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# JAZZ SCHOOL»



## Singing with the Band

By Dominique Eade

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Dominique Eade performs at New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall in October 2017. (Photo: Andrew Hurlbut/NEC)





ANDREW HURLBUT/NEC

# Integrating Singing into Jazz Ensembles

The human voice has been integral to jazz from its prehistory to present day. From ring shouts, to every era of Duke Ellington, to Jen Shyu with Miles Okazaki, the resourceful and creative use of the voice, and its symbiotic relationship with other instruments, has fed the jazz tradition. In pre-jazz Black American music, the voice often carried the musical traditions when the contributions of other instruments were prohibited. At other times, instrumentalists relayed the message when those words were suppressed. We need only to think of Lester Young and Billie Holiday, Norma Winstone and Kenny Wheeler, or Louis Armstrong, who, as a trumpeter, interpreter of lyrics and wordless vocal

improviser, embodied it all, to appreciate the rich interaction and creative expression of the interwoven vocal and instrumental traditions.

Yet I sometimes encounter jazz educators who are uncertain how to incorporate singers into their programs without relying solely on vocal jazz groups or the conventions of more traditional settings for a solo vocalist. In this article, I will suggest ways to expand the role of singing in ensembles in jazz education. Applying these approaches can provide the vocal student, and everyone in the ensemble, with a richer learning experience that connects to the history of the music itself.

Before we explore how to employ the voice with more variety, let's open our ears to some

of its features. Like every instrument, the singing voice has complex technical aspects. Here are some basics to consider.

## Vocal Range

Instrumentalists in ensembles with singers should learn the singer's full range, as well as the normally smaller area they are comfortable singing with words as a soloist in a given style. Ranges might fall into classifications, such as soprano, mezzo, alto, tenor, baritone and bass, but individual voices vary, and these classically derived categories aren't always useful, especially in other genres that use different sound qualities or registration.

Awareness of specific range and registers is not only crucial to writing successfully for a singer, it's also important for anyone playing with singers. Often, instrumentalists have not stopped to identify what octave the singer is singing in, where that falls on their instrument, and how that might affect what they choose to play. The octave being sung will not necessarily be accurately represented on a lead sheet. Tenor voice, conventionally written in treble clef, sounds an octave lower. A higher voice might sing an octave below the written part to avoid excessive ledger lines. Or, the singer might choose to deviate from the written music.

Singers should be challenged to extend their range and registral facility as their technique and musicianship develop, but some basic awareness of what is reasonable to expect in an educational setting makes that development less hit or miss.

## Lyrics & Language

Unlike any other instrument, the voice can combine words with pitch. We all use words every day, so it's easy to take their contribution to the musical soundscape for granted. Words not only impart meaning, both literal and evocative, but they create textures of varied tone colors, rhythm and dynamics that should be considered in arranging, and listened for in musical interaction. While singing any given pitch, singers constantly modify the shape of the "bell" of their instrument (lips, jaw, tongue, soft palette and pharynx) to create the sounds of language. Paying attention to the sonic properties of language and the shifting tonal palette of the voice is like hearing how the different parts of the drum kit sound, recognizing tongued versus legato saxophone articulation or distinguishing trumpet mutes.

Vocal pitch begins with the breath's vibration of the vocal folds in the larynx. To form



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vowels, the shape of the vocal tract above the larynx is modified to amplify certain resonant frequencies or formants. Vowels are sometimes labeled bright to dark or high to low. As an experiment, whisper “ee,” “eh,” “ah,” “o” and “oo” to hear the (second) formant’s pitch descend from high to low. But a “bright” vowel can be sung “darkly,” or vice versa, to impart another layer of musical and emotional nuance.

Consonants, too, have different features to consider. For instance, which consonants are phonated (have pitch made by the vocal folds vibrating) and which are not? Which consonants have pitch that can be sustained? What consonants can sound more than one way?

It’s good to remember that words don’t always sound the way they look on the written or musical page. For example, the word “fire” could be assigned a single rhythmic articulation in music, but the word is not just one sound, but four in succession: the fricative “f,” the vowel “ah,” followed by “ee” and then “er.”

Just as you can sing a multisyllable word on one note, you can also extend one syllable over many notes, called a melisma. Melismas can be a stylistic choice in interpretation or composed. A stream of notes on one syllable, often improvised, is called a riff or a run. Melismas affect the lilt of the melodic line.

