

MICHIGAN MUSIC CONFERENCE 2023

# Singin' 'n' Swingin'

Vocal Jazz for the Choral Educator



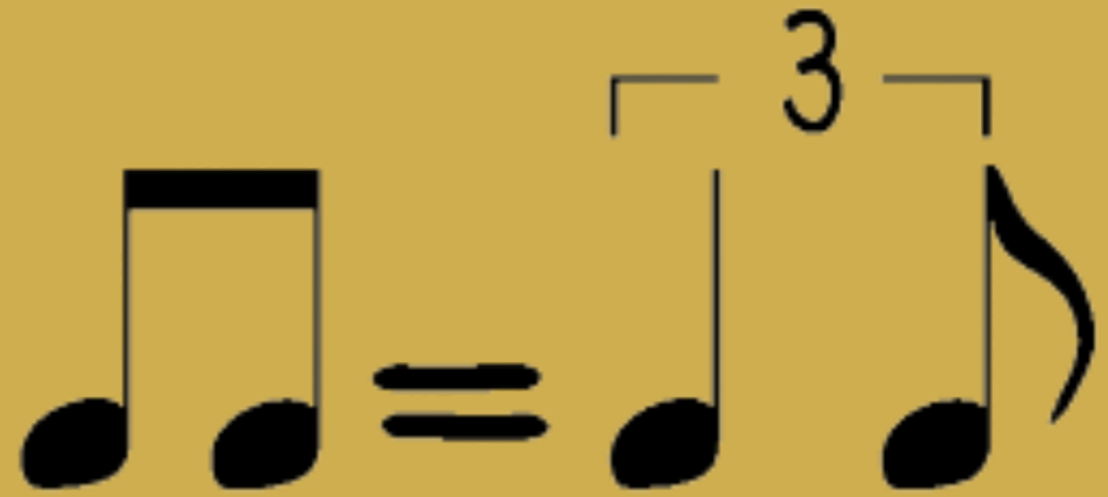
BY LIZ TOWNSEND

# What is Vocal Jazz?

Vocal Jazz is a broad genre that encompasses:

- Swing
- Latin (Bossanova, Samba, Afro-Cuban, Salsa...)
- Gospel
- Contemporary
- Acapella Ballads
- Pop

# Swing



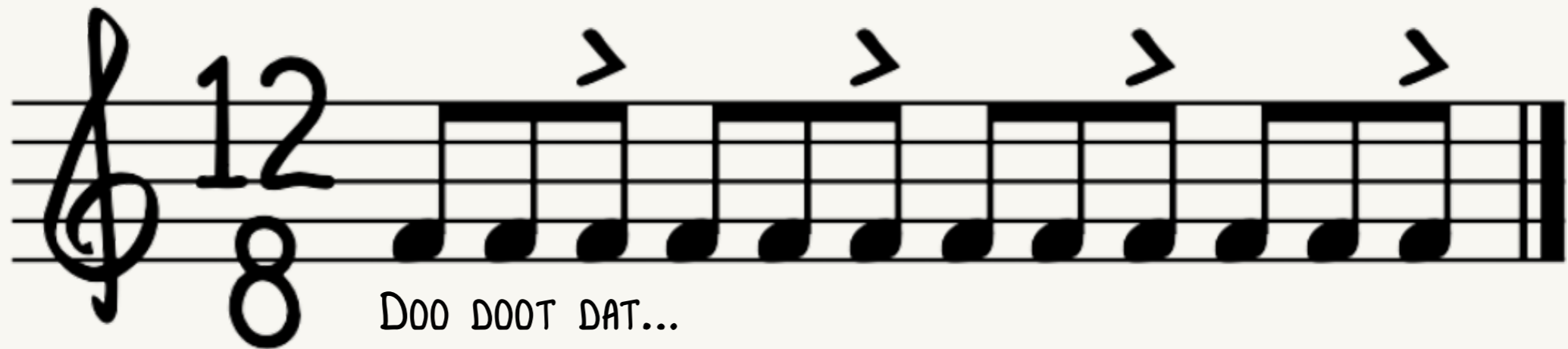
When you see this...



... it sounds like this...



