

[Note: To help my students get used to lead-sheet symbols and chord extensions, they have an initial assignment in which they focus only on writing out in stacked thirds the chords indicated in the lead sheet.]

Vocal Jazz Arrangement

You will write a four-part (3+1) vocal jazz arrangement of “Misty” using [this lead sheet]. You should write the four parts on two staves, with **SAT in the treble clef staff and B in the bass clef staff.**

Detailed requirements:

1. Your four-part ensemble will serve simply as backup singers singing the bass line and chords; your score should **not** include the melody, which will be performed by a fifth musician.
2. For each chord, the bass should sing whatever is implied by the lead sheet’s symbol; you should make sure that some voice is singing the chord’s root, third, and seventh, as well as the 9th or 13th if appropriate. If you must omit a tone, it should be the chord’s 5th.
3. Whenever the top voice is singing a 7th, it should move down by step at the next opportunity.
4. Voice-leading in S, A, and T should follow the smallest motion possible, within the constraints imposed by #s 2 and 3 above.
5. In the middle of a given chord, you may have the upper voices leap to other chord tones to keep them in comfortable vocal ranges.
6. Finally, though you may write your arrangement in whole and half notes, you are encouraged (**not** required) to “spice up” your arrangement. You may wish to create a “walking bass” (make sure the proper lead-sheet-implied note is always the first note in the measure), and/or to have the upper voices sing in some kind of syncopated rhythm.

Then you should record your arrangement with four voices in the correct registers, with a fifth singer performing the melody. (You may want to just learn the melody from a recording, and it’s certainly ok to be fairly free with it.) It is also ok to have a unified instrumental ensemble (five brass, five winds, or five strings). Even if your score does not include fun rhythms, you may have your singers perform with interesting rhythms.