Compare “Happy Birthday” to “Silent Night.”

Instrumentalists who play effectively with singers usually listen to singers and know lyrics. Memorizing lyrics to a few standards, even a poem, is a good place to begin. The rhythmic content of speech is complex, undulating with odd groupings and accents. Unfolding these contours in the context of meter is part of the singer’s interpretive skill and something a collaborator can learn to perceive and react to.

With a better awareness of range, register, tone color and the nuances of meaning and sound in language, it is possible to include the voice more effectively in an ensemble setting, allowing both the vocalists and instrumentalists to gain valuable musical skills. Here are some suggestions.

### Written Music & Learning Parts

- If individual parts are being given to other instrumentalists, singers should also be given their own notated part.
- Singers’ written charts should include some other pitch references such as chord changes or instrumental cues.
- Singers should do their best to sight-read according to level, but getting music in advance and/or taking the music home helps.
- Encourage the entire ensemble to learn some music by ear and sing their parts in the


ensemble, so there is—at least occasionally—more emphasis on aural transmission skills.

### Arranging & Composing

Vocalists can participate in ensembles in many ways. They can sing with lyrics and wordlessly, but they shouldn’t be limited to only singing the head in and out with everyone else soloing in between or, when singing wordlessly, always doubling the melody with another instrument.

Here are some other possibilities:

- An instrumentalist plays the melody in the original key, after which the chart modulates and the song is sung in a new key (like old big-band arrangements). This gives the lead instrumentalist an opportunity to improve their melodic interpretation and the band to practice playing in different keys.
- Singer is featured “instrumentally” on the intro, then interprets the melody with lyrics (e.g., Ivie Anderson on “It Don’t Mean A Thing”).
- Singer is given a harmony part, rather than always doubling or singing the lead line.
- Singer is given a background line while someone else is playing a melody or soloing.
- Singer sings obbligato (written or improvised) lines while someone else plays the melody. (This is great ear training and other instru-



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*it all happens here.*



mentalists could try to sing like this as well.)

- Singer sings obbligato lines with the lyrics of the song, answering an instrumentalist that is playing the melody. For example, the horn plays the first three notes of “All Of Me,” and the voice answers, “all of me,” altering the melody and rhythm to adapt to the delayed placement.

- Singer sings the melody with lyrics, but the arrangement modulates within the form. Bill Evans’ “Days Of Wine And Roses” is an instrumental example.

- Singer, or other, writes lyrics to a piece that has no lyrics or new lyrics to a song that does.

- Singer writes lyrics to an existing instrumental solo or composes a solo-like line and adds lyrics.

- Arrangement features horns and voice alone in chorale-like harmony.

- Singer doubles an unusual instrument such as bass, or bass and piano left hand, in a melody, background or shout chorus.

- Singer uses spoken word.

- Singer sings repeated lyrics in a looped section.

- Singer sings an ostinato or another accompanying figure.

- Singer is given a percussive role.

- Singer sings some portion of the arrangement rubato with one or more instruments.

- Accompaniment features different subgroups of instruments. For example, the bass and the voice could double a melody with only drums accompanying.

## Improvisation

As with any student, a vocalist’s level of familiarity with improvising will vary. Whether the student is accomplished or just beginning, they should be given every opportunity to practice within an appropriate set of parameters.

Here are some suggestions on musical ways to give vocalists more experience with improvisation, beyond simply scatting over the form:

- Singer improvises over a vamp as an intro, interlude or coda, rather than the entire form.

- Singer improvises using the lyrics but changing the melody, often done as a second chorus.

- Singer is given a guide-tone line to embellish as a solo or a background line for another soloist.

- Singer trades with other soloists or solos on only one section of the tune and sings backgrounds for another. Trading doesn’t always have to be a set number of bars or a back and forth between soloists, but can be a call-and-response structure where everyone plays a short figure together and the vocalist impro-

vises in the “response” section.

- Singer is given a fixed rhythmic figure, but improvises the pitches or vice versa.

- Singer participates in a group solo, over a form or “free.”

- Singer solos percussively with drums.

- Singers should be able to take the music home to practice.

