

Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University

## **Exploring the Delivery of Jazz Education: Ensemble Performance in a Queensland High School**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Queensland high school education has a long tradition of introducing students to jazz through participation in ensemble or big band. Young musicians are introduced to a variety of jazz elements from rehearsals to school performances, competitions and festivals. Overall, this Master of Music project examines jazz high school education through a two-stage study of teachers involved in directing ensembles of varying levels. This dissertation focuses on the perspectives of teachers directly involved in the delivery of jazz education in Brisbane from its beginnings in the 1970s through to the present day. Through the analysis of data gathered from teacher interviews, literature, curricula structures and self- reflection, it is apparent that although jazz education has existed within Queensland high school instrumental music programs for a considerable time, it has done so with little direction from formal pedagogical or administrative systems. It has instead predominantly relied on the varied individual educational and musical experiences of the teachers who are producing a diverse range of outcomes.

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## **CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify this work is original and has not been previously submitted in whole or part by me or any other person for any qualification or award in any university. I further certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself to the source of such material.

Signed : 

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2012

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the last 25 years, as a Queensland jazz educator I have directed many high school big bands and jazz ensembles and have also adjudicated at multiple competitions and festivals. During this time I have also travelled to North America and Europe to attend conferences and festivals to observe high school ensembles in performance. From these experiences I have seen a variety of approaches by teachers directing ensembles who have produced mixed outcomes.

In the Queensland competition and festival scene I have seen several outstanding high school ensembles with precise sectional ensemble playing that would be on a par with their North American counterparts. In these ensembles however I would quite often see students performing ‘improvised’ solos by rote or even by reading notation and ensembles performing predominantly in rock rather than jazz genres. In contrast, in some North American ensembles I have observed students improvising solos at a level that was approaching a professional standard and they were performing in a wider variety of jazz genres such as Bebop Swing and Latin Salsa.

From the variation of outcomes achieved by these ensembles it became apparent to me that teachers were focusing on a variety of jazz elements and although the educators, both here and overseas, were using the same repertoire and resources, they were being used in different cultural contexts. Curricula were being delivered by teachers with varied backgrounds, skills and education – but most importantly their methods were producing very different outcomes.

In my initial research, I have found several studies in North America (Dyas, 2006; Goodrich, 2005; Hinkle, 2011) and Australia (Chessher, 2009) that examine high schools and their delivery of jazz education and jazz culture through the jazz ensemble. However, to date, I have found no in- depth studies about jazz education in Queensland schools. Further knowledge of the perspectives and experiences of teachers will elucidate the background and history of jazz education in Queensland and the varied outcomes achieved through the jazz ensemble.

My own experience with Queensland jazz education began as a high school student in the Far North of the state in the late 1970s. It continued as a tertiary student in Brisbane and then for several years as a young teacher based in the Wide Bay-

Burnett region of rural Queensland. Although I have been predominantly based in Brisbane for the last 20 years I have continued to visit regional Queensland as a performer and educator. During this time I have had a good opportunity to observe jazz education being delivered by teachers throughout the State who each had in common administrative directives and materials prescribed predominantly by Education Queensland and repertoire choices driven by festivals and competitions held throughout the state. From these experiences, my contacts in the jazz education community, the available literature on jazz education in regional and metropolitan Queensland and through my current teaching position at Marist College Ashgrove in Brisbane I had a good opportunity to investigate my central research question of:

**How effective is the high school jazz ensemble in delivering recognized jazz elements such as improvisation, genre, aural tradition and jazz culture in a Queensland setting?**

## 1.1 The North American context

Two central issues emerged from my investigation of jazz education through ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting. In the first instance I realized that it was important to explore what might be recognised as ‘good’ jazz pedagogy; specifically what makes up its core elements. Author and cultural historian Gerald Early states “I think there are only three things that America will be known for two thousand years from now: the Constitution, jazz music, and baseball, the three most beautifully designed things this country ever produced” (Kirchner, 2000, p 3). Although today jazz culture and music is prevalent throughout the world there can be little doubt that its origins began in North America and it is from here that the majority of pedagogical resources for today's Queensland jazz educators originate from. To keep this project within the confines of a master's dissertation I decided to focus primarily on these North American sources. Following this investigation I needed to assess what impact the unique environments of the Australian and Queensland jazz scene had on the delivery of jazz education.

Today there are hundreds of method books and pedagogical materials available to jazz educators (Goodrich, 2005) and these are a good place to start in determining what elements are recognised as important for delivering a comprehensive jazz education. David Baker's (1974) *Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method for Jazz Education for Teacher and Student* is prominent as an early jazz education text. At the time of its first publication, Baker recognised that

... in spite of the proliferation and growth that has occurred in the past decade in jazz instruction and stage bands in schools, very little exists in the way of texts or method books that would provide basic instruction for music educators on how to organize, develop, teach, and conduct a jazz education program in their school music departments. (p. i)

Of note, sections of this book are dedicated to aural exercises, jazz history, form, jazz keyboard harmony and chord voicings, repertoire, rhythm section techniques, the importance of jazz festivals and competitions, discographies and the teaching of improvisation.

Although published nearly 30 years after Baker's work, Dunscomb and Hill's (2002) widely used *Jazz Pedagogy: The Jazz Educator's Handbook and Resource Guide* follows very similar themes to Baker's work, however, it is more detailed in that it provides chapters on specific instrumental sections. More recently *Teaching Music through Performance in Jazz* (Carter, Marsalis, McCurdy, Modell, & Thomas, 2008) again follows a similar line in the introductory chapters, but then follows with a major part of the book dedicated to detailed repertoire suggestions. In the introductory chapter, the authors state that the reason for this is that they believe that there is "a void in the preparation for selecting quality jazz literature and teaching specific jazz concepts" (p. xvii).

Goodrich (2005), in his thesis entitled *Inside a High School Jazz Band*, gives an excellent outline of both the history of the jazz ensemble and jazz education in North American high schools dating back from the 1940s through to the time of its publication. Through his detailed literature review on the jazz pedagogical resources available to high school jazz educators, he discusses reoccurring themes such as jazz history and culture, aural skills and listening, repertoire, jazz theory and keyboard harmony, and the teaching of improvisation. The primary focus of Goodrich's study was to examine a "single exemplary high school jazz band to discover why it performed at a consistently high level" (p. iii). Of particular interest to my research was the amount of time devoted to rehearsal. The Thunderbird High School Jazz Ensemble rehearsed each day of the school week for at least an hour with students receiving class credit for their participation in the ensemble. This contrasts significantly to the typical program in Queensland high schools where each band usually rehearses only once a week with students receiving no class credit for their participation.

Dyas' (2006) in his U.S. based doctoral thesis study of two performing arts high schools outlines a similar amount of time devoted to ensemble rehearsal and jazz education with students focusing on jazz history and culture (listening to jazz), jazz theory, improvisation, and jazz keyboard harmony through both the jazz ensemble but also, in some cases, through additional classes. However, although each of the two Texas high schools studied focused predominantly on very similar jazz elements and produced similar outcomes, their teachers used quite contrasting methods. The

Houston high school's approach was less structured in comparison to the Dallas school's more academic, or formalised, approach with compulsory complimentary classes and written research assignments.

This contrast of more academic as opposed to a less structured delivery of jazz education is found in numerous studies emanating from North America (Dyas, 2006, Goodrich, 2005) and Europe (Macdonald & Wilson, 2005) and is one that prompts much debate. A similar discussion is also very much alive in the Queensland jazz education community. In an interview with David Udolf in 1993, jazz pianist, Hal Galper, outlines his strong views on the topic. "So many times I've met students and teachers who have been misled by a Western, classical approach to learning and elevate the importance of a theoretical background over knowing how to play intuitively" (Galper, 1993, p. 2). Throughout this interview he voices his concerns of 'jazz academia' distorting the true essence and 'personal spirit' that is jazz. Both Scott (2004) and Dempsey (2008) also discuss in length the strengths and weaknesses of less formalised approaches to jazz education.

Although there is debate regarding the contrasting styles of the delivery of jazz education there is also considerable agreement both in academic fields and also in the performing professional community about the importance of the aural tradition of jazz and the establishment of strong jazz culture. In their discussions with jazz journalist Garry Giddins, tenor saxophone greats Joshua Redman (2009), and Joe Lovano (2009) both emphasize the importance of interacting with other musicians and being immersed in a rich performance culture. They discuss the influences of recordings of jazz greats such as Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane, and also the cultural influence of growing up in communities and families with a strong jazz heritage. Ratliff (2009) in his book *The Jazz Ear* further explores the aural tradition and influence of listening to seminal recordings in jazz culture.

## 1.2 The Australian context

In *The Australian Accent*, John Shand (2009) argues that, “Jazz is now a globalized mesh of threads, with many countries concurrently enriching its tapestry with their unique local perspectives. To say that Australia is prominent among them is not a flag waving exercise, merely an objective cultural observation”(p. ix). He observes that our isolation from the rest of the world has played a part in the development of a unique jazz scene in Australia. Although this may have been true in the past, this theory is one that has become increasingly challenged in recent times, particularly with the advent of new technologies in music distribution and jazz pedagogy.

Resources such as the *iRealbook* (Bioicati, 2010), Apple’s iTunes, and widespread audio downloads are now instantly available to the Australian jazz musician and educator. This is a new phenomenon and one only has to go back to 2009 to find that Jamie Aebersold’s (1980) Play-A-Long series (a similar resource to iRealbook used for teaching improvisation) had limited distribution in Australian capital cities even though it was internationally recognised as a major jazz pedagogical tool.

Through his conversations and interviews with prominent jazz musicians Shand (2009) gives some interesting perspectives on the current jazz scene in Australia. The debate about the merits of ‘academic’ jazz is voiced in interviews by tenor saxophonist Julien Wilson: “people are so educated, and it actually becomes hard to have a really unique voice when you have too much information” (p. 145). Steve Newcomb (2005) also concludes that a less structured approach is the desired way of learning even within an academic institution. Although the formalisation of jazz education in Australia which began at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1973, more than 30 years after its inception in the U.S.A. (Goodrich, 2005, p. 32), it is interesting to see that parallel debates resonate in both the Australian and American jazz community.

While many studies explore jazz education in American secondary schools Andrew Chessher’s (2009) honours thesis, *Australian Jazz Musician-educators: An Exploration of Experts’ Approaches to Teaching Jazz*, is one of the few studies to investigate high school jazz education in an Australian setting. In his study, Chessher explores the approaches of expert performing jazz musicians involved in teaching in the Sydney metropolitan area. Although this study is of interest, it is focused purely



on a New South Wales environment with little mention of the wider Australian jazz education scene. As an example, Chessher states that “student jazz festivals prevalent in the United States of America provide a focus for many high school bands. At this stage, such festivals are not as common in Australia” (p. 13). This is clearly not the case in Queensland where competitions and festivals such as *Fanfare*, *MusicFest* and the *Queensland Catholic Colleges Music Festival* have provided a focus for many high school jazz music programs for over 30 years. These festivals began to appear soon after the establishment of the Instrumental music program in 1971 where students began to learn band and orchestral instruments and participate in larger ensembles. Although the Education Queensland web site (Department of Education Queensland, 1990) provides extensive curriculum documents regarding instrumental music, it provides limited information on jazz education and it is understandable that Chessher makes no mention of it. In fact, since the demise of the International Association of Jazz Educators in 2009, and its Australian branch, there has been limited infrastructure for jazz educators to communicate within the wider Australian education jazz community.

### **1.3 Summary**

The importance of aural or listening skills, repertoire knowledge, studies in jazz history and culture, rhythm section techniques and jazz theory and improvisation, are common themes across multiple studies and pedagogical resources (Aebersold, 1980; Baker, 1989; Carter, Marsalis, McCurdy, Modell, & Thomas, 2008; Chessher, 2009; Dunscomb & Hill, 2002; Dyas, 2006; Goodrich, 2005; Macdonald & Wilson, 2005). Although there appears to be consensus on these elements, there is also much debate, both in Australia (Newcomb, 2005; Shand, 2009) and in the international jazz community (Folkestad, 2006; Galper, 1993; Scott, 2004), on how these elements should be delivered. It is also significant that there has been little written on the teaching of jazz in high schools in Australia and, more specifically, in Queensland where a long tradition exists in the delivery of jazz education through the performing jazz ensemble.

## 2.0 RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.1 *Stage one: History and background of the jazz ensemble in Queensland high schools*

Through my own experience in both metropolitan and regional Queensland, my current work environment and associations with colleagues I had direct access to jazz education practitioners who collectively possessed a rich source of experiences and information to inform my study. Initially, I decided to undertake interviews with some of those educators who were active in the teaching and design of the instrumental music curriculum at its inception in the mid to late 1970s.

Taking into account the limitations of this Masters project and my ongoing employment location, three Brisbane based interviewees were selected based on the following:

- *Experience* – participants had been, or were currently involved in instrumental music teaching and jazz education for a period of 10 years or more and were involved in this work at different time periods in its development.
- *Accessibility* – they were available at mutually agreeable times, negotiated to fit in with their busy teaching and performing schedules.
- *Variety* – the three participants selected came from different academic and performance backgrounds to each other and myself and had experience with jazz education in a variety of metropolitan and regional areas of Queensland.

