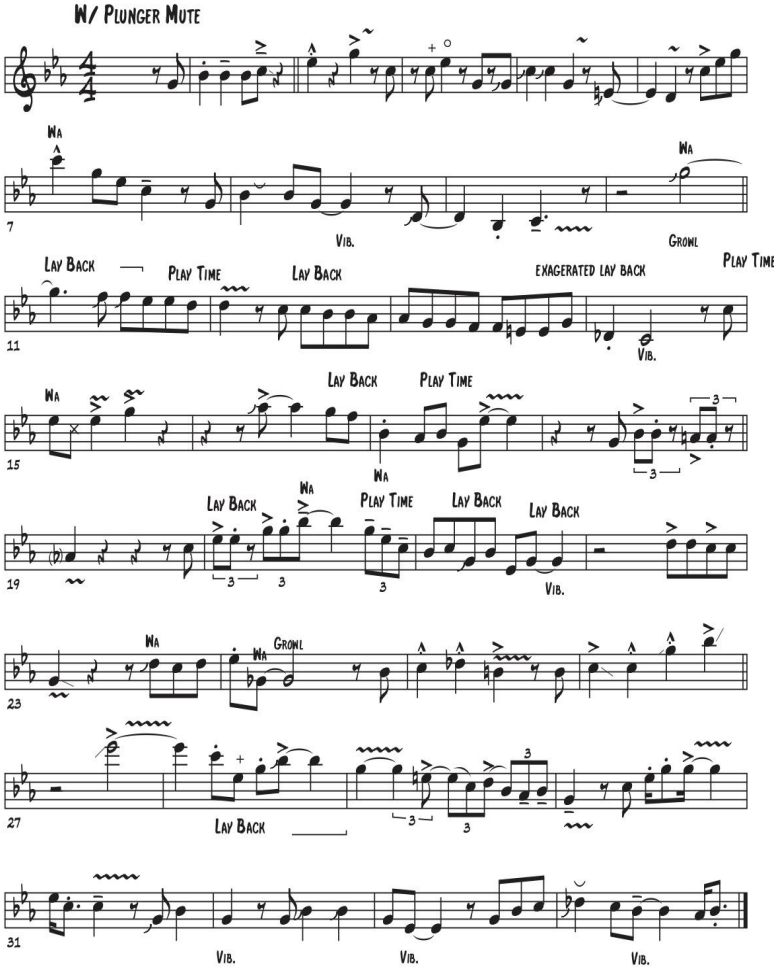

Figure 10. – Snooky Young Solo on *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart* (1978) with musical notations.

Audio 6[18]

We can also highlight another influential soloist who enormously impacted the style of lead trumpet playing: Dizzy Gillespie (1917-1993), renowned as one of the primary figures in the bebop era. Gillespie's exceptional range, technique, sense of time, and swing have served as a source of imitation for trumpet players to this day.

In the following solo of *Anthropology* (Fig. 13, 14 and Audio 07), a composition by Charlie Parker (1920-1955), performed in the album *Dizzy Gillespie and His Orchestra* from 1946, we witness

[18]Idem.

Gillespie's remarkable proficiency in demonstrating all the essential characteristics expected of a lead trumpet player. His performance exemplifies efficiency, precision, and musicality, highlighting his ability to easily navigate challenging passages while maintaining a captivating sense of swing.

Dizzy Gillespie's contributions to jazz as a soloist and an innovator have profoundly influenced the evolution of lead trumpet playing. His enduring legacy inspires trumpet players worldwide, shaping their approach to the instrument and setting new standards for technical prowess and musical expression.

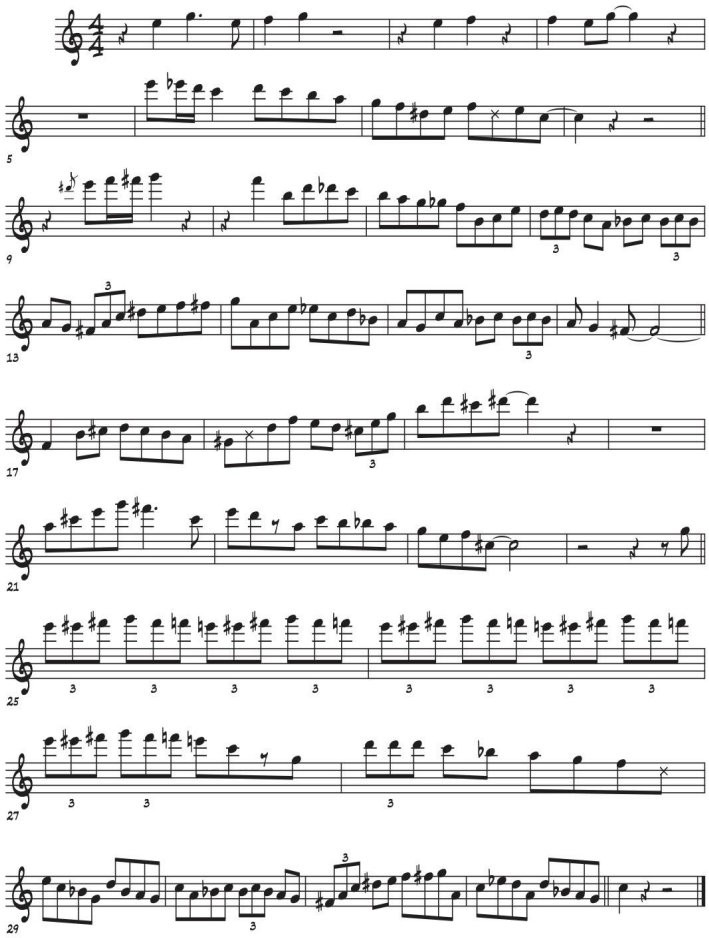

Figure 11. – Dizzy Gillespie Solo on Anthropology (1946) without musical notations.