I’m sure there are many more possibilities for integrating singing into jazz ensembles than I have listed here. It’s my hope that these ideas will stimulate the imagination, helping educators give vocalists and instrumentalists

the opportunity to develop their musicianship in an informed and creative environment. **DB**

Dominique Eade is a vocalist, improviser and composer known for wide-ranging work with artists from Ran Blake and Stanley Cowell to Dave Holland and Anthony Braxton. She has recorded seven albums under her name, including two for RCA Victor. Her most recent release, *Town And Country* (Sunnyside), garnered 4½ stars from DownBeat. Eade is the featured vocalist on the brand new album *If There Are Mountains* (Newvelle) with Dave Douglas and Elan Mehler. A member of the faculty at the New England Conservatory of Music since 1984, where she has developed a renowned vocal program, Eade has taught some of the most established and up-and-coming vocal artists today, including Luciana Souza, Roberta Gambarini, Rachael Price, Sara Serpa, Jo Lawry, Richard Saunders, Akenya Seymour, Sofia Rei, Michael Mayo, Aoife O’Donovan, Sara Jarosz, Darynn Dean and many others.



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# The Wise Man Knows You Should Compose

A few months before I turned 17, I won a generous scholarship from the Monterey Jazz Festival to study with the legendary Joe Henderson for a full year. The lessons—more like freewheeling musical intensives—lasted up to five hours. Though we worked on saxophone technique and sound production, the main focus was elsewhere. He'd play unreleased recordings for me and asked me to discuss what I heard, analyze classical saxophone pieces as I learned each section, teach me cool and obscure tunes by ear—all the good stuff. During the first lesson, he asked me to play the melody of something I'd written on piano. Then he asked me to play it again as a three-horn arrangement incorporating the melody. The mission was clear: to think and play compositionally. This changed my life.

A year later, I sold my first big band chart to Ray Charles. During the next 40 years, I supported my jazz habit, in part, by writing, arranging and licensing all kinds of music. My inspirations include the fabulous Benny Carter and the amazing Quincy Jones.

The first advice I'd give to any young musician is to start composing. You'll stand a much better chance of making a good living in the music business if you add "composer" and "arranger" to your résumé.

There are numerous potential benefits to knowing how to write and arrange music. You will become a better musician. You will enhance your marketability. You can boost your current and future income by writing songs, jingles, TV themes, video-game music and film scores. You can create a repertoire that best showcases your playing strengths. You can make a lasting contribution to the genre of music you love the most. You can express yourself beautifully without using words. If you also happen to be a skilled lyricist, you'll be unstoppable. Music composition is one of the highest art forms and has been an integral force in vibrant cultures throughout history. Join the party.

And a heck of a party it is. From Tin Pan Alley to Jazz at Lincoln Center to Ed Sheeran, musicians who compose rule. If you had opened the door to one of the cubicles in the Brill building in New York in the late '50s and early '60s, you would have seen one of the great young singer/songwriters of the day pounding out the hits. Then there were the prolific teams of musician/composers at Motown and Stax, in Hollywood and Nashville, and on Broadway. And, of course, while all that was happening, great bandleaders like Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck earned big publishing bucks. It's the same today—even with the advent of streaming: You're better off if you own your own material, regardless of the musical genre.

Though there are plenty of stories about songwriters whose first songs were hits, and quite a few untrained composers who have achieved spectacular commercial success, you should assume that you'll have to use more elbow grease than those anointed folks.

Writing solid, original and memorable music has never been easy, and getting your music heard often depends upon who you know; writing effective lyrics is really tough; and hit songs are the exception to the rule. But who said you need to write a hit song? As I mentioned, there are many reasons to write and ways to generate income in the process. Learn the craft. Once you find your compositional voice, the rest will fall into place.

My fans often ask how I "come up with" my compositions. I explain that when I'm lucky, the music writes itself: I "hear" a song in a dream, wake



up and furiously scribble it down or record it. Other ideas are born while I'm improvising or during rehearsal and soundcheck jams. Sometimes, I'll start a song, put it away and combine it with other snippets years later. When I'm writing for hire, I let the project inspire me (like Cole Porter). It doesn't really matter what device or technique you use; whatever works. And no matter how (or how well) you write, it's unlikely that you'll create something truly unique: Most music is a patchwork of musical ideas accumulated over a lifetime. Just try to avoid overt plagiarism.