My original intention was to conduct the interviews face-to-face, however due to access and availability one of the subjects agreed alternatively to be included in the study via email correspondence. The interviews were conducted in a semi-formal format to provide a “flexible and adaptable way of finding things out” (Robson, 2002, p. 272). The interviews were approximately 40 minutes in length and were recorded using a digital HD recorder and manually coded via time code on the software application *Scrivener*. To prevent researcher bias the interview transcripts underwent ‘member checking’ where participants were offered the opportunity to comment on my interpretation of the data prior to publication and add more input if

desired to ensure that the data was accurately interpreted.

Initially my research design involved interview questions that were informed by my review of the literature. These questions related to specific jazz elements including improvisation, aural learning, jazz theory and culture. Through the process of my first interview however, I realised that it was more important to establish the history and background of how the jazz ensemble had emerged through the instrumental music program. After establishing this I would be better informed to pursue more specific jazz related themes in the second stage of the project. I also discovered that in the early 1980s Education Queensland had funded research into the design of curricula to be used for the teaching of instrumental music in its schools. However, a resulting research study (Thompson, 1983) was not available in Australia and it took several months of negotiation with the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University (QCGU) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) libraries to procure. During this time the remaining interviews took place and these were focused on the teachers perspectives on the history and background of the high school jazz ensemble in Queensland. I also formalised my own professional educational practice that began in regional Queensland in the mid 1980s through self-reflective writing. When I did finally acquire access to Roy Thompson's dissertation (ibid), *A curriculum model for instrumental education in the schools of Queensland, Australia*, it gave me access to information and data that could be used to concur with the perspectives of the interviewed teachers and my own reflective practice.

Through a process of triangulation, (the data from Brisbane interviews, the cross-referencing to related literature regarding to both metropolitan and regional Queensland, educational journals and my own reflective writing), the story of instrumental music teaching and jazz education in Queensland from it's early days through to the present day began to unfold. More broadly, I was able to gather information on how the program began, what its aims were, where the first teachers came from, what their backgrounds were, what curriculum existed and the importance and effect of the competition and festival culture. The collected data was analysed using Chang's (2008) analysis and interpretation strategies, including: searching for recurring topics, themes, and patterns, connecting the present with past,

analysing relationships between self and others, looking for cultural themes, comparing yourself with other peoples' cases and interpreting and framing theories. The data was then compared, refined and checked for consistency against the information obtained from each of the participants, the literature and from my own reflective writing. Advantages of using this method include adding further depth and clarification, which "increases the rigour of [the] data collection and analysis" (Nueman, 1997, p. 336), "the use of multiple sources to enhance the rigour of the research" (Robson, 2002, p. 174) and also to come to conclusions that were not based on my opinions and experiences alone.

The themes that emerged through this process are summarised as follows:

- The early history of instrumental music in Queensland.
- The backgrounds and experiences of the teachers.
- Curricula.
- Competitions and 'festival culture'.

## **2.2 Stage two: Experiences of Brisbane jazz educators**

After establishing the history and background of how the jazz ensemble had emerged through the instrumental music program, I decided to investigate the varied individual educational and musical experiences of teachers who were currently active and explore how these experiences influence their delivery of jazz elements through their ensembles.

The teachers involved in this stage of the study included myself and two other colleagues who were employed in the primary research location of Marist College Ashgrove. To give further depth and perspective it was also decided to include valuable data uncovered in stage one of this study from a teacher who is also currently involved in jazz education and is teaching outside the primary research location. Each teacher involved was responsible for taking at least one jazz ensemble in his or her school's co-curricular program each week.

Macdonald and Wilson (2005) state "if you create the music in a group, it is worth asking a group about it" (p. 398); because of time constraints and available budget, I

decided to adopt a small focus group approach that involved the three teachers involved in the primary research location. The ‘focus group’ method of investigation had advantages including, “participants are empowered and able to make comments in their own words, while being stimulated by thoughts and comments of others in the group” (Robson, 2002, p. 285). The group interview lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Acting as both a participant and moderator in this research presented disadvantages, advantages and challenges throughout the group interview process. Robson advises that,

The moderator has to generate interest in and discussion about a particular topic, which is close to his or her professional or academic interest, without at the same time leading the group to reinforce existing expectations or confirm a prior hypothesis’ (cited in Sim, 1998, p. 347).

Through the previous stages of my research I had become aware of elements that were recognised internationally as being important in providing a well-rounded jazz education but I was most interested to hear what the participants in this study believed was relevant and important. The group interview was conducted in a semi-formal format using general questions to inquire about the participants’ experiences both as a student and teacher and I was careful not to lead the participants.

To maintain consistency across the entire project the data that emerged in this second stage of research was analysed using an identical methodology to stage 1. Once again through the triangulation of data from the interviews, the cross-referencing to related literature, educational journals and my own reflective writing the following themes were identified regarding each participant’s jazz educational experiences as a student and then as a teacher:

- Culture as a student and as a teacher
- Aural tradition as a student and as a teacher
- Repertoire and genre as a student and as a teacher
- Improvisation as a student and as a teacher

It is important to note that although these themes are listed separately they may also have a direct relationship to each other. For example when discussing the teaching of improvisation one teacher emphasized that the choice of repertoire was integral to the development of this process. Another teacher reflected on her experiences as a high school and tertiary student and the varying degree of emphasis that was placed on listening in these learning environments. During the interview process she identified how she believed that aural tradition and listening was integral to the overall success or failure of developing jazz culture. This integration of the identified themes is represented in Figure 1 below.

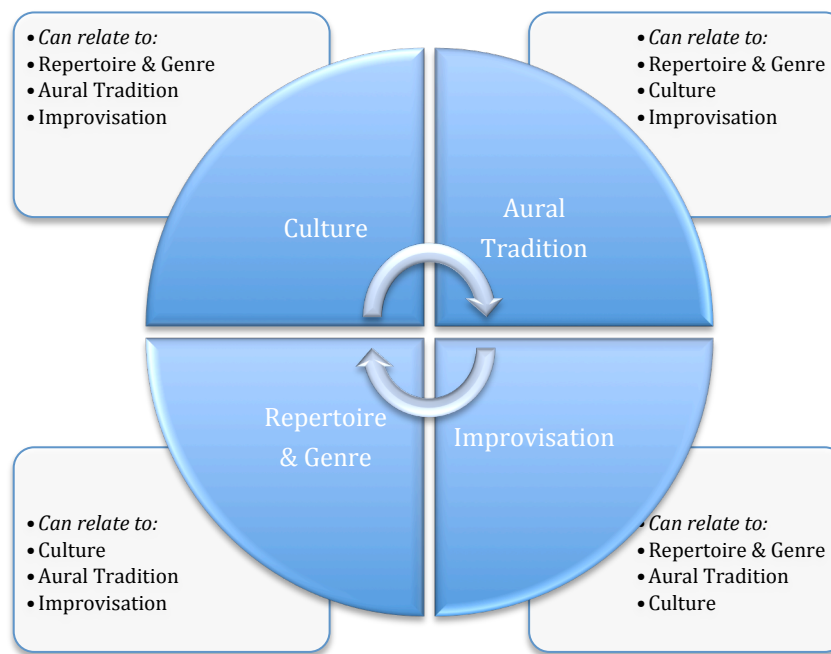


Figure 1: Possible interrelationships of identified themes.

### **2.3 Ethical considerations and requirements**

The primary ethical considerations for this research project concerned the consent of those involved in being interviewed and recorded. Ethics approval was sought and granted from the Griffith university human research ethics committee (see Appendix 3), as well as from the Headmaster of the primary research location (see Appendix

5). Participants were asked for their consent to participate and be recorded at the outset, and were always given the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any time.

## **2.4 Research location**

My current working environment at Marist College Ashgrove in the inner western suburb of Brisbane presented a good opportunity to explore the delivery of jazz education in a Queensland high school setting. The College has a strong tradition of jazz education producing numerous alumni who have pursued further study at a tertiary level both in Australia and the US, and have performed professionally with numerous national and international artists (including James Morrison, Don Burrows, Dale Barlow, Will Vinson, Don Rader and Nigel Kennedy). Over the last 20 years, the College's premier jazz ensemble, *Big Band 1*, has consistently been awarded placings in the top grade of competitions at both state and national festivals. Each week over 500 students undertake an instrumental music lesson given by a faculty of 16 (full-time and part time) music educators. Currently (2012) five jazz ensembles rehearse each week as part of the school's wider co-curricular program. These ensembles vary in both size and skill level of students and are directed by staff members with differing backgrounds in jazz performance and education.

### **3.0 STAGE ONE THEMATIC ANALYSIS – History and background of the jazz ensemble in Queensland high schools**

The three teacher interviewees are identified throughout as T1, T2 and T3. The identified themes will now be explored in detail as follows.

#### **3.1 The early history of instrumental music in Queensland**

As Throsby (2001) states in his article *Public funding of the arts in Australia-1900 to 2000* - "The first half of the 1970s is sometimes seen as marking Australia's 'cultural renaissance', a period when the creative arts blossomed throughout the country as never before, thanks to enlightened public patronage" (p. 551). He goes on to say that the support for the arts actually began a few years earlier in 1967 when then Prime Minister Harold Holt announced the establishment of the first Australian Council for the Arts, which was formed to "distribute grants and to advise the government on cultural matters" (p. 551). It is worth noting that "following the establishment of the Council ... the various States moved in turn to set up their own bodies to provide cultural support within their own jurisdictions" (p.551) and that one of the states to first act was Queensland which established a portfolio for Cultural Activities within its Ministry for Education and Cultural Activities only one year after in 1968.

A few years after this in 1972 the Instrumental Music Program for Queensland State Schools was initiated by the Queensland Department of Education with the appointment of a Supervisor of Music, Kevin Siddell. Through his direction a basic structure was formulated under which the program was to function. "This system of instruction involves itinerant instrumental instructors who visit State Schools in Queensland to enable students in these schools to participate in group lessons ... any ensemble activity is undertaken before or after school or during lunch hours" (Thompson, 1983, p. 22).

Teacher 1 (T1) was one of the early educators at Kevin Grove High School and he explained how this began firstly as a trial.

T1: Kelvin Grove was one of the two original trial schools, the other one being Cavendish Road State High School. Brisbane State High School already had a



program due to its Great Public School (GPS) status.

After the initial success of 'trial schools', the program was introduced to centres across the State. Erickson (1983) in his article for the Australian journal of music education outlines that within the decade " ... independent schools have also increasingly supported their music programs, and some results have been spectacular" (p. 2). By the end of the 1970's Erickson, one of the original teachers in the trial pilot stated, "Now many metropolitan schools, and a number in smaller centres, can boast both a school band and a school orchestra. Many country students - particularly those in the Roma area - have been involved. Camps and festivals have flourished, and the demand rises year by year" (Erickson, 1983, p. 2).

Thompson's (1983) doctoral thesis *A Curriculum Model for Instrumental Music Education in the Schools of Queensland, Australia*, gives good insight into the development of this uniquely Queensland program. In 1981 the aims of the program were proposed after numerous requests from instrumental instructors. These aims included "to provide ensemble experience (through the formation of bands, orchestras, and other ensembles) for these students so that they develop ensemble and solo performance skills as an integral part of their music education" (p. 5). From the start, few guidelines and little direction was given to the teachers who were initially charged with the responsibility of *instructing* the students and directing their ensembles. Below, Teacher 2 elaborates on how this translated into the types of ensembles that were offered.

T2: Default positions were to produce concert bands and symphony orchestras ... in programs where they had somebody who had an understanding of winds and strings together where in other schools there would be the strong brass and woodwind teacher who would look after the concert band and the string teacher would form a string orchestra ... that melded into the administrative instructions that prescribed that the school will have a concert band and that it will have a string orchestra and that the symphony orchestra and the jazz bands will become adjunct to them ... how they were managed was a decision of the school.

From the very beginning of the instrumental program through to the present day there is evidence that many high schools offered a jazz ensemble or big band as part of there larger ensemble programs. This has been reflected in schools prospectuses,

web sites and also in the large number of jazz ensembles presented in festivals and competitions such as *Fanfare*, *Musicfest* and the *Queensland Catholic Colleges Music Festival* held in regional and metropolitan centres across Queensland. From my own experiences and from the literature and interview data I have uncovered to date, it is also evident that the repertoire performed and the skills that are introduced and emphasised to the students in these ensembles has predominantly relied on the background, qualifications and experiences of those employed to undertake these tasks.

### **3.2 The backgrounds and experiences of the teachers**

Thompson (1983) outlines that at the start of the program the Supervisor and the Co-ordinator of Instrumental Music for Queensland adopted a criteria that took into account the academic qualifications, professional experience, (both teaching and performance), personal references and finally the interview in determining the appointment of teaching staff to the program. When the program began "it was not considered necessary for the staff to possess a teaching credential as the position is primarily a performance development situation. As these staff cannot be registered as teachers in Queensland because of a lack of a teaching credential they are designated as instructors" (Thompson, 1983, p. 238). From the beginning it soon became apparent that there were not enough qualified teachers available to deliver a program of this size considering the number of schools and students involved. As a result a large number of instructors were recruited from the Australian armed services bands and a smaller number of teachers from overseas and in particular from the United States.