Audio 7[19]

[19] Audio available at:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rAST61-xDk8ARryt8h_JWanfwSuYqea9/view?usp=drive_link

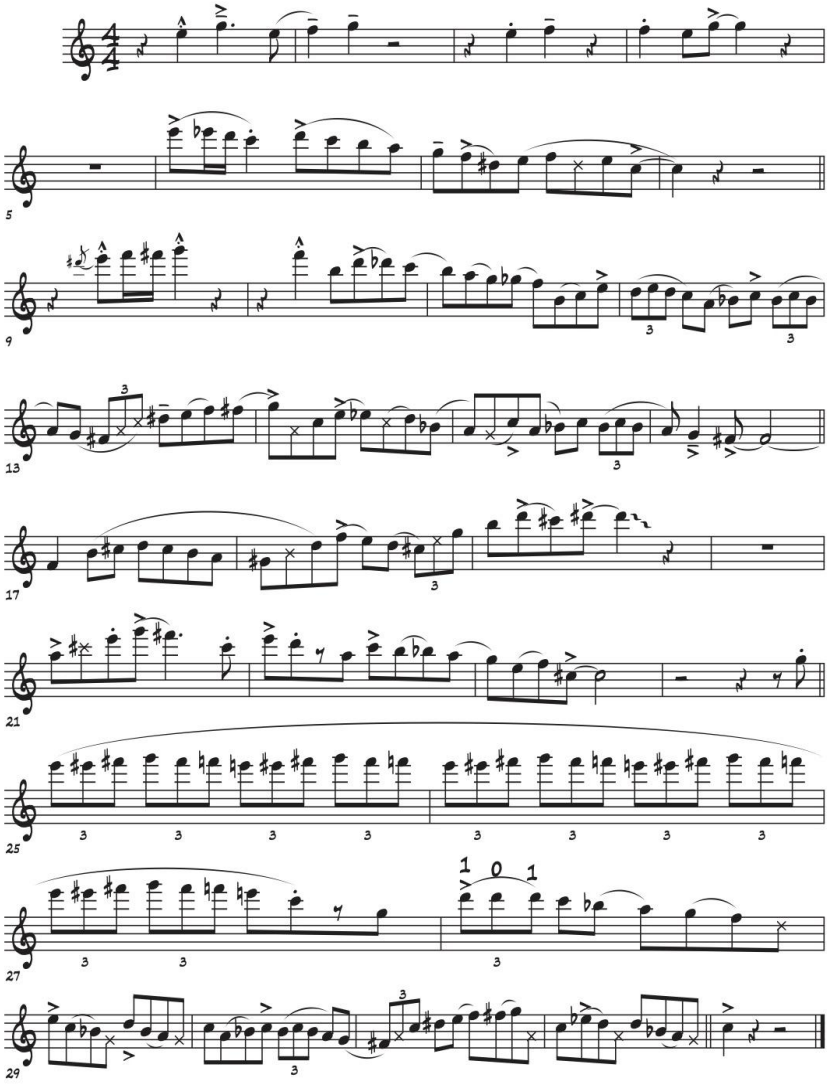

Figure 12. – Dizzy Gillespie Solo on Anthropology (1946) with musical notations.

Audio 7[20]

Parker, Charlie*, Anthropology,* Dizzy Gillespie Sextet - Ol' Man Rebop / Anthropology, Swing Music 1948 Series – No. 7, Swing Music 1948 Series – No. 8 Shellac, 10", 78 RPM, Repress, 1948. Recorded on February 22, 1946, New York City.

[20] Idem.

Application in the lead trumpet context

Lead players will gain a greater sense of confidence when they can independently perform songs without relying on others. Their knowledge and self-assurance will significantly increase as they develop their improvisational skills.

An exemplary illustration for trumpet players interested in lead trumpet performance is a widely recognized passage in the music community. Specifically, it is the *tutti* section from the song *Basie Straight Ahead*, composed by Sammy Nestico (1924-2021) and recorded by the Count Basie Orchestra for their album *Basie Straight Ahead* in 1968.

The excerpt is presented below, including the original chart (Fig. 15), the interpreted chart (Fig. 16) and two audio recordings featuring the author's interpretations of the passage (Audio 8 and 9).

This example serves to emphasize the significance of incorporating interpretive skills to enhance lead trumpet performances.

The first audio recording faithfully adheres to the written excerpt, precisely rendering the notated music. In contrast, the second audio recording showcases the application of interpretive tools previously discussed, as demonstrated in the performances of all three soloists. These interpretive techniques encompass elements such as crisp attacks, a precise and consistent sense of time feel, deliberate phrasing, and the infusion of both intensity and sweetness into the eighth notes.

By honing these skills, lead players can elevate the overall quality and flavour of the passage. Emphasizing precise technique, expressive phrasing, and a tasteful balance of intensity and musicality will contribute to a compelling performance that captures the essence of the composition.

Developing improvisational abilities not only enhances a lead player's confidence and empowers them to add personal touches and creative nuances to their performances. This enriches the musical experience and allows lead players to take ownership of their interpretations, ultimately contributing to their growth and mastery in the realm of lead trumpet playing.

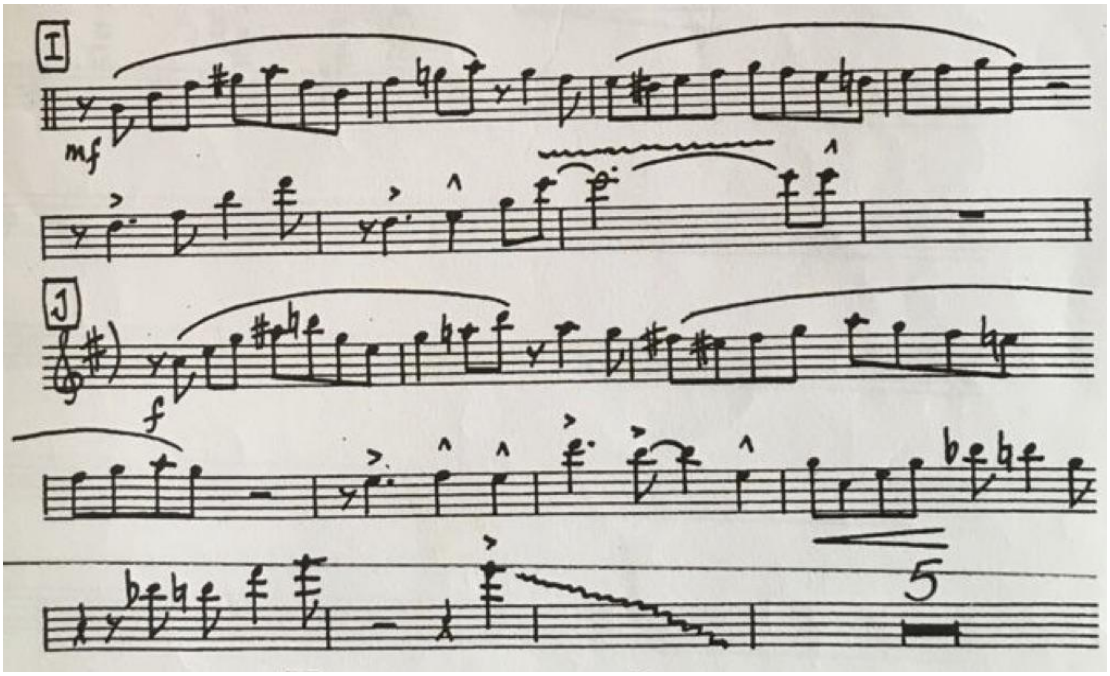

Figure 13. – Basie Straight Ahead *tutti*, original chart.

