



Steve Johnson

11/8/2018

Hi Steve,

Thanks for jumping in with us here at Jazz Wire. We are going to get a lot done together, and have plenty of fun doing it. My personal guarantee to you is that, when you put in a bit of time with us each week, your playing and understanding of this great music is going to be transformed. You are here because you want to play better, and I'm looking forward to doing that work with you.

Following this letter, you'll see your Playing Evaluation, which gives you a score on each of The Jazz Wire 15 Essentials. To the right of each score, you'll find some notes I took as I listened. I definitely liked what I heard, but I'm also aware that you want to be taken seriously and given some real actionable information. The point of this is to get better, no matter how good you already are. This is where we begin!

The next 10+ pages is your Jazz Wire Practice Plan. From the 15 Essentials, I noted two Strengths of yours, which I'd like for you to really develop over the next six months. In your Practice Plan, you'll see a number of lessons for you to follow to dig deeper into those Strengths. Developing our Strengths gives us confidence, and eventually leads us to finding our own artistic voice.

In the Practice Plan, you'll see that I've also identified two Areas For Fast Improvement. Here, I've picked two of the 15 Essentials that you'll be able to make HUGE progress on. Taking a weakness or a blind spot and improving it is the surest way to improve very quickly, and I'm excited to see what you'll get done here.

Enjoy the Practice Plan, and I'll look forward to seeing you on Jazz Wire once the full site launches on November 1. We have a lot of people from around the world waiting to meet you!

Cheers,

Jeff

Strength Index

Accuracy Playing The Melody (pitches & rhythms)	3 / 5	The melodies on both songs were played quite well, Steve. On Bags Groove, there were little articulation and tone issues that affected the sound of the melody, but the basic rhythms were there. Good preparation!
Intonation	3 / 5	Your intonation is generally quite good. There are times when you'll bend up to a note, and that bend can make the pitch questionable (not getting to the center of the tone in time). Just watch that the bends are not too big. There were also some long notes when your pitch went sharp. (In general, saxophones want to be sharp!) We'll get into some good discussions on this in your Community here at Jazz Wire, for sure.
Time & Feel	2 / 5	In general, your time feel is ahead of the beat. You certainly never get off, or get a beat ahead, but the FEEL is ahead. To many listeners, that might sound "anxious" or that it isn't swinging as hard as we'd like. This will be a fantastic thing for us to sign into in your Practice Plan.
Tone/Timbre	3 / 5	Nice tone! It's the first thing that I noticed. Working on some articulation ideas, and watching the pitch a bit more will all add up to an even better sound. You are doing well here, and we'll work on helping you develop it.
Articulation/Clarity	2 / 5	This will be a great place for us to spend some time in your Practice Plan. There isn't anything particularly wrong or offensive in what you are doing, so that is good! But, some time spent thinking about and really practicing jazz articulation will really give you some important tools, and a path to swinging harder and playing with more clarity.