Whether or not you've ever tried to write music, you should jump in with both feet. Get something down on paper or on a recording device. I've experienced both prolific spells and drought years, so I won't advise you to write every day, but write as much as you can. You should explore the many excellent books, periodicals and websites devoted to songwriting; take a composition and arranging class in college; find a mentor; find a writing partner who's at or above your level; analyze songs and scores; discover what makes your favorite music sound so good; write something for your high school band. You can get a great deal of inspiration directly from your vinyl or MP3 collection, radio, Spotify and YouTube. A wealth of information can be found on the websites of ASCAP and BMI.

Then, expect rejection—especially from your family and friends. The human ear is an extraordinarily subjective instrument: Play a song for 10 people and you might get 11 radically different opinions of it. Most people—including most music industry people—don't even hear the way you do, let alone have the same taste. In other words, when you're ready to shop your wares, pick your targets carefully and possess a teflon ego. Eventually someone will hear things the way you do or at least appreciate your sonic alchemy. Keep growing and keep knocking on those doors. **DB**

Dan Wilensky has toured and recorded with hundreds of artists, including Ray Charles, Jack McDuff, Slickaphonics, Steve Winwood, Joan Baez, Cornell Dupree, Mark Murphy, Santana, Rory Block, Faith No More, James Brown, The Roches and David Bowie. He has played on and composed and arranged for numerous film soundtracks and TV themes, and can be heard on more than 250 records. His popular book *Musician!* and his seven albums as a leader are available at [danwilensky.com](http://danwilensky.com) and iTunes. His latest release, *All In All*, features Clay Giberson, Bill Athens and Micah Hummel.





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# Develop Rhythmic Vocabulary by 'Playing' with Isorhythms

During an interview with music critic Ralph J. Gleason, Dizzy Gillespie once said, "I think up a rhythm first and then I put notes to it." This idea of starting with the rhythm and dealing with notes, scales and chords afterward will be a novel concept for many, but rhythm is in some sense the most important aspect of music. Think of it: There's percussion music that has rhythm but no chords or scales, but no music has scales and chords without rhythm—even if it's an implied rhythm. I'm going to give you one method of putting the rhythm first.

We'll be using isorhythms. An isorhythm is a repeated figure in which the rhythm remains constant but the notes change. As a bassist, I've often used this technique as a means of keeping a groove while interacting with a soloist (and it was decades before I found out there was a cool word for it). But it's also a means of creating continuity in a solo or just developing your rhythmic vocabulary, which is reason enough. I've often had students come to me after they've spent years of studying scales, arpeggios, chord substitutions and chromatic concepts with the complaint that everything they play still sounds the same. Upon examination it often comes out that they only play a few rhythmic ideas over and over again.

Of course, the way to develop a strong and diverse rhythmic vocabulary is by thoroughly learning a few rhythms, and expanding from there. Doing this, you'll find your ability to work with rhythm will become more refined, and it will become easier to create and learn new rhythms. Don't believe me? Let me walk you through some steps on how to do this.

We'll start with a simple rhythm, four eighth notes starting on the downbeat (Example 1). The first step is to play the isorhythm without pitches or on one pitch, just to get familiar with it. (I often do this with a metronome at a slow tempo and then increase the tempo, until I get to the point where I'm just hearing the rhythm, no longer counting it.)

Next, create lines using this rhythm. If we play chromatically from D to F (Example 2), we have the main motif for Thelonious Monk's "Blue Monk."

For Example 3, I've created some lines for the first three bars of a B $\flat$  blues. This can be a wonderful means of having your solo sound connected to the song. If you use the rhythms of the melody and improvise with them, your solo naturally will evoke the song. (I was on a gig years ago and the bandleader called a song I'd never heard before, so when it came time for my solo, I just improvised around the rhythms of the melody. Afterward everyone in the band complimented me on that specific solo.)

The next step is to develop the ability to improvise with these rhythms. When I work with an isorhythm, once I'm comfortable with playing it, I'll improvise on a mode, then on a blues, and then maybe on other progressions and forms. I'll solo over an entire track exclusively with the isorhythm, and then play along with it again using the isorhythm in conjunction with other rhythms, to make sure this new rhythmic pattern becomes a natural part of my vocabulary. A curious thing often happens: When I've got the rhythm set, I often find I know what notes to play, and I've seen this with students as well. Those who complain that they can't improvise or can't think of what to play, when given a rhythm they discover that the notes almost take care of themselves. It's just like Dizzy said.