As late as 1983, Erickson outlines in his article for the Australian journal of music education that "... no sure supply of qualified instrumental teachers is at present available, and as yet no course has been established within the State to provide such a supply." (p. 2). In the same year Thompson states, "in most cases, these instructors have little formal music education background" (Thompson, 1983, p. 29). Below teachers 2 and 3 reflect on their colleagues experiences and backgrounds involved in the early days of the program.

T1: Suddenly there is all this federal government money to produce instrumental music

programs, there is nowhere for them to get the teachers for it as the institutions where not producing them at the time ... they also cut defence funding and the first the defence department does is cut their bands so there was this wave of musicians coming out of the defence force bands also from places like Her Majesties and the Tivoli because live music was being cut back as well and disco and disc jockeys were coming in ... suddenly there was a chance of a second career for them. Also there were lots of educators of all types came from overseas, they used to talk about the 747s full of teachers coming out. The difficulty was that they had been trained in a model that had instrumental music as a subject in the school timetable and they come in to a model where instrumental music is extra curricular ... at least there were trained people in the environment alongside very enthusiastic amateurs as we ex-servicemen were.

T2: ... up to 85-90% of instructors were unqualified to be teachers - came from a range of areas such as the armed services, some American graduates and the rest were perhaps best described as “musicians” eking a living from gigs etc. and fell into the program.

Both of these teachers further elaborated on the diverse skills, attitudes and professionalism of their fellow instructors at the time.

T1: Some of the musicians were just duds as teachers, some of them were stunners ... some of the programs that you look at that were run by ex servicemen were just outstanding.

T2: Very few of these could be called educators in the true sense and were and are a pale shadow of the programs in such places as Japan and America – we just don’t have the population densities, the desire or the cultural background to see jazz as anything else and, as for all arts, see jazz as a periodic consumable. Also many of the instructors today and yesterday are failed or aspiring performers so really don’t have the ethos to be teachers so it is also about mind set and application – this applies to higher education as well where they coalesce in covens of almost made “its”. Many as today fall into teaching because age and gravity have caught up but still crave the attention so gather around them the adoring uninformed.

The diverse professional and educational backgrounds of the early instructors and their delivery of music education was further clouded by a lack of specific directions or instructions on how and what they were to teach and how they were to conduct their ensembles.

T1: The problem was there was no in-service training ... back then there was nothing like there is in the institutions now, their concept of instrumental training was you went and learnt to play your instrument, you did a couple of classes in pedagogy and then you hung your shingle outside your door and taught Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB) exams.

Like myself, teacher 3 had his first jazz musical experiences delivered by teachers in the late 1970's and 1980's whose backgrounds were typical of the time. Although mostly academically unqualified our first mentors in music and in the jazz idiom in particular, were rich in the enthusiasm and spirit of the genre and had generated a culture through lessons and ensembles within their programs that inspired us to pursue careers in instrumental music education and become part of the second generation of instrumental instructors.

At one of the first assemblies on entry to high school, I heard the school jazz band and was mesmerised. Although immersed in the 1970's rock music culture of the time this was new *jazz* music that I had never heard before, live or recorded. It made a big impression on me. In particular the solos and improvisation fascinated me. I quickly became involved with the school instrumental music program and began learning saxophone. After relocating from South Australia to Cairns in Far North Queensland in the late 1970's I was immersed in the rich culture that the Queensland instrumental music program offered, and in the later years of high school began to pursue a career in music by gaining entry into the Conservatorium. Although my main teacher in years 11 & 12 was not a jazz specialist, he had some experience in my passion and put me in contact with the local jazz community and I soon found ways of getting myself invited to local Jam sessions. Through this medium and with his help I truly began to understand jazz seeing both the social and musical interaction between the various local musicians. Below, teacher 3 outlines similar experiences.

T3: In grade 9 I had my first big band experience, pretty basic big band doing Glen Miller kind of stuff ... that's why I went to the con, so that I could become an instrumental music teacher ... the reason I became a teacher was because my instrumental music teachers inspired me and they both took the big bands.

After leaving high school, I began studies at the Queensland Conservatorium. Although my interest was in jazz, at the time, only mainstream classical courses were offered. Although I acquired a lot of inspiration and new knowledge through my classical studies I found that little was offered in jazz performance or education and the only way I was going to acquire this knowledge was through self-direction. I found that I learned more about the jazz genre when I returned home each summer and reunited with the jazz musicians I had performed with in late high school. Through playing with them I learnt basic jazz repertoire and, although it was very difficult at the time, I began to seek out recordings of the masters and to aurally transcribe their music. Through my classical studies I had explored analysis through notation, however it was apparent to me that jazz elements such as groove or swing, playing behind or in front of the beat and instrumental techniques that were essential in performing jazz did not always lend themselves to traditional notation. I found that listening, analysing and then performing was the most important thing, and sometimes there was not really a need, or an effective way to notate the music I was hearing.

Although the Conservatorium did have a Big Band, and in my final year of studies began a trial year for the jazz course, jazz education at the time was centred on the big band playing highly arranged charts where the musicians were mostly reading with limited space for improvisation. Teacher 3 reflects on similar experiences while at the Conservatorium a few years later when the jazz course had just begun in the mid 1980's. Like the instrumental program this course that initially began as a trial was now offered as a full course on a campus separate from the rest of the Conservatorium.

T3: I played in the Con big band ... however I'd consider myself to be classically trained ... I've got jazz experience in that I've played in big bands but no training.

I took part in the jazz course in that I played in the combo... I did not get any of the training that they got or lectures ... they were on a different campus.

Teacher 2 also discusses the early days of tertiary jazz education at the Queensland Conservatorium and his impressions of jazz education in the high schools at the time:

T2: The Con was just starting its jazz program and instrumental music education was in its infancy at that time – any “jazz” education in high schools was a matter of chance and not scheduled choice – standards were very ordinary with a few exceptions and those who came from the jazz ‘scene’ brought with them all of the beliefs, values, baggage and work ethic that was befuddled by the lifestyle extremes/abuses that they had subjected themselves to over a lifetime. Jazz was and is considered to be an oddity and a hobby as a life style choice ... hardly considered jazz education as it was just about getting instructors to adopt a modicum of educational method and sequence rather than discussing the medium.

After graduating from the Queensland Conservatorium in 1984, I began my first fulltime appointment as an instrumental instructor employed by Queensland State Education Department (now Education Queensland) based at Kepnock high school in Bundaberg, teaching at 10 secondary and primary schools and directing a variety of ensembles including concert bands and jazz ensembles. Like many of my colleagues at the time I had no academic educational training and began teaching on my first day with no work program, no curriculum and a teaching load of over 500 students. Teacher 3 began his teaching career a few years later in Brisbane and encountered a similar situation:

T3: [As] soon as I left the Con I went into teaching and in my first year was at around 10 schools. I took over the big band at Yeronga and that was a good learning experience for me ... by my 3rd year of teaching I took over the MacGregor A grade Big Band and they were already a good big band at that stage and that for me was also a great learning experience, taking on a band of that standard, finding new repertoire ... I had that band for 18 years.

For both teacher 3 and myself knowing what and how to teach was really a matter of ‘trial and error’. At the time little existed in curriculum materials for our general instrumental teaching and even less information was available in helping us develop the skills needed for directing the jazz ensembles that we were now responsible for.

### **3.3 Curricula**

For the first decade of the Queensland instrumental music program teachers relied solely on two commercial texts as curriculum documents, String builder

(Applebaum, 1960) and First Division Band Method (Weber, 1962). Teacher 1 elaborates that at the time more was needed and this resulted in individual teachers devising their own curriculum.

T1: One of the first things I did was try to develop a curriculum. At the time, there was no curriculum. There was a set text ... for strings it was string builder and for band it was First Division Band Method. They became de-facto curriculum documents.

Although both of the prescribed texts were based on ensemble style tuition it was eventually recognised that more was needed. As Anne Carroll, the Senior Advisor in Music Education in Queensland at the time outlines in her paper presented at the Australian Society for Music Education conference. "Currently commercial tutor series such as First Division Band Method are the actual curriculum for most instrumental staff, though of course not for all. A department initiative has been taken in 1983, with the appointment of an officer to Curriculum branch to develop an instrumental curriculum" (Carroll, 1984, p. 88).

Roy Thompson was appointed to curriculum branch and granted funds to undertake Post-Graduate study at the University of Southern California to devise a curriculum model for instrumental music education in the state. In his thesis he further elaborates on the state of affairs in regards to curriculum. "Therefore, the situation exists where the Instrumental Music Program in Queensland has a series of vague aims, two textbooks, and a staff of largely untrained instrumental instructors from which a unified program of instrumental education is expected to emerge" (Thompson, 1983, p.14).

Thompson's work resulted in the generation of curriculum documents that were prescribed as the instrumental guidelines to be used by instrumental instructors across the state. Since that time these documents have evolved into a package of documents that are available as support materials for all instrumental teachers. It is worth noting that by the late 1980's the majority of new instrumental staff that now came to the workplace held both music and teaching qualifications as tertiary institutions had now begun to offer courses designed to instruct instrumental teachers. In the meantime, and since commencing employment, many teachers like

myself and teacher 3 had undertaken further studies to be eligible for teacher registration. This being the case for the majority of instructors we were now referred to as teachers.

Curricula documents that are available to instrumental teachers today give a comprehensive overview of administrative guidelines and role descriptions with detailed outlines of outcomes for students at each level of development on wind, percussion and stringed instruments. The big band, or stage band, is referred to throughout as one of the suggested groups that will make up a school's large ensemble program as well as other groups including concert band, orchestra, and string orchestra.

In reference to jazz education, many jazz elements including improvisation, aural skills and stylistic interpretation are sporadically mentioned throughout. For example, in the wind and percussion section of the document the following is suggested:

In order to demonstrate awareness of the style of the music, the student must develop some insight into the way that musical elements have been treated by composers, performers and improvisers in various periods and genres of music ... students' awareness of style and the need for a suitable stylistic approach in playing can be encouraged by: provision of a diverse and balanced repertoire at all levels; specifically teaching relevant skills and interpretations, for example how to play a Baroque trill, a Classical appoggiatura or a jazz rhythm; promoting knowledge about eras and styles in the broader sense, so that decisions about interpretation are understood. Listening is an excellent way for the student to gain an insight into the authentic sounds of a New Orleans jazz band or an Irish fiddler. Collaboration with librarians and other teachers in the school is a useful way of providing the necessary background. (Department of Education Queensland in association with Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1990, p. 46)

Typical of most of the directions given in these documents, the above extract does not give specific directions on how to achieve these outcomes, however it does advise on the choice of repertoire and collaboration with other teachers and musicians.

As outlined in my earlier confirmation paper (Butt, 2011), there is much agreement



that the elements of jazz education rely on the immersion of students in a culture of listening, performing and in the interaction with others who have a similar interest in the jazz genre rather than through transmission from the written word or musical score. From the very beginning of the instrumental program Queensland was fortunate enough to have a culture of festivals and competitions evolving at the same time, and this provided a forum where this could be possible.

### **3.4 Competition and festival culture**

In my first week of teaching my students informed me, that each year the school's jazz ensemble travelled down to Brisbane to compete in the Queensland Festival of Music. Panic began to set in at the first rehearsal as the students ran me through music they had performed in the previous years. The repertoire bore little resemblance to jazz and instead was a mixture of 1980's rock songs with most of the lead melody lines taken by vocalists and little or no improvisation. As a young teacher of barely 20 years of age I soon found myself in a challenging culture where there was little advice from either my teaching colleagues or administration. Throughout the year I worked on the band's ensemble skills, and in late September we travelled down to Brisbane for the festival that at the time was run by a large music store. By 1985 this festival had been running for quite some time and in the jazz ensemble section there were over 40 bands entered in 3 divisions. The band that I directed competed in the B grade section and although unsuccessful in competition, the experience gave myself and my students a great opportunity to perform in front of an enthusiastic audience and to hear other bands playing at a variety of levels and in contrasting genres. By listening to some of the bands in the A grade section such as Brisbane State High School, Wavell State High School and MacGregor State High School I became aware of what was possible when directing a high school jazz ensemble and it became my goal to develop a band that could achieve the same high standard I had heard in these performances.

Some years later, teacher 3 describes his experiences with the competition and festival culture:

T3: ... when I got to MacGregor in '91 or '92 ... they were pretty competitive ... for them

(students) it was a big thing and they were pressuring me saying we've got to do well this year... and I thought I was out of my league a bit there ... that sought of rubbed off on me a bit ... we did win it that year and I didn't think we would but we did and that put pressure on me after that ... that then made me lift my game a bit and I was trying to keep the standard at that standard, you know keep it high.

From the 1970s through to 2005, the competition culture thrived within the state where jazz bands competed in regional and metropolitan festivals such as the *Queensland Festival of Music*, the *Tropicana Festival* on the Gold Coast and also many regional eisteddfods as far north as Cairns. Each year through this forum I would develop my ensemble direction skills further by listening to other ensembles and getting ideas for repertoire and styles. For the most part these competitions awarded 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> places to the leading bands and special prizes for sections of ensembles and soloists. Around the mid 2000's however festivals began to award bands with either a gold, silver or bronze award with sometimes several bands being awarded a gold award in the same section.