Nestico, Sammy, *Basie-Straight Ahead*, professional version – as recorded, jazz ensemble, Kendor Music Publishing, 1968.

Audio 8[21]

[21] Audio available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qjawg2134VzWYzKhsYjLwTVYGYKRk5mx/view?usp=drive_link
Audio performed and recorded by the author.

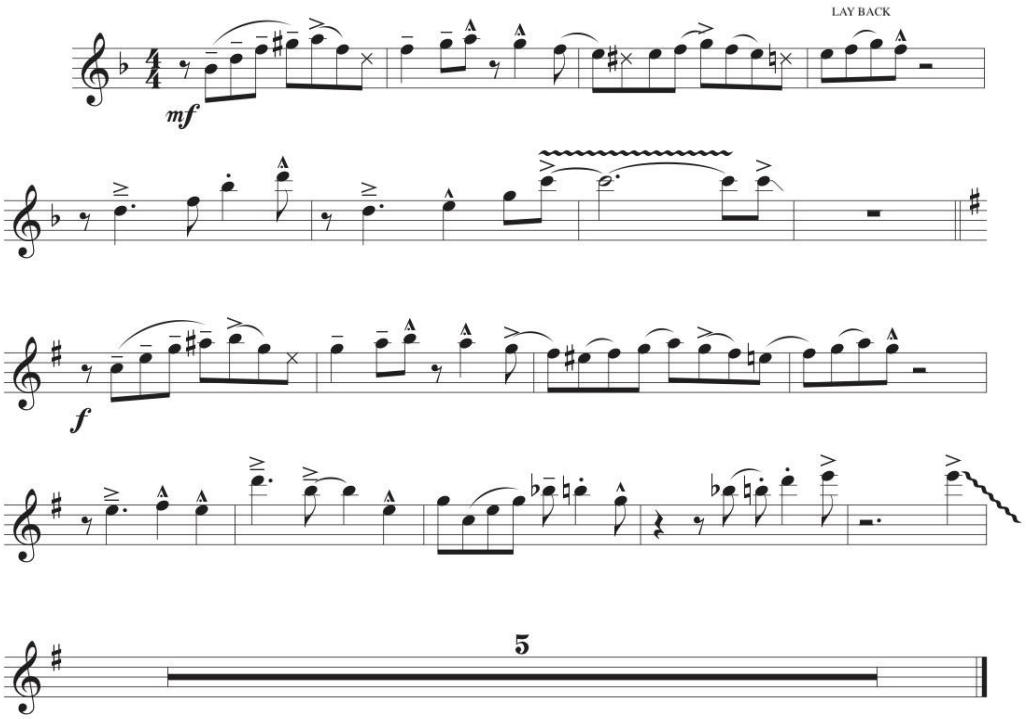

Figure 14. – Basie Straight Ahead *tutti* with the author's interpretations.

Audio 9[22]

According to Tolson (2012):

> Jazz encompasses many styles – from Dixieland to big band swing to bebop and fusion. Anecdotal evidence from adjudicators and directors indicates that, by far, the most challenging element for both instrumentalists and vocalists to interpret is the swing style common to both big band swing and bebop. (Tolson, 2012)

Tool's application conclusion

The study of jazz improvisation can greatly benefit lead trumpet performers by helping them achieve a more cohesive and stylistically appropriate musical performance. This first part of the chapter has presented some solos and music patterns as both auditory and visual examples, showcasing how renowned soloists have incorporated specific nuances that should be applied when

[22]Audio available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M3N83PqLPMl_CDFknvQo6vZo68mF9u5G/view?usp=drive_link
Audio performed and recorded by the author.

playing the lead trumpet part in a big band context. Additionally, a segment from the repertoire of the Count Basie Orchestra has been included to provide further insight and practical application.

By presenting these examples, the author aims to illustrate how the observed characteristics in the solos can be effectively applied to written passages, ultimately enhancing the overall artistic quality of the performance. It is important to note that not all lead trumpet players throughout history have been considered improvisers. The purpose of this study is not to criticize or compare individuals but rather to emphasize the potential impact that the study of improvisation can have on the performance of lead trumpet in a big band setting.

The upcoming chapter will delve further into this topic, exploring how the study of improvisation can make a significant difference in the performance of lead trumpet players within a big band context. The intention is to provide valuable insights and practical strategies that lead trumpet performers can incorporate into their practice and performance, ultimately elevating their musical expression and contributing to the overall success of the ensemble

The Groove Merchant shout chorus performance analysis

Before delving into an analysis of the performances of two renowned lead trumpet players, Snooky Young and Earl Gardner, who have made significant contributions to the history of modern swing big band music, it is crucial to recall:

> One of the definitions of the word *lead* is 'to show the way.' Back in the '40s, '50s and '60s, usually, the person chosen to play the first trumpet was the player who had the nicest sound, the best feel, and the most experience regarding overall playing and style. The 'high note' player would play third and fourth chair (Ingram, 2008).

As we have previously emphasized, jazz improvisation skills can greatly enhance the performance of a lead trumpet player. This chapter will briefly analyze two notable lead trumpet players associated with the Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra at different historical points.

The first musician we will examine is Snooky Young, widely regarded as one of the pioneers of big band jazz lead trumpet playing. He was a founding orchestra member and remained a part of the ensemble from 1966 to 1972. While he gained recognition for his exceptional skills as a lead trumpet player, he was also highly regarded for his abilities as a soloist.

The second musician we will discuss is Earl Gardner, a Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra member from 1976 to 2005. In a 2017 interview with Michael Davis, Gardner candidly expressed, “I had no greater understanding of improvisation”. This highlights the significance of his improvisational prowess.

