

Note from the Author

This book is for intermediate and beginning chord concept pianists who would like to learn how to make basic jazz introductions for Standards and cocktail piano playing.

I created it as a companion to “*Creating Cocktail Piano Introductions*” video lesson. Here you will find written examples for all of the chords and introduction concepts that are demonstrated in that video.

It’s important to note that this book is not simply intended to be a collection of intros to be memorized. Rather, the intro examples are designed to provide students with an understanding of the basic building blocks that jazz and cocktail pianists draw from when creating their own, spontaneous introductions.

If you feel confused by any of the explanations and theory in this book, you can just ignore the explanations and proceed directly to the written examples. However, it’s the theory information behind the examples that will enable you to create your own intros and play them in any key.

My teaching. . .

Every teacher has their own perspectives and ideas. I think you can learn something useful and unique from all of them. Sometimes you pick up one or two ideas from a teacher that can propel you in your playing that can really move you along.

My teaching and books are based on my 50 some years of playing professional piano beginning in my early 20s after growing up with some fairly serious classical piano training and a very musically-serious father who raised the family working with movie film composers in the heydays of Hollywood. I made my way through life somehow as professional pianist with guitar being my second instrument. My teaching is based on my lifetime of experience of study and as a solo pianist and band player and I’ve always enjoyed playing cocktail piano in nice social settings. I was lucky to have caught the last years of the time when clubs, restaurants and cocktail lounges all had pianos and hired pianists to entertain their patrons. Sitting at a grand piano in a nice sports coat, playing popular standards from the golden era of Broadway was still quite common place in the 70s and 80s. Somewhere along the way I started singing at the piano as well. Today the digital piano has taken over and the days of well-dressed pianists sitting at a grand piano playing standards are now few and far between. I was fortunate to have developed my cocktail jazz abilities on real pianos in the last winds of the piano era.

I’ve retired from my life of performing but I enjoy very much teaching and sharing my knowledge with students striving to learn and gather useful information. I hope you can pick up some useful ideas from my teaching that will serve you well.

Creating Introductions for Cocktail Piano

What is a piano introduction? It is the music added before a tune that sets the mood, tempo and, most importantly, the key for the song that's about to be played. Intros stimulate interest and provide a sense of anticipation for the listener.

Intros can be made in many ways. Special introductions can be crafted that are original and inventive, but for the purpose of this book, I will focus on how to make what I call common, "garden-variety" introductions. These are the basic introduction chord progressions that we jazz and cocktail pianists draw from when setting up a song.

I - vi - ii - V
ii - V7 - I
iii - VI7 - ii - V - I
iii - bIII7 - ii - bII7 - I

I have written some examples of how they can be played. You can play the examples exactly as written but once you understand the idea, you can play and express them in any way that suits you.

How the chords are notated in this book. . .

Throughout the book you will see that I write the chords symbols in two ways. The actual chord names are written above the staff and the chord progression is described in the middle of the staff with Roman numerals like iii - VI7 - ii - V. The dominant V chord is always a dominant so there is no need to add a 7 next to it. (Sometimes I have written V as V7 but doesn't change the meaning V and V7 are the same thing.)

The VI7 chord as dominant. . .

Except for the last examples, the VI7 chord is always played as a dominant chord in the iii - VI7 - ii - I progression because this is how it is used in that very common introduction progression. (There is more explanation in the accompanying video.) The VI7 chord is notated with the 7 following VI (VI7) to define it as dominant. If the 7 were not present and it were notated as simply VI it would be interpreted as a major chord type.

F.Y.I., Roman numerals are used for describing chord progressions

In jazz music theory we use roman numerals to describe the chord progressions.

Lower-case Roman numerals describe minor chord types and upper-case Roman numerals describe major chord types, Thus:

iii - vi - ii are all minor chord types.

III - VI - II are all major chord types.

"7" is placed after an upper-case Roman numeral to define it as a dominant chord, thus:

III7 - VI7 - II7 are all dominant chord types.

Dominant chord notation. 7 = dominant. This is important so please read.

It is the same for chord symbols as it is for Roman numerals. In jazz notation, a "7" written after an alphabet letter defines it as a dominant chord that can be played in many ways. You will see dominant chords written this way on every page in fake books for standards. (G7, Bb7, C7, F7, etc.) They will sound like jazz chords when color tones are added to them. (9, 13, 11, b9 etc.)

To illustrate the point that 7 is shorthand for dominants in jazz. Compare the two examples below where you see F7, Bb7 and Eb7.

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SWEET GEORGIA BROWN

Bernie/Pinkard/Casey 1925

A F7 Bb7

No gal made has got a shade on Sweet Geor- gia Brown. Two left feet but
oh so neat, has Sweet Geor- gia Brown, They all sigh and wan- na die for

Detailed description: This block shows the first two staves of the 'Sweet Georgia Brown' musical score. The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and the chord symbol 'F7' above the first measure. The second staff has the chord symbol 'Bb7' above the first measure and 'Eb7' above the first measure of the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Here are the same chords written without the shorthand. They are labeled F dominant, Bb dominant And Eb dominant. It is much easier to write “7” than to write “dominant.”