One of the reasons for this is voiced below by teacher 1 who was responsible for a lot of adjudication of these events at the time.

T1: ... we went from a strong culture of lets all share to lets beat somebody and win a competition

For many this was a good thing as it took the pressure off individual directors and promoted a culture of collaboration and learning rather than pure competition. However for some, including myself, it has had a negative result by taking the focus and edge away from performances. At the same time many private and public sector schools began to build performing arts centres that provided a superior performance space and experience for their students that in the past could only be found in a festival. What is in agreement is that there has been a decline in the number of jazz ensembles entered in the top sections of festivals and competitions in recent years. Teacher 3 further echoes this in statements.

T3: ... there has been, (a good culture), I don't think there is now ... up until probably 2005 or particularly 2004 that there was a big culture of the competition ...there was lots of rivalry going on between the kids in the schools... they would always meet at

QYO and that sought of thing ... it has changed... once they went to that gold silver bronze thing which was meant to make, you know, it fairer and all that sought of thing...the edge went off it ... you need to set a goal for them to say this is what we want to reach, we want to obtain this level for this reason ... then you can focus what they do ... that you do for that competition, it just lifts the whole band

In recent times we have seen problems in our competition and festival scene that have been encountered in all sections of the music competition environment. For example, the following contrasting statements were made by different adjudicators about the same group that I directed in the top section of a festival in recent times:

Adjudicator 1: ... very effective dynamics and a Rolls Royce rhythm section... a musical joy to listen to.

Adjudicator 2: ... self-indulgent clashes of harmony and dissonance ... I am sorry that was not enjoyable.

David Baker echoes similar concerns voiced in the 1960s with the competition scene in the United States, "Among the areas of concern which many of us saw then and now are: Adjudication ... how to choose judges who are compatible with the avowed educational aims of the contest ... how to arrive at reasonably objective standards minimizing personal tastes and biases" (Baker, 1974, p. 15). In contrast the national competition scene is flourishing with increased entries each year and several Queensland jazz ensembles annually travelling to Mount Gambier for the Generations in Jazz festival held in South Australia. Below, teacher 3 comments on his experiences at this event.

T3: When we went to Mt Gambier ... best thing I've ever done... it was such a fantastic experience ... competing at national level takes it to a whole new level ... the Marrickville and the Wesley Colleges down there are just phenomenal ... for the kids to see that playing at that level was invaluable.

All teachers involved in this study mirrored similar sentiments made by Baker in the United States in the 1970s, "In my personal experiences I have found, in contest after contest that the evils far outweigh the good" (1974, p. 15).

### **3.5 Stage one summary**

This stage of the study identified the perceptions of four instrumental music teachers on the history and background of jazz education through the high school jazz ensemble in Brisbane and clarified these perspectives with the available literature.

Although not mandatory, the jazz ensemble has existed within the wider framework of the instrumental music program that began as a trial in 1972 to enable students to participate in instrumental music through lessons and ensembles. At its commencement the vast majority of instructors were recruited from the armed services bands and the performing arts industry and held no academic qualifications, although a small number of qualified teachers were employed predominantly from overseas. Over the last 25 years tertiary courses in instrumental music teaching have become available to instructors and students and all of the teachers who participated in this study have obtained one of these qualifications as part of their professional development.

The instrumental music program began with limited curricula however in the early 1980s Education Queensland began developing a package that has evolved into a document giving directives on the instruction of string, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments and ensemble direction. Although the jazz ensemble and jazz elements such as swing and improvisation are sporadically mentioned throughout this document it gives few specific directions on how to achieve jazz outcomes. The teachers in this study recognised the importance and prominence of the competition and festival jazz culture that had particular strength in Queensland from the 1980s through to the mid 2000's however agreed that in recent times had lost some momentum.

Most importantly it has been identified that the outcomes achieved in Queensland high school jazz ensembles are reliant on the backgrounds and experiences of the teachers taking these groups. Through literature review, it has also been established that jazz elements such as improvisation, genre, aural tradition, jazz theory and jazz culture are recognised as integral in providing a well-rounded jazz education.

The next stage of the research used these findings to explore in greater depth how individual teachers go about delivering recognised jazz elements through their

ensembles; some of these teachers make up the next generation of jazz educators and hold specific jazz tertiary training.

#### **4.0 STAGE TWO THEMATIC ANALYSIS – Teachers' jazz education experiences in a Brisbane high school**

The three teachers interviewed in this stage of the study are identified throughout as T3, T4 and T5. The identified themes will now be explored in detail as follows.

##### **4.1 Student culture**

Australian jazz pianist Mike Nock states “Jazz may be barely on the general public’s radar” (Shand, 2009, p. 3), and it comes as no surprise that all of the teachers in this part of the study reported little contact with the genre in their early years growing up in typically Australian urban environments in the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s. There was significant discussion by all of their introduction to music in more general terms with all sharing similar experiences of being introduced to jazz through their participation in the instrumental music program and their participation in the high school jazz ensemble. Only teacher 4 had recollections of an earlier interest in the genre.

T4: My dad liked blues but not John Coltrane or anything like that ... there was not a lot of playing music at home. When I was about 11 someone lent me a James Morrison tape and I really liked it, the same person gave me some Nat King Cole and Ella Fitzgerald and things like that ... I just started listening to it and liked it. I did not have anybody teaching it to me at that point.

Although teacher 4 was unique in showing an interest in jazz prior to high school all participants began their musical education in a more formal or classical method.

T4: When I was in primary school I learned piano and did classical grades. There wasn't any jazz training ... at that point there was no jazz, it was all just classical stuff and any contemporary or jazz stuff I wanted to do ... I had to find out on my own.

T5: I started percussion in grade 4 ... got kicked out of that and then began trumpet for 2 years after which I was switched over to Euphonium ... at the end of grade 8 I was only playing in concert bands.

My interest in jazz started after starting high school and hearing the high school jazz ensemble for the first time. All teacher participants reported similar experience of wanting to be a part of it. There was a consensus that the connection with the music

was most probably generated through its similarities to the pop and rock music of the time.

T5: ... I did want to get into the stage band but the only way to do that was to play trombone. About 2 weeks before the auditions I managed to get a trombone and take it home and work out the connections between euphonium and trombone and auditioned and got in to the stage band ... it looked like fun, I liked playing euphonium ... but also I liked the style of music ... I liked the drums ... the rhythm section. It was also seen to be the number one ensemble at the school.

Another common thread amongst all participants was that although they were involved in a jazz ensemble throughout high school and were being directed by teachers who had experience in the genre, all felt that they were not being taught how to 'play' jazz; rather, they were just part of the ensemble. They all became aware of elements such as improvisation and genre however none of the participants could see any structure in its delivery. Instead they recalled that their teachers relied more on the skills that individual students had learnt from others outside the ensemble or had acquired by themselves.

T4: My high school teacher had an interest in jazz ... he was a jazz flute player ... he was excited to find that kids were interested in it but it didn't seem that he had much experience with kids that were interested in jazz before ... he was not that pro active in introducing us to listening to jazz ... it was not until grade 12 ... that he got us together occasionally and he would get us together to do some improvisation ... it was just jamming basically, that was about it. It wasn't until I went to young Conservatorium in grade 12 that I started to be taught how to play to jazz

T5: The guy that had us had an interest in jazz, he was a saxophone player and did gigs around the place ... he especially talked with the more advanced students about Chick Corea and all that stuff ... they were talking about it a bit ... I wasn't really involved in it and didn't understand it as much as they did ... I really did not have any jazz teaching, it was never taught, it was just play this ... here is a chart.

Being a member of a jazz ensemble also meant being involved in competitions and festivals that were particularly strong in Queensland at this time and all shared experiences of this. It is worth noting that each participant saw these events as more of a showcase for individuals within the ensembles, and in particular rhythm section

players, rather than the entire ensemble demonstrating specific jazz elements. It was suspected that the festival organisers also encouraged this culture with prizes awarded to individuals in each section.

T5: The stage band had generally done pretty well in music festivals for a number of years there ... we had a number of other students ... who were quite musically talented ... we had really good drummers, really good keyboard ... and a couple of others that continued on to do music. It had a bit of a breeding ground tradition in a way ... it was definitely heading towards competitions ... featuring a few chosen soloists ... they did a lot of it themselves ... the teacher did give them some kind of direction ... but only to the ones that were really keen ... there was no culture of I am going to develop other kids as well

T4: ... well it was myself and these other two boys who were into jazz ... the repertoire was chosen to showcase us ... he wasn't very good at explaining what to do ... the most I got out of it was when the three of us got together and played

As was my experience, after completing their high school education all teacher participants immediately began tertiary studies in Brisbane. Two of the teachers enrolled in more traditional classical performance courses while one teacher commenced studies in jazz performance. However, the two teachers who studied classical strands were involved in the institution's jazz ensemble or big band. They shared varied experiences as members of these ensembles.

T3: I played in the Con big band ... however I'd consider myself to be classically trained ... I've got jazz experience in that I've played in big bands but no training.

T4: I went to the conservatorium and majored in jazz piano ... it was a lot of ensemble playing, jazz theory ... being in the Con Artists big band and the junior one. It was the standard stuff, piano lessons, ensemble lessons, theory classes and listening classes as well ... it was a performance course

T5: I went to Queensland University of Technology (QUT) that was a Bachelor of Arts in music ... it was more of a classical based course at the time ... I had trombone lessons and second study on tuba and some on French horn ... we had theory lessons which were all classical ... history ... we had some aural lessons ... it wasn't taught, it was just here it is do it ... There was a concert band I played in and a big band I played in. There were some guys doing a jazz or contemporary type stream and I came across them in big band



## 4.2 Teaching culture

Each of the four teachers in this stage of the study had varied experiences as teachers within their teaching environments. As an instrumental teacher for Education Queensland Teacher 3 had over 20 years experience in a variety of schools, some for short periods and others for a considerable amount of time. Of interest to this study was that his experiences gave good insight into how the changing environment of different schools can affect the music culture within these schools. Teacher 3 perceived that a change of administrators could have a direct impact on the culture, particularly through the funding of music departments. Through the itinerant nature of his position T3 was in a good position to see schools develop stronger music programs and jazz ensembles sometimes at the expense of other schools. Teacher 3 believed that parents and students would be attracted to schools by the strong music culture that they offered.

T3: The band was great for many years and then the school changed, we got a new principal in the school and also the demographic of the school changed ... refugees and that sought of thing came to the school and it changed the whole culture of the school and the other thing that happened was that another school close by became a good school for music about the year 2000.

T3: The admin had a lot to do with the school and the change of the culture in the school ... and the support is not there any more ... from 1995 until 2000 the support from the admin was amazing... anything we wanted we could do but this Principal, its like...does not want to know us...she does not come to anything of ours and we don't get any money.

In my time as a teacher for Education Queensland I also perceived this phenomena and again experienced it when I moved to private sector schools. Over the last 20 years I have noticed certain private schools actively promoting a strong jazz culture through offering music scholarships to gifted and talented students. These students would often feature at competitions and, when successful, be promoted through the media to attract more musically gifted students to their school. I discussed further with Teacher 3 the importance of what key players were needed to make a successful ensemble and it was clear that these were most often the type of students who were offered scholarships.

T3: If you want a great big band or just a good big band you need some key players and that's ... great drummer, bass player, lead trumpet and lead alto.

On commencing my teaching at Marist College Ashgrove I became aware of the consequences of this festival and competition culture where schools that were successful in competitions were seen in the wider community to have successful jazz bands; however they were not actually developing jazz skills such as improvisation and swing. There was a lot of “fast, high and loud” going on without what I believed were true jazz elements being delivered. In my own practice I made a concerted effort to develop the jazz skills of students while at the same time establishing successful results in the wider festival and competition culture. Over time I hoped to develop a program that fostered an environment of developing skills for all, promoting a culture of listening and demonstration through performances. This involved regular evening and lunchtime concerts involving current students, staff, past students and musicians from the wider jazz community. Over time I was also determined to employ staff that offered broad musical experiences, not just in jazz but in all musical genres and to establish a collegiate climate of shared experiences. Although teacher 5 did not come from a strong jazz background it was interesting to note some of his thoughts on jazz education in his time here.

T5: I would have to say now I have learnt most about jazz from being here at the school ... I can come to you (Teacher 4) and say how does this chord work or what's this chord here, what sort of scales can I play ... I can come and do it straight away, I never had that when I was at uni.

The College's highest-level ensemble rehearsed as a group each week from 90 to 120 minutes and in combination with sectional rehearsals I incorporated listening and improvising for all students. In my lower level ensembles however I realised that with only a 50-minute rehearsal there was not enough time to cover these elements. During the interview process both teacher 4 and 5 echoed these sentiments.