Volume/Evenness	3 / 5	In general, pretty good. If you listen to the melody section of Bags Groove, you'll hear places where some of the softer "ghosted" notes want to drop out, or at times be too loud. Of course, having a bad reed doesn't help!! These are places - picky as they are - that we can spend some time playing with more evenness from our airstream.
Rhythmic Accuracy	3 / 5	There were little times where the rhythm would threaten to get off a little bit (you never got LOST in the rhythm, for sure). These times would affect the feel. Working on your time and feel will likely make this element of your playing a lot better, so we'll focus there in your Practice Plan.
Technique On Your Instrument	3 / 5	Really, your technique seemed just fine for what you were doing on these two songs. There were few or no "finger fumbles." I can imagine that working on our technique will actually help your Time and Feel however. Looking ahead, it'll be fun in your Jazz Wire Community when we begin working on harder, more challenging songs. We'll be able to push your technique and see what happens!
Confidence	3 / 5	Confidence is one of the hardest things to learn (and to teach). That said, you played with a sense of confidence that I liked. I felt that I was in good hands as a listener . . . I didn't have to "figure out" what you were doing. Again, working on Articulation and Time/Feel is only going to make this element that much stronger.
8th Note Momentum	2 / 5	On Bags Groove the 8th notes would get ahead in the time. This will be something we work on in your Practice Plan . . .the connection of Rhythm, which develops into Time and Feel, and which finally gets to 8th notes, and MOMENTUM. Your rhythms are doing alright, so we'll work on Time and Feel (see above). From there, we'll eventually dive into Momentum and our 8th notes feel.
Harmonic Knowledge & Content	3 / 5	I liked that you were improvising in a way that had you inside the chords, really addressing and making the chord changes. The modulation in Blues Bossa into Eb major was nice! You have obviously spent time on this. It will be a great place for us to work in your Practice Plan, really developing this side of your playing.
Historical Language, Vocabulary	2 / 5	I think that you will be able to find a lot of value here. In essence, learning and playing more classic licks, turns of phrase, bits of famous solos. This is also a way to expand your Harmonic Knowledge, from above. Spend some time here, just learning some great classic licks. Your Community is going to be doing a LOT of this here at Jazz Wire, so just stay tuned. Plenty coming your way in this category.
Melodic Content	4 / 5	You have a very nice melodic approach to your soloing, Steve. Your phrasing is strong and in control (where you stop and start your phrases), which gives what you play a nice melodic sense. This is a big part of "your sound," and I enjoyed listening to how much sense it all made as you played. Few, if any, wrong notes. Very nice!

Solo Development, Motivic Playing	3 / 5	I liked that you were listening to yourself as you soloed - taking an idea and repeating it or expanding on it (a lot of this is Blue Bossa). This is something I'd love to help you really develop, since it seems to be a strength and something that seems to come naturally to you. We'll get to it in your Practice Plan, below.
Having "Your Own Sound"	2 / 5	This is something that will be coming clear for you more and more as you develop, the idea of finding your own voice as a player. I'm already hearing little "Steve-isms" in your playing, which is great. As you spend time in your Community here at Jazz Wire, you'll be honing this, focusing in on specifics. No rush, this will come in time.

Strength Index Score: **5.4**



Practice Plan for Steve Johnson

11/8/2018

Welcome to your Practice Plan & Playing Evaluation, based on the two recordings you sent us, Steve. I enjoyed listening to them, and heard plenty of great stuff there. I truly appreciate your jumping in with us at Jazz Wire, and I love your desire to know yourself and your playing better, and to take your music to another level. Your Strength Index number from your Playing Evaluation is an excellent place to start your work here at Jazz Wire. It has helped me in creating a great Practice Plan for you - a focus for the next six months of your time playing music, and our time together here at Jazz Wire.

A word about the scores on the Playing Evaluation - please don't stress if you got a score of 2 or 3/5 on something. That isn't like "getting 50% on the exam!" If someone got all 5/5's on their evaluation, they would be a solid pro player, and Jazz Wire wouldn't be the best place for them. Someone who scores 3/5 on one of the Essentials is in pretty good shape on that element, and is ready to now dig in and do some truly great work on it. So, you are in a fantastic place, and should be very happy with the work you've done to get you to this place.

A word about your Practice Plan - your Practice Plan is *dynamic!* What this means is that *your Plan will change over time* as you come back to it on the Jazz Wire web site. When a new video that pertains to your Practice Plan is released, say, 3 weeks from now, it will automatically appear on your plan. When new information, exercises or conversations arise related to our work together, they will appear on your Plan. This is some amazing technology that means your Practice Plan is truly a living, evolving document. Visit it regularly on the Jazz Wire site.

As a reminder - you'll be sending in a second recording of these two songs again in six months, on 5/9/2019. You'll receive your second Practice Plan & Playing Evaluation, based on your playing at that time (which I can imagine will be a good amount better than you are today!). Add that to your calendar, and don't worry - I'll remind you too.

