

PHRASING

Phrasing means many things, but basically it means interpretation. The way you phrase a particular passage is synonymous with the way in which you interpret it. Even a single note can be phrased in many different ways. Tone, breathing, intonation, rhythm, stress, articulation—all of these elements constitute the art of phrasing. There is no one correct way to phrase; each "idiom" or "school" of jazz performance has its own conception of phrasing. Even within each idiom there appear subtle differences of conception. We must be content with discussing the most generally applicable principles.

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between jazz phrasing and "legitimate" music phrasing is that of rhythmic interpretation. Typical jazz notation will sound very stiff and "unswinging" when played by an orchestral oriented instrumentalist. In legitimate music, each note within a legato phrase is given its full time value. The composer writes his music exactly the way it is meant to be played. But this is not true in jazz. For instance, on-the-beat eighth-notes will usually receive somewhat greater time value than those which are off the beat. In effect, all notes written off the beat are delayed a bit. Sometimes this is referred to as "laying back" on the beat. In the example below, the notes with x's over them will receive more than full value. Those marked with an o will be slightly cheated of their full value.



Notice that the on-the-beat eighth-rests also receive more than their full value.

The degree of delay is relative to the tempo. At a moderate tempo (♩ = 140) the above example will approximately like this:



The off-the-beat will also receive

As a general rule, the slower the tempo, the more exaggerated the implied "triplet" will decrease until finally, at very fast tempos, it will disappear almost entirely. Retention of each individual ensemble is always an important determining factor in ar

Phrasing, then, is a group problem as well as an individual one. In writing the music the same way. At such times, there is one conductor who is automatically in agreement with what this conception should be, and the diligent guidance of the leader and/or lead men in the ensemble. The arranger is very often insistent upon having his mark the musicians how to phrase. He employs phrase markings, and when acknowledged, will help considerably.

Just as the key to good ensemble playing is so the key to successful ensemble playing is the importance of this knowledge is made by a man who is more concerned with the importance of phrasing in a marked score. Under such



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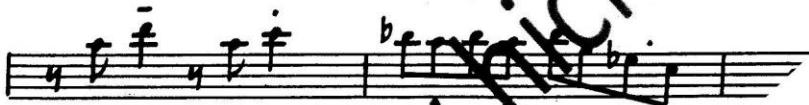
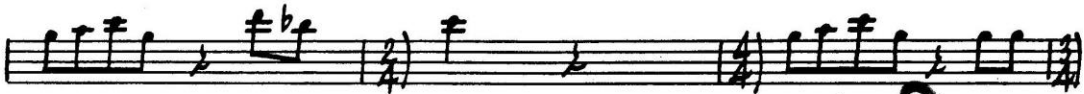
This musical score consists of ten staves of notation. The first three staves have rhythmic arrows above them, indicating fingerings: down (↓) and up (↑). The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines. A large watermark "www.hickeys.com" is overlaid diagonally across the middle of the page.



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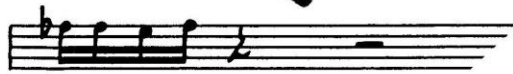
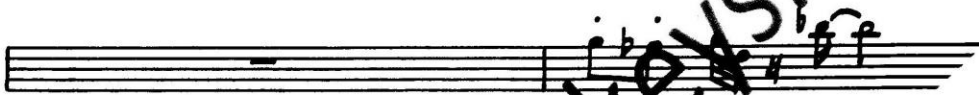
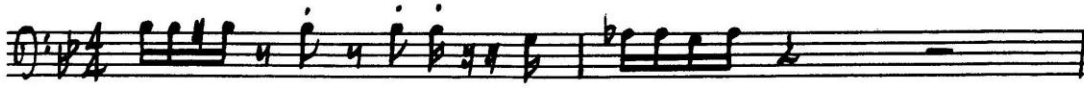
The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "FAST SWING". The score is written on ten staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. A large, diagonal watermark reading "www.hickeys.com" is overlaid across the middle of the score. At the bottom left, there are two short, incomplete musical staves.



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SLOW FUNK SWING

Handwritten musical notation for 'SLOW FUNK SWING'. The score consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The notation is dense, featuring many beamed eighth notes and sixteenth notes, often with slurs and accents. A large, diagonal watermark 'www.hickeys.com' is overlaid across the middle of the page, partially obscuring the musical notation.



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