

# Audition Instructions for The AMIS International Honor Jazz Festival

It's never too soon to start preparing students for Honor Jazz Band auditions. We know it's hard to push this festival in the spring with exams of all sorts coming up soon after the International Honor Band. BUT....experience shows that you and your students only get busier and miss the audition deadline. Try to encourage your very best jazz players to start preparing the auditions NOW!

There will continue to be opportunities for wind and brass players to perform with combos. For this to be successful, students must have a certain level of improvisational skill. Therefore, all wind and brass players wishing to participate in a combo, and **all** piano, guitar, and bass players, **MUST** perform the improvisation segment of the audition. The improvisations will be used by the audition committee to make appropriate combo placements, but students of varying improvisational abilities can be accepted into the festival.

As in last year's festival, this year there will also be the opportunity for vocalists to audition. These vocal auditions are open to all singers, not just instrumentalists who also sing. A vocalise and an additional audition piece are in the audition materials in two keys. Singers must audition as a soprano, alto, tenor or bass and use the correct set of materials. Please pay careful attention to the separate page of vocal instructions.

Wind and brass players wishing to have an opportunity to work in a combo *must* submit an improvisation. Wind and brass players wishing only to participate in the big band are not required to submit an improvisation.

Fine jazz musicians who enter our schools for the first time in September will unfortunately not be eligible for this festival unless a vacancy occurs due to someone unexpectedly moving between audition time and the festival date, or due to a particular section not attracting sufficiently experienced candidates.

## **What the AMIS web site contains:**

- 1 General instructions
- 2 Music to be read and played by all trumpets, trombones, and saxes
- 3 Music to be used for rhythm section auditions, students wishing to solo.
- 4 Audio files and audition materials for the vocal auditions
- 5 Backing tracks for the various sets of audition materials

Audition instructions and certain materials can also be found on the AMIS web site at <http://amis-online.org.uk> under the Auditions tab.

The Track List from the Online AMIS Registration Database must be completed and printed copies must accompany your auditions to arrive by the date on the AMIS web site – <http://amis-online.org/auditions> . **For 2010 the date is 2 May 2010.**

Please send all auditions to .

Richard Hein  
ACS Hillingdon International School  
108 Vine Lane  
Hillingdon, Uxbridge  
Middlesex UB10 0BE  
England

Late Auditions Can Not Be Considered

## General Instructions

- 1 Only students who will be in grades 9-13 during the school year in which the festival occurs and who are members of their school's musical groups or are in good standing with the school music department are eligible to audition.
- 2 Use quality cds or minidisks. Please do not over edit, especially in the middle of an excerpt. Be sure to include the printed Online Track List of tracks for cds and minidisks. The Audition forms will be completed online using the AMIS Registration Database. The link will be posted on the AMIS web site – <http://amis-online.org>
- 3 CD's usually present the best quality of sound than. Be sure your CD's are in **audio** format.
- 4 Please send one recording for each group of instruments (i.e. all saxophones on one recording, all trumpets on one recording, all trombones on one recording, all bass players on one recording, all guitar players on one recording, all piano players on one recording, all drummers on one recording.)
- 5 Please **CLEARLY LABEL your recordings** with the audition **code number** for your school and the instrument. Do **not** label with your school name or student names.
- 6 Each student should clearly announce his or her instrument and the audition number.  
"I am trombone number 2."
- 7 A student auditioning on an instrument is also eligible to audition as a vocalist. You should clearly indicate this double audition and give the student's preference of group should he or she be selected for both the band and the vocal ensemble.
- 8 The metronome should be audibly ticking except when recording using the backing cd. If a student needs to use a slower tempo, please have the student announce this tempo when recording the audition.

A complete audition packet will have one cd/minidisk/tape for each instrument auditioning. Each CD/minidisk/tape will be accompanied with a printed copy of the track list from the AMIS Registration system.

The audition materials on the AMIS Web Site are to be used in rotation! Be sure you use the correct set of audition materials for the year for which you are submitting auditions.

Rotation of the audition materials is as follows:

Use Set B for the auditions due in May 2010 for the HJB Festival held in the Autumn of 2010.

Set A 2012, 2015

Set B 2010, 2013

Set C 2011, 2014

# Vocal Jazz Ensemble Recording Instructions

## AMIS International Honor Jazz Festival

**BE SURE TO USE THE CORRECT SET OF AUDITION MATERIALS.**

**For the festival in autumn of 2010 use Set B**

### Vocal Audition Instructions

AMIS welcomes interested, well-prepared singers to audition for the AMIS International Vocal Jazz Ensemble. This document has been written to help you to help your students prepare the best possible audition. The audition listening committee strives to select the best singers possible to participate in this Honor Festival. Please help us in this process by carefully reading and following the instructions.