SWEET GEORGIA BROWN

A F dominant Bb dominant

No gal made has got a shade on Sweet Geor- gia Brown. Two left feet but
oh so neat, has Sweet Geor- gia Brown, They all sigh and wan- na die for

Detailed description: This block shows the same musical notation as the previous one, but with full chord symbols. The first staff has 'F dominant' above the first measure. The second staff has 'Bb dominant' above the first measure and 'Eb dominant' above the first measure of the second line. The lyrics are the same.

However, when jazz players say these chords out loud to other players to describe the chords, we literally say: “F dominant, Bb dominant, and Eb dominant.” We don’t say F7, Bb7, Eb7 because that would imply that we want the chords to be played as four-note 7th chords. There are times that we do in fact want four-note 7th chords to be played, but generally we play dominant chords with the jazz color tones 9 and 13 at a minimum. F9, Bb9, Eb9 or F13, Bb13, Eb13. They can be played in other ways as well by adding sharps (#) or flats (b) to the color tones. It’s up to the players creative choices what color-tone shadings to use on dominant chords.

More about the notation in this book. . .

Dominant 13 chords may or may not include a 9. The player can choose to include it or not. I am using Dominant 13 chords in many of the examples and they all include the 9 but it is not written on the chord symbol. Similarly, the minor 9 chord symbols all include the 7 automatically so there is no need to write 7/9.

In this study there are common introduction progressions where the 9 on some dominant chords are altered to become b9. When a color tone is altered like this, the numeral 7 has to be included in the dominant chord notation:

Example: C^{7b9}

Simple four-note 7th chords then Rootless jazz chords. . .

In all of the examples I write them first using simple, four-note 7th chords and then play the same progressions with rootless jazz chords. You can hear the difference and see which you prefer for your various playing situations. For this study you don't have to understand the theory of how make rootless jazz chords. Play them as written and let your fingers get familiar with them. They will learn and remember on their own without your understanding their construction. If you want to learn more about the rootless jazz chords you can study them in my courses or from other sources as well.

The examples in the book are written in five keys

In the accompanying video I demonstrate all the progressions in the key of C. Here in the book, I have transposed and written out all of the examples in the five common keys that pianist gravitate toward and do most of their playing in. This way you can try applying them to songs to hear if they make sense as introductions to the arrangements you are playing. The five common jazz piano keys are C, F, Bb, Eb and G.

Professional and advanced pianists play in all twelve keys but for casual playing we tend to favor the five common keys. When you look at fake books you will see that most standards are in those keys. The reason is simply that those keys are more finger friendly for the piano than D, E, A or B. In fake books there are not many standards written in Ab or Gb (F#) either, but Db is actually a comfortable piano key under the fingers once you get used to it.

The discussion here, and on the accompanying videos, is on introductions for cocktail piano and jazz. But these common progressions are also used a lot for turnarounds in standards and also are found regularly throughout the main body of tunes. So, it is well worth it for progressing amateur pianist to practice these progressions in all five keys, working toward them becoming second nature in your playing. When you learn them well they will make your standards playing easier and more fluid.

A beginning point. . .

In the book and accompanying Video, I am showing suggestions on how to play common jazz progressions as cocktail piano and jazz band introductions. It is my hope that you will use these examples as a beginning point that you can develop and then interpret in your own way,

Make cocktail piano introductions with ii - V - I

Use four-note 7th chords

One of the simplest cocktail piano intros is to play the ii-V-I followed by a dominant chord.

Musical notation for a ii-V-I progression in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The progression consists of four measures: 1. Dm7 (labeled 'ii') in the right hand, with a single B-flat note in the left hand. 2. G7 (labeled 'V') in the right hand, with a single B-flat note in the left hand. 3. C6 (labeled 'I') in the right hand, with a single B-flat note in the left hand. 4. G7 (labeled 'V') in the right hand, with a single B-flat note in the left hand. The G7 chord in the fourth measure has a fermata over it.

If you are playing solo use the sustain pedal

Add b9 to dominant 7 chords

We can add a sophisticated jazz touch by adding a b9 to the dominant chords. An easy way to make a b9 is to raise the root note in a dominant chord a half step.

Root position G7	1st inversion G7	2nd inversion G7	3rd inversion G7
Raise root note G one half step to Ab	Raise root note G one half step to Ab	Raise root note G one half step to Ab	Raise root note G one half step to Ab

By raising the root note G to Ab in the right hand it becomes a rootless jazz chord.

The root is played in the left hand. Ab is the flat nine of the G dominant chord. G7b9

Play the same ii-V-I intro progression with a flat 9 added to the dominant chords

Musical notation for a ii-V-I progression in 4/4 time, similar to the first example but with a flat 9 added to the dominant chords. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The progression consists of four measures: 1. Dm7 (labeled 'ii') in the right hand, with a single B-flat note in the left hand. 2. G7b9 (labeled 'V') in the right hand, with a single B-flat note in the left hand. 3. C6 (labeled 'I') in the right hand, with a single B-flat note in the left hand. 4. G7b9 (labeled 'V') in the right hand, with a single B-flat note in the left hand. The G7b9 chord in the fourth measure has a fermata over it.