When doing anything with rhythm, it's important to observe yourself and make sure you're playing the rhythm you intend. If you're not careful, you might morph the rhythm into a simpler one or just one you know



better. I suggest precise counting, until you've got the rhythm together. You might even want to record yourself playing the rhythm and count along on playback to determine if you're producing it accurately. This is only necessary in the beginning stages. As you get comfortable with isorhythms, you'll know when you're playing the indicated rhythm or not.

Over time, you'll want to do this process with more than one rhythm. A simple way of creating other rhythms is through rhythmic displacement, which is exactly what it says: moving a rhythm over. So, if we displace our motif a half beat, we get Example 4. With most eighth-note rhythms, you'll have eight variations (in 4/4), since there are eight points in the measure you can start the rhythm on. That's a lot of variety just in the permutations of a few rhythms. And if you're the kind of musician who enjoys taking things further, you can take any two rhythms you've created and combine them to create a two-bar isorhythm.

Example 5 combines Example 4 with Example 1. Taking the blues line of Example 3 and applying it to this rhythm, we get Example 6. Notice the subtle but effective alteration in mood this small alteration makes.

So, how do you create the initial isorhythm? A few ways come to mind. One is to do what we did above, and take the rhythm from somewhere else. It could come from a melody, a bass line, an improvisation, a drum beat, your imagination or wherever you hear a rhythm you think you'd like to appropriate. I suggest writing them on index cards and putting them on your practice stand, so every practice you have some rhythmic material to work on.

Another manner of generating isorhythms is to do it systematically: Create all the possible permutations of notes in the bar. Example 7 starts you off with the first group of permutations of our four-note motif. From all of them at the front of the bar, you can just move the last note to every subsequent point in the bar, then move the penultimate note over one and move the final note around again. If you want to continue, just move the penultimate note over once again and repeat. When you've finished all of those, then move the second note over and start again, until you've

ROBYN BELLOSPRITO

Jimi Durso

exhausted those possibilities, and then move the first note over and continue the process. That's quite a lot of rhythms.

Rather than do so much thinking, I often would just come up with them randomly. I'd write out the points in the measure (like this: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +) and just pick some. The more points you pick, the denser the rhythm; the fewer, the more sparse.

Besides being incredibly useful for expanding your rhythmic vocabulary, isorhythms are a powerful method for any rhythmic issues. Have problems with 16th-note syncopations? Create some isorhythms. (Isorhythms don't have to be eighth notes and can be a great way of developing proficiency with other subdivisions). Suck at odd meters? Make and practice some isorhythms in those time signatures. Issues with polyrhythms? Once again: isorhythms. It's also a fantastic way of developing the ability to comfortably play over the bar line.

If you can approach learning isorhythms with a sense of discovery, you'll likely pick up on it faster. Find the method that is most enjoyable for you. This shouldn't be a chore—make it more of a *game*. **DB**

Jim Durso is a guitarist and bassist based in the New York area. Visit him online at [jimidurso.com](http://jimidurso.com).

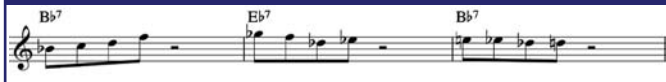
#### Example 1



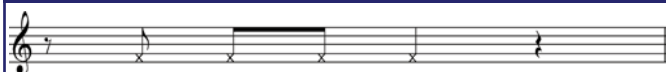
#### Example 2



#### Example 3



#### Example 4



#### Example 5



#### Example 6



#### Example 7



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JOHN ABBOTT

Matt Wilson

# Matt Wilson's Drum Solo on 'Jabaloni'

In a year marked with endless challenges, drummer Matt Wilson reminds us all to smile and remain hopeful with his new release, *Hug!* Representing his 13th album on the Palmetto label, *Hug!* assembles a piano-less quartet with frequent collaborators Kirk Knuffke (cornet, soprano cornet), Jeff Lederer (woodwinds) and Chris Lightcap (bass), as they explore an eclectic array of covers and original compositions. Wilson, who is equally at home playing straightahead and free, blends his unique style of musical drumming throughout each track on the album. A highlight can be found in his solo work on Abdullah Ibrahim's joyful composition "Jabaloni."