Your Strength Index

Congratulations, Steve! Your playing is at a **5.4** on the Jazz Wire Strength Index.

After 15+ years of evaluating adult amateur and semi-pro musicians, I see you in the Intermediate zone. This is where the majority of folks are, many with years of experience playing on their own and in group settings, definitely putting in a lot of time on their instruments, and serious musicians. After working in classes and summer camps with thousands of adult players over the years, I can tell that you are doing all of the right things, tackling the physical challenges of your instrument, and are focused on finding the holes that need digging to take your playing to the next level.

Our Strength Index is on a scale of 1-10

- 10 = Good Professional Player
- 9 = Advanced Semi-Pro Player
- 8 = Semi-Professional Player
- 7 = Strong Amateur Player
- 6 = Upper Intermediate Player
- 5 = Intermediate Player
- 4 = Advanced Novice Player
- 3 = Novice Player
- 0 - 2 = Not at Jazz Wire

Your Jazz Wire Community

I love connecting everyone here at Jazz Wire. Frankly, that's what Jazz Wire is all about. Getting like minded, serious musicians together in the same place, so that some magic can happen. That is where the fun is, and where the sparks can start to fly.

I've placed you in the **Red Community**. This is where you'll find folks who are at or near your playing and experience level. These are folks who are working on what you are working on, playing similar kinds of tunes, and addressing similar concerns in their practice. These are your peeps, and you should definitely get to know these folks! You can spend time in *any* of the three Communities (Blue - most advanced, Red - intermediate, and Green - novice), but you'll probably have the most fun in your assigned Community.

Although you'll love hanging out with musicians at your level, I highly encourage meeting as many people as you can at Jazz Wire. We've got great players from every corner of the globe (every one a serious musician) in all three Jazz Wire Communities, playing a variety of instruments. Feel free to look around. You can answer other members' questions yourself, offer advice, or be a mentor. See what folks are talking about, which amazing concert they just heard, which album they just discovered, or which cool new bit of equipment they are excited about. There is a lot going on in the Jazz Wire Communities, and we want you involved and included in the fun.

(see below to learn more about the three Jazz Wire Communities)

What To Do With Your Practice Plan & Playing Evaluation

#1 - **PRINT OUT your Practice Plan & Playing Evaluation.** Put it on your music stand. You now have an incredible PLAN!!

Your evaluation sets your starting point today, and the advice and direction you receive from us (and hundreds of others here are Jazz Wire) helps you to set your goals, move you forward, and gauge your progress.

#2 - **Go back and listen to the two recordings that you sent us, with your Playing Evaluation** in your hand. Listen, and see if you can hear what we heard. Go through each of the **15 Essentials**. Can you hear the time issues, or the articulation work to be done, or the motivic playing you did (or didn't do)? Listen through a couple times and key in on those observations from us.

#3 - **Below you'll see your Strengths and Areas for Fast Improvement.** This is a fantastic place to begin reorganizing your practice routine and incorporating your Jazz Wire **Practice Plan**. You'll find very personal and specific advice and tips, as well as links to videos (and pdfs) that will be perfect for where you are right now.

#4 - **Each week, in all three Communities, we will be doing a video lesson,** based on a particular song, style or concept. This is some fantastic new information and direction for you, every week. The ideal scenario is to apply the advice we gave you in your **Practice Plan & Playing Evaluation** to these weekly lessons. Powerful!

#5 - **We'll be answering questions and offering advice** in all three Communities throughout the week, commenting on ideas and concerns, and taking questions which we'll be answering in the following week's video. If you ask a question, I'll get it answered for you! Send us your requests for topics to cover, questions about your practice routine, next steps, or anything else.