To assess their performances, we will focus on the shout chorus (Fig. 13 and Audios 10 and 11) of the Thad Jones’ arrangement for the tune *Groove Merchant*, a composition by Jerome Richardson (1920-2000). We will examine both the 1968 and 1999 recordings to gain insights into their respective approaches.

According to Albrecht (2021):

> There are various stylistic effects that a lead trumpet player uses and has at their disposal when adding style to a given chart: Time feel, tone colour, phrasing, articulations, vibrato, dynamics, shakes, and glissandos, falls, bends, and scoops. (Albrecht, 2021)

Considering the specific characteristics outlined above by Albrecht, we will pick up some of the most critical elements pointed out and highlight some distinctions in the styles of both trumpeters. It is important to note that this analysis is not intended to determine who is the superior lead trumpet player but rather to identify certain musical elements that can benefit lead trumpet players who also possess improvisational skills, thereby enhancing their artistic performances beyond their technical capabilities.

The Musicians

Snooky Young (Fig. 20)

Eugene Edward "Snooky" Young's trumpet playing was most often heard in the context of the big band. As he says, “I considered myself a first trumpet player, but then I did do some soloing. My main job was playing first trumpet in the bands”.

For 30 years, he was heard weekly as a member of the Tonight Show orchestra, a group in which he was not the lead trumpet but could often be seen playing solos. From 1939-1942 he made a name for himself as lead trumpeter and soloist in the Jimmie Lunceford Jazz Orchestra. From 1942 to 1947, Young worked with Les Hite (1903-1962), Benny Carter (1907-2003) and Gerald Wilson (1918-2014), as well as with the Count Basie band, where he replaced trumpet player Ed Lewis (1909-1985).

He was a founding member of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra in 1966. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, he played with various big bands, including on recordings by such jazz greats as Louis Bellson, Gil Evans (1912-1988), Quincy Jones (1933-), Charles Mingus, and Jimmy Smith(1925-2005).

Young worked since with several Los Angeles big bands and issued three albums under his name, *Boys from Dayton (1971), Snooky and Marshal's Album(1978)* (with Marshal Royal), and *Horn of Plenty (1979)*, which demonstrated his solo gifts as an assertive lead trumpeter.

Earl Gardner (Fig. 21)

Earl Gardner is a native New Yorker. He has gained a reputation among colleagues and critics as one of the jazz world's premier lead trumpeters. He has been a member of many of the world's most notable big bands, including the Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Orchestra, McCoy Tyner Big Band, Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, and the Mingus Big Band.

Earl is a multifaceted artist with ties to the jazz and commercial recording fields. He has appeared with countless artists, including Michael Jackson (1958-2009), Sting (1951-), Frank Sinatra (1915-1998), Santana (1947-), Dizzy Gillespie, Katy Perry (1984-), John Mayer (1977-), Queen Latifah (1970-), Aretha Franklin (1942-2018), Harry Connick Jr. (1967-), Paul Simon (1941-), and Luther Vandross (1951-2005) on recordings as well as in live performances.

The music

The *Groove Merchant* is a medium-shuffle style tune composed by saxophonist Jerome Richardson in 1967 and arranged for a big band by Thad Jones. It is a swung arrangement with an edgy melody line, contemporary voicings, and lots of section work.

The recordings to be analyzed are those from 1968, in a live show by the Thad Jones & Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra with Snooky Young playing the lead trumpet part, and another recording from 1999, in the studio, on the album *Thad Jones Legacy*, by Vanguard Jazz Orchestra with Earl Gardner playing Lead Trumpet's part.

Jones's shout chorus of this arrangement starts at the upbeat of the letter I and goes down to the sign *D.S.*[23]. There are fifteen bars in which the melodic line written by Jones allows the placement of many musical nuances that can be performed personally by each lead trumpet player. It is this comparison that we will explore further in this brief analysis.

[23] D.S., or Dal Segno, means "from the sign." It instructs the musician to go back to a previous point in the musical notation indicated by the symbol.

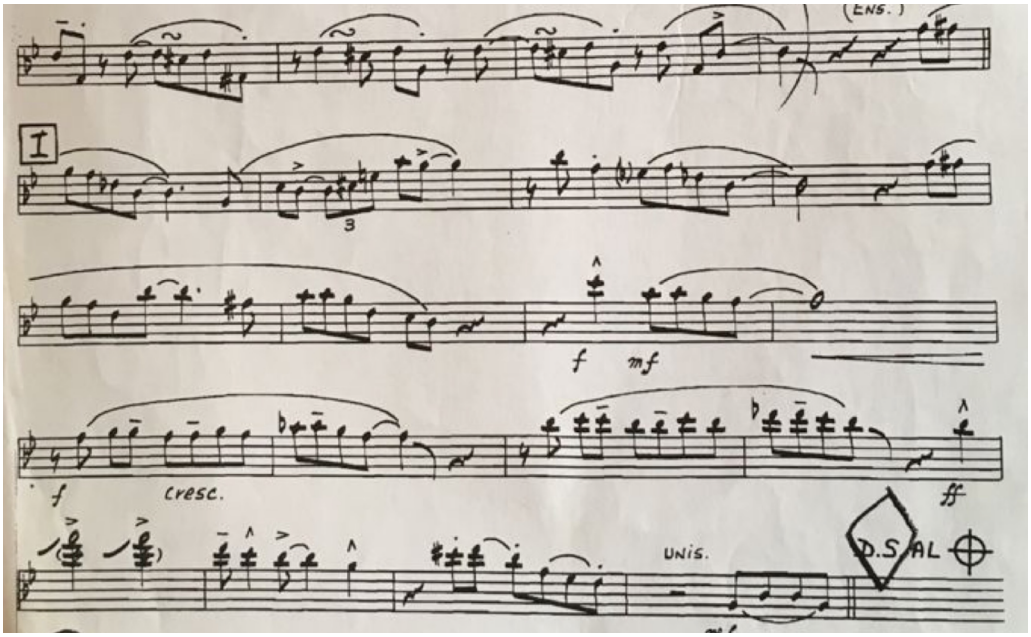

Figure 15. – Groove Merchant original lead trumpet part shout chorus.

Richardson, Jerome, *Groove Merchant – Full* Score, Jazz Ensemble Score, Kendor Music Publishing [nd].

