



Swing Into Action - W-ACDA Toolbox Session

Dr. Jeremy Fox – Mt. San Antonio College Vocal Music
(with Austin Byrd – collaborative jazz pianist at Mt. San
Antonio College)



Route 66 Bobby Troupe, *arranged by Jeremy Fox* (available from Anchor Music Publications)

1. Concept: “**The group that breathes together, sings/grooves together.**”
Have a rehearsal just to practice breathing “in groove”!
2. Unless marked differently in score, a generic philosophy of swing:
“**Shorter quarters, Longer 8ths.** (even if a word is broken)
a) m. 4: “If You”
b) “Motor west”
3. m. 8: “**Unison → Splat**”
4. mm. 8-10: Lengthen second half of diphthongs (personal taste)
5. m. 14: **Unison → Blossom**
6. m. 17-19: *Accenting higher notes, or sometimes off-beats (though do not over-do this)*
From the big band/bebop tradition: crescendo as notes go up, decrescendo as notes go down – when working on a swing tune, it is OK even if the syllable is unnaTURally emPHAsized.
7. m. 21: *Crescendo toward the end of note, **not** from **beginning** of note. The same is usually true for glissandi – gliss later, crescendo later.*
8. m. 26: “On Route 66”: *Again, smooth 8th notes “with Lipsy-ness” (“Con Lipso” in Italian)*
9. “Don’t forget Winona”: *almost always jazz singers will sing with imploded t’s at ends of words, instead of exploded t’s. Why?*
10. m. 36 & 38: *Another chance to gliss later and crescendo later.*
11. m. 39, m. 40: **Rehearsal technique:** *Loop small chunks in rehearsal without stopping the tempo.*
12. m. 40: *Of course, our singers should probably aim for “Won’t you” instead of “Wohn-chu.”*
13. m. 41: *Breath-push on “Get”.*
14. mm. 41–42: *Different ways of emphasizing (see number 6 above):*
 - a) *Accent higher notes (instrumental shaping)*
 - b) *Accent important words/syllables in phrase (lyric shaping)*
 - c) *Accent offbeats (though perhaps do not over-use this, or it will feel off-kilter)*
15. m. 45: *Implied crescendo on the word “make”, even though it is not written.*
16. m. 44 and 48: *the most difficult consonants in jazz.*
17. m. 51: “on route” – *with fast melismas, think about each note to re-articulate each one.*
18. m. 75: *Crescendo-to-a-rest on a vowel, usually requires a **breath release**.*

19. mm. 78-79: Sopranos / Basses sing in Major 7th intervals.

20. mm. 89-91: Break up hard passages into smaller chunks and loop it!

Let Your Light Shine Keb' Mo'/Jenny Yates, arranged by Jeremy Fox
(available from www.JeremyFox.net)

1. Ask your singers which concepts apply to a new piece – transfer of knowledge.
2. m. 1: Breath on beat
3. m. 2: With any song in groove, your short notes can default to having more length (rather than being too short).
4. Living in “Scoop-ville”: Ten/Basses might not scoop with Sop/Altos, depending on register.
5. m. 8: Two-part writing: tendency will be for Tenors and Basses to be too loud.
6. m. 70: **Rehearsal Technique:** Play parts on piano while singers speak rhythm/syllables
7. mm. 74-75: “Oh” vowel is a diphthong which often does not tune easily in a vocal group.
Rehearsal Technique: have singers rehearse by copying one ensemble member’s lips.
Works particularly well with a soprano, because the group can hear as well as see.

**If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email at
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or on my website at www.JeremyFox.net