#6 - **Be interacting in your Jazz Wire Community.** Everyone is here because, like you, they are SERIOUS. This isn't a broad and basic Face Book group, or a boring chat room about guitar strings or saxophone reeds. These are serious musicians from all over the world who want to meet you, interact with you, and move ahead with their music. This "hanging out with other musicians" was the richest part of my eight+ years in music school. That experience is what I've created for you here.

The Rubber Hits The Road HERE!

Congratulations, Steve! Your playing is at a **5.4** on the Jazz Wire Strength Index. As I mentioned above, refer back to your **15 Essentials** to get a take on what I heard, and what my thoughts are across the spectrum of the 15 Essentials for great jazz small group playing. There is a ton of information waiting for you there.

Your Strengths

Looking at your **15 Essentials**, your **Solo Development**, **Motivic Playing** and your good **Harmonic Knowledge & Content** are great strengths for you. Developing them further is our first plan, since you have such a strong inclination and skill in these regards. Let's jump in!

STRENGTH: Solo Development, Motivic Playing

The ability to develop the content in our solos is a major hallmark of a great jazz musician. Early on in our development as a jazz player, we are happy with just finding some correct notes in each measure . . . that is a fantastic feeling! Then, as more time went by, we were thrilled when we could actually play mostly correct notes through an entire solo . . . victory! This was a great arrival in our playing, and not a small thing. It could be argued, however, that we aren't really making "true jazz" yet, we are just "hitting some correct buttons" on our instrument. *Learning to develop the ideas that we are playing* is what jazz (and most forms of music) is really all about.

I heard definite hints of this in your playing, which is very exciting. Spending practice time each day on developing your ability to find motifs (little musical ideas) and develop them will go a long way with you. This is what our jazz heroes were so excellent at doing - playing some small idea, and then taking us on a journey as they developed that idea through their solo. Together, we are going to get you doing this at a higher level, guaranteed.

ASSIGNMENT #1 - Below is a video lesson that will give you a powerful practice idea on this topic. Motivic playing is a habit as much as anything . . . just do it a bit every day. Here, you'll learn how to get in the habit of listening to yourself, and then really valuing your musical ideas. This exercise is one of the most important things that I've done over the past 25 years to develop my ability to play and think this way, and it's worked for many students of mine over those years. Have fun with it - you'll use this exercise for the rest of your life!

Video #1 - "Commando Jazz Skills" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

ASSIGNMENT #2 - Here, I want to give you two very tangible tools, a couple of precise next steps to move ahead in your motivic playing. Below, you'll find two videos, each with specific devices to help build your motivic playing ability. These videos address classic devices you'll hear in famous jazz solos, in your favorite jazz compositions, and of course, in hundreds of years of classical music as well. The bonus is that you'll be able to use these devices constantly in your work in your community here at Jazz Wire. This will transform your playing and your understanding of music, guaranteed.

Video #2 - "Motivic Playing" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

Video #3 - "2X Your Jazz Chops" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

STRENGTH: Harmonic Knowledge & Content

For many jazz musicians, getting deeper into the harmonic side of things is one of the exciting and challenging parts of playing this music. Expanding our harmonic palette is a never ending pursuit, and I can hear that you've certainly done some work in this area over the years. I have some fun ideas for you here that should be easy enough to understand, but will serve to really open up your understanding of some new harmonic concepts. Most importantly, however, these ideas will make you sound COOL! You will find some fantastic sounds here that will really add some spice to your improvisations.

ASSIGNMENT #1 - Getting more harmonic knowledge into our soloing is also called "getting inside the changes" or "playing inside the changes." If you think of the great bebop players like Clifford Brown or Sonny Stitt or Oscar Peterson, that is the sound we are talking about. I would love for you to work on getting inside the changes more, and this approach will be perfect. It's easy to understand, but not simple to do. I've personally been working on this exact exercise for over 20 years. Today is a good day for you to jump in to it too!

