

# Jazz/Rock Improvisation

A Complete Approach to Improvising on both Acoustic and Electronic Keyboards

**Bert Konowitz**

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## Foreword

Improvisation is a skill that can be learned. It is important because it allows the performer to use music to express individual feelings and ideas. Improvising is a natural part of Jazz/Rock playing—it is an exciting skill and a welcome companion to studying and performing all styles of music.

Jazz/Rock Improvisation, Level 4, lets you improvise right from the beginning. It is correlated page-by-page with Alfred's Jazz/Rock Course, Level 4. Though the Improvisation series (Levels 1–4) may be used independently, when used together with the Jazz/Rock Course (Levels 1–4), the pianist has the unique opportunity to become a well-trained jazz/rock musician.

This book is written to be played on either a traditional acoustic piano or an electronic keyboard. At the bottom of each page, suggestions are offered for ways that acoustic and electronic instruments may be used together:

**Acoustic Jamming** suggestions offer a supportive left-hand accompaniment that may be added by a teacher, a parent who plays piano, or a more experienced student.

**Electronic Jamming** suggestions offer specific sound and rhythmic backgrounds that may be used when playing on an electronic keyboard. The electronic rhythm backgrounds may also be added as an accompaniment when performing on an acoustic piano.

*To Rebecca Lauren*

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# Improv Idea #1: Developing Rhythmic Freedom through Syncopation Improv

Occasionally performing rhythms a bit earlier than expected (*syncopation*) creates a “swing” feeling that is characteristic of the Jazz/Rock style.

The following steps will enable you to perform music as written, and/or improvise those rhythms in a swinging rhythmic style.

## PLAYING IT EITHER WAY, No. 1



The IMPROV SCORE is a step-by-step guide that will make improvising very easy.

1st time, play as written (no Improv).

2nd time, *anticipate* (play earlier than written) and accent the notes indicated by an asterisk (\*).

**Moderato**

## PLAYING IT EITHER WAY, No. 2



1st time, play as written (no Improv).

2nd time, *anticipate* and accent the notes indicated by \*.

**Moderately slow**

**ACOUSTIC JAMMING:** Play the bottom LH notes an octave lower. Coordinate syncopation with student's LH when appropriate.

**ELECTRONIC JAMMING:** REGISTER: Hammond Organ RHYTHM: Rock or Jazz

# Improv Idea #4: Improvising Like a Pro

A professional improvisor uses a combination of improv ideas to create musical excitement. The following two compositions will give you a chance to play "like a pro"!

## REBECCA'S NIGHTINGALE

IMPROV  
SCORE

1. Meas. 13–14: 1st time, play as written.  
2nd time, improv *shorter* rhythms in *RH*.  
3rd time, improv *shorter* rhythms in *LH*.
2. Meas. 23–24: 1st time, *rearrange the motif's rhythms*.  
2nd time, play *RH 8va* and *rearrange the motif's rhythms*.

Slowly, with feeling

The musical score for 'REBECCA'S NIGHTINGALE' is written for piano in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system (measures 1-4) starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes fingering numbers (1, 2, 4) and a 'simile' marking. The second system (measures 5-8) begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features a triplet in the right hand. The third system (measures 9-12) continues the piece with various fingering and articulation marks. The fourth system (measures 13-14) includes a 'shorter rhythms' instruction for the first time and an '8va' marking for the second time. The score is annotated with numerous fingering numbers and dynamic markings throughout.

ACOUSTIC JAMMING: None.

ELECTRONIC JAMMING:

REGISTER: String Ensemble 1 RHYTHM: None