1. Only students who will be in grades 9 through 13 at the time of the festival may audition. Singers may audition for **only one vocal section**.
2. Record using the best equipment and conditions possible. Auditions may be submitted on CD, or MiniDisc. **Applicants are encouraged to use CD's** as these frequently produce the best quality auditions. Be sure you record your CDs as **audio** CDs.
3. Use a **separate** good quality CD or minidisc for **each** voice part.
4. **Do not announce the name of the school on the recording.** At the beginning of the audition, each student should clearly state **voice part and** the order **number** in which he/she sings. This is the **only** way to identify who is performing. For example: "I am alto number 6." The **student**, not the teacher, should make the announcement.
5. You will need to complete the "**Online Track List and Entry Form**" on the AMIS website. You should print a copy of this from when you fill out the information. Make a **copy** of this from and **submit it** with your auditions. This list will give the names of students in the order they appear on your recording, listing the tracks in which each individual audition is recorded. This printed list will serve as a double check with the online submission.
6. If a student is auditioning for **both** Honor Jazz Vocal Ensemble and Honor Jazz Band, clearly **note this** and indicate **which organization** they will choose if admitted to both.
7. Unchanged male voices will not be considered. Women's voices will not be considered for the tenor section.
8. Only students who submit **complete** auditions will be considered. It is important to listen to each audition completely before submitting the master. If a portion of the audition is cut off that student cannot be considered.
9. Mark your CD with the school number listed on the AMIS website and the voice part recorded on that CD. **DO NOT LIST YOUR SCHOOL NAME.** Example: School 5, alto.
10. **The audition recordings and forms must reach the ACS Hillingdon NO LATER THAN the due date listed on the AMIS web site under "Latest Festival Information."** For the 2010 festival this date is **May 2, 2010**. Do not assume that even DHL or Federal Express can always make a next day delivery; they can't. If your mail service is notoriously unreliable, it might be best to consider using an express or courier service. *Auditions from outside the EU should be clearly marked: **EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL, NO COMMERCIAL VALUE.***

Send submissions to:

Richard Hein  
ACS Hillingdon International School  
108 Vine Lane  
Hillingdon, Uxbridge  
Middlesex UB10 9AF  
England

**Use Set B for the festival in the autumn of 2010.**  
**You will find the music for set B on the AMIS web site.**

## Guidelines to help you prepare a successful vocal audition

### Please read carefully before you record:

1. **Carefully observe all metronome markings.**
2. For the vocalise the metronome **must** be heard (without overpowering the singer) throughout the exercise, with the singer and accompanist following that tempo. The singer must also be heard easily.
3. For the Swing Vocalise: Only the written accompaniment should be played.
4. For the Song: Play the correct backing track. All breath marks, articulations and dynamic markings should be observed. Do not use reverb or echo in recording the vocal track. Balance to favour the singer.
5. In the song vocalist should sing the 32 bar form 2 times with backing track--the first time with the supplied lyrics. The second time through the first 16 bars should be scatted (Vocal improvisation). After sixteen bars the singer should return to the lyrics for final 16 bars. Total song audition is 64 bars.
6. **Record Vocalise 1, then the song.**
7. Accompaniments can help or hinder your student. If your piano skills are inadequate, find a qualified accompanist or simplify the accompaniment, preferably using the bass line. The committee is listening for **vocal quality, pitch, rhythmic accuracy, and musicality**. It is important that the entire audition represents the student's **well-prepared** performance. The committee can judge only the recorded performance. Help your student to have every possible advantage by carefully following these guidelines. All singers will audition in the same way using the same material.
8. All portions of the audition should be **carefully** prepared. Tone quality, pitch, rhythmic accuracy and musicality (general musicianship) in **all** portions of the audition will be rated and numerical ratings given by all judges in all these categories will be averaged to obtain a final rating.
9. Judges do not know the identity of the auditionees and do not know which school the candidates come from until after all auditions are heard and rated.

### Recommended Recording Techniques:

1. Please record in stereo.
2. When preparing a CD or MiniDisc put each singer's audition on its **own** track. You must provide a **track list** as part of the online forms you will submit.
3. The addition of electronic echo/reverb will disqualify the student.
4. Pay attention to **balance**. The metronome and piano must be audible but should not overpower the singer. The metronome should be audibly ticking during the vocalise.
5. Make every effort to avoid recording in a room that has too much echo.
6. Avoid recording the voice and accompaniment on separate channels.
7. **Be sure you listen to each entire recording for distortion or editing mistakes.**

### Before you send the auditions:

1. Do **not** send auditions for students that clearly indicate a lack of preparation or a level of performance that is not appropriate for a highly select choir. Screen your auditions.
2. Listen to your completed recordings on a **different** machine.
3. Listen to your recordings once more to insure that you have recorded **complete** auditions consisting of the student information, Swing Vocalise and the song. Remember - incomplete auditions will not be considered. Also listen carefully for balance and clarity.
4. Make sure the singer is **clearly audible**. **Make sure the student does NOT give his or her name or the name of your school.**
5. Make a back-up copy of your recordings.
6. Label each recording with your school's number and the voice part on that disc.
7. Be sure to supply the necessary paperwork.

Some appropriate jazz listening suggestions from Jim Yarnell, Rick Hein, Bob Rigter, Jon Hodge and Laura Lentz are available on the AMIS website at <http://amis-online.org.uk/jazz/index.html> Most of these works can be found in the jazz section of your local music store or from online sources such as Amazon. Point your students here to get an idea of what a trumpeter, trombonist, tenor saxophonist and rhythm section player think are some of the standards of the jazz repertoire.

Below is a guide to some of the more jazz specific terms used in the audition materials.

- Comp* accompany with chords in appropriate rhythmic style, possibly with light fills at the ends of phrases.
- Walk* “walking bass” pattern, supporting rhythm, possibly outlining chord structures and filling in scale steps
- Time* play in appropriate rhythmic style, possibly with light fills or pushes at the end of phrases
- Solo* play a stylistically appropriate solo section, using scales appropriate to the chords indicated. Pianists might play chords in the left hand while improvising a melodic pattern in the right or use block chords. Guitarists might use a stylistically appropriate mixture of chords and melody.
- Scat* vocal improvisation using nonsense syllables (bah dah, bat n doo-yah, and so on)