



Quarterly Newsletter
Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall 2025

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear LAJE Members,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the LAJE quarterly newsletter! My last project as president is to begin this quarterly newsletter for the membership; January, April, July, October. The newsletter will include information from your board members, concert dates from college/university and district/honor jazz ensembles, jazz festival dates, LMEA conference information (JAJE specific), pedagogy articles and more. This is something I think long overdue and I hope you will find useful. All the newsletters will be archived on the LAJE website.

Comments, ideas, suggestions are always welcome. If you have an idea or submission for a pedagogy article, please contact me directly.

All my best,

Michael Brothers
LAJE President
lajepresident@gmail.com

FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD



Dear LAJE Members,

I joined this cohort with Jazz Empowers and they have a TON of free jazz resources and zoom clinics offered to those who join the cohort (I'm pretty sure it's mostly free!).

Cory Joy Craig
Middle School Rep

Jazz Empowers

Getting Started with the Resource Site

New Members:

1. Go to www.jazzresources.org
2. Click "Sign Up for Free"
3. Enter your information and select "Create Account" – you're in!

The site should remember your login so you won't need to sign in each time.

To navigate back later, hover over the Jazz Band Director Resource Site menu in the top right to access all sections.

FALL 2025 CONCERT DATES

Loyola University

November 11 - Jazz Ensemble, Roussel Hall, 7:30 PM
November 13 - Nine Horses Strings, Nunemaker Hall, 7:30 PM
November 18 - Jazz Workshop and Underground, Roussel Hall, 7:30 PM
November 20 - Crescent Collective (Jazz Vocal), Nunemaker Hall, 7:30 PM

Louisiana State University

November 11 - Lab Band and Jazz Ensemble, Union Theater, 7:30 PM
November 25 - Chamber Jazz Recital, School of Music, 7:30 PM
December 2 - Jazz Ensemble with LSU Orchestra, Union Theater, 7:30 PM

McNeese State University

November 11 - Jazz Band, Tritico Theatre, 7:00 PM

Nicholls State University

November 5 - Facing West Guest Concert

November 6 - Nicholls State University Jazz Ensemble

November 12 - Michael Kaplan Guest Artist Concert w/Nolan Wible

Southeastern Louisiana University

October 15 - University Jazz Ensemble, Pottle Annex Recital Hall, 7:30 PM

December 4 - University Jazz Ensemble Big Band Christmas, Columbia Theatre, 7:30 PM

University of Louisiana Monroe

October 14 - ULM Jazz Ensemble - El Fuego Lento, Brown Auditorium, 7:30 PM

November 5 - The P-40's (ULM Pop Ensemble) - Celebration, Brown Auditorium, 7:30 PM

November 18 - ULM Jazz Ensemble - I'll Be Home (Holiday Program), Brown Auditorium, 7:30 PM

JAZZ FESTIVAL DATES

Fortier-Gerbrecht Jazz Invitational

March 2, 2026

Manship Theatre

Baton Rouge, LA

Loyola University Jazz Festival

March 6 - 7, 2026

Loyola University

New Orleans, LA

Southeastern Louisiana University Bill Evans Jazz Festival / LAJE State Jazz Festival

April 15 – 18, 2026

Columbia Theatre

Hammond, LA

University of Louisiana Monroe Jazz Clinic

April 18, 2026

University of Louisiana

at Monroe

Monroe, LA

HIGH SCHOOL ALL-STATE JAZZ ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR



Drummer Rich Thompson has been in demand as a top call drummer in Rochester for the past 25 years. Besides serving as the drum set instructor at the Eastman School of Music since the fall of 1996, Rich has toured, performed, and recorded with the “who’s who” of jazz greats including pianist James Williams (Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers), The Count Basie Orchestra, Tito Puente, Frank Foster, The Byron Stripling quartet, saxophonist Rich Perry, the Bill Dobbins Trio, Harold Danko, Marion McPartland, Trio East (which includes Clay Jenkins and Jeff Campbell), trumpeter Snooky Young, guitarist Gene Bertoncini, Carl Fontana, Phil Woods, Joe Pass, and a host of others too numerous to mention. The Boston Globe cited Rich as “the drummer who drove the Basie sound” when he appeared with them at the Boston Jazz and Blues Festival.

Rich has been touring this country and abroad with the Byron Stripling Quartet for the past five years. His new CD entitled “Trio Generations” was released in May of 2012 on Origin Records. It was included on the long list for two Grammys. His new CD entitled “Less is More” was recorded with trumpet sensation Terell Stafford, pianist Gary Versace, and bassist Jeff Campbell and was released in March of 2013 on Origin Records also. In 2016 Rich recorded “Have Trumpet Will Swing” w/the Bryon Stripling Quartet and in 2017 “I Believe in You” by the group Triocity was released. Triocity features multi- saxophonist/reedman Charles Pillow and bassist Jeff Campbell.

