

Jennifer Roesler

Mr. Pecherek

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Concert Review—IVCC Jazz Ensemble

The Illinois Valley Community College Jazz Ensemble consisted of many different families of instruments including woodwinds, brass, percussion, keyboard, and a string instrument. In the woodwind family I observed three different types of saxophones and one clarinet. Trumpets and trombones made up the brass section. In addition, there was a drum set, keyboard, and an electric bass guitar, which are members of the percussion, keyboard, and string families, respectively.

The first piece performed by the group was a medium-fast, *allegretto*, tempo. The piece began quiet, but the volume grew louder with a *crescendo*. Throughout the piece, more *crescendos* and *decrescendos* were used, but the overall dynamic of the piece was closest to *forte*. I concluded that the meter of the piece was a duple meter. The rhythm seemed steady, as well as the tempo. The melody was relatively simple and the non-melody involved short, accented notes. I think that the non-melody created syncopation and added excitement to the piece. Both the brass and the saxophones projected well, and the band had a full sound. The tenor saxophone soloist used a microphone and his solo could be heard loud and clear. I thought that this piece was a great opener to the concert because it was loud, kept moving, and caught my attention.

The second piece was an *andante* piece in a quadruple meter. Unlike the opening piece, the second piece was generally quieter with less *crescendos* and *decrescendos* and had a few abrupt switches in dynamics, like terraced dynamics. The rhythm was simpler than in the first piece, but also involved some syncopation. The loud accents throughout the piece were played most recognizably by the brass, rhythm section, and baritone saxophone. Sometimes the melody was played together by the woodwinds and brass, which made the melody easier to follow. I

enjoyed this piece because the slower tempo allowed me to think about what was happening in the music without feeling overwhelmed.

The next piece had a faster tempo and featured the saxophone section. The overall dynamic level was mezzo forte. When the saxophones were featured, they all stood up while playing the melody and were accompanied by only the rhythm section. The saxophones seemed to play well together and had good intonation. In addition to the saxophone feature, there was a tenor saxophone solo. I was impressed by the tone quality, accuracy of notes, and ability of the soloist to keep in time with the band.

The fourth piece had a smoother melody than the other pieces so far. The rhythms seemed simpler, and the piece did not seem as busy as the others. The melody seemed to be passed between the saxophones and brass. This piece had many opportunities for solos on different instruments. I noted that the tenor saxophone solo in this piece was well prepared and well projected. I also noticed that there was a section of the piece where the trumpet section traded fours. This was my favorite overall piece because it featured many solos on different instruments and had a smooth melody.

Before the band performed the next piece, the director noted that the piece was more of a pop standard than jazz music. The piece opened quietly with a piano riff. There were many crescendos and decrescendos throughout the piece. The harmony sounded like an echo of the melody. The baritone saxophone played loud, accented notes that contrasted the overall calm flow of the piece. Of all of the pieces, I thought this piece displayed the simplest rhythms, was the least busy, and was the easiest to listen to.

When I read the title of the sixth piece, I expected to hear the trumpets have the main melody, but I mainly heard saxophones. Instead of the melody, the trumpets seemed to play a

syncopated harmony. The tempo was medium-fast and the piece was in a duple meter. This was the shortest piece of the concert.

The final piece of the concert was full of crescendos and decrescendos of long tones. The keyboard played a series of repeated and mysterious sounding intervals and chords. The trumpets had a raspy tone quality in this piece. Because the piece sounded mysterious, I concluded that it was not in a major key. I liked this piece and thought it was a fun way to close the concert because it was different from all of the other pieces and had a lighter, less serious mood.

The group looked experienced because the majority of the members were older adults. I was impressed by how they played together because the director did not conduct the whole time. He would start off a piece, step back, and let the band play together. I enjoyed the concert as a whole because I liked the variety of styles throughout the performance and thought that the concert was a reasonable length.