DEAN SORENSON

AAARDVARK ALLEY

Correlated with the STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE JAZZ ENSEMBLE METHOD
THE COMPOSER

Dean Sorenson (b. 1963) is the Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Minnesota as well as a prolific and highly sought-after composer, arranger, trombonist, educator, and clinician. He received his bachelor’s degree in trombone performance from the University of Minnesota and his master’s degree in jazz arranging and composition from the Eastman School of Music.

Mr. Sorenson is the co-author of the highly successful Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method, an innovative and comprehensive method book for young jazz ensembles. The highly anticipated follow-up book, The Standard of Excellence Advanced Jazz Ensemble Method, was recently released to rave reviews and continues the solid, practical techniques introduced in the first book. He is also the author of Standard of Excellence Jazz Combo Session, and composer of numerous pieces for concert band and jazz ensemble published by the Neil A. Kjos Music Company. As an advocate of jazz education and the expansion of the repertoire, he continues to develop creative materials and methods to help students and teachers better understand the art form. An outstanding clinician, conductor, and soloist, he is frequently featured at festivals and conventions around the country and abroad. He also maintains a full schedule of concert and recording dates as a Yamaha performing artist.

Mr. Sorenson has composed and arranged for numerous ensembles including the Glenn Miller Orchestra, the Airmen of Note, the United States Air Force Band, and for brass ensembles Proteus 7 and the Chestnut Brass Company. He is active as a commissioned composer and arranger for jazz ensemble, concert band, and chamber ensembles, and has also written several sacred choral pieces. For more information please visit www.deansorensonmusic.com.

THE COMPOSITION

AARDVARK ALLEY is a straight-ahead funk tune. Pay careful attention to the marked articulations, and make certain there is a difference between long and short notes. Short notes can be “punched” or accented. For examples of this kind of articulation listen to recordings of groups like Tower of Power. To place the rhythms properly, subdivide 16th notes while you are playing. Listen very carefully to the ensemble, especially the rhythm section. The ensemble unison beginning at bar 38 should be played at a moderate dynamic. Be careful not to overblow.

As with all Standard of Excellence Jazz In Concert selections, AARDVARK ALLEY is designed to be played by the full jazz ensemble. The chart will, however, sound full and complete when performed by as few as nine players: 1st and 2nd Alto Saxophones, 1st Tenor Saxophone, 1st and 2nd Trumpets, 1st Trombone, Piano, Bass, and Drums. The solo section of AARDVARK ALLEY (bars 30-37) is equally flexible and can be deleted entirely or repeated as necessary to accommodate multiple soloists. A CD containing a demonstration recording of the chart is attached to the AARDVARK ALLEY jacket.

To allow as many students as possible the opportunity to experience a jazz education, AARDVARK ALLEY and all other Standard of Excellence Jazz In Concert selections include optional supplemental parts for flute, Bb clarinet, French horn, Baritone T.C., and tuba. The included parts are readily adaptable for other non-standard jazz ensemble instruments (oboe, bassoon, Eb alto clarinet, Bb bass clarinet, baritone/euphonium, cellos, viola, and cello).

INSTRUMENTATION LIST

- 1st Alto Saxophone
- 2nd Alto Saxophone
- 1st Tenor Saxophone
- 2nd Tenor Saxophone
- Baritone Saxophone
- 1st Trumpet
- 2nd Trumpet
- 3rd Trumpet
- 4th Trumpet
- 1st Trombone
- 2nd Trombone
- 3rd Trombone
- 4th Trombone
- Guitar
- Piano
- Bass
- Drums
- Auxiliary Percussion
- Vibes
- Flute
- Clarinet
- French Horn
- Baritone T.C. (3rd Trombone T.C.)
- Tuba
- Director Score

THE CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Bruce Pearson (b. 1942) is a world-renowned educator, composer, author, and conductor. A graduate of St. Cloud State University and the University of Northern Colorado, his teaching experience spans over three decades at all levels of instruction. Most recently, he served as Director of Bands and Coordinator of Instrumental Studies at Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Bruce is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the prestigious Midwest Clinic Medal of Honor and the Wenger “Most Outstanding in the Field of Music Education” award for the State of Minnesota.

