

Essentials of **JAZZ THEORY**

LESSONS • EAR TRAINING • WORKBOOK

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FOREWORD

MUSIC IS THE MORTAR OF HUMANITY. It binds people of all backgrounds and experiences, as it poignantly expresses universal human emotions. It is an amazing and elusive complement to our existence. And yet, this spiritual art form is rooted in concepts that are easily explained in the practical realm. Music theory is the study of these concepts. The yin and yang of music results from the fact that it is created out of a limited supply of simple, theoretical formulas, and yet, any piece of music can be entirely unique.

When a musician composes or improvises, the material emanates from two creative wells. There is the "spiritual" well, which houses our emotions and experiences, and also the "technical" well, in which resides the theoretical elements that we have practiced and perfected. Music is at its best when the impetus is from the spiritual well. The technical well will be unconsciously called upon to provide the raw materials of expression. So, a study of theory is not merely a dry analysis of technical functions, but rather an exploration of how the elements can provide fuel to the creative process, an energizing activity toward the goal of meaningful music making.

WELCOME TO JAZZ—welcome to an exhilarating journey to musical freedom!—Shelly Berg

To successfully navigate this jazz theory course, you should be versed in basic music theory concepts, such as those taught in Books 1 and 2 of *Alfred's Essentials of Music Theory*. You are encouraged to play and/or sing the examples in this text, at first along with the enclosed recording, and then on your own.

BOOKS 1, 2, 3: *Alfred's Essentials of Jazz Theory* is made up of three books, 40 pages each, with each book containing six units. A unit consists of four or five pages of instructional material (including written exercises), an Ear Training page and a Review page.

COMPLETE BOOK: *Alfred's Essentials of Jazz Theory* is also available as one complete book of 120 pages that contains all the pages included in the separate books.

AUDIO: Each book in *Alfred's Essentials of Jazz Theory* is packaged with a recording, allowing students to hear the musical elements discussed, and offering students the opportunity to test their listening skills. Music examples are played by a variety of instruments.

TEACHER'S ANSWER KEY: A *Complete Book* with the answers for the exercises from the Lesson and Review pages and music for the Ear Training pages. Also included is a reproducible sheet for listing student names and grades for the Ear Training and Review pages.



Stream or download the audio content for this book.

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Jazz Language—Melodic Soloing & Melodic Sequence

If music is compared to painting, then melody represents the finest and most detailed brush strokes, and melodic devices are the paint colors. As introduced in Book 1, Lesson 5, MELODIC SOLOING (MOTIVIC SOLOING) is basing musical phrases on simple ideas, which are repeated and varied. It is actually composing a new melody to the chord structure. Using this device, a soloist may think of the original motive as a thought or emotion: repetition deepens or intensifies the emotion, while variation expands on it. Because the ideas are simple in melodic soloing, individual notes take on heightened significance. The example below demonstrates melodic soloing to the beginning of the “Take the ‘A’ Train” chord progression. Notice how the repetition is not exact, but altered to reflect the new color of the second chord.

Track 1

C^{6/9} D13(#11) DMI⁹ G13 C^{6/9}

Playing is said to be “organic” when the variation of a motive becomes the seed for the next variation.

Track 2

F MA⁷ F⁶ F MA⁷

MELODIC SEQUENCE is the repetition of an idea transposed by some interval. An idea may be sequenced once, or several consecutive times. An ascending sequence can be successively more soaring or thrilling...

DMI⁹ G⁹ CMA⁹

...while a descending sequence can make a melody more somber or introspective. Track 3 demonstrates both an ascending and descending melodic sequence.

Track 3

CMI⁹(MA⁷)

Exercises

- 1** Continue the melody in the motivic style, using repetition and variation.

FMI⁹ B^b13 FMI⁹ B^b13 E^bMA⁹

- 2** Continue the melody using sequence.

CMA⁹