Rich performs regularly with numerous symphonies in the U.S. and Canada, the world renowned “Jazz Cruise” and clubs throughout the U.S. and Europe with the Byron Stripling quartet. His clinics and performances have taken him as far as France, Thailand, Japan, Switzerland and Newfoundland. Rich has written four drum set books published by Kendor Music USA and Advance/Schott Music-Germany. Visit Rich on his website to listen to clips or watch a video of his trio at the Rochester International Jazz Festival.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ALL-STATE JAZZ ENSEMBLE DIRECTOR



Diron Holloway, serves Associate Professor of Saxophone and Clarinet and Coordinator of Woodwind Studies at Virginia State University. Mr. Holloway teaches applied lessons in saxophone and clarinet and conducts woodwind chamber ensembles and the VSU Jazz Band I.

A native of Miami, FL, Mr. Holloway earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education from Florida A&M University, a Master of Music degree in Jazz Performance from Northern Illinois University, and was a member of the inaugural Jazz Studies class, receiving the Artist Diploma degree from the prestigious Juilliard School. Previous teachers include Dr. John Daniels, Michael Titlebaum, Dr. Steve Duke, Dr. Gregory Barrett, Wessell Anderson, Joe Temperley, and Victor Goines.

As a performing artist, Mr. Holloway leads his own ensembles, has toured internationally, recorded with The New Vision Saxophone Quartet, The Nat Adderley, Jr. Quintet, performed with The Wycliffe Gordon Ensemble, The Wynton Marsalis Septet, The Dominick Farinacci Quintet, The Melton Mustafa Jazz Orchestra, The Miami Big Sound Jazz Orchestra, shared the stage with Jon Faddis, Vincent Gardner, Bobby Watson, Benny Golson, Carl Allen, Frank Foster, Ed Thigpen, James Carter, to name a few. He has been a featured classical and jazz artist at several schools in Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and North Carolina.

Mr. Holloway has also directed ensembles receiving numerous superior ratings at Florida MPAs, made appearances at The Crescent City Jazz Festival in New Orleans, The Jazz Education Network (JEN) conference in St. Louis, MO as well as the Florida Music Educators Association conference in Tampa, FL. Mr. Holloway previously served on faculty at Florida Memorial University and Florida A&M University, respectively.

PEDAGOGY ARTICLE (attached)



It's About Time: Improve Your Groove (Part I), by Antonio J. García
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It's About Time: Improve Your Groove (*Part I*)

by Antonio J. García

Time-feel is perhaps the most-ignored element of musical practice. This might be particularly true in jazz practice, for the nature of time-feel is different in jazz than in many other musics.

As students of music, we tend to practice range, tone, attacks, scales, even dynamics before we work on our time. Yet what is the most-glaring error in any ensemble performance...or in any jazz solo effort? Our ears will put up with quite a few cracked notes; but a performance with poor time-feel, bad counting, or an unsatisfactory interpretation of the “groove” will quickly disenchant us.

When we *do* practice our time-feel, how do we do it? Do we simply listen to the constant click of a metronome and play along? Is *that* practicing our time—or having it already given to us?

I must emphasize that nothing replaces *listening* to jazz as the ultimate teaching tool. Playing along with jazz recordings is invaluable as well. However, listening and playing by themselves are not enough; for one has also to understand what s/he is hearing. We can actively explore a series of exercises to develop our time-feel. All provide group participation via counting, scatting, tapping, or clapping; and any exercises in which you might lead a smaller group of volunteers participating at the front of a rehearsal room or auditorium can be in part experienced by everyone else's feet moving in place where they are seated or standing.

Since swing feel is a greater challenge for most than even-eighth (bossa, samba, rock, etc.), we will focus on swing. However, note that these exercises can and should be applied to even-eighth explorations as well—for instrumentalists *and* vocalists.

Developing an Internal Beat

The best time-feel practice begins with your body *alone*: prove that you have mastered the beat *without* the external complication of an instrument, which can be added at the final stage of practice. The best practice is also initially distant from any written music. When you pass on these exercises to others, do so by the *experience* first: internalize the exercises and then teach them *aurally* and *physically*, away from printed music so as to heighten the internal growth of all concerned. Then relay the printed music *later*.