Audio 10[24]

Audio 11[25]

Time Feel

Time feel refers to how a musician interprets the rhythmic motif or phrase concerning the metronomic time of a piece of music. There are three main ways to interpret the tempo of a piece:

1. On top of the beat: This involves playing the music with rhythmic precision, where the notes are played precisely on the downbeat.

2. In front of the beat: In this approach, the musician intentionally pushes the tempo forward, creating a sense of being ahead of where the beat lands.

[24] Audio available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/176uelhrCfclhzN0IW02KyVGGVneNHHKC/view?usp=drive_link Bob Hardy. (2008, January 21). *Thad Jones & Mel Lewis - The Groove Merchant (1968)* [Video]. YouTube.

[25] Audio available at:https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jYtwcvpDGYOaf9_9Nz3HoH0fI1X_rIH7/view?usp=drive_link Richardson, Jerome, *Groove Merchant*, The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra – Thad Jones Legacy, CD, New World Records, 80581-2, 1999.

3. Behind the beat: This style involves playing with a laid-back feel, creating a delayed sensation or what is commonly referred to as back phrasing.

However, it is important to note that for each of these interpretations, the rhythm section's time feel must be consistent to be effective. The cohesion and consistency of the rhythm section serve as the foundation for the lead trumpet player to apply these different approaches to their playing.

According to Bobby Shew in his article *Playing Lead Trumpet in a Big Band Setting (n.d.)*:

> The most important characteristic of a good lead player is feeling. The good player who can play the notes with good control and still emit a loose, relaxed, and swinging feel with high energy when called for will help the band swing as a group. (Shew, n.d.)

Shew goes on to say that "jazz soloists who have some chops will make better lead players by knowing the importance of feeling the music in good time and developing melodic lines, and understanding chord structures as the chart progress". (Shew, n.d.)

In the section chosen for analysis, we can observe distinct approaches in the time feel of the two lead trumpet players. Snooky Young begins the upbeat of section I with a *layback* intention, where he slightly delays his playing but quickly returns to the tempo, showcasing his confidence in his interpretation. He proceeds to play the following bars on top of the beat, maintaining a precise rhythmic placement. Afterward, he alternates between playing a little behind the beat for two bars and returning to playing on top of the beat for the subsequent two bars. As the section progresses, he again introduces a slight *layback* feel and concludes the shout chorus playing on top of the beat.

In contrast, Earl Gardner consistently employs a *layback* feeling throughout his performance. This can be heard prominently in bars nine to twelve after section I, where he intentionally exaggerates the effect of playing behind the beat.

These contrasting approaches demonstrate how each trumpeter incorporates their personal interpretation of time feel into their performance, adding distinct musical nuances to the arrangement and making the band sounds different each time.

Tone Color

We will briefly review the differences in the Tone Color[26] of each musician we analyze.

According to Petruzzi (1993), "tone quality is one of the first elements to strike the ear in listening to a musical performance."

He stills adds: “a trumpeter's sound is determined by several features such as equipment (that is, the type of trumpet and mouthpiece), embouchure, breath control, and musical conception." (Petruzzi, 1993)

Thus, tone colour is an element that the lead trumpet player utilizes to fully express their artistic abilities. It is also crucial to mention Martin Saunders (2010): “the lead player is responsible for leading the trumpet section and also for leading the whole band. A lead player’s sound needs to sit on top of the band and help guide the time, style, articulations, and cut-offs for the band.”

We must consider the sound quality of the recordings for our analysis. The first recording, from 1968, is a live performance in a theatre, and it is likely that the sound capture was not flawless. The second recording, from 1999, is a studio recording, ensuring the best possible sound capture to represent the band's sound at that moment faithfully.

That being said, Snooky Young's tone colour is intense, bright, concentrated and exhibits numerous well-applied dynamic nuances. The contrast he brings to his performance adds excitement. Petruzzi (1993) remarks, "While listening to Young's performance, one can easily imagine the exuberant shouts of a preacher delivering his sermon to his congregation."

Earl Gardner's sound is powerful, full, warm, and darker compared to Young's. However, we can observe that the dynamic nuances in his phrases are less exaggerated and less reminiscent of a preacher's style.

Dynamics

Bringing up the element of dynamics, one can notice that Snooky Young emphasizes accents when interpreting melodic phrases, particularly by contrasting the upbeat and the sense of the phrase.

[26] Can also be called tone quality, sound, or timbre.

This is evident in bars one to five after the letter I, where he employs crescendos when ascending and decrescendos when descending, highlighting the swing feel personality.

In an interview for *The Cool Toddcast - All About Jazz podcast, episode 84*, trumpeter Clay Jenkins discusses Young's approach to playing lead trumpet. Jenkins affirms, "He plays lead like a jazz trumpet player," and continues by mentioning that "Young consistently incorporates numerous nuances when performing the lead part".

On the other hand, Earl Gardner aims for a more constant sound volume. He adopts a more *straight* approach, allowing for a smaller dynamic contrast range. It is worth noting that the crescendo on the F (concert Eb) in bar eight after the letter I starts with a dynamic level higher than the *mf* indicated on the chart. Perhaps due to his narrower dynamic range and a tendency towards a louder sound, the two high Fs in measure thirteen after the letter I, which serve as the climax of the shout chorus, do not come out with optimal execution as there is limited room to increase the volume. Consequently, the notes do not achieve their full potential.

It is worth quoting Bob Shew (n.d.) again:

> I often try to explain that rather than paying attention literally to the traditional dynamic markings of f's , m's, and p's. These are merely visual and it is extremely difficult to precisely estimate the difference between p, pp, mp , etc. All they are referring to is soft. Then there is the f group. f, ff, fff all refer to loud. In many cases, this merely becomes overblown and leaves the world of sound and enters the ugly world of noise! In between those, we have our friendly mf. That means medium. So we can look at 5 different dynamics: too soft, soft, medium, loud, too loud! By approaching things this way, it forces you to use your ear to fit in with what is going on around you and getting a better blend with the other players. You must learn to interpret the page markings to understand the three workable and desirable dynamics of soft, medium, and loud and to avoid the two extremes of too! (Shew, 2014).

