

Gloucestershire Jazz Live - Bassist Expectations

1 - Preparation and practice

- a) As a matter of principle ALL musicians should **arrive punctually at rehearsals / performances** in good enough time to set-up and work through individual warm-ups prior to the rehearsal / performance start time. Bringing a reliable music stand and 2 pencils is also expected.
- b) All GJL members should **ensure they can perform their part to each piece**. If not then practising the necessary parts independently is expected.
- c) Be able to **set-up, tune-up and sound-check with amplifiers** independently and properly. GJL will communicate what amplifiers they can provide, however the GJL bassists are responsible for ensuring amps are set-up properly and any respective mains leads returned to the respective owner. Any issues with amplifier / lead provision should be reported to the GJL Director.

2 – Development of listening skills

- a) Listening should be a staple part of developing your musicianship. All GJL members are expected to **be familiar with the main developed jazz related genres**; (Blues), Dixieland, 1920s New Orleans style, Chicago “hot” style, Swing (1930-1950s Big Band music), Bebop, Bossa Nova, Latin, Funk and Fusion.
- b) If unfamiliar then **the following styles should also be explored** (by listening and practising) as a developing jazz musician; Charleston, Stomps, Beguine, Foxtrot, Cha-cha, Quickstep, Jungle, Rhumba, East-Coast Jazz (1950s), West coast jazz (1950s), Soul Jazz plus more contemporary / modern styles (late 1960s onwards – eg. Free Jazz, Hip-hop) and more global styles (Cuban, Afro-Cuban, Salsa, Township etc.)
- c) **Pivotal jazz bassists** to listen to – Jimmy Blanton, Walter Page, Eddie Jones, Paul Chambers, Ron Carter, Oscar Pettiford, Ray Brown, Stanley Clarke, Charlie Mingus, Niels-Henning Orsted-Pederson, Jaco Pastorius, Steve Swallow, Anthony Jackson, Richard Bona, Marcus Miller, Victor Wootton, Peno Paladino, Nathan East, Christian McBride, John Patitucci, Laurence Cottle and Dave Holland.
- d) For more bassists to discover please ask your GJL band-leader or your instrumental teacher.

3 – Musical Knowledge

- a) All GJL members are expected to be able to read musical notation, perform up to the standard expected of their band and be developing their improvising skills with their progressing knowledge. As a bassist this should mean developing your:

Knowledge and understanding of:

- **Technical skills and techniques** (electric and double bass) [using right-hand fingers] / thumb and a pick (electric bass)
- **Time signatures:** 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 6/8 and 9/8
- **All Italian tempo directions**
- **Structural / textural terminology:** eg. A theme, B theme, Binary form, Ternary form, Rondo form, 32-bar song form, accompaniment, ad lib, bridge, break, chorus, fills, homophonic, intro, imitation, Instrumental, monophonic, octaves, polyphonic, solo, soli, tag, tutti, unison,
- **Specific jazz terminology:** Charleston, comping, head, solo “chorus,” improvisation, riff, “time.”
- **Rhythms:** semibreves [whole notes] to semiquavers [16th notes], triplets, quintuplets, sextuplets, cross-rhythms, polyrhythms, offbeat, syncopated and tied rhythms,
- **Dynamic markings:** from fff to ppp, crescendo, diminuendo, sforzando (sfz), subito forte-piano (sfp).
- **Articulation / phrasing markings:** legato, staccato, accents, clipped notes, grace notes, phrase marks and vibrato.

Understanding of jazz chords is vital as well as arpeggios

Major, minor, major 6, minor 6, major 7, minor (major 7), minor 7, 6/9, 7, 9, 13, (b5), (#5), (b9), (#9), (#11)

Understanding of basic and jazz associated scales is also vital

Ionian, Natural minor (Aeolian), Harmonic minor, Jazz “Natural” minor, Chromatic, Blues, Mixolydian, Dorian, Lydian, Lydian Dominant, Phrygian, Locrian, Whole-tone, Altered, Diminished (half-whole), Diminished (whole-half)

Understanding the difference between straight, swing, shuffle and 12/8 grooves is vital to all jazz musicians

4 – Technical Ability

- a) Ability to perform the following techniques – arco (if double bass), bend (1/4, 1/2, full), hammer-on, picking / alternate picking, octaves, pull-off, slide, sixths, thumb technique, thumb position (double bass), thirds, tremolando and vibrato.
- b) As a matter of principle all musicians should practice sight-reading on a bi-weekly basis (at least)
- c) Developing the ability to perform from tempo 45 to 240 bpm