Tufts Jazz Orchestra Description

The Tufts Jazz Orchestra rehearses on Tuesday and Thursday from 4:30-6:30 pm in the Fisher Performance Room in the lower lever of the Granoff Music Building.

The orchestra’s instrumentation is made up of 1-2 singers, 5-6 saxophones, 4-5 trombones, 4-5 trumpets, a rhythm section consisting of piano, bass, guitar, drum set and additional Afro-Caribbean percussion instruments such as congas, timbales, bongos and an assortment of bells.

The repertoire studied and performed by the orchestra is a rich blend of music for big band combining the musical styles of North American, Afro-Cuban and South American Jazz. The orchestra has a time honored tradition of presenting to the public compelling instrumental and vocal music arrangements of music that inspire, educate, enrich, entertain and transform audiences of all ages. We feature the works of past master composers and arrangers, as well as incorporate the works of the best contemporary writers active in the field of jazz and Latin Jazz.

Jazz Composers that the band has performed includes Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Neal Hefti, Frank Foster, Sammy Nestico, Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, Toshiko Ashioki, Quincy Jones, Thad Jones, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Rob Lussier, Bob Brookemeyer, Manny Albam, Charles Mingus and Maria Schneider.

Latin jazz composers that the band has performed includes Wayne Wallace, Oscar Hernandez, Humberto Ramirez, Mario Bauza, Arturo Sandoval, Chico O’Farrell, Chano Pozo, Dizzy Gillespie, Hilario Duran and Jeremy Fletcher.

The TJO always features classic arrangements as well as innovative treatment of music from the Great American Song Book. Some composers that we perform are George and Ira Gershwin, Rogers and Hart, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Eubie Blake and many more.

Finally, we sincerely encourage and perform the works of advanced student composers. We take great pride in helping to keep the tradition of writing for jazz orchestra alive and well at Tufts. By using our large jazz ensemble as a forum for the development and fostering of future jazz composers, we feel that we are making a healthy, and worthwhile investment to the betterment of our musical community. All of our musical endeavors are an attempt to bring innovation and a genuine excitement to the arts and Arts Education at Tufts.

Thank you,

Joel LaRue Smith
Director of Jazz Activities
Tufts Jazz Orchestra Highlights

2002 Tour in Havana Cuba.
2003 Tour in Prague, Czech Republic.
2007 Tour in Prague, Czech Republic
2007 Performance at Jazz at Lincoln Center.
2008 Performances at various Massachusetts public schools, churches and Assisted-living facilities.
2009 Tour in Costa Rica, Central America.
2009 Performance at Assisted Living facility.
2011 Tour to Bulgaria, Eastern Europe
2011 Performance at Tufts Grafton Campus at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine
2013 Tour in Portugal.