Articulation

"The term articulation refers to types of attack - single, double, triple, and du-dul tonguing - and to the pattern of slurs and attacks in a given line" (McNeil, 1999). With the combination of attacks and slurs, the nuances of each are obtained. According to the *Grove Music Dictionary*, articulation means the junction or separation of successive notes or groups, which can be widely applied to musical phrasing.

In addition to expanding their range and developing a powerful sound, a lead trumpet player must also demonstrate responsibility and a solid commitment to researching and studying the

characteristics of the genres they interpret. This knowledge allows them to utilize articulations and inflections correctly and effectively.

According to Albrecht (2021):

> Articulation markings are observed by all musicians in all genres of music. They dictate the variety of emphasis or lack thereof in music. The articulations that lead trumpet players use and the way that they play them, are an exaggerated and forceful approach to articulating. The lead trumpet player stands in the back row of the big band and must project his or her articulations out in front to be heard. This is partly where an exaggerated articulation approach is required. Another reason that articulations are commonly exaggerated is the lead trumpet commonly has the last stab at the end of a given melodic phrase within the big band, so the lead trumpet acts as punctuation at the end of a melodic statement. (Albrecht, 2021)

According to David Hickman (1950-) in his book *Trumpet Pedagogy: A Compendium of Modern Teaching Techniques (2006)*, "the precision and speed of articulation are primordial for a performance with efficiency, precision, appropriate rhythm and musical style."

The chosen music for analysis is a medium shuffle. The original sheet music (Fig. 14) is notated with a 12/8 or triplet feel for the eighth notes. It is interesting to observe that Young accentuates the upbeat accents and occasionally transitions the eighth notes between the prescribed 12/8 feel suggested by the composer/arranger and an even eighth note feel in certain sections. This technique makes the impression that he mentally sings the entire shout chorus line internally. It is worth mentioning Tolson (2012) in the article *How to get your band and choir to swing*, where he discusses the importance of achieving a swinging feel in music. “Likewise, singing is very effective for the internalization of the swing feel and style. If the rhythm cannot be verbalized using syllables that approximate the desired articulation, the performance will never be truly authentic”. (Tolson, 2012)

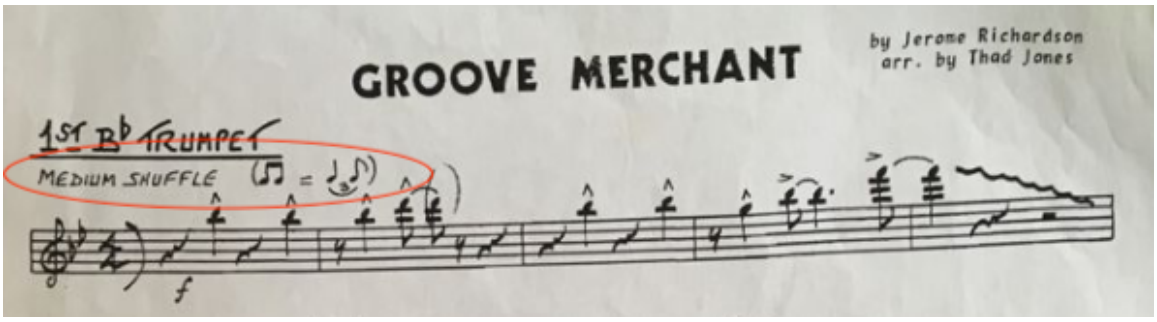

Figure 16. – Original lead trumpet sheet music.

Richardson, Jerome, *Groove Merchant – Full* Score, Jazz Ensemble Score, Kendor Music Publishing [nd].

We also observe that he interprets the articulation differently than what is indicated in the original score, as depicted in Figure 18[27].

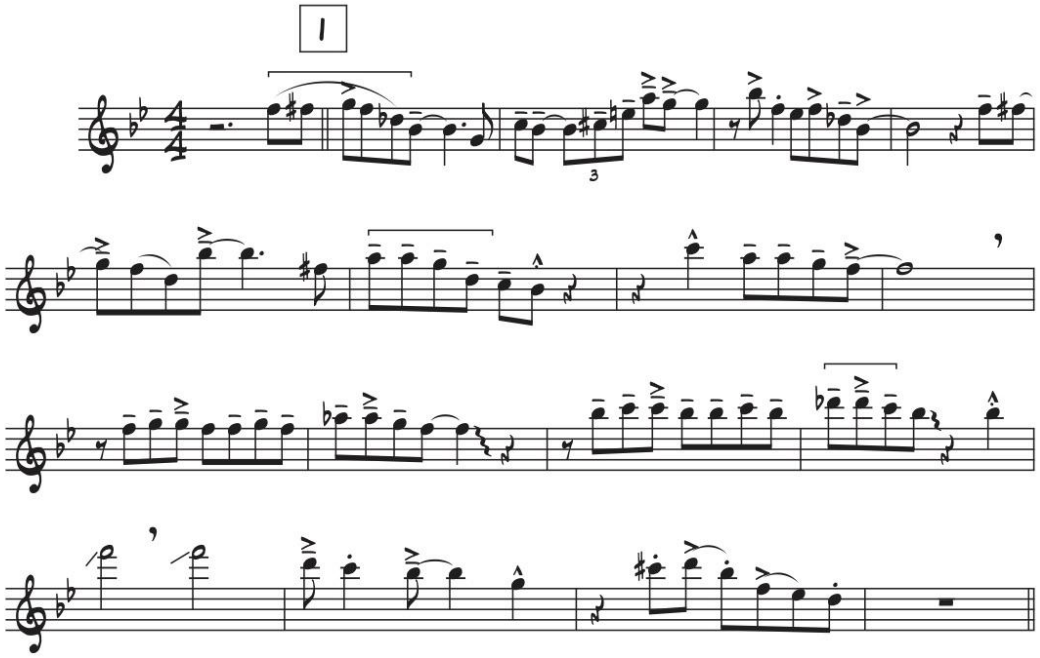

Figure 17. – Groove Merchant lead trumpet part shout chorus as played by Snooky Young.

[27] Figure 18 accurately represents Young's interpretation of the articulation, specifically highlighting the areas where he deviates from the 12/8 feel indicated in the original score. The brackets indicate the sections where he did not adhere to the specified rhythmic pattern.

In Gardner's interpretation, it is evident that he maintains the 12/8 feel consistently throughout all the notes. However, in bar ten after the letter I, he either omits the attack on the second note (Ab) or executes it with such delicacy that it is barely audible. This demonstrates a contrast in performance compared to Young, as Gardner does not prioritize exaggerating the interpretation of the upbeats.