To begin, set a metronome to resonate on beats two and four of a moderate 4/4 swing tempo. (This ground beat mimics a drummer's hi-hat.) Alone or with a partner, listen to the beat: match it with your finger-snaps, and then turn down the metronome's volume to an inaudible level. After a few measures, restore the volume and compare your beat to the metronome's (**Ex. 1**).

If they didn't match, consider a common cause: not feeling the pulse on the silent beats. By moving your forearm silently in rhythm *between* the metronome's pulses, most people improve their accuracy. This is the first step to internalizing the beat: physically (but silently) feeling all pulses *between* what the metronome provides you.

Once you are successful, add a vocal element: can you scat a passage and/or converse with someone and still match the return of the beat? This challenge mimics your rhythmic and arrhythmic solo work above the ground beat.

Let's consider a tempo twice as slow, one more appropriate to a ballad such as Neal Hefti's well-known *Li'l Darlin'*. Ballads provide a greater challenge than moderate tempi. Place the metronome on beats two and four; and snap your fingers in tandem (**Ex. 2**). Once you're "locked in," lower the volume for a few bars and restore it. If you matched, add scatting the rhythm of the first phrase of *Li'l Darlin'* to the exercise.

Aside from the obvious benefits of internalizing time for a soloist, the improvement is potentially greater for any ensemble. Usually a jazz band (or wind or string or vocal group of any nature) that seems sloppy in its rhythmic delivery fails these tests at the outset. But in just a few minutes of concentration, the same ensemble develops a remarkable accuracy for the beat; and when the instruments are added, the music delivery is incredibly improved. Students can continue this practice on their own as well as in the ensemble.

Jazz bands tend to rely on the drummer for the time—which means that even in a best-case drumming scenario, your band cannot perform "stop-time" passages well. The worst-case scenario is frequently heard. *Everyone* in the ensemble is responsible for the time. When was the last time *your* ensemble's time was tested?

True Time-Practice

Instead of lowering the metronome's volume to test ourselves, let's just create more space between the pulses. Consider the pulsing to be only on beat four of each bar (such as in a drummer's cross-stick pattern, **Ex. 3**). Are you comfortable snapping two and four? If so, add some scatting or talking and be sure you can apply such improvisation and still maintain your time-feel.

Once secure with the metronome clicking once per measure, adjust it to once every two measures (**Ex. 4**), four measures (**Ex. 5**), or *eight* or *sixteen* measures (not shown). If the metronome's click indicates you are slightly ahead of or behind the beat, immediately try to adjust your pace (without stopping) to meet the next cycle's click. It can be done!

For swing, practicing with a metronome on beats two and four is a necessary initiation but limited application. True time-practice comes with matching your snapping to clicks that are **widely enough spaced to allow you to err and adjust**. As soon as you have grasped a given challenge, double it! I have observed students successful at a setting of two beats per minute (once every sixteen bars); and I have no doubt that some have matched one beat per minute now and then.

Once you have matched the click by snapping, add vocal scatting or conversation to the challenge. If you're still secure, it's time to bring in the instrument: practice melodies with the extended clicks. For the ultimate challenge, then practice *improvising* with the extended clicks. Then change the tempo to accommodate more up-tempo or down-tempo tunes (moving the ground beat to beats one and three as needed for up-tempos).

No one outgrows these exercises. I have yet to meet the musician who can repeatedly improvise music to clicks at one beat per minute, though one may exist. It seems none of us have *perfect* time. But those musicians who practice their time seem to be far more advanced in pulse-keeping than those who do not. And I would rather make music with the former than the latter.

Applications

A remarkable exercise is to bring this setting into a combo rehearsal, holding the metronome near the drummer's ear—especially while s/he plays fills, trades fours with horns, or changes feel from swing to Latin and back. I quickly learned that most student drummers are completely astonished at how loose their time truly is—and are immensely pleased to learn how great it feels to lock in with the time.

Given that combos also lean excessively on their drummers for the time, I then like to bring the metronome over to the bassist's ear, telling the drummer that now s/he must take the time from the *bassist*. For most students, this is a shocking thought: many young drummers do not pay enough attention to their bassists to collaborate effectively with them. The evolution that takes place when a drummer is forced to concede that the bassist has better time (at least while the metronome is with the bassist) is often extreme.

Lastly, I move the metronome to a horn soloist's ear; for few combo members ever consider a horn player to be so responsible for the time. Yet doing this exercise for the horn player reveals how his or her indecision, ornaments, stop-time, or other factors contribute to the rushing or slowing of the group's time. Once the horn soloist is in synchronization with the metronome, I can instruct the others in the combo to take the time from the *soloist*—again, a notable shift that provokes interesting evolutions in the entire combo's sense of time.