A prolific composer of music for concert band, Bruce is also author of the Best in Class Comprehensive Band Method and Standard of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method, and co-author of the Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method. As an adjudicator, clinician, guest speaker, and conductor, Bruce continually shares his talents, insights, and goodwill with both teachers and students worldwide in every conceivable jazz ensemble and concert band setting.
Rhythm Section Notation

Rhythm section parts in jazz ensemble charts traditionally call for a great deal of playing ad lib. For a student to develop the skills necessary to fill in this “missing music,” he or she must be exposed to appropriate, clearly notated models. Such models are provided throughout AARDVARK ALLEY.

Guitar
Suggested chord voicings for every chord used in the chart are provided in the guitar part.

Piano and Bass
Fully “written-out” piano and bass parts are provided below chord symbols. Players may alter the parts as long as the alterations follow the chord changes and are stylistically compatible with the groove established by the rest of the rhythm section. The marking “as is” is used to indicate music that should be played exactly as written.

Drums
The drum part is notated on a five-line staff with spaces representing different drum kit surfaces:

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Crash Cymbal, Ride Cymbal, or Hi-Hat (with hand)
Snare Drum Large Tom
Bass (kick)
Drum Hi-Hat (with foot)
Hands
Feet
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All grooves are completely “written out.” The drummer may alter a groove as long as the alterations are stylistically compatible with the groove established by the rest of the rhythm section.

Auxiliary Percussion and Vibes
The auxiliary percussion part is completely “written out,” though it may be altered as long as the alterations are stylistically compatible with the groove established by the rest of the rhythm section.

Traditionally, the vibes hold a dual function in a jazz ensemble setting. Sometimes, vibes function as a melody-playing instrument with the saxes, trumpets, and trombones. Other times, they function as a chord-playing instrument, helping to establish the groove with the rest of the rhythm section. In AARDVARK ALLEY, the vibes function exclusively as a melody-playing instrument.

No chord symbols appear in the vibes part except during the SUGGESTED SOLOS and the open solo section of the chart; in those cases, the symbols should be used to guide players in the creation of single-note improvisations.

Rhythm Studies and Suggested Solos

To better assist students and directors in understanding and performing jazz, all Standard of Excellence Jazz In Concert selections include RHYTHM STUDIES and SUGGESTED SOLOS. These exercises are based on similar studies that are included with the Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method and the Standard of Excellence Advanced Jazz Ensemble Method, both published by the Neil A. Kjos Music Company.

The RHYTHM STUDIES combine vocalization (using a rhythmic syllable system) and instrumental performance to help develop a better understanding of the rhythms, phrasings, and articulations used in the chart. The RHYTHM STUDIES are included on a photocopyable page (score page 4) that can be passed out to the entire ensemble. For more information on the syllable system used in the RHYTHM STUDIES or for suggestions and information on the notation and teaching of rock rhythms, see the Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method Director Score (Neil A. Kjos Music Company edition number W31F).

Singing (or vocalizing) rhythms is an excellent way to internalize the feel of the rhythm while avoiding the technical problems of the instrument. It also is very helpful in saving the chops. Have the students sing each rhythm study until they are comfortable with it, then have them play it on their instruments. The RHYTHM STUDIES are written using “X” noteheads on the student study sheet, which allows you to assign whatever pitch you would like for them to play. Generally, this will be a tonic pitch in a middle register.

Each student part includes two SUGGESTED SOLOS, which can be performed during the solo section of AARDVARK ALLEY (bars 30-37). SOLO PRACTICE TRACKS are also provided on the CD included with the Director Score. These tracks provide recorded rhythm section accompaniment to the solo section of AARDVARK ALLEY, allowing students to practice improvising solos in preparation for performance. Encourage students to improvise their solos using the SUGGESTED SOLOS as models, or by using the pitches of the scale notated in the grey box above the SUGGESTED SOLOS on the student parts.

SUGGESTED SOLOS are notated in concert pitch in the Director Score. All instruments except flute and tuba generally sound in the octaves shown in the score, though occasional octave adjustments occur.
The RHYTHM STUDIES combine vocalization (using a rhythmic syllable system) and instrumental performance to help develop a better understanding of the rhythms, phrasings, and articulations used in the chart.