T4: I think in the big band situation a lot of the time that I spent and probably still do is spent on getting the sound of the big band right, so all of the dots on the page as far as improvising I feel there is never enough time to do improvising especially ... because I have never conducted a band like the top ensemble at any point it's sought of in the middle, it is an interesting age group and ability level to work with,

you do spend a lot of time just getting the notes on the page right, there are a lot of times when I feel it is just coming together just right before the concert. I wish for their sake they could learn the parts a lot quicker so we could work on being a lot more musical rather than just getting it together ... because we could work more on getting the groove happening and stuff like that.

T5: Taking the 4<sup>th</sup> big band that is an early level band ... even for beginner big band stuff it would be much more difficult than wind ensemble ... a kid needs to be a lot more able on their instrument before you can stick them in to a big band ... if they cant read notes, cant read rhythms ... trying to teach them this strange style on top of that just blows their mind ... the rhythms are generally more complicated ... looking at straight quavers on a page and saying don't play them straight ...

As with reports in Stage 1 of this dissertation, teacher 3 outlined that the majority of his time in rehearsing an elite jazz ensemble was focused on precision and ensemble playing.

T3: The majority of my rehearsals I work on getting it tight, you know the articulation, the rhythm, the notes and just getting the band to sound good together... and improvisation is OK, we've got that now lets put the impro in with it, lets put the soloists in with it, as an added thing at the end...so that's why our bands aren't fantastic at doing impro.

Having recognized this several years ago I established weekly small jazz ensemble workshop sessions that were conducted by a teacher who had a strong jazz background. Over time this has proved to be a successful initiative especially for the students in the younger age groups. Older students find it more of a challenge to find the time to attend these extra sessions. The concept of additional workshops is one that as a staff we are continually striving to improve and refine.

T4: I am finding a lot of the guys who have been coming for the past couple of years ... they're now in grade 11 and starting to freak out about exams ... once upon a time they put time into learning the tune from week to week. Now I am finding that is not happening ... I feel I am spending a lot of the time teaching the tune rather than developing the soloing skills.

### **4.3 Student aural traditions**

Through my Master of Music confirmation process it was established that “Although there is debate regarding the contrasting styles of the delivery of jazz education there is also considerable agreement both in academic fields and also in the performing professional community about the importance of the aural tradition of jazz” (Butt, 2011, p. 3). The data that was uncovered through Stage 2 of the research gave further support to this statement with participants’ (T1, T2, T3) agreement on the importance of listening to recordings and live jazz performances. Although all participants were aware of this aural tradition at high school, their engagement with it developed at different stages of their jazz ensemble experience. For some, including myself, the importance of and engagement with listening to jazz began during early high school. For others it only really began through their tertiary studies and beyond. Although all agreed on the importance of listening most found that it was not actively promoted to each member of the ensemble at a high school level and instead was offered to a chosen few or left for each student to pursue on an individual basis. Others reflected on listening to recordings of the music they were performing even though their teacher did not overtly promote it.

Teacher 4 and 5 elaborate on the aural culture of listening to jazz recordings that they experienced while at high school.

T4: ... there were some other guys in the band that were also interested in jazz and we started swapping our collection.

T5: We often did vocal charts ... we had singers as well ... there was this one album that Sinatra did that our teacher transcribed some charts for us to play ... that was pretty cool, that made me later on get a recording of that album and I still think it is fantastic. I guess he was kind of teaching us not directly but a little bit by playing these things for us ... and have a listen to this ... just for the charts we were doing

At a tertiary level each participant expressed varied experiences that usually depended on their lecturers, ensemble directors and peers who were directly involved in and during their study programs. Teacher 4 experienced a rich culture of listening both through the introduction of varied recordings and live demonstrations while others were unsure if their mentors had a full grasp of the performing jazz genre.

T4: When I think of what I learned and what improved my playing it was the ensemble playing ... the mentoring by the ensemble director ... sometimes the whole session for ensemble would be him bringing in stuff for us to listen to ... there was this whole world of stuff that I had never listened to.

T5: My trombone teacher took some of us into the pit for shows ... that was one of the things that was really good about there ... that was fantastic, I really enjoyed that ... and I thought, yeah this is cool ... this is why I need to learn a bit of soloing, to be able to get you through some little hassles here and there.

T5: There was one really good (student) trombone player who was very much in to jazz ... he soloed very well; it was the first time I realized trombones could really do that.

T5: ... the (big band) director we had I am not really sure about how much jazz experience he had, I never saw him, I never heard him play any jazz at any time.

Teacher 5 also reflected on his experience of working in a retail music shop and the access it gave him to a wide variety of listening experiences. He credited this as one of his most beneficial learning experiences as an educator and musician, not just for jazz but also for all genres of music.

T5: I went to work at HMV (music store) and that's where I got my knowledge of who was out there ... I listened to a lot so I can pick things up ...

Finally the participants commented on the formal aural classes that they participated in as part of both the classical and jazz strands of their undergraduate degrees. Although each teacher experienced different levels of success in this part of their educational journey they all agreed that it was not presented in a well-structured manner and supportive environment.

T4: I have pretty good ears however I was 18, you get scared and shy and you didn't want to make an idiot of yourself in front of others ... there was this big gap of what they think you are capable of and what you actually are ... over the years you eventually worked it out ... I don't know maybe because they are more performers than teachers.

T5: Others had really good ears, I didn't, it was like so frustrating ... here listen to this, listen to that but not how you do it.

#### **4.4 Teacher aural traditions**

As a student and now as a teacher I have always placed a strong emphasis on listening and developing aural skills through my instrument. Through literature research I consistently encountered similar sentiments from numerous performing jazz musicians and educators (Lovano & Lundvall, 2009; Maupin, 2008; Redman, 2009). I was also fortunate to hear jazz great Sonny Rollins speak at the 2011 Melbourne International Jazz Festival where he reflected on his early high school years, being immersed in the rich music culture growing up in Harlem and listening to other family members and the great musicians on the radio and nearby jazz clubs. For me this way of learning was engaging and real and I could see that it had a direct impact on me as a performing musician especially in the jazz genre. When I first began my tenure as Head of Music (around 15 years ago) I installed speakers throughout the music center and would play a wide variety of music for the students to listen to throughout the day. At the time some staff were quite perplexed by this initiative viewing it as a waste of resources and money; but I saw it as an essential way of introducing students to the importance of listening and performing music. In 2005 when the school built a multi million-dollar performing arts center I made sure that this tradition would continue. A plasma screen was installed and a variety of audio-visual jazz, rock and classical music was played. Over time this practice has developed to a point where all staff can see its importance for not only the promotion of a strong jazz culture but a strong music culture in general and now many bring their own recordings and DVDs to school for the students to listen to. In most of my jazz ensemble rehearsals I use my instrument to demonstrate how to improvise, play different styles, genres and ways of phrasing. Again, for some staff this seemed unusual however over time I have encouraged them to do the same. I believe that, particularly in the jazz genre, it is essential not just to theorize and talk about it, but also to actually do it. Over time other teachers at the school have also adopted this practice in their jazz ensemble rehearsals.

T5: I sing a lot more, I'm obviously not conducting ... its more imitation, I play for them and say it's like this. I also play for them and say it's not like this ... hopefully they will hear the difference

In conversation with teacher 3 we also agreed on the importance of listening as jazz educators. We also discussed how many of our students did the same.

T3: I'd just listen to big band music all the time, that's what I'd play on my stereo. I'd listen to all the great big bands Gordon Goodwins, Bob Mintzers...

T3: I wouldn't say my whole band does (listen to jazz)...at the moment my guitarist definitely does, the bass player does ... my tenor player does, there are key players in the ensemble...they're coming to me and showing me music which is fantastic ... the drummer I've got at the moment ... he just knows what to do because he, you know, is listening to it.

#### **4.5 Repertoire and genre as a student**

All participants, including myself, had similar experiences with the repertoire encountered in their high school big band being a mix of predominantly arranged rock and funk styles from the 1970's through to late 80's and 90's. For most the remainder and smaller part of the repertoire consisted of more traditional and original swing and latin charts. I have vivid memories of playing the Rocky Theme as a 14 year old in 1978 and of really believing it sounded better than the movie.

T3: In grade 9 I had my first big band experience, pretty basic big band doing Glen Miller kind of stuff ...

T5: Our repertoire was probably more towards funk and rock, that kind of popular music ... rather than a straight ahead swing ...

It was not until each participant made the transition to a tertiary level that each began to experience a wider variety of jazz genres. All commented that it was through this experience that they truly began to understand jazz and how it should be performed and approached through different styles.

T3: Playing in the ensembles helped me understand the style, understand how they were supposed to sound ... understanding a little bit of the articulations and that sought of thing.

T4: We did a few Maria Schneider pieces and that was stuff I had never heard before ... it sounded so fresh and contemporary and I wanted to find out what harmony, and what scale is she using.

T5: We played a lot more swing than we ever had done before ... I enjoyed that ... the variety of stuff was better than high school ... there was some swing, some latin.

#### **4.6 Repertoire and genre as a teacher**

All teachers involved in the study voiced the importance of repertoire and it's implications for the successes achieved by their ensembles.

T3: ... pick the wrong pieces and you could go down the gurgler ... if you pick the right music at the right time it just flows, the thing, it just happens.

Teacher 4 also reflected on her first experience of directing a jazz ensemble and the challenges it presented.

T4: It was daunting; I had done a little bit here and there taking ensembles and rehearsals in contract jobs ... I was pretty scared ... I got help choosing charts from others because I wasn't sure, choosing charts at the right level is a really hard thing to do, I still think I am learning to do that. I look back now and look at things I did in my first year and I think why did I do that ... it was just too hard.

The importance of how you 'introduced and sequenced' the repertoire was also seen as essential by each teacher. In particular teacher 3 gave some insights into how his repertoire choice enabled him to develop skills such as improvisation within his ensembles.

T5: I try to look at the standard of the music and keep it pretty simple; I look for a lot of 12 bar blues things ... in Bb or in F ...

Finally there was again consensus on choosing a variety of repertoire that engaged with the ensemble members and also enable success.

T4: I'll try and chose something like a bit more of a funk rock thing because it's something that they are familiar with. It makes sense for them. It is not too far away from what they are already listening to ... then I will try and get them to do some swing stuff and I do a lot of swing stuff because I think it is really important to learn how to do that.

T5: I like to try to have in the repertoire at some point of the year a Latin, a rock and a swing

T3: When I pick my repertoire I pick it with the intention of what band I've got ... I'm



doing a latin chart, a swing chart, a ballad, and a funk and I've picked that for them because I want to make sure they know all of the different styles and make sure they understand all of the different articulations and stuff like that.

#### **4.7 *Improvisation as a student***

In both national and international literature (Dempsey, 2008; Galper, 1993; Scott, 2004; Shand, 2009) improvisation has been consistently identified as one of the main elements of the jazz genre. In this study however participants consistently commented on how they received little or no instruction on how to achieve improvisation skills through either their high school or tertiary jazz ensemble involvement. At a high school level:

T3: Improvisation? no, because I didn't do it ... it was a really hard thing that I just had no idea about.

T5: There were a couple of times that we did a 12 bar blues kind of thing and it was like "here play a solo" but that was kind of it ... there was no teaching of improvisation ... I did not have much interest in it at that stage, to learn how to improvise

At a tertiary level:

T5: I didn't know how to solo and I didn't really get taught much about it ... everybody seemed to know how to do it ... maybe I just didn't pick it up.

Teacher 5 also commented on classes that were held outside the jazz ensemble as part of his tertiary studies.

T5: There was this one time where they started a bit of a jazz class ... it was like OK here is the tune and he played it and said now you play it ... there was no direction ... it was like here it is, now do it ... no structure, no teaching.

Both teacher 4 and 5 commented that although they did not receive any instruction on improvisation through their tertiary ensemble they did receive more structured, informative and helpful information through their private studio lessons.

T4: ... that's the kind of stuff you took to your teacher ... you would say OK I've got this solo and I have no idea of what to do ... what ideas, scales modes ... you know that sort of stuff.

T5: I then went to a jazz trombone teacher ... he said OK first of all go and learn doxy, and then you are going to learn about the chord structure, looked at this scale over top of it and I thought yeah this is going to help me, this is what I need, this is what I am after but then there were some legal issues with the teacher and it didn't happen.

Both of these teachers also commented that being able to improvise was not integral to being a part of the ensemble and that many members were quite happy to be just playing the ensemble parts.

T4: When I was in the Con Artists we had a lot of guys who were classically trained ... they could play stylistically but they were really happy not to solo.

#### **4.8 Improvisation as a teacher**

In their study of Scottish jazz practitioners Macdonald and Wilson (2005) state, “improvisation is a much-vaunted attribute of jazz music” (p. 400). Their sentiments are echoed across the world through academic literature and pedagogical texts (Baker, 1974; Carter, Marsalis, McCurdy, Modell, & Thomas, 2008; Dunscomb & Hill, 2002; Levine, 1995) with improvisation always taking a predominant role when jazz or the teaching of jazz is discussed. In my own practice as a performer I find the creative process and the sharing of ideas through improvisation is where I experience the most joy and engagement. As an active member of numerous professional jazz ensembles that perform regularly at local jazz clubs and festivals I find that my professional peers also enjoy the interaction of improvisation and are all keen to share their skills and creative ideas with others. Within my teaching practice I have strived to share this passion by establishing a strong culture of improvisation, inviting everybody to be involved. At times this has included staff and students performing and improvising together at community and lunchtime concerts. Over time I have realized that the best way to start is just to ‘have a go’ and see what happens. Teacher 5 reflects on some of his experiences being involved with this.

