Jazz Elements in Dreams of Vagabond Winds

By Barbara Jazwinski

Jazz is an especially American art form that has unique characteristics. Some important elements of jazz music are:

- Swing feel
- Instruments used (saxophones, big bands, etc.)
- Improvisation/creative musical freedom
- Rhythmic syncopation
- Harmony

Some music, like Jazwinski's Dreams of Vagabond Winds, is NOT jazz but has been influenced by jazz music. This means that it includes some jazz elements. Here are TWO:



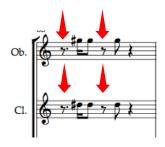


Syncopation

Syncopation is rhythm that doesn't happen on the beat.

This means if you are tapping your foot to the beat, some notes happen when your foot is off the ground!

Below is a clip of Jazwinski's piece. The beats are marked so you can see that the notes are syncopated (not on the beat).



Improvisation

Improvisation is making up music on the spot. Jazz is full of improvisation.

Dreams of Vagabond Winds has improvisatorylike sections (though, not true improvisation because the notes are written on the page).

In the beginning and ending of Jazwinski's piece the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon exchange "riffs" that sound like they were improvised.

See below for an example of what this section looks like in the music.