To fully appreciate Wilson's solo, it is important to first understand the melody of Ibrahim's composition. Heavily influenced by his upbringing in Cape Town, South Africa, and his admiration of fellow pianist Thelonious Monk, Ibrahim focuses his attention on rhythm to drive the overall theme of his composition.

More specifically, he leverages the relationship between downbeats, upbeats and the space between, as he playfully "flips" the emphasis of the downbeat on the listener. Like the standard "Evidence," a similar composition by Monk, "Jabaloni" creates a playful landscape of rhythmic unpredictability. This is an important factor to note in this instance, because Wilson leans heavily upon this concept and motif throughout his solo.

The most obvious example of this motif occurs between measures 9 and 12. Like the melody, the rhythmic displacement serves as a call-and-response every two measures of the "A" section. In this example, measures 9–10 establish a heavy emphasis on the downbeat, alternating between floor tom and high tom on beats 1 and 3, respectively. Subsequently, the response to this statement is first heard in the pickups to measure 11, mimicking the same motif but this time from the perspective of the upbeats.

Wilson takes this concept one step further

in measure 12 when he yet again flips the perspective by dropping the floor tom note on beat 4, instead of on 1. To trained ears, this sounds like a brief bar of 3, but it is just a rhythmic illusion expertly crafted by Wilson. The tension is ultimately resolved in measures 15 and 16, ending with Wilson dropping beat 1 back on the floor tom in measure 17.

One unique aspect of this solo is that Wilson never strikes a cymbal during the entirety of the improvisation. This artistic choice to focus on just the drums might be in tribute to the African influence of this composition, but it makes the solo unique in that the drums are exposed dynamically without the wash of the cymbals. Coming out of the bass solo, Wilson maintains the mezzo forte sound on the snare as he weaves through syncopated bebop lines, slowly integrating the toms in measures 1–7. Up to this point, the hi-hat foot has remained silent, but in measure 8 he strategically places it as a solo voice landing on beat 4 to set up the next section.

From this point forward, Wilson begins to explore the full range of dynamics. Aside from the obvious sharp tom attacks and quiet responses featured in measures 9–14, Wilson uses exaggerated dynamic shifts as rhythmic anchors from which to improvise around. This is seen in measure 25, which compositionally represents a shift to the "B" section when Wilson drops two accented double-stops between the snare and high tom on beats 1 and 2. Like an ostinato, this sets up a structure from which to improvise around, as can be seen in measures 27, 33, 35, 37 and 39.

Texturally, Wilson employs a range of strokes on the drums to evoke the intensity and color he seeks. In general, the first half of the solo has a strong focus on single strokes, while the second half of the solo moves more into a combination of double-stops and flams.

Measures 37–44 are a particularly rich example of this conversation between the two techniques. The hi-hat, as it has appeared throughout the solo, plays an important linear role as it breaks up phrases across the drum set. A good example of this in action occurs in measures 43–44 as the hi-hat and the snare/floor tom alternate and grow dynamically into measure 45. To do this cleanly requires substantial technical ability, something Wilson is never short on.

The solo ends with a restatement of its original motif in measures 53 and 54 and decrescendos back into the ensemble's free-form rubato section to close the tune.

DB

Jeff Lien is a drummer, writer and educator residing in Nashville.

♩ = 256

(Solo starts at 4:15)

#### Drum Notation Key

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of New York

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Photograph by  
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## Ibanez George Benson GB10-BS Hollowbody

### *Four Decades of Quality, Versatility & Classic Jazz Tone*

In 1974, Ibanez offered its first original design, the AR series, and its success inspired the company to produce its very first artist signature model, the George Benson GB10, in 1977. Sporting pro-level workmanship, tone and playability, this flagship of the Ibanez signature line remains a solid choice among guitarists who appreciate its quality and versatility.

Today, Ibanez offers a rich catalog of artist signature models in addition to the Benson line, which now contains three models. The GB10, manufactured in Japan, is the top of the line and a true collaboration between manufacturer and musician. According to Scott Miller, communications and marketing specialist at Ibanez, Benson was focused on several key areas in designing his guitar. He wanted something comfortable to play, resistant to feedback on stage and easily adjustable on the road without the need for special tools.