Video #1 - "Less BS, and the I - VI - II - V" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

ASSIGNMENT #2 - The idea of expanding our harmonic knowledge really gets down to working with the concept of "tension and release." Knowing interesting ways to create tension, and then knowing how and when to release that tension. The idea of "secondary dominants" is a great place to start with this idea of creating tension and release, and the "V of IV" (five of four) sound is one of the most standard examples. We find this in many jazz compositions, so working with this idea will be time very well spent for you.

If this is a new idea to you, the concept will open up a lot of doors, and will let you know what it is that your jazz heroes are doing when they use "that sound." And, if this is something you are already familiar with, dig a little deeper on this idea. The great part is that the "V of IV" concept applies equally to our solo lines *and* to our comping.

Video #2 - "The V of IV Sound" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

ASSIGNMENT #3 - Of all the great ways to extend our harmonic palette, and to amp up the interest in our soloing, the Tritone Substitute is the most popular choice of musicians around the world. This may be something you are intellectually familiar with, but have never used in your playing. Or, perhaps you use it occasionally, in specific songs or in specific keys. Where ever you are in your development with this, you are definitely ready to push further. I'd love for you to be able to call upon tritone subs at will (all songs, all keys). Here is an approach to using Tritone Subs, by extending the work you did in Video #1 above. As with the previous video, I have personally been working on this exercise for 20 years, on and off. It's very deep and very illuminating - simple to understand, much harder to master.

Video #3 - "Tritone Substitutes" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

Your Areas For Fast Improvement

Looking at your 15 Essentials, **Time & Feel** and **Articulation/Clarity** are places where I believe you will be able to get a lot of work done in a short amount of time. This is where things could move quickly for you, and where you could find yourself playing better (and likely have a higher Strength Index number) in six months time. I'm excited to see what is going to happen with your playing here!

AREA FOR FAST IMPROVEMENT: Time & Feel

From my perspective, Time and Feel are possibly the most important elements of music, especially when we are playing jazz. All the nice/correct notes in the world don't mean much if the rhythms are off. And, at a deeper level, even good rhythms are not very compelling if they aren't played with that incredible jazz feel that attracted us to this music in the first place. This is actually an exciting place to be for you to be right now. Yes, you need to do some work here, but there is room for a lot of improvement in a short amount of time I believe. This could be transformative for you and your playing!

ASSIGNMENT #1 - Working with the metronome is something that will be very important for you. Begin with some of the basic things that you are currently practicing - scales, patterns, etudes and melodies. Begin with having the metronome click on every quarter note in the measure (for instance, clicking four times in a measure of 4/4). The goal here is to be able to stay with the metronome as you play. Be sure that you are not getting ahead or behind the click. This seems simple, but it is not! There is a lot of good work to be done here.

A NOTE: It is possible to have a good sense of rhythm, but a poor sense of time and/or feel. It is possible to play the rhythms in a piece correctly, but to have them behind the beat or ahead of the beat. So, this exercise isn't about you playing the correct rhythms (you probably already are). It's about *where in the time* you are putting those correct rhythms. This take a lot of concentration as you play and practice. Don't be on auto-pilot . . .

ASSIGNMENT #2 - A big, important transition is when we get the metronome clicking 50% less, clicking just twice a measure instead of all four beats (in 4/4). This is such a big deal for two reasons. #1 is that we have to now be TWICE as responsible for the time (the metronome is checking in with us only half as often). Here, you will be practicing with the metronome clicking on "one and three" in a measure of 4/4.

ASSIGNMENT #3 - The next huge leap ahead for you, and for all musicians playing jazz, is when we begin have the "twice a measure" click of the metronome move from clicking on "one and three" to clicking on "two and four." This is where we are beginning to move from the metronome being just a tool for our Time to being a tool for developing our Feel. This is a big change, and a difficult one for many people. I'll be helping you and your Community along with this here at Jazz Wire. You are in good company here, and this is truly going to transform your playing in the next six months.