Imagine the potential of an ensemble—jazz or classical—in which the members are confident in matching a pulse of even eight beats per minute. And why shouldn't they be? With this practice, it's quite possible.

In Part II of this article, available online, we explore how you and your students can capture the essence of a mature swing feel, rooted in the internalization of *cross-rhythm*, an essential element of African and Latin musics brought to jazz. To hear audio demos and see photos of students doing a number of the exercises detailed in both Parts I and II, visit www.garciamusic.com/educator/articles/articles.html and click on the “Improve Your Groove” article title listed there.

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Doing the Math

Why have I chosen tempi such as half-note = 64? The exact division of a tempo in half makes for an easy transition to exercises with beats spaced twice as far. In other words, if you've just mastered **Ex. 1** but at half-note = 60, you can proceed to tempi of 30 or 15—but then you have to compromise, likely substituting 16 so that you can then divide down to 8, 4, and 2. This tempo-shift is not necessary and distracts from the original challenge set. It's better to stay focused on the task at hand.

Thus for 4/4 time, 128 divided in half yields 64, on to 32 and so on, down to 2 beats or 1 beat per minute. And 192 yields 96, on to 48 and so on, down to 3 beats per minute. For 3/4 time, dotted-half = 54, divided by 3 yields 18, 6, and finally 2; and 81 yields 27, 9, and finally 3.

While not all of the exercises provided need to be done with a metronome, I have given each a tempo marking allowing for that divisible potential.

Technology

Of course, you still need a device that generates a pulse lower than the typical metronome's 40 beats-per-minute; or the exercises are not possible. Years ago I simply set my metronome to 40; turned on a tape recorder; and alternately moved the metronome towards and away from the recorder so as to create a tape of 20, 10, or 5 beats per minute. Now anyone with a reputable metronome app can generate clicks down to one beat per minute!

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*This article is © 1998 Antonio J. García and originally appeared as "Improve Your Groove, Part 1" in **School Band and Orchestra**, Vol. 2, No. 8, October 1999 and "Improve Your Groove, Part 2" in **SBO**, Vol. 2, No. 9, November 1999. It then appeared as a reprint in the **Missouri Music Educators Association Journal**, Winter 2006 (for Part I) and Spring 2007 (for Part II). It appears here with the permission of the author, who retains all rights.*

Antonio J. García, now in his native New Orleans, is Professor Emeritus and Former Director of Jazz Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University (formerly at Northwestern and Northern Illinois). A composer of symphonic and of instrumental and vocal jazz and chamber works, he has been trombonist, bass trombonist, or pianist with 70 major artists including Ella Fitzgerald, Louie Bellson, Dave Brubeck, and Phil Collins. He is a Research Faculty member at The University of KwaZulu-Natal; Past Associate Jazz Editor, **International Trombone Association Journal**; Past Editor, **IAJE Jazz Education Journal**; and the only individual to have directed the Illinois All-State jazz combo, vocal jazz choir, and big band (plus All-County and community concert bands and orchestras). The author of [**Jazz Improvisation: Practical Approaches to Grading**](#) and [**Cutting the Changes: Jazz Improvisation via Key Centers**](#), he is a Midwest Clinic Board Member, Brubeck Institute Past Advisory Board Member, Conn Selmer Institute Hall of Fame inductee, and recipient of The Midwest Clinic's Medal of Honor. Visit www.garciamusic.com; e-mail him at ajgarcia@vcu.edu.

Improve Your Groove

focusing on swing feel

Antonio J. García

Ex. 1 Swing $\text{♩} = 64$

Hand *snap*

Speak $\frac{4}{4}$

(can add scat later... ...or even converse!)

Metre $\frac{4}{4}$

(inaudible)

Ex. 2 Ballad (Swing 8ths) $\text{♩} = 32$

Hand *snap*
mp

Speak $\frac{4}{4}$
(tacet 1x, scat)

Bah dot dot dot dot dot doo bah

Metre $\frac{4}{4}$

(inaudible)

Ex. 3 Swing $\text{♩} = 32$

Hand *snap*

Speak $\frac{4}{4}$

(can add scat later... ...or even converse!)

Metre $\frac{4}{4}$

Ex. 4 Swing $\text{♩} = 16$

Hand *snap*

Speak $\frac{4}{4}$

(can add scat later... ...or even converse!)

Metre $\frac{4}{4}$

Ex. 5 Swing $\|\bullet\bullet\| = 8$

Hand

snap

Speak

(can add scat later... ..or even converse!)

Metr