The GB10 is one of those guitars that simply exudes quality the instant you open the case. The body features a comfortable 14¾-inch bout and a slim 3⅝-inch depth. The five-ply binding is nicely yellowed, and the gold hardware along with bound f-holes really set off the deep tobacco sunburst. The three-piece neck has an ebony board highlighted by abalone/acrylic block inlays and topped off by the Benson torch logo on the headstock. This hollowbody features the standard spruce top and maple back and sides with a floating ebony bridge and two floating GB special humbucker pickups custom wound by Ibanez.

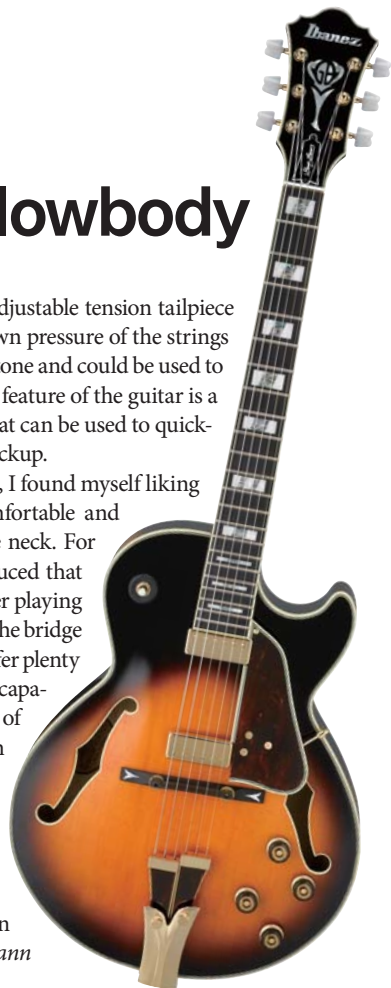
With separate volume and tone pots for each pickup, dialing in your sound is straightforward, with lots of possibilities to work with. One of

the GB10's signature elements is an adjustable tension tailpiece that offers the ability to tweak the down pressure of the strings behind the bridge, which will impact tone and could be used to control feedback issues. Another cool feature of the guitar is a threaded post under the pickguard that can be used to quickly fine-tune the height of the bridge pickup.

After many hours of playing time, I found myself liking this guitar more and more. It's comfortable and easy to play, with a great slim-profile neck. For jazz, using just the neck pickup produced that creamy yet clear archtop tone, whether playing with a pick or bare fingers. Dialing in the bridge pickup expands the palette and can offer plenty of bite and grit. Overall, the GB10 is capable of an extremely broad variety of sounds, but without compromising on that classic "jazz tone" that is really what this guitar is all about. Ibanez offers the GB10 for \$3,599, including a rugged thermoplastic molded case, and for a no-compromise professional-level instrument, that's more than reasonable.

—Keith Baumann

[ibanez.com](http://ibanez.com)



## Yamaha Revamps Baritone Saxes

### *New Custom Model Tops the Line*

With the YBS-82, YBS-62II and YBS-480, Yamaha has scored a baritone saxophone trifecta. The three new horns represent a complete revamp of the company's bari lineup, which until now included the always reliable YBS-52 student model and the versatile YBS-62 professional model.

A Custom-level Yamaha instrument, the YBS-82 (MSRP: \$16,323) is the new top-of-the-line bari, appropriate for use in jazz, classical and contemporary settings. Like the Custom alto and tenor, it comes in a variety of customizable configurations involving the handmade neck, which is available in three bore tapers: V1 (large), E1 (medium) and C1 (small). The C1 neck is standard, and the E1 and V1 can be purchased separately (starting at \$366). The new necks will fit any Yamaha bari, in fact, including original YBS-62 and YBS-52 models that cats have been playing for years. Having a choice of neck bores is a major advantage when it comes to getting that juicy, ripe tone and quick response you need on bari.

Players can choose from six different finishes for their neck: lacquered, silver-plated, sterling silver, gold-plated, unlacquered and black lacquer. The main body of the YBS-82 comes in gold-lacquer, silver-plated and unlacquered options, and features elegant hand-engraving throughout.