I would like for you to just work with exercise #1 on the video below. You will never "grow out" of this exercise of playing with the metronome on "two and four." I personally do this every day. That said, if it gets 100% comfortable for you after awhile, you can experiment with some of the next exercises on the video and on the pdf.

Video #1 - "Mo' Better Metronome" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

AREA FOR FAST IMPROVEMENT: Articulation/Clarity

Articulation is an important consideration in playing music, and certainly a key element in playing jazz. Articulation is what gives our performance precision and clarity. It also contributes to (or takes away from) our jazz feel. By prioritizing some work on your articulation, I think you'll be able to make some very noticeable strides in your playing in the next six months. This is a very exciting, rich and demanding element of music to work on, and it will serve you very well. Some fast improvement in this area will literally transform your playing, as it did for me years ago.

ASSIGNMENT #1- Let's jump into some Focused Listening to really understand what we are talking about here. I'd like for you to pick ONE jazz hero of yours, and do some focused listening to their articulation. Not their tone, not their technique or their cool licks or their note choice . . . JUST their articulation. See if you can figure out what they are doing. The longs and shorts, how they begin and end notes, the strength of their attack, or the relaxed nature of it. Can you come up with some "best practices" that your hero uses in their jazz playing?

The observations that you make about your hero's articulation are actually very fun and fruitful discussions to have with other musicians. Bouncing ideas off fellow players, talking with friends who are at your level about what you heard, and asking questions and advice of your peers. These discussions were frankly the best part of my university studies in jazz, talking with my friends about great recordings that we all loved. I'm excited for you to have this experience as well.

In your Community here at Jazz Wire, articulation will definitely be a topic of discussion and analysis. Doing some listening on your own is critical, but the conversations you are a part of will be where you really will find yourself learning something. Be sure to check in early and often with your Community on this!

ASSIGNMENT #2 - Working on "Off Beat Articulation" will help you further develop a strong and accurate sense of articulation on your instrument. There is a lot of technique involved here, and this exercise will help highlight where the strengths and weaknesses are. This exact exercise helped transform my playing when I was doing my Masters degree at the University Of North Texas years ago. You are going to find months of good practice and focus here.

Video #1 - "Off Beat Articulation" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

ASSIGNMENT #3 - Once you have better control of your articulation and your instrument (from the exercise above), you can begin applying those skills to all the songs you are playing. At this point, good articulation will serve to help us in developing our feel and sense of groove. Believe it or not, I feel that articulation has as much to do with a great swing or funk feel than "good time," or anything else. The Four Rules in the following video will give you a great framework and some very specific input on how to articulate well in a jazz style. Your soloing and your melody playing is going to take a huge leap forward in the next six months.

Video #2 - "Articulation - How To Swing" - [Watch Video](#) | [Download PDF](#)

. . . and now, go practice!

At this point, you should have more focused, insightful knowledge about your playing than at any other time in your musical life. We've dug into the **15 Essentials** that make all jazz players successful, and I've let you know where you are with each of them. Further, you now know what makes me smile when I hear you play (your Strengths), and what, to me, is clearly the best place for you to put some regular practice time (your **Areas for Fast Improvement**). Most pros and college students are not as musically self aware as you are, right now in this moment.

Remember -

- Your next video is coming to us on **5/9/2019**. Write down the date, and work towards it! It'll be exciting to see how far you will progress in the next six months.
- Spend some time each week in your spot, the **Red Community**. These are "your people" here at Jazz Wire, and they are excited to meet you and work with you. We'll be doing a lot of work together each week in all three Communities, but the **Red Community** is the best place to address your specific concerns, questions and ideas.
- *Make it a goal to connect with at least two different Jazz Wire members every week.* The greatest strength of Jazz Wire is the power of us getting to know each other.