T5: There was one time when we did a staff concert here and we did a funk thing ... just two chords ... someone recorded it, we played and I soloed ... I felt very uncomfortable ... later on I heard the recording and I thought it wasn't so bad, it

sounded OK and it sounded much better than I thought it did ... I began to think this is possible.

Although Teacher 5 does not consider himself to be a jazz musician he realised that improvisation was possible for all and as an educator began to explore the possibilities with his students.

T5: I've done the same with my students with play alongs ... I've recorded them playing along with it and then I've played it back and said to them "didn't sound so bad did it" and they say "no" ... when they keep it simple it really works.

As a student, teacher 5 perceived that improvisational skills were offered to him in a structured or sequential manner and it was insightful to hear him discuss how he tries to offer what he received himself to his own students.

T5: If we are doing a blues I say here is the blues scale, just choose three notes, or these two and we are just going to think about rhythm ... and then I demonstrate for them because I can do that ... it's hard to do that however in the big situation, even if everybody gets a quick go it's still not enough ... it needs to be supplemented as well in the private or group lesson ... I don't think any of my teachers did that when I was in high school.

His choice of repertoire for his ensemble also indicated his desire to provide a structured and sequential environment for his students to learn to improvise.

T5: Even within the rock have a 12 bar blues within that ... we did this before we can do this again now in a different style ... saying you are all going to solo at some point ... so we do a blues scale.

Both teacher 4 and 5 also shared their experience of not pushing students too far too soon in this inclusive process.

T4: I don't know if there is a completely inclusive culture of everyone wanting to improvise because the kids still have this mentality of I'm scared ... I don't want to do this ... I'm going to play it wrong.

T5: I see it now, kids are scared of playing a solo ... they do not want to make a mistake ... I think if I started it earlier it wouldn't have been so bad ... They need to experience some kind of success and they will go "oh, this is OK"

In contrast to this teacher 4 experienced some more advanced students being over confident in their improvising and perhaps not truly being aware of its experimental creative element.

T4: Sometimes the kids think “I can do blues, lets do something else” but actually no ... they need to realize it's good to keep playing the same thing ... we still play the same things (as performers) ... because you play better every time and you feel good, you can experiment because it is something familiar.

Teaching in other schools with a different improvisational culture Teacher 3 recognized this element as integral to producing high-level performances from his elite ensembles however did not feel confident in its delivery. With no direct access to other practitioners within his teaching environment he often brought other teachers from outside to assist.

T3: I encourage the kids...were doing a chart at the moment and I'll say OK I want as many of you to have a go at doing this and I'll talk about it and I'll basically go through what I know about the improvisation of that chart and how they could do it and then I'll say give it a go.

T3: I still get people to come in to the school ... to help with it because I still feel uncomfortable doing it.

#### **4.9 Stage two summary**

After sorting and analysing the interview data I realised that most of the main themes that emerged were similar to those that arose in the previous stages of my research; that is, all participants recognised the significance of developing an inclusive jazz culture, listening and aural skills and the importance of repertoire and developing improvisations skills. Other themes such as jazz theory and rhythm section were spasmodically mentioned however were not prominent.

Throughout each of these themes there was a consensus regarding each participant's experiences as a student. Typical of most children growing up in metropolitan Australia, prior to their introduction to jazz through the ensemble at school all had little contact with the jazz genre. At a high school level each participant experienced a culture where they became aware of various jazz elements including improvisation and aural culture however they did not feel that they were adequately instructed on how to develop these skills. Instead they experienced a reliance of their teachers to

focus on individuals within the ensemble who had acquired various jazz skills from outside the ensemble. This focus on individuals within the group rather than the group as a whole also resonated in the strong competition culture of the time where chosen soloists were often featured. On progression to tertiary education all again expressed similar sentiments where they were introduced to a more varied and sophisticated repertoire through their participation in the jazz ensemble. Through this experience each agreed that they acquired skills and how to approach more diverse genres stylistically by their directors.

As a student, teacher 4 was the only participant who became aware of the importance of listening to others and developing a strong aural culture actively through her tertiary education. Not surprisingly, this teacher was the only participant undertaking specific tertiary jazz studies.

In the research setting each teacher experienced an inclusive environment of developing a strong jazz culture through sharing experiences and skills.

Alternatively, teacher three did not feel he had the background, skills or access to others in his direct teaching environment to teach certain elements. Instead he relied on practitioners from the wider jazz education community to visit as guests to workshop certain elements. There was consensus regarding the importance of structure when introducing jazz elements such as improvisation and in most cases each teacher encouraged all members of the ensemble to be involved. Finally, all teachers recognised that they were restricted by the time in which they had to develop jazz skills. In most cases, and particularly in the younger groups, teachers were predominantly focused on producing a cohesive performance for their next concert.

Although the sample group of teachers was small in size due to the scope of this Masters project the thematic analysis elucidated some insightful perspectives of a range of teachers from the 1970s through to the present day. Through the analysis of this data in combination with my own perspectives and the available literature I had gained an insight into the background and current culture of high school jazz education in Queensland. In the final chapter I will examine the implications of these findings for jazz education and the effectiveness of jazz education through the high school jazz ensemble and music education in Queensland more generally.

## **5.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This paper explored the perspectives of six Brisbane teachers directly involved in the delivery of jazz education through the high school jazz ensemble from its beginnings in the 1970s through to the present day. Through the analysis of data gathered from individual and focus group interviews, literature, curricula structures and self-reflection it became apparent that although jazz education has existed within Queensland high school instrumental music programs for a considerable time it has done so with little direction from formal pedagogical or administrative systems. It was also identified that the competition and festival culture of Queensland has played an important role in each of the participants' experiences as teachers and for the younger teacher participants as students. Teachers involved in this study came from a range of backgrounds with a lack of specific jazz education training. Although they were mostly aware of recognised jazz elements, they were limited by their own expertise and the available time they had to deliver them through a weekly rehearsal. All of these factors combined to have a direct affect on the diverse outcomes that each individual achieved through the ensembles that they directed. This chapter clarifies the reasons for these diverse outcomes and suggests areas for further research, the development of curriculum and pedagogical structures, and elucidates ways to move forward in the current Queensland education environment.

### **5.1 *Recognition of Identified jazz elements***

At the outset of this project in exploring the delivery of jazz education in a Queensland high school I identified that it was important to explore what might be recognised as 'good' jazz pedagogy; specifically what makes up its core elements. Throughout this research and across multiple studies and pedagogical resources the importance of improvisation, aural or listening skills, repertoire knowledge, jazz history and culture, rhythm section techniques and jazz theory were common themes (Aebersold, 1980; Baker, 1989; Carter, Marsalis, McCurdy, Modell, & Thomas, 2008; Chessher, 2009; Dunscomb & Hill, 2002; Dyas, 2006; Galper, 1993; Goodrich, 2005; Levine, 1995). There was an identifiable consensus that these themes are recognised as important elements in jazz education. It was also identified however that both in Australia and in the international jazz community there is not

the same consensus on how these elements should be delivered. Through the study of literature I found a variety of opinions on what was considered the best way to deliver an optimal jazz education (Dempsey, 2008; Dyas, 2006; Folkestad, 2006; Galper, 1993; Newcomb, 2005; Scott, 2004). Pedagogical styles varied from formalised theoretical based approaches through to unstructured learning environments. A further investigation of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach was outside the scope of this project however of particular interest was the work of Dyas (2006) in his study of two exemplary high school jazz programs. Although each high school used contrasting pedagogical approaches they each produced similar outcomes. Over a long period of time each school's jazz ensembles consistently demonstrated advanced jazz elements such as improvisation and performed in a variety of jazz styles and genres. Both schools recognized the importance of fostering these skills through the development of a strong jazz culture of aural tradition, listening and the importance of repertoire choice and knowledge. From my own experiences in jazz education in Queensland not only did I see a variety of pedagogical approaches as seen in other studies, (Dyas, 2006; Folkestad, 2006; Galper, 1993; Goodrich, 2005) I also saw a diverse range of outcomes produced by the top high school ensembles. Through the analysis of data uncovered in this project I began to see why this was so and how the unique environments of the Australian and Queensland jazz scene impacted on the delivery of jazz education through the high school jazz ensemble.

## **5.2 Curriculum and time allocation**

As outlined in Chapter Four of this document, when the instrumental music scheme commenced in the 1970's there were few guidelines, direction and curriculum documents given to the teachers who were charged with the responsibility of instructing students and directing their ensembles. Over time it was identified that through the work of Thompson (1983) and others a prescribed set of guidelines were generated into a package of support materials for all instrumental teachers. This study identified that although jazz elements and the jazz ensemble are mentioned spasmodically throughout these documents there is little detail given on what jazz elements are to be taught or indeed how to teach them.

The basic structure of the instrumental music scheme that was initiated in 1972 where “any ensemble activity is undertaken before or after school or during lunch hours” (Thompson, 1983, p. 14) and thus not form part of the mainstream academic program, is a model that is followed to the present day. Typically most Queensland high school jazz ensembles rehearse for an hour each week. As reported in the review of the literature, until the 1960s most North American high school jazz or big bands also “rehearsed outside the school day” (Goodrich, 2005) however, through the social and cultural changes that have happened since that time jazz education and the jazz ensemble has gradually become accepted within the overall structure of academic music education. This differentiation between Queensland and particularly North American schools may do much to explain the variation of outcomes by both school systems.

Dyas outlines in his study of two exemplar Texas high schools that one of the studied ensembles “meets either two or three times per week” (Dyas, 2006, p. 48) for 90-minute sessions during the school day. These sessions are divided between structured sessions of improvisation, jazz history and ensemble. At the same time other music students rehearse in either choral, string or wind band formats. Although there is variation from state to state in America there is a predominant focus on music education and its curriculum through performance in a band, orchestra, choir or jazz ensemble within the academic school day.

In Queensland and throughout most of Australia this is not the case. Instead curricular music that happens during the school day is focused on a combination of musical analysis through the study of music history, composition and performance in small groups (The State of Queensland, 2004). With the recent release of the *Shape of the Australian curriculum: The Arts* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2011) this model of delivery seems likely to remain. The overview for the music curriculum outlined in this document follows a similar format to what has been followed in the past. Performance makes up a part, however is not the predominant element of the curriculum.

In music, students will use the concepts and materials of music to compose, improvise, arrange, perform, conduct and respond to their own and others’ work. They will learn the elements of music including duration (rhythm and tempo), dynamics, form, pitch



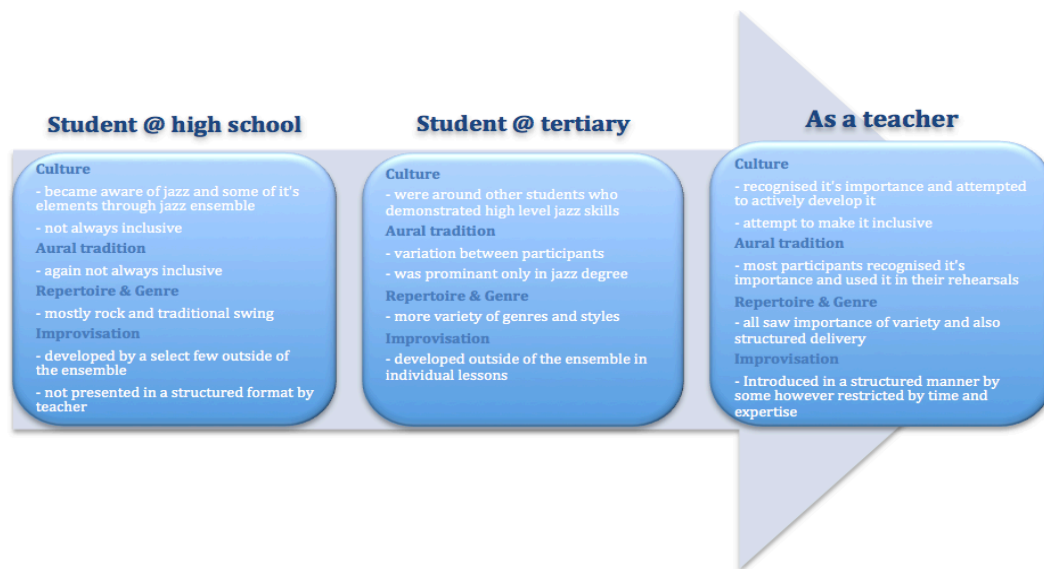
(melody and harmony), and timbre (sound texture and quality). They will apply this knowledge to the materials of music, including the voice, body, instruments, found sound sources (natural and manufactured objects including stones, household objects and so on) and information and communication technology. They will imagine and respond to their own and others' music by developing specialised listening skills as composers, performers and audience members. (p.14)

Throughout this research participants have voiced an opinion that although they are aware of many of the elements that are fundamental to the jazz genre they simply do not have enough time to develop these through a weekly rehearsal conducted outside of the school day. It is evident Queensland jazz educators cannot be expected to produce consistent results that are achieved by their North American counterparts with the limited curricula and time available. Considering that ensemble performance exists outside the mainstream academic curriculum in this state it seems unlikely that a more prescribed syllabus or curriculum for jazz education will be available to teachers in the near future. As in the past the future of jazz education will be reliant on the teachers themselves and how they are prepared as undergraduates and then supported as professional teachers.