The YBS-82 (pictured) has that familiar Custom sound, a manifestation of advanced bore design and Yamaha's proprietary brass recipe. Intonation was superb during play-testing, and the revised key layout felt compact and comfortable in my hands. This instrument is clearly built

for speed. The low end responded magnificently, with plenty of power and a touch of cello-like tonal sweetness. The bell of the instrument was shortened to accommodate improved tonehole placement, a design change that also makes the low register sound more uniform with the rest of the horn.

Many of these design enhancements are incorporated into the new YBS-62II (MSRP: \$13,997) professional model, which replaces the YBS-62, and the already-popular YBS-480 (MSRP: \$8,641) intermediate model, which builds upon the success and reputation of the YBS-52.

The YBS-62II has the same integrated keypost setup as the YBS-82, where multiple keys connect to a single plate, helping to bring a moderate level of resistance while delivering a solid tonal core.

The YBS-480 features a redesigned bore and neck modeled after Yamaha's original 62 series saxophones to improve intonation.

All three new Yamaha baris are outfitted with a special socket attachment at the bottom bow to accommodate an optional detachable peg.

—Ed Enright

[usa.yamaha.com](http://usa.yamaha.com)



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# JAZZ SCHOOL Toolshed > GEAR BOX

## 1. FM Rhythm

Roland has released a firmware update for its flagship drum machine in the Aria series. The free version 2.0 firmware update of the TR-8S Rhythm Performer offers major enhancements like an FM synthesis engine with MORPH parameter: an ultra-expressive macro control that lets you sweep through an array of tonal variations, manipulating FM depth, ratio and feedback with a twist of a knob. Version 2.0 also offers expanded performance effects and helpful reload functions to speed up workflow. Roland has added more Instrument FX, as well, including Saturator, Spread, Frequency Shifter and Ring Modulator.

More info: [roland.com](http://roland.com)

## 2. Vocal Freakout

With the MicroFreak Vocoder Edition, Arturia gives keyboard players the option to sing along with dynamic textures and harmonies provided by a paraphonic synth with 16-band vocoder engine. The vocoder comes with an easily adjustable and removable gooseneck microphone. Combine the Vocoder mode with MicroFreak's wild features and manipulate your sound like never before. Sequence vocal melodies or modulate voice parameters with the low-frequency oscillation. Connect an external sound source like a drum machine or synth via the headphone socket for glitchy sound processing.

More info: [arturia.com](http://arturia.com)

## 3. Mouthpiece Case

The Great Leather Trumpet Mouthpiece Case fits up to five trumpet, cornet or flugelhorn mouthpieces. Each premium, handcrafted leather case is fastened with Velcro strips, sewn into special 3M backing that helps the case hold its form. Protective dividers separate the mouthpieces and hold them snugly in place. The Great Leather Trumpet Mouthpiece Case comes in seven colors: wine, forest green, British tan, black, red, palomino and brown.

More info: [mouthpiececase.com](http://mouthpiececase.com)

## 4. Guitar Hang

On-Stage has introduced the DT8000 Guitar Stool with Hanger, an all-in-one setup that allows guitarists to conveniently store their instruments right behind the backrest of a comfortable perch. Suitable for practice or performance, the DT8000 has an extra-thick padded cushion and four nonslip rubber feet to ensure that the stool sits firmly on the floor or stage without moving. A folding design makes this stool especially easy to transport and store.

More info: [on-stage.com](http://on-stage.com)

## 5. 360-Degree Sound

Hong Kong-based developer miniDSP has created the ambiMIK-1 Ambisonic USB microphone, featuring 3D audio software from Swedish sound pioneer Dirac. The ambiMIK-1 plugs directly into a standard USB port to capture lifelike 360-degree sound for applications ranging from recording music to producing augmented virtual reality content.

More info: [minidsp.com](http://minidsp.com)



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### NOTABLE PERFORMANCES

Montreux Jazz Festival  
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MCP New York City  
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ACDA National Conference  
NAfME National Conference  
Kansas Music Education Association  
Southwestern ACDA Divisional Conference  
Opening act for Take 6 and New York Voices

### NOTABLE ALUMNI

**Bobby Watson**  
*Internationally-renowned saxophonist, Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City*

**Lisa Henry**  
*Winner of the 1994 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition, toured with Herbie Hancock*

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