

LET'S PLAY JAZZ!

Textbook with interactive audio tracks.

Hello keyboard enthusiast and welcome to Let's Play Jazz-an interactive beginning guide to jazz phrasing and melody.

If you work with this material and learn to match your sound to the recorded piano at tempo, this will get you familiar with speaking the jazz language!

Many of the people who buy this book come from classical music, so let me explain some key differences between jazz and classical.

01 While classical music is about reading notes, following markings, and memorizing visual information, jazz came from a long use process called "call and response." Call and response is when someone sings or plays a musical melody, and then others create that on their instrument or using their voice. The shift you need to make with jazz is to start using and training your EARS a lot more.

02 Entire generations of jazz musicians have passed along the jazz language without being able to read music with many of them never meeting each other in person. This is done by using classic recordings of jazz songs and then sitting down with your instrument and learning how to play the exact music phrase that you just heard.

03 One of the key ways of learning jazz is to listen to trumpet players, sax players, guitar players, and vocalists and then play their melodies on the keyboard. Some great jazz musicians are Miles Davis, Chet Baker, Wynton Kelly, and Oscar Peterson. Listening to their recordings many many times will help you get familiar with the jazz language.

This book consists of simple melody exercises over single bass notes so you can focus on learning the melodies with correct phrasing. The common song form in the book is the 12 bar blues.

I learned at first by just listening to a song I liked and figuring out the bass notes, key of the music, the melody, and then the chords. I didn't know music notation at first so I just used alphabet letters with sharp and flat signs and wrote things out on notebook paper. I was thrilled every time I could get a melody right, and once I did, I would play it in all 12 keys to memorize it.

This book will take you on a journey into several of the most popular keys in jazz, and with careful study you'll start to hear the sounds and pay less attention to the notation.

The key is to now become more curious about music in general and start thinking about it as an audio language and not a strict notational thing to be followed. Experiment with playing the exercises on your own at faster tempos, and see if you can do some left hand variations such as quarter notes on the root and simple chords with rhythms.

So, with all that in mind, just a note to solo pianists. There are a huge number of amateur pianists online who speak endlessly online about jazz without ever putting in a simple 30 minutes a day practicing. Don't be like them. Be intellectually curious about what makes music so great and what you like and want to emulate.

It is a great idea to join a local band or take lessons with a jazz teacher to help guide you on your journey. Youtube is not that solution, and neither is AI.

So best of luck and Let's Play Jazz!

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