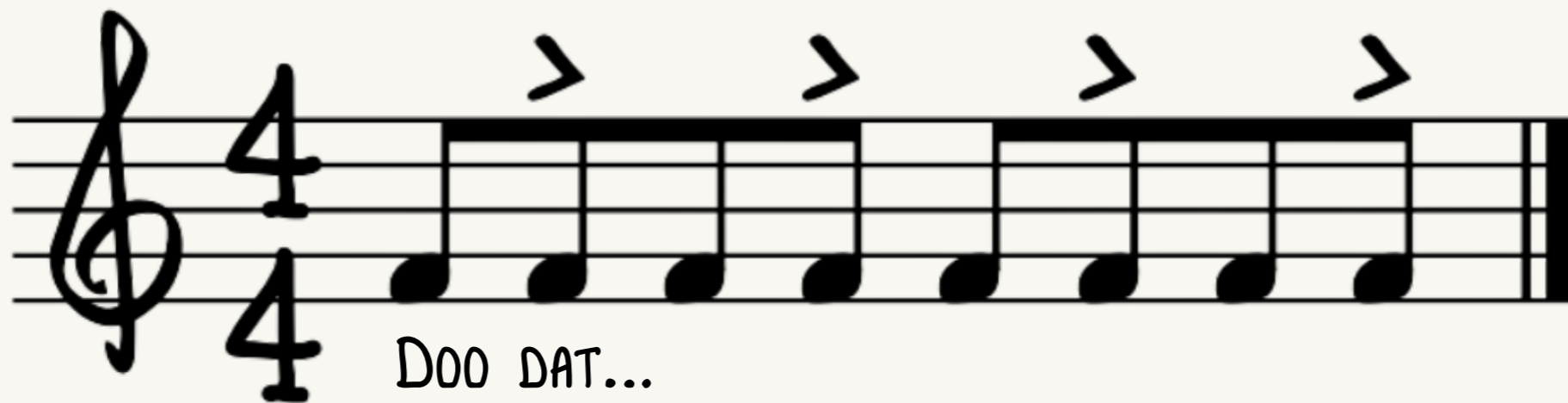
# Swing Feel



12/8

DOO DOOT DAT...

This musical staff is in 12/8 time, indicated by the '12' above and '8' below the treble clef. It features a sequence of four eighth notes on the top line of the staff, each with an accent (>) above it. The notes are positioned on the first, second, third, and fourth lines. The staff concludes with a double bar line.



4/4

DOO DAT...

This musical staff is in 4/4 time, indicated by the '4' above and '4' below the treble clef. It features a sequence of four eighth notes on the top line of the staff, each with an accent (>) above it. The notes are positioned on the first, second, third, and fourth lines. The staff concludes with a double bar line.

# Harmony

- Extensions (9, 11, 13 =  $^2$ ,  $^4$ ,  $^6$ )
- Root is often not present in vox (unless acapella)
- Can be challenging
- Most common progression:  $ii^7-V^7-I^{maj7}$

# Harmony - Common Chords

Major 7	Dominant 7	Minor 7	Minor 7 $\flat$ 5 (half dim)	Diminished
7	$\flat$ 7	$\flat$ 7	$\flat$ 7	$\flat$ $\flat$ 7
5	5	5	$\flat$ 5	$\flat$ 5
3	3	$\flat$ 3	$\flat$ 3	$\flat$ 3
1	1	1	1	1

# Harmony - Chord Alterations

	Major 7	Minor 7	Minor 7 $\flat$ 5	Dominant 7
7	6			
5	#11	11	11 w/ $\flat$ 5 (no root)	#11, $\flat$ 13, 13
3				11 (sus4)
Root	9	9	9	9, $\flat$ 9, #9

Adapted from Gary Lindsay's *Jazz Arranging Techniques*



**Swing Feel & Harmony**

**Participation Time!**





# Timbre (syllables)

- Relaxed vowels/consonants
- What instrument are you supposed to be?
- Little to no vibrato - generally



**Horn Section**

**Participation Time!**



# Timbre (lyric)

- Sung in the vernacular
- No hard consonants, especially ends of words
- Little to no vibrato



**Lyrical**

**Participation Time!**



# Lyric Solos

- Written melody/rhythm is a guideline
- Back Phrasing/Front Phrasing
- Listen to solo jazz artists for inspiration

# Improvisation Solos

- Embellish the melody
- Blues Scale
- Guide-tone line
- Transcribe. Transcribe. Transcribe.

# Blues Scale





**Guide-Tone Line**

**Participation Time!**





# Conducting

- No conductor
- Small cues - tempo changes, hits
- Helps connectivity with audience
- Acapella ballads are okay to conduct

# Additional Resources

- **Me ;)**
- *The Complete Guide to Teaching Vocal Jazz* by Steve Zegree
- *Rehearsing the Vocal Jazz Ensemble* by Daniel Gregerman
- *The Vocal Jazz Ensemble* by Paris Rutherford
- *Vocal Jazz Improvisation* by Darmon Meader
- **The New York Voices Vocal Jazz Camp @ WMU  
July 31-August 6**

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