The Three Jazz Wire Communities

We humans tend to gravitate towards like-minded groups. People who have similar views, people who like similar movies and books, people who value the same ideas that we personally value. Those conversations are often times richer, more comfortable, and more rewarding. We find a lot of spark in these groups. Plus, we all know that a good *team* can get a lot more done than an individual. Let's meet your team.

Blue Community - This community is filled with people whose Strength Index is 7.5 and above. These folks are working on more advanced jazz tunes, and are digging into expanded thinking on topics like harmony and voicings, rhythmic devices and phrasing, and more "modern" melodic devices. That said, they also understand that there is still plenty of work to be done with the building blocks of jazz style, harmony, rhythm, feel and everything else. The full history of jazz is what we are working on here! At this more advanced level, "Band/Group Dynamics" are a huge part of our development, and composition and arranging will eventually become topics of conversation as well.

Blue Community level musicians generally play every day (including some gigs and rehearsals), and likely practice daily for at least an hour or two on top of that. Playing and thinking about music is something like their "full time job" for these folks, or it has been in the past. These musicians could sit in at a jam session anywhere on earth, playing a song they know, and do just fine.

Red Community - This group is filled with people whose Strength Index is 5.0 to 7.4. These folks consider themselves serious musicians, and play their instruments most days of the week. They take private lessons (or have in the past). They have likely attended jazz workshops and camps. A member of this community likely plays music seven or more hours a week.

Red Community members have been playing jazz for years, and are comfortable soloing on a variety of songs and in the different basic jazz styles (swing, bossa, funk/rock). They continue their work on typical jazz progressions (ie. ii-V-I, rhythm changes, etc) and continue learning and using the typical jazz scales and chords. Their best time spent is likely in accumulating more jazz vocabulary.

Musicians in this community likely practice four or five times a week, and generally have some outlets for playing and improvising in a small group setting (ie. classes, jam sessions, summer camps, community big bands).

Green Community - This group is filled with people whose Strength Index is a 3.0 to a 4.9. These are musicians who might be newer to jazz, and/or possibly newer to their instruments as well (or dusting off their instrument after a long break). These folks can function in a jazz group setting, and they continue to learn more about the roles of their instrument in the band. They are learning more jazz theory, chords, scales, style and feel. Everyone (including John Coltrane and Miles Davis) was at this level, once upon a time! Applying the theory they are learning to the music they are playing is their biggest challenge.

These folks practice at least several times a week, and aspire to advance and feel more comfortable as they play. They are eager to get more organized and get more focused in their practice.

The 15 Essentials - Scoring & Weighting System

After decades of playing and teaching music, and after more than 15 years of focusing my attention on adult amateurs and semi-pros, I've decided what really matters, and what doesn't. If you look at the **Jazz Wire 15 Essentials**, you'll definitely see elements of music and jazz that are left out. *On purpose*. You won't see "Sight Reading," or "Playing Fast Tempos," or "Augmented Scales in All 12 Keys." Over the years, I've determined what truly matters, what matters 10% of the time, and what is simply busy work. I've sorted through what is important to a graduate student in university, but is NOT time well spent for you, an adult student and jazz player.

Further, I've "weighted" the scoring for each of the **15 Essentials**, meaning they don't all count the same as each other. Not all elements of music have the same importance to me, so that is reflected in your Strength Index Score of **5.4**. For instance, "Technique On Your Instrument" and "Time And Feel" are both very important Essentials. However, to me, "Time And Feel" is three times as important as "Technique." So, it counts three times as much in your final score. Developing the 15 Essentials was an important step at Jazz Wire, but the real power comes from weighting the scores in a meaningful way.

Here at Jazz Wire, I am not interested in just trying to "keep you busy." I want to keep you engaged and excited, talking and discussing, and working on the correct things, in the correct order. I am certain that we've all spent a lot of time on exercises, books and lessons that just didn't move us ahead fast enough, or didn't make us any better at all. Those days are over. Welcome to Jazz Wire!

Cheers,

Jeff