### **5.3 *Teacher jazz education development***

All of the teachers involved in this study recognised that as students and teachers more advanced skills such as improvisation and extended listening and analysis could not be adequately developed in the ensemble. The sentiments voiced by each individual in this study resonated with the conclusions that were drawn by Chessher in his exploration of teaching jazz to high school students in New South Wales where “Greater emphasis is placed on ensemble skills and getting the band to an acceptable performance standard” (Chessher, 2009, p. 46). In most cases this development of skills relied on the independent elaboration by the individuals themselves or in their private instrumental lessons. However for the younger teachers in this study it was pleasing to note that their experiences as students resulted in reflection, development, and a determination to produce a higher quality, more inclusive and structured learning environment for the students in their ensembles. This development is

summarised in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Jazz elements recognition and development through transition from student to teacher**

Through my 20 years experience as a supervisor of undergraduate specialist brass, woodwind and percussion instrumental music teachers I have noted that although the majority of student teachers receive basic choral and instrumental conducting lessons to help in their development as directors of wind bands and choirs, few are guided in the rudimental jazz elements required to direct a big band or jazz ensemble. Each participant in the second stage of this study also identified that they themselves were given little direction or access to basic jazz instrumental training in their preparation as an undergraduate teacher and only became aware of skills needed by being a member of a tertiary big band or in one case by being enrolled in a specialized jazz degree.

#### **5.4 Festival and competition culture**

It has been recognized by all participants in this study that the Queensland competition and festival scene has at times produced a vibrant forum for students to collaborate, compete and share experiences and promote a strong jazz culture. Of concern for jazz education in Queensland however is that all involved in this study perceived that in recent times this dynamic culture has been in decline. Over the years, as an ensemble director and adjudicator, I have seen these festivals establish

directives regarding repertoire choice and styles that, through knowledge and inconsistency of adjudicators and organisers, have sometimes resulted in a negative experience for both students and teachers. For example in a 2010 competition participants were chastised in front of their peers during the adjudication process for performing a funk version of a well-known jazz standard. The situation became farcical when the adjudicators were made aware that this was the set piece for the section.

Situations like these have produced a decline in entries in recent years and in 2011 the top ‘premier’ grade section of a major festival was discontinued through lack of interest. Of further concern was the removal of funding for the *Fanfare* festival (Ironsides, 2012) run by the Education Queensland, a competition that has featured jazz ensembles over its 30-year history. The importance of the festival and its role in promoting a strong performance music culture in this state has been recognised by Australian jazz great James Morrison. Morrison states on the Jazz Queensland website that “It’s important we nurture our students’ love of music and confidence to perform and that is why I’m calling on private enterprise backing to help bring back Fanfare” (Jazz Queensland, 2012).

It is hoped through a more informed approach by organisers and adjudicators and that in response to research conducted by this and further studies that this important scene may return to the strength it once held.

### **5.5 Recommendations for further study and development of jazz education**

Although this study has explored the perspectives of Brisbane teachers involved in the delivery of jazz education it is limited by its small sample size, and only takes into account the approaches of those whose work has largely taken place in Brisbane secondary schools.

Further research into jazz education in Queensland might take a more quantitative approach exploring the numbers of teachers, students and schools that deliver jazz education through the jazz ensemble and include regional areas of the state. It would also be hoped that in the future more defined curriculum documents could be

generated relating specifically to jazz education and the desired outcomes to be achieved in the time available through the ensemble rehearsal.

This study has clearly identified that involvement in a jazz ensemble at a tertiary level provides many benefits for the undergraduate teacher. This would be particularly pertinent to **all** brass, woodwind and percussion instrumental music teachers where a large percentage of graduates will be expected to direct a jazz ensemble when employed as teachers in a high school environment. Of most concern for the delivery of jazz education in Queensland is that, in recent times, both the University of Technology and the University of Queensland have scaled back offerings for undergraduate teachers to participate in a large jazz ensemble or big band. Reasons for this trend are well outside the scope of this study however I believe that the implications of these contractions in tertiary music education programs warrant further investigation. As my research study drew to an end I could find resonance on this issue in a more extensive quantitative study by Jonathan R. Hinkle (Hinkle, 2011) into instrumental music programs in Florida's high schools and the rationale for the inclusion of jazz ensemble experience in music teacher training.

The data gathered from Florida high school directors and programs suggest that a teacher's actual or perceived level of training in jazz genres, most notably through performance experience, is the greatest factor in the presence of jazz-related courses in high school music programs ... data also suggest that teachers may be more willing to initiate courses in jazz if they were required to or were offered the opportunity to participate in jazz ensembles during their teacher preparation. To facilitate such participation, a college-level jazz ensemble that is specifically designed for the experience and pedagogical needs of future music teachers, in a non-intimidating and positive atmosphere where appropriate literature is performed at a high level, may be helpful to music. (p. ix)

During the second stage of this investigation it became apparent that even at a tertiary level, higher order skills such as improvisation were left to be developed independently or optimally through the private or group instrumental lesson and outside the ensemble rehearsal time. This was a model that proved successful in cases where the student had either the personal initiative or had access to a teacher

who could develop these skills. Throughout the focus group conversations it was agreed that it could be possible to provide students with a more integrated approach to improvisation and the development of jazz skills through more formal communication and planning between ensemble directors and instrumental teachers. The focus group decided that an annual workshop where ensemble directors and instrumental teachers from the primary research location could meet and plan strategies for developing skills that related to and complimented the jazz ensemble would be of much benefit. Suggested topics could include basic information regarding what repertoire was being covered but also how to most effectively develop jazz culture, access audio recordings and develop genre, style and improvisational skills. A similar model of sharing skills and information could be adopted in other schools and regions across the state.

Currently to obtain employment in both the private and public sector all teachers must gain registration through the Queensland College of Teachers. As part of this process all teachers “must have undertaken continuing professional development as required under the Continuing Professional Development Framework” (Queensland College of Teachers, 2012). In 2006 a document published by this organization *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* outlines the standards that teachers must undertake to maintain their registration. Some of these include:

- Design and implement engaging and flexible learning experiences for individuals and groups
- Contribute effectively to professional teams
- Commit to reflective practice and ongoing professional renewal

There is no doubt that the establishment of meetings and workshops designed to discuss and develop the skills needed to effectively deliver jazz elements through the jazz ensemble would meet the requirements of this process. This framework of professional development also provides scope for individuals to undertake their own independent development of skills in areas such as improvisation, repertoire development and knowledge. All of these activities would be beneficial and worthwhile to contribute to the mandatory 30 hours of annual professional

development needed to maintain registration. As a result of early stage publications of this study I was invited to present some of my findings at the 2012 Australian National Band and Orchestra Conference. Following this presentation I have been approached by this organisation to present workshops to introduce jazz elements through both the instrumental lesson and ensemble. It would be hoped that in the future more of these workshops could be held to further develop the knowledge and skills of educators directly involved in jazz education in Queensland.

Finally there is the ‘big jazz elephant’ in the room - the students. At the commencement of this study it was my intention to include interviews from a cross section of students at the beginning, middle and end of their jazz journey through the high school jazz ensemble. These rounds of interviews were conducted and uncovered some valuable data that had implications not only for jazz education but also for education in general. Unfortunately due to the scope and size of this project it became apparent that it would not be possible to explore the data in the detail warranted by their insightful views. The comments made by a 20-year-old student of Commerce and Law who participated in the jazz ensemble throughout his high school years and graduated in the top percentile of his graduating class warrant the need for a more extensive study into the jazz elements introduced to students through the high school big band. I heard much in his comment that elucidated how important the creative art form of jazz and jazz education is, not just to me but for everyone.

Since leaving school ... some of the skills I learned from big band like improvisation and thinking on your feet have really helped me in my studies and also my life ...

(student interview data)

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Through a two-part study I have investigated the effectiveness of the Queensland high school jazz ensemble in delivering recognised jazz elements through the analysis of data gathered from teacher interviews, literature, curricula structures and self-reflection. Although limited by its scope and small sample size this study gives insight into the development of jazz education within the Queensland instrumental music scheme and identifies the perspectives of Brisbane high school teachers who were directly involved in its delivery from its inception through to the present day.

Through the study of predominantly North American literature I found much consensus in the recognition of aural skills, genre, repertoire knowledge, jazz history, jazz theory and improvisation as being essential in the successful delivery of an effective jazz education. The qualitative approach adopted in this study produced findings consistent with these views. However, it was found that although Queensland jazz educators were aware of these elements they were not always able to consistently deliver them. This was due to a number of factors.

It was identified that the high school jazz ensemble existed within the wider framework of the instrumental music program and began with minimal curricula structure and direction. Over time a prescribed set of guidelines was generated into a package of support materials for all instrumental teachers. Although jazz elements and the jazz ensemble are mentioned spasmodically throughout these documents there is still little detail given on what jazz elements are to be taught or indeed how to teach them.

From its commencement, teachers directing jazz ensembles had mostly no teacher training and possessed a diverse range of experiences in the jazz idiom. Since that time tertiary courses in the teaching of instrumental music have become available and all of the teachers who participated in this study possessed qualifications in music education. Although educated at a tertiary level and aware of important jazz elements such as improvisation and genre each participant involved in this study voiced concerns over their success in the delivery of these elements. This was due to a variety of factors including their experiences in jazz, lack of jazz training at a tertiary level, absence of curriculum guidelines and the time available to them of one

rehearsal each week. This was in contrast to findings identified in North American literature where, for some time, jazz education has existed within high school and tertiary curricula structure with far more allocated teaching time and direction.

Finally, each participant in this study recognised the prominence of the competition and festival jazz culture and the important role it played in developing a sharing of jazz culture within Queensland high schools. However, all agreed that in recent times this culture had lost some momentum for a variety of reasons including adjudication directives and the chosen award systems.

With the implementation of the Australian National Curriculum guidelines this study has identified that the current status quo where instrumental music remains outside of the mainstream Queensland curriculum is one that is unlikely to change. Taking this into account and the time restraints that this imposes on jazz education the study has suggested several ways of moving forward. These include:

- The development of more specific curriculum directives for jazz ensembles and their directors.
- Better communication between ensemble directors and instrumental teachers.
- More prescribed jazz education training at a tertiary and professional development level.
- Continued focus on the development of a vibrant festival culture for performing jazz ensembles.

All of these suggestions warrant further research and investigation into how they could be implemented in the allocated time and structures available for Queensland jazz educators.

Most importantly, in answering my primary research question “How effective is the high school jazz ensemble in delivering recognized jazz elements such as improvisation, genre, aural tradition and jazz culture in a Queensland setting”, I have identified that at present the answer is mostly determined by the individual experiences of teachers taking these groups. Through the qualitative approach taken in this investigation I have concluded that although the teachers involved were aware of recognized jazz elements identified elsewhere in the literature, they were mostly



not able to consistently deliver them. They indicated that this was due to a lack of direction through curriculum, undergraduate training, professional development, personal expertise and most importantly available rehearsal time.

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## APPENDIX 1: The interview participants

**Teacher 1 (T1)** is a male in his 50's who began his musical studies at high school outside Queensland. After leaving school he was employed as a musician in the armed services. In the late 1970's he relocated to Queensland to take up the position of Instrumental Instructor based at an inner city state high school. His role included teaching brass, directing the wind and jazz ensembles and symphony orchestra as well as working as a composer and arranger. Like many of his contemporaries from the service bands that made up a large component of the teaching staff at the start of the instrumental music program, Teacher 2 had a strong background in performance however initially held no tertiary qualifications in either music or education. After more than twenty years working for Education Queensland and completing part time tertiary studies he took up a career in tertiary education.

**Teacher 2 (T2)** is a male in mid to late 50's who began his musical studies in Queensland and was employed as a musician in the armed services based in Queensland. After leaving the army, teacher 2 worked for the Department of Education as an instrumental instructor as well as in various administrative positions that included traveling throughout the State and was also involved in the design of the instrumental music curriculum. After working for over a decade for Education Queensland and completing part-time and full-time tertiary studies he has since left the school education sector.

**Teacher 3 (T3)** is a male in his early 40's who began tertiary studies directly after leaving high school and holds qualifications both in music and education. He has had over twenty years experience as a music educator and professional performer. As a student he attended a state high school in Queensland in the mid 1980's and was involved in instrumental music, taking lessons and by being a member of a variety of ensembles including big band or jazz ensemble. Teacher 3 is currently employed as an instrumental music teacher by Education Queensland and works in several state high schools in Brisbane, directing a variety of groups including jazz ensembles.