Furthermore, Gardner adheres more closely to the written notation on the sheet music, implying that he follows the musical instructions strictly as written.

Phrasing

Each musical passage we perform demands a unique set of phrasings. Our interpretation of music excerpts reflects our understanding of the music we are playing. Therefore, it is crucial to have an appreciation for various music genres.

Jimmy Giuffre (1921-2008) defines phrasing as follows:

> […] it means the particular style or manner in which a musical passage is interpreted. Naturally, it is unrealistic to standardize jazz phrasing. It changes with each passage, each player, each group. But we can discuss each area of phrasing, catching some general practices (Giuffre, 1969).

As Bobby Shew states in his article *Developing the Trumpet Section (n.d.*), one of the primary prerequisites for a lead trumpet player is to be a skilled jazz musician. This is because the most musical way to perform a lead part is to approach it as if it were a jazz solo within an ensemble. By doing so, the lead trumpet player can infuse the performance with swing and utilize a range of phrasing techniques, drawing upon their knowledge of improvisational jazz music. This allows them to enhance their role with a greater array of resources.

About that subject Jon Faddis (1953-) stated in an article by Tim Philips to *ITG Journal* in 2000:

> If you want to play lead trumpet, you have to listen to great lead trumpet players…Most young trumpet players will misinterpret that to mean only those who play lead trumpet in a big band. To me, that is not where the term "lead trumpet" is derived. To me, it is derived from the style set by soloists like Louis Armstrong, Roy Eldridge, and Dizzy. They really set the style for the phrasing that is used in big bands. (Faddis, Philips 2000)

With careful consideration of the excerpt provided for analysis, we observed that Young employs a more natural and relaxed phrasing compared to Gardner.

As previously mentioned, Young utilizes a broader range of interpretive tools in his performance of the given excerpt. For instance, he alternates between swing eighths and straight eighths, plays with a laid-back feel as well as on top of the beat, and incorporates dynamic nuances that are more pronounced and contrasting. As a result, Young's phrasing exhibits a greater richness in terms of stylistic details.

Analysis Conclusion

In this analysis, our focus was solely on the performance of the two chosen lead trumpet players, as our research is specifically centered around this particular role. It is important to note that the analyzed recordings feature different band members, with a significant time gap of over twenty years between the recordings. Therefore, our evaluation was solely based on the performance of the lead players and did not consider the band's overall performance.

Furthermore, we provided a brief illustration of how knowledge of improvisation and immersion in the study of jazz, whether through anecdotal listening or academic pursuit, are essential for a lead trumpet player's performance in a big band setting.

As stated at the outset of this chapter, the intention was not to determine who is the superior lead trumpet player between the two individuals discussed but rather to highlight the elements that improvisers have at their disposal when interpreting their parts, thereby bringing greater excitement and attitude to their performances.

We have explored various style-specific characteristics outlined by Albrecht (2021) that define the performance of a lead trumpet player. From these elements, we have engaged in a discussion regarding interpretive tools that can be applied.

In closing, we would like to emphasize a statement made by Jimmy Giuffre (1921-2008) in the preface to his book *Jazz Phrasing and Interpretation (1969),* where he affirms that "a good jazz player can phrase a written passage so that it sounds improvised. In other words, it has spontaneity, freshness, 'now-ness,' and newness."

Conclusion

Jazz is an art form that relies heavily on sensitivity and creativity, serving as fundamental factors in musical performance. Each jazz musician must develop a highly personal and individual sound to express their artistry with the utmost richness.

Within a big band jazz ensemble, the lead trumpet player holds a distinctive role. While their primary responsibility is accurately performing the written music, incorporating personality and individuality is crucial for a specialized and distinguished approach.

Throughout this work, we have explored the significance of improvisation and its potential as a tool to enhance the artistic quality of the lead trumpet player's performance. It is not a requirement for a lead trumpet player in a big band setting to be an exceptional improviser. However, the study of jazz improvisation plays a vital role in enabling musicians to enrich their performances with greater artistry.

We have observed that attentive listening to influential jazz trumpet players such as Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie, along with a deep appreciation for cultural and historical aspects, are essential for a comprehensive assimilation of the nuances inherent in the music style of that era.[28]

Over the years, the role of the lead trumpet in a big band setting has undergone significant evolution, becoming a distinct position that has garnered increased attention and study, both through anecdotes and formal research. This growing importance has given rise to notable figures who have shaped the style and impacted the history of this particular role[29].

In this research, we have highlighted various characteristics that are expected in lead trumpet performance.

Through analyzing the playing styles of two influential lead trumpet players, Snooky Young and Earl Gardner, we have identified commonalities rooted in the study of improvisation in jazz. By

[28] Our research primarily focused on jazz performance after the Swing Era.

[29] In an attached document, we point out some names that made history as lead trumpet players in a table, first made by Dan Miller (1969-2022) and extended by Albrecht in his doctoral work, from 2021.

focusing on these aspects, we aimed to shed light on elements that could enhance the performance of lead trumpet players in a big band context.

In conclusion, this research confirms that the study of jazz improvisation can artistically enhance the performance of the lead trumpet in its distinctive role.

Personal Conclusion

When I applied for the doctoral program at the University of Montreal, I wanted to study with Professor Ron Di Lauro because he possesses attributes as a solo trumpeter that are completely opposite to what I consider my strength as a musician, which is musical reading. Ron has a very keen intuition, and consequently, during the private lessons we had, he would point out elements in my playing that went unnoticed by me, and therefore, I couldn't resolve them until then.

I realized that my development as a lead trumpet player was accentuating, as well as my evolution as a soloist, as I became increasingly attentive to elements I hadn't paid proper attention to before. Being part of the University of Montreal's big band during these two years studying with Di Lauro, I could apply in practice what we discussed in class. In every rehearsal with the University of Montreal's big band, I could implement the elements we worked on in class.

I can say that during the period I participated in the University of Montreal big band as the lead trumpet, I realized that I evolved in my role by working on this "aural perception" and the identification of sounds. This allowed me, from the moment I defined the musical map being executed, to add that "extra something" to the performance, not just by playing the right notes.

Notable improvements were also observed during trumpet section rehearsals with students from the University of Montreal. The emphasis on musical perception concerning group performance, pitch, blend, articulation, dynamics, phrasing, and style was brought to the forefront.

