

Second Virtual Jazz & Poetry Plan

By David Bugli, version 1 - updated 3/6/2021

1. Overview

We are doing Second Virtual Jazz & Poetry in early 2021. I am setting up a "resource page" for the project at MileHighJazz.com/virtualjnp2.htm. I would appreciate MHJB musicians reviewing the songs mentioned in section 2 (parts B, C, D, F, and G, plus the backing for Jakki in part I) and sharing with me their ideas on how they could contribute a short recording of them (under three minutes, please).

Here is the plan. This is "version 1" of the plan, and I am planning to revise it as we fill in details:

2. The Nine Parts of the Video

Rita Geil and I have selected 8 poems to be read for this round of Jazz & Poetry, plus there will be a few lines from Shakespeare ("All the world's a stage...") that will be read at the introduction. We have also selected 8 tunes that we want the MHJB musicians to video record for after the reading of the poems. I have designed each Part by a letter, but it does not determine the order in which these poems and tunes will be presented in the final video.

Part "A" - The Shakespeare quote from "As You Like It" will be read by Rita Geil. It is not followed by music.

Part "B" - Kwame Alexander's poem "Jazz Jive Jam" will be read by Rita Geil. It will be followed by someone performing Ellington's "Come Sunday."

Part "C" - Marjory Wentworth's poem "Spin a Song" will be read by Rita Geil. It will be followed by someone performing Rodgers & Hart's "Dancing on the Ceiling."

Part "D" - Krista Lukas' poem "Prolate Spheroid" will be read by the poet. It will be followed by someone performing Cole Porter's "I Get a Kick Out of You."

Part "E" - Krista Lukas' poem "My Niece" will be read by the poet. The Carson High School Jazz Band will record, as an ensemble, "Born to be Wild." Their recording will serve as a "reference recording," and the MHJB musicians will, on their own, video record parts. We will be working off the same arrangement. Parts are posted on the resource page (MileHighJazz.com/virtualjnp2.htm). (See item #4.)

Part "F" - Derek Mahon's poem "The Dream Play" will be read by Susan Sara Priest. It will be followed by someone performing "The Summer Knows."

Part "G" - Timothy Rhodes' poem "A Handful of Dandelions" will read by the poet. It will be followed by someone performing "Gone With the Wind."

Part "H" - Wayne Carlson's poem "An Act in Three Plays" will be read by the poet. The poem is in three sections of six lines each. For this, I will prepare a simple repeating riff for rhythm

section. Each section will be in successively higher keys (probably C, D-flat, and D major). I will write out a rhythm for reading each section, and the MHJB members will video record themselves "rapping" the words to the song. We will open up eight bars between the first and second sections and between the second and third sections, and selected MHJB band members can do instrumental improvisations during those sections. Similarly, at the end of the third section, the riff will continue in the key of D, and we will record improvisations. In production, these improvisations will be overlaid, and the whole business will probably fade away. (See item #5.)

Part "I" - Maya Angelou's "Phenomenal Woman" will be read by Jakki Ford. Jakki will then sing Harold Arlen's "That Old Black Magic" in B-flat (her usual key). We will need to create a backing track (piano, bass, and drums) similar to the arrangement she usually does with the band. (See item #6.)

3. Selecting and/or recruiting instrumentalists

I would like the MHJB musicians to check over the tunes requested for Parts B, C, D, F, G, and I. If you think you can record this on your own and want to do it, please contact me. The recording should not exceed three minutes. You may use "Band in a Box," iReal Pro, Music Minus One, or similar software to create your accompaniment. I could also lay down a piano accompaniment, and there is the possibility of adding drums and bass. We would need to decide on the key, the tempo, the structure, the style, the mood, etc. Sample lead sheets are available on the resource page. In some cases there are multiple versions available in different keys.

4. Preparation of "Born to be Wild" for Part "E"

MHJB has purchased two sets of parts to one of Michael Sweeney's arrangements of "Born to Be Wild." One set was given to the Carson High School Jazz Band to video record. Nick Jacques will determine which CHS students will get solos and where they will occur in the arrangement. He will also leave open several spots for MHJB musicians to play solos. Once that is recorded, likely with two or three cameras, an audio reference track will be prepared. I will help determine which members of MHJB will have solo spots. Then MHJB will video record their parts, using the audio reference recording as a guide. (See also section 9.)

5. Preparation of the rap for Part "H" ("An Act in Three Plays")

For this part of the video, Wayne Carlson will video record himself reading the poem. I will prepare an arrangement for piano, bass, and drums that will serve as an accompaniment. I will also write out the same poem in a sort of rap rhythm. I would like as many MHJB players as possible to record themselves rapping the lyrics to the accompaniment. Between the stanzas there will be 8-bar transitions on which two soloists and jam. At the end of it, the ostinato accompaniment will continue, and I hope a lot of you will join in with the improvising. I will control whose solos get in during the post-production process. My idea is to fade out to nothing at the end.

6. Preparation for accompanying Jakki in Part "I"

[This section needs to be written.]

7. Use of the resource page.

The resource page for this project is at milehighjazz.com/virtualjnp2.htm. I have posted a short description of the project and some information about Parts A through I. I have posted some lead sheets for most of the tunes.