**Teacher 4 (T4)** is a female in her early 30's who began her musical studies at age 5 learning keyboard and piano. As a student she attended a state high school in Queensland in the late 1990's and was involved in the schools big band playing piano. After leaving high school teacher 4 began tertiary studies in jazz performance at the Queensland conservatorium. As part of her studies she participated as a member of the 'Con Artists' the Conservatorium's premier jazz ensemble. Upon completion of a Bachelor of Music in jazz performance teacher 4 completed a Bachelor of Education at the Queensland University of Technology. Although

predominantly practicing as a classroom music teacher, teacher 4 is also active as a performer participating in a variety of professional small and large jazz ensembles when time permits. Teacher 4 is currently employed as a classroom music teacher at the primary research location directing a variety of groups including several jazz ensembles.

**Teacher 5 (T5)** is a male in his mid 30's who began tertiary studies directly after leaving high school and holds qualifications in classical music and education. As a student he attended a state high school in Queensland in the mid 1990's and was involved in instrumental music, taking lessons and by being a member of a variety ensembles including a big band that was particularly successful in the competition scene at the time. As part of his studies he participated in the Queensland University of Technology big band performing on trombone. Teacher 5 is currently employed as the coordinator of instrumental music at the primary research location directing a variety of groups including a jazz ensemble.

## **APPENDIX 2: Interview questions**

Q1: Tell me about your background?

Q2: How long have you been directing jazz ensembles in Queensland schools?

Q3: Tell me about your history as a director of jazz ensembles in Queensland schools?

Q4: Where did you go to school?

Q5: Are you classically or jazz trained?

Q6: What do you think are the important elements of jazz education?

Q6: What are your tertiary qualifications?

Q7: Do you still perform and if so what kind of ensembles does you perform in?

Q8: Do you enjoy taking a jazz ensemble?

Q9: Tell me about your views on jazz education?



## APPENDIX 3: Ethical clearance

### GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

27 Mar-2011

Dear Professor Draper

I write further to your application for ethical clearance for your project "NR Exploring the delivery of jazz education: Ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting" (GU Ref No: QCM/04/11/HREC). This project has been considered by Human expedited review 1.

The Chair resolved to grant this project provisional ethical clearance, subject to your response to the following matters:

This application has been reviewed administratively by the Office for Research via a new mechanism for research that has been assessed as involving no more than negligible risk.

Given the nature of the research and the context in which it will occur, it was not felt that a higher level of review was required.

Please clarify the affirmative answer to question C2, indicating that the research will include the participation of persons who cannot consent because of mental or intellectual impairment, unconsciousness, or some other inability to communicate their wishes.

Further clarification in regards to the recruitment mechanism (eg how will potential participants be identified, initially approached and then recruited). Please refer to Booklet 21 of the Griffith University Research Ethics Manual.

The contact officer signing sF1 of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

An appropriate authorising officer, who is not a member of the research team, completing and signing sF2 of the Expedited Ethical Review Checklist.

This decision was made on 27-Mar-11. Your response to these matters will be considered by Office for Research.

The ethical clearance for this protocol runs from 27-Mar-11 to 29-Jul-11.

Please forward your response to Gary Allen, Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research as per the details below.

Please refer to the attached sheet for the standard conditions of ethical clearance at Griffith University, as well as responses to questions commonly posed by researchers.

It would be appreciated if you could give your urgent attention to the issues raised by the Committee so that we can finalise the ethical clearance for your protocol promptly.

Regards

Gary Allen  
Manager, Research Ethics  
Office for Research  
G39 room 3.55 Gold Coast Campus  
Griffith University  
ph: 3735 5585  
fax: 5552 9058  
email: g.allen@griffith.edu.au  
web:

Cc:

At this time all researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students. You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting

<http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/xupdate/month/e7852d226231d2b44a25750c0062f457?opendocument>

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GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

08-Apr-2011

Dear Professor Draper

I write further to the additional information provided in relation to the conditional approval granted to your application for ethical clearance for your project "NR Exploring the delivery of jazz education: Ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting" (GU Ref No: QCM/04/11/HREC).

This is to confirm receipt of the remaining required information, assurances or amendments to this protocol.

Consequently, I reconfirm my earlier advice that you are authorised to immediately commence this research on this basis.

The standard conditions of approval attached to our previous correspondence about this protocol continue to apply.

Regards

Gary Allen  
Manager, Research Ethics  
Office for Research  
G39 room 3.55 Gold Coast Campus  
Griffith University  
ph: 3735 5585  
fax: 5552 9058  
email: g.allen@griffith.edu.au  
web:

Cc:

At this time all researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students. You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting <http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/xupdatemonth/e7852d226231d2b44a25750c0062f457?opendocument>

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GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

02-Mar-2012

Dear Professor Draper

I write further to your application for a variation to your approved protocol "NR Exploring the delivery of jazz education: Ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting" (GU Ref No: QCM/04/11/HREC). This request has been considered by the Office for Research.

The OR resolved to approve the requested variation:

Requested an extension of the ethical clearance from 10/12/2011 to 10/07/2012.

This decision is subject to ratification at the next meeting of the HREC. However, you are authorised to immediately commence the revised project on this basis. I will only contact you again about this matter if the HREC raises any additional questions or comments about this variation.

Regards

Dr Gary Allen  
Manager, Research Ethics  
Office for Research  
G39 room 3.55 Gold Coast Campus  
Griffith University  
ph: 3735 5585  
fax: 07 5552 9058  
email: g.allen@griffith.edu.au  
web:

Cc:

At this time all researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students. You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting

<http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/xupdatemonth/e7852d226231d2b44a25750c0062f457?opendocument>

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## APPENDIX 4: Information and consent from participants

*Exploring the delivery of jazz education:  
Ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting*

### INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET

Research Team

Student Investigator: Andrew Butt (Master of Music student)  
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University  
Ph: 0407537926  
Email: [andrew.butt@griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:andrew.butt@griffithuni.edu.au)

Senior Investigator: Professor Paul Draper  
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University  
Ph: (07) 3735 6263  
Email: [p.draper@griffith.edu.au](mailto:p.draper@griffith.edu.au)

26<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Dear Participant,

I am currently undertaking a Masters research project entitled, *Exploring the delivery of jazz education: Ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting*. This project is being conducted as part of my Master of Music degree at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

As a teacher involved in the education of jazz through your involvement in curriculum design, you have been nominated to participate in this research project.

#### **Why is this project being conducted?**

The purpose of this project is to examine the outcomes of jazz education through the study of students and teachers who have been, or are soon to be involved in a jazz ensemble. The study will study a variety of students involved in ensembles ranging from beginner through to advanced levels. The study will focus on ensemble repertoire, instructional methodologies and curricula as well as the expectations, experiences and backgrounds of the students and staff involved.

#### **What are the expected benefits?**

It is hoped that the findings will assist Music educators in creating effective teaching strategies that will instruct Instrumental Music students in various jazz elements; identify areas for further research and development; and, inform my practice as an educator of jazz Music for school-aged students of various levels.

#### **What will you be required to do?**

You will participate in either an interview in a nominated classroom/office at a day/time that is convenient for you or alternatively by email correspondence.

#### **Confidentiality**

The interview or correspondence will be recorded for analysis. The data will be erased following transcription/analysis. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be safeguarded through the use of coding. You will not be identified in any publication or report, unless your written consent is given. All raw data and analysis will be stored in a locked box in the student researcher's residence for a period of five years.

**Feedback**

After analysis, I will review the results with you to check if they match your perceptions. You will be provided with a summary of the overall results of the research, if requested.

**Ethical Conduct**

This research project has obtained ethical clearance. Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the *National statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 5585 or [research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au).

**Questions/Further Information**

If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact the research team using the contact details provided.

Thank you for taking the time to peruse this information sheet. If you are willing to participate in this research project, please sign the attached consent form.

**INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Research Team

Student Investigator: Andrew Butt (Master of Music student)  
 Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University  
 Ph: 0417721359  
 Email: [andrew.butt@griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:andrew.butt@griffithuni.edu.au)

Senior Investigator: Professor Paul Draper  
 Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University  
 Ph: (07) 3735 6263  
 Email: [p.draper@griffith.edu.au](mailto:p.draper@griffith.edu.au)

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research involves participating in an interview or through correspondence that will subsequently be transcribed;
- I understand that this correspondence will be erased at the completion of transcription and analysis;
- I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved, and that any reports or publications from this study will be reported in general terms and will not involve any identifying features;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction and understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team - Senior Investigator: Professor Paul Draper Ph: (07) 3735 6263 Student Investigator: Andrew Butt Ph: 0417721359,
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University on 3735 5585 (or [research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**Privacy Statement:** The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and / or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at [www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp](http://www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp) or telephone (07) 3735 5585.

*Exploring the delivery of jazz education:  
Ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting*

### **FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION SHEET**

#### **Research Team**

**Student Investigator:** Andrew Butt (Master of Music student)  
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University  
Ph: 0407537926  
Email: [andrew.butt@griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:andrew.butt@griffithuni.edu.au)

**Senior Investigator:** Professor Paul Draper  
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University  
Ph: (07) 3735 6263  
Email: [p.draper@griffith.edu.au](mailto:p.draper@griffith.edu.au)

1<sup>st</sup> April 2011

Dear Parents,

I am currently undertaking a Masters research project entitled, *Exploring the delivery of jazz education: Ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting*. This project is being conducted as part of my Master of Music degree at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

As an instrumental music student at the College, your child has been nominated to participate in this research project.

#### **Why is this project being conducted?**

The purpose of this project is to examine the outcomes of jazz education through the study of students and teachers who have been, or are soon to be involved in a jazz ensemble. The project will study a variety of students involved in ensembles ranging from beginner through to advanced levels. The study will focus on ensemble repertoire, instructional methodologies and curricula as well as the expectations, experiences and backgrounds of the students and staff involved.

#### **What are the expected benefits?**

It is hoped that the findings will assist Music educators in creating effective teaching strategies that will instruct instrumental music students in various jazz elements; identify areas for further research and development; and, inform my practice as an educator of jazz music for school-aged students of various levels.

#### **What will your child be required to do?**

Your child will participate in a focus group of 5-10 beginner instrumental music students. Participation in a focus group will depend on the number of students who return consent forms e.g. if a large volume of consent forms are returned, students will be selected from the pool of returned consent forms. It is hoped there will be enough students for two small focus groups.

I will conduct the focus groups. The focus groups will meet in a free classroom/office in the music block on during the school day. Students will be asked questions about their opinions



on jazz, with particular reference to how it is delivered through the jazz ensemble or big band. Each focus group session will be completed within 20-30 minutes. Should the focus groups need to be postponed to another date due to unforeseen circumstances, notice will be given in writing.

**Confidentiality**

The focus group will be recorded for analysis. The recordings will be erased following transcription/analysis. Your child's anonymity and confidentiality will be safeguarded through the use of coding. Your child will not be identified in any publication or report, unless your written consent is given. All raw data and analysis will be stored in a locked box in the student researcher's residence for a period of five years.

**Feedback**

After analysis, I will review the results with the students to check if they match their perceptions. You will be provided with a summary of the overall results of the research, if requested.

**Ethical Conduct**

This research project has obtained ethical clearance. Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 5585 or [research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au).

**Questions/Further Information**

If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact the research team using the contact details provided.

Thank you for taking the time to peruse this information sheet. If you are willing to have your child participate in this research project, please return the attached consent form to Mr Craig Kennedy.

**FOCUS GROUP INFORMED CONSENT FORM****Research Team**

**Student Investigator:** Andrew Butt (Master of Music student)  
 Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University  
 Ph: 0407537926  
 Email: [andrew.butt@griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:andrew.butt@griffithuni.edu.au)

**Senior Investigator:** Professor Paul Draper  
 Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University  
 Ph: (07) 3735 6263  
 Email: [p.draper@griffith.edu.au](mailto:p.draper@griffith.edu.au)

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my child's involvement in this research involves participating in a focus group that will be recorded, and subsequently transcribed;
- I understand that these recordings will be erased at the completion of transcription and analysis;
- I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved, and that any reports or publications from this study will be reported in general terms and will not involve any identifying features;
- I understand that my child's participation in this research is voluntary;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction and understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team - Senior Investigator: Professor Paul Draper Ph: (07) 3735 6263 - Student Investigator: Andrew Butt Ph: 0407537926,
- I understand that my child is free to withdraw at any time without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University on 3735 5585 (or [research-ethics@griffith.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project;
- My child is willing to participate in the project; and
- I give consent for my child to participate in the project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME OF CHILD

\_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGNATURE OF CHILD

\_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME OF PARENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
 SIGNATURE OF PARENT

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 DATE

**Privacy Statement:** The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and / or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at [www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp](http://www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp) or telephone (07) 3735 5585.

## APPENDIX 5: Primary research location consent



24 March 2011

To the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee,

This letter is to certify that I have granted Andrew Butt permission to conduct his research project, *Exploring the delivery of jazz education: Ensemble performance in a Queensland high school setting* (GU Ref No: QCM/04/11/HREC), at Marist College Ashgrove.

I have viewed his Informed Consent Mechanisms and understand the nature of research to be conducted.

He has permission to commence his research once full ethical clearance has been granted by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. McLoughlin", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Peter McLoughlin**

Headmaster

Marist College Ashgrove