Adding a b9 to dominant chords is an option we can use anytime.

Cocktail and jazz intro using simple 7th chords

Play ii - V - I (2-5-1) for the intro

If you are playing solo use the sustain pedal on all examples

Key of F

Musical notation for the first example in the key of F, showing a ii-V-I progression with simple 7th chords. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The chords are Gm7 (ii), C7 (V), F6 (I), and C7 (V). The bass line consists of single notes, while the treble line shows the chord voicings.

Same simple 7th chords as above - with expression #1

Musical notation for the second example in the key of F, showing a ii-V-I progression with simple 7th chords and expression #1. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The chords are Gm7 (ii), C7 (V), F6 (I), and C7 (V). The bass line consists of single notes, while the treble line shows the chord voicings with a melodic line.

Same simple 7th chords as above - with expression #2

Musical notation for the third example in the key of F, showing a ii-V-I progression with simple 7th chords and expression #2. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The chords are Gm7 (ii), C7 (V), F6 (I), and C7 (V). The bass line consists of single notes, while the treble line shows the chord voicings with a melodic line.

Simple 7th chords - iii - VI7 - ii - V - I (3-6-2-5) Progression

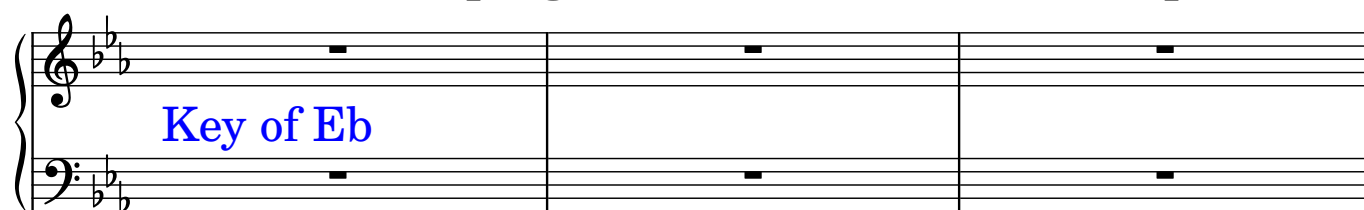
Musical notation for the fourth example in the key of F, showing a iii-VI7-ii-V-I progression with simple 7th chords. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The chords are Am7 (iii), D7 (VI7), Gm7 (ii), C7 (V), F6 (I), and C7 (V). The bass line consists of single notes, while the treble line shows the chord voicings.

Same simple 7th chords as above - with expression #1

Musical notation for the fifth example in the key of F, showing a iii-VI7-ii-V-I progression with simple 7th chords and expression #1. The notation is in 4/4 time and features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The chords are Am7 (iii), D7 (VI7), Gm7 (ii), C7 (V), F6 (I), and C7 (V). The bass line consists of single notes, while the treble line shows the chord voicings with a melodic line.

I - vi - ii - V progressions for intros and vamps

Key of Eb

A musical staff for piano in the key of Eb, consisting of a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The key signature has three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab). The staff is currently empty, with only the key signature and a blue text label "Key of Eb" present.

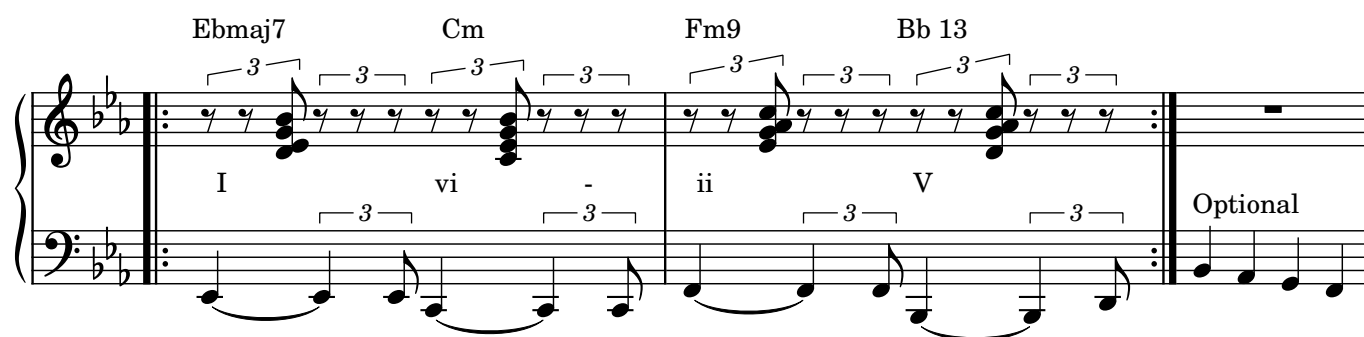
I - vi - ii - V Intros vamp #1

Vamp Ebmaj7 Cm7 Fm9 Bb 9/13

Musical notation for the first vamp. The treble clef contains chords Ebmaj7 (I), Cm7 (vi), Fm9 (ii), and Bb 9/13 (V). The bass clef contains a simple bass line. The notation includes triplets and a final measure with a triplet of eighth notes. The word "Vamp" is written above the first two measures.