I have also posted the parts for "Born to be Wild" on the resource page. I will also post a "road map" for the repeats and such on the resource page.

8. Specifications for video recording

8.1. Video concerns: For this project, I would like all videos to be taken in landscape mode. Ideally, place the camera at eye level. The camera should not be pointing up; we are not interested in your ceiling. A plain background is best, and there should be more light on the front of your body than behind it. For example, do not record yourself on a sunny day with a bright, sunny window behind you. Poetry readers should frame themselves in the picture so that there is about 6 inches of open space above the top of the head, and the bottom of the frame should be between belt and chest level. The instrumentalists should be recorded so that there is about 6 inches of open space above the top of the head, and, generally, the bottom of the frame should include the instruments, or at least the portion of the instrument involving the hands.

Here are some instructions I "borrowed" from Ricky Hutton conductor of the Carson Chamber Singers:

Setup

• You are going to need **TWO** devices to make this work: a **RECORDING** device that you'll use to film yourself, and a **REFERENCE** device you'll use headphones with to hear/watch the guide track. The mic on the recording device should only be picking up your voice, not the guide track.

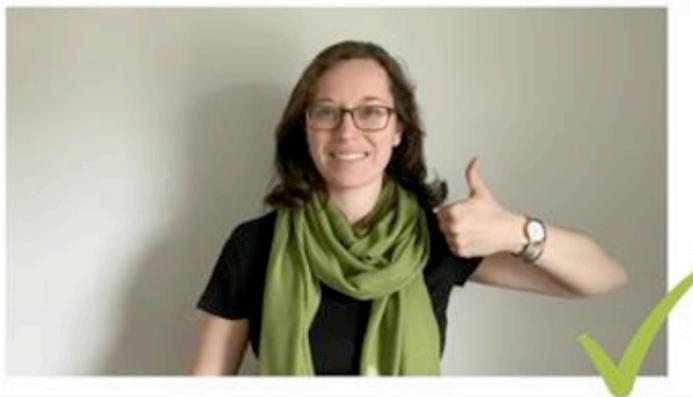
• Recording Device Setup:

- Please make sure your camera is oriented **horizontally**, not vertically.
- Prop it on something steady instead of holding it while you sing, and try to film at or just below eye-level.
- Try to be looking directly at the camera lens most of the time while you're filming
- **(SUPER IMPORTANT!)** Framing yourself: because of how I need to fit you into the virtual choir grid, **I need some extra space to work with above and below your head**. Please aim for the framing in the bottom right picture below.



Filming yourself:

- Keep video horizontal
- Leave a nice margin above your head
- Include your shoulders and upper torso
- Choose a simple background
- Keep face well-lit



• Reference Device Setup:

- Queue up the guide video for the song you're singing on with your headphones plugged in/connected. Prop it somewhere near your recording device so that your eyes don't have to move too far off-camera when you glance at it.

Recording:

- **First:** Get in position with your headphones plugged into your **Reference Device** with the guide video for your vocal part cued up.
- **Second:** Press "record" on your **Recording Device**
- **Third:** Press "play" on your **Reference Device**
- **Fourth:** Clap when prompted and then smile and begin to sing along with me in your ear! Sing along all the way through to the very end of the track and smile at the camera for a few seconds at the end before stopping the recording.
- **Fifth:** if you felt like you nailed it, great job! If you need to re-record, don't worry about it, that happens to everyone.

8.2. Audio concerns: Avoid recording in a noisy environment. Turn off fans, A/C, radios, and other noisemakers while recording. Don't be so far from the microphone that the sound does not pick up the more immediate sound of your instrument or voice. If you can control the volume level of your recording, it is important to not let your volume go into the "red zone." It is easier to increase volume in post-production than to correct too strong a signal. Practice recording a few seconds with the camera and microphone in various locations to determine which combination brings out the most pleasing sound and view. Please include at least 5 seconds of you just quietly looking at the camera at the beginning of the recording and, similarly, 5 seconds of you quietly looking at the camera at the end. Please do not lunge for the off switch immediately after the last word or note.

8.3. Transmission of video to David Bugli:

Based on my experience with some other video projects since May 2020, I will probably ask that video files be transmitted to me (dcbugli@aol.com) via WeTransfer.com. Some people with Gmail accounts, I believe, have had success using Google Docs to transfer files.

9. Post-production:

I will need video files and maybe some audio files at various times, and much of that timeline still needs to be worked out. Once I get the files, I will evaluate how the various parts work with each other. Therefore, my identification of Part A, Part B, Part C, etc. in section 2 of this document does not reflect the order of the final product - these are merely convenient shorthand for grouping units of work.

Special note: Part "E" (the poem "My Niece" and the song "Born to be Wild") will serve as a substitute for the "Jazz Extravaganza" that the MHJB has done with the middle school and high school bands over several years. The audio portion of the Carson High School recording of the piece will be used as the reference recording upon which MHJB players will add their video recording of parts. I am hoping to get several camera angles of the CHS players as they do their recording. As I see it, boxes for MHJB players will probably be added around a central visual section of the CHS band. I would like all MHJB players to record their parts in landscape mode. I will probably add some various visual effects. (See also section 4.)