Begin by singing the rhythm on a unison pitch, paying close attention to the articulations. Try to internalize the rhythm, and listen to those around you to ensure that it is phrased consistently across the entire ensemble.

Play the rhythm on a unison pitch that your director will give to you. Strive to match the feel and phrasing of the rhythm within your section, and within the entire ensemble.
SUGGESTED SOLOS – AARDVARK ALLEY

All parts except Drums, Aux. Percussion.

NATURAL MINOR SCALE

The solo section for AARDVARK ALLEY is based on the Natural Minor Scale, sometimes called the Aeolian Scale.
Aardvark Alley

SUGGESTED SOLO #2

Funk \( \text{d} = 88-94 \)

Alto Sax
Baritone Sax
Tenor Sax
Trumpet
Clarinet
Baritone T.C.
F Horn
Flute (8va)
Guitar
Piano
Vibes
Trombone
Bass
Tuba (8vb)
Drums

SAMPLE

ZB389
DIRECTOR:
- Bars 30-37 of AARDVARK ALLEY are open for solos. Students soloing may use the SUGGESTED SOLOS, or create their own solos based on licks they know, or new ideas derived from the RHYTHM STUDIES or the AARDVARK ALLEY chart itself. If desired, the open solo section may be omitted entirely.
- Woodwind backgrounds (solo accompaniment figures) begin at bar 30 and brass backgrounds begin at bar 33. Backgrounds may be cued at the beginning of any solo chorus. When more than one soloist plays, it is suggested that the backgrounds be used to accompany alternating solo choruses, or the last chorus only. The rhythm section should accompany every chorus. Players should overlook background figures written in their parts while soloing.
- In jazz, pianists frequently comp to accompany and complement the parts played by the other members of the ensemble. Comping involves creating a rhythmically appropriate part that follows the chord changes of the music. The written AARDVARK ALLEY Piano part is an example of a comped part. Advanced pianists should be encouraged to comp ad lib., using the written part as a model.
- Guitarists frequently comp when playing funk style music. There are suggested comping rhythms in the Guitar part for AARDVARK ALLEY. Advanced guitarists should be encouraged to comp ad lib., using the written part as a model. For more information, refer guitarists to the page FOR GUITAR ONLY exercises in the Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method Guitar student book.

REHEARSAL SUGGESTIONS:
- Begin the rehearsal in a way that prepares players’ minds, muscles, and instruments. See page 14 of the Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method Director Score for specific suggestions.
- Throughout the rehearsal, focus attention on achieving a good ensemble sound. The first step to achieving this sound is establishment of the proper relative balance between instruments. In general, lower-pitched woodwinds and brass should play at a louder dynamic level than higher-pitched woodwinds and brass. This “pyramid of sound” concept applies to both harmonic and melodic passages in charts. An appropriate balance must also be established within the rhythm section, and between the rhythm section and the rest of the ensemble. Use the recording attached to the AARDVARK ALLEY jacket as a model of appropriate balances for rock-style music.
- The woodwinds and the rhythm section should play a very clean and short quarter note on the downbeat of bar 2.
- The rhythm section groove begins at bar 5. Rehearse the rhythm section separately to establish a solid groove before adding the winds. Pay particular attention to the bass drum and the bass.
- Exaggerate the dynamics as marked in bar 12.
- Woodwinds take over the melody at bar 13, and the brass should adjust their dynamic accordingly.
- Make certain they breaks in the rhythm section beginning at bar 38 are played very cleanly. Drums should not allow any cymbals to ring past beat 2.
- Winds playing the unison line beginning at bar 38 should be careful not to overblow and should listen carefully to the ensemble. A unison line will carry better if played at a more relaxed volume with a good blend.
- Play the final note in bar 43 short and fat.

ACTIVITIES FOR EXCELLENCE
- Students can practice rhythmic subdivision by clapping their hands in 16th notes. In order to maintain a steady 16th note rhythm, the tempo will likely need to be slower than performance tempo. Once a steady 16th note rhythm is established, have students sing their parts in bars 1-4. Concentrate on accuracy in rhythm and articulation.
- Have the rhythm section vamp the solo section accompaniment groove beginning at bar 30 while the winds improvise collectively using pitches from the concert A natural minor scale.