These improvements exceeded expectations and were the result of dedicated teamwork and respect for each member's specific role within the session. Furthermore, we had several big band concerts featuring a diverse repertoire, and the author was able to apply the main subject of this research paper to his performance.

As a research source, this work can be utilized by students and professional musicians who seek an overview of the correlation between jazz improvisation and the role of a lead trumpet player.

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Appendix 1

Appendix 1 – Donald Albrecht Lead trumpet players list, expanded

Adolfo Acosta	**Bobby Shew**	**Craig Johnson**
Al Porcino	**Bob McCoy**	**Cris La Barbera**
Altair Martins	**Bob Millikan**	**Dalton Smith**
Andy Cresap	**Bryan Davis**	**Dan Fernero**
Andy Harner	**Brian McDonald**	**Dan Foster**
Andy Tishnor	**Bud Brisbois**	**Daniel Falcone**
Andrew Bezik	**Buddy Childers**	**Dave Stahl**
Andrew Fowler	**Burt Collins**	**Dave Trigg**
Arnie Chycoski	**Byron Stripling**	**David Miller**
Augie Haas	**Carl Saunders**	**Derek Watkins**
Bijon Watson	**Chad Willis**	**Dominc Rossi**
Bill Chase	**Charlie Davis**	**Dominic Leveille**
Bill Churchville	**Charlie Margolis**	**Don Jacoby**
Bill Dowling	**Charlie Turner**	**Don Smith**
Bill Dunn	**Chet Ferretti**	**Don Thomas**
Bill McCoy	**Chris Griffin**	**Earl Gardner**
Bill Millikan	**Chris Hammiel**	**Ed Lewis**
Bobby Bryant	**Chris Jaude**	**Elpidio Chapotin**
Bobby Burns	**Clyde Reasinger**	**Eric Miyashiro**
Bobby Pratt	**Conrad Gazzo**	**Ernie Royal**

Everett MacDonald	**Joey Tartell**	**Louis Dodswell**
Fip Ricard	**John Audino**	**Louis Fassman**
Frank Galbreath	**John Chudoba**	**Lynn Nicholson**
Frank Greene	**John Faddis**	**Malcolm McNab**
Garrett Schmidt	**John Frosk**	**Mannie Klein**
Gary Grant	**John Howell**	**Mario Bauza**
George Graham	**John Lake**	**Mark Oats**
Graham Young	**John Thomas**	**Mark Upton**
Greg Gisbert	**Jon Faddis**	**Mark Wood**
Jack Feierman	**Jon Owens**	**Marky Markowitz**
Jack Laubach	**Joshua Kauffman**	**Marvin Stamm**
Jack Wengrowsky	**Jurare Muiz**	**Mel Davis**
Jake Boldman	**Jumaane Smith**	**Micah Bell**
James Blackwell	**Kenneth McGee**	**Mike Lovatt**
Jay Saunders	**Kevin Bryan**	**Mike Ponella**
Jay Webb	**Kevin Burns**	**Mike Vax**
Jeff Davis	**Lamar Wright**	**Mike Williams**
Jeff Wilfore	**Laurie Frink**	**Milo Pavlovic**
Jessie Miguire	**Lee Thornburg**	**Mitchell Cooper**
Jimmy Maxwell	**Lennie Johnson**	**Nahor Gomes**
Jimmy Nottingham	**Lew Soloff**	**Nick Ciardelli**
Joe Davis	**Lin Biviano**	**Nick Marchione**
Joe Shepley	**Liesl Whitaker**	**Nick Owsik**

Ollie Mitchell	**Ryan DeWeese**	**Tom Walsh**
Otavio Nestares	**Ryan Kisor**	**Tony Kadleck**
Paul Baron	**Ryan Quigley**	**Tyler Mire**
Paul Cohen	**Sal Cracchiolo**	**Uan Rasey**
Paul Jordão	**Scott Englebright**	**Vaughan Nark**
Paul Stephens	**Scott Sour**	**Victor Paz**
Peter Olstad	**Seneca Black**	**Vinnie Ciesielski**
Piro Rodriguez	**Serafin Aguilar**	**Walt Johnson**
Raul Agraz	**Shelton Hemphill**	**Wallace Davenport**
Reunald Jones	**Shorty Baker**	**Wallace Jones**
Rick Keifer	**Shorty Sherlock**	**Walter Simonsen**
Rob Parton	**Simon Gardner**	**Walter White**
Rob Schaer	**Snooky Young**	**Warren Luening**
Robert Quach	**Steve Patrick**	**Wayne Bergeron**
Roger Ingram	**Tanya Darby**	**Willie Cook**
Roger Walls	**Thomas Davis**	**Willie Maurillio**
Robby Yarber	**Thomas Eby**	**Willie Mitchell**
Ryan Chapman	**Tom DeLibero**	**Zeke Zarchy**

Appendix 2

Appendix 2 – Pictures

Figure 18. – King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band

Left to right: Baby Dodds, Honore Dutrey, Bill Johnson, Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dodds, Lil Hardin-Armstrong and in the foreground, King Oliver. Photograph courtesy of the William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University Library.

Figure 19. – Count Basie Orchestra film still from Air Mail Special Soundie, 1941

Institute of Jazz Studies photograph collection (IJS.0048), Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University Libraries. Original image held by Herrick Library, Los Angeles.

Figure 20. – Snooky Young

National Endowment of Arts

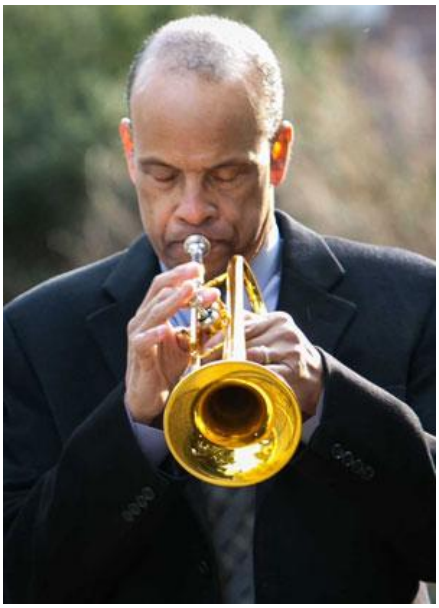

Figure 21. – Earl Gardner

Cannonball Trumpets Website