

Effective Etudes For Jazz

by Mike Carubia and Jeff Jarvis

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Introduction

Our daily environment normally exposes us to a wide variety of non-jazz music, which explains why developing musicians render less convincing performances of swing jazz music than when playing rock or Latin styles. Many musical styles require players to perceive rhythms exactly as they appear, whereas the attack, duration, and rhythmic placement of the notes against the pulse vary from player to player when performing swing style jazz. *Effective Etudes For Jazz* is designed to develop and improve jazz conception, particularly in the swing idiom. Once familiar with the various interpretations, your preferences will emerge, thus defining your own unique style.

Dictionaries define an etude as a musical work composed for the development of a specific point of technique, but also performed because of its artistic merit. *Effective Etudes For Jazz* not only bears out that definition, but it provides well-written material for a broad variety of applications:

- *Effective Etudes For Jazz* provides ideal material for jazz honors band auditions. Students can be evaluated for both concept and improvisation (chord symbols are provided) using the etudes and the corresponding accompaniment recordings. Guitarists, pianists, and bassists can also practice or be evaluated on their comping skills using the play-along recordings.

- *Effective Etudes For Jazz* provides performance worthy music for jazz solo competitions, evaluation festivals, and recitals - most of which allow the use of recordings in lieu of an accompanist.

- *Effective Etudes For Jazz* helps the aspiring jazz soloist learn to improvise. Annotations beneath the staves identify phrases and patterns common to the jazz language. Chord Reference Charts at the top of each page show the notes found in every chord of the etude.

- *Effective Etudes For Jazz* is a collection of etudes based on the chord changes to popular standards. Players will learn to interpret and improvise over the chord progressions of songs that jazz musicians should know.

- *Effective Etudes For Jazz* accompaniment recordings allow students to perform the original melody (not included) of the standard tunes on which the etudes are based.

- *Effective Etudes For Jazz* is perfect for group lessons since any combination of solo instruments can perform etudes simultaneously with or without the accompaniment recordings.

- *Effective Etudes For Jazz* allows players to perform nearly any combination of the above uses with the accompaniment tracks. For instance, the user can play the etude for a chorus, then improvise during the next chorus, and so on. The possibilities are endless.

How To Use This Book

The etudes are presented sequentially, progressing from accessible to challenging. For best results...

- Use a metronome when learning the etudes.
- Set the speed to a realistic tempo to minimize frustration, even if it's slower than the suggested metronome marking.
- Learn the articulations and nuances concurrently with the actual notes.

Learning the notes first and attempting to apply musicality later can prove ineffective, as the memory is likely to be imprinted with a bland, lifeless interpretation. *Effective Etudes For Jazz* assists in the quest to assimilate the jazz language by providing frequent articulations on the more accessible etudes. In the intermediate and advanced etudes, obvious articulations have been purposely omitted so as to minimize visual distraction for musicians able to interpret the style without assistance.

Next...

- Listen to the accompanying CD to hear how the professional solo artist and rhythm section perform the etude.
- Compare their interpretation with yours. Play along with the recording, matching the soloist's rendering of each etude.
- Now practice with the tracks containing the rhythm section accompaniment without the soloist, applying what you've heard to your performance.

Swing Articulation

As you listen to the etudes played by the professional jazz musicians on the accompanying recording, notice the connected legato treatment of the swing eighth note figures and lines.

Novice jazz players often try too hard to swing. This is especially true at faster tempos where the triplet subdivisions of the swing eighth note dissolve into a "straight eighth note feel". You may wonder - How can music swing if the eighth notes are interpreted in a straight manner? This is accomplished through strategic placement of accents. But which notes receive extra emphasis when playing in the swing style? Here are some helpful tips:

- Accent the top note of each ascending line.
- Accent the top note when there's an interval leap.
- Accent anticipations into the next measure, such as an eighth note tied over the bar line.
- Accent the third note of eighth note triplets. When playing a stand-alone triplet, accent the first and third notes.
- Notes that appear before accented notes of longer value should be under-emphasized, giving the impression of more energy and weight to the accented note.

- Never precede a long note with a short one in the swing idiom.

The contour of the line is also used to arrive at good phrasing. In addition to connecting the swing eighths and strategically placing accents on upper notes, crescendo while ascending and decrescendo during the descent. This will "shape" the phrases, thus adding musicality to your performance.

Improvising

Learning to play etudes in the jazz style will improve your jazz conception and help you learn to improvise. These etudes have been composed using the same jazz language used during improvised solos. Maximize the benefits of this collection by performing the etudes verbatim and improvising your own ideas over the chord progressions that appear above the staves. To get started, make slight changes to the original melody by adding grace notes, scoops, bends and other ornaments. This is called melodic embellishment, a stepping stone to creating your own ad lib solos. You can also incorporate some of the written figures from the etudes into your improvised solos. Another device is to make references to the melody of another song during ad lib solos. This crowd-pleasing technique is known as "quoting", a common practice of experienced improvisers.

Whether interpreting notated jazz music or improvising, imitation and assimilation are vital components of the learning process. Improvisation is essentially composition, except the player has less time to arrive at good ideas. Since composing and improvising are close relatives, similar devices are used to navigate chord progressions. These commonly-used sequences and patterns, also known as licks and clichés, appear frequently in *Effective Etudes For Jazz* to help you recognize, understand, and use them when improvising. Learning these devices in all keys will speed your mastery of the jazz language.

Annotations

Of the many key ingredients that constitute a good solo, some are not practical or even possible to study, such as innate talent, early exposure to certain musical styles, personality, mood, point of view, and instrumental ability. However, compositional devices of a theoretical nature can be analyzed and studied. Unlike other jazz etude collections, *Effective Etudes For Jazz* advances jazz conception by providing annotations beneath the staves that will help you build and expand your jazz vocabulary as you discover exactly how jazz phrases are constructed and how they relate to the corresponding chords. Here is a guide to the abbreviations used in the annotations, along with explanations:

- **Melody** - references to the song's melody
- **Arp.** - use of chord arpeggios and their variations
- **Scale** - use of an appropriate scale or scale fragment
- **Root, 3, 5, 7, 9, etc.** - movement toward chord tones when crossing a bar line
- **Cliché** - use of memorized and/or commonly used phrase or lick
- **Motif** - use and development of melodic and rhythmic motives (short ideas used repeatedly for effect).

The next set of abbreviations denote the use of non-harmonic tones, or notes of short duration that do not interfere with the corresponding chords:

- **CAT** - chromatic approach tone
- **UN** - upper neighbor tone
- **LN** - lower neighbor tone
- **PT** - passing tone
- **BN** - blue note

Annotations that do not appear in the legend are specific and not abbreviated.

Chord Reference Chart

Motivated students will want to learn more about the chord symbols above the staves. A chord reference chart above each title identifies the chord tones of every chord symbol in the etude. For this reason each chord has been voiced tertially (in thirds), starting at the root. *These configurations are provided for chord tone analysis, not to demonstrate the most sonically pleasing voicings and/or ranges.* Chord reference charts do not appear in the piano book since left hand voicings for all chords appear in the bass clef staff.

Conclusion

Effective Etudes For Jazz covers many theoretical, visual, and aural aspects of learning to interpret and improvise jazz music. But don't stop here! There is an ocean of great jazz recordings that will inspire you to even greater heights of proficiency and understanding. Take advantage of every opportunity to listen to performances by accomplished jazz artists - known or unknown, recorded or live. This never-ending educational process will contribute to your success as a musician and your enjoyment of jazz. We wish you every success in both endeavors.

CHORD REFERENCE CHART

CD Tracks 2/20

Keep Smilin'

by Mike Carubia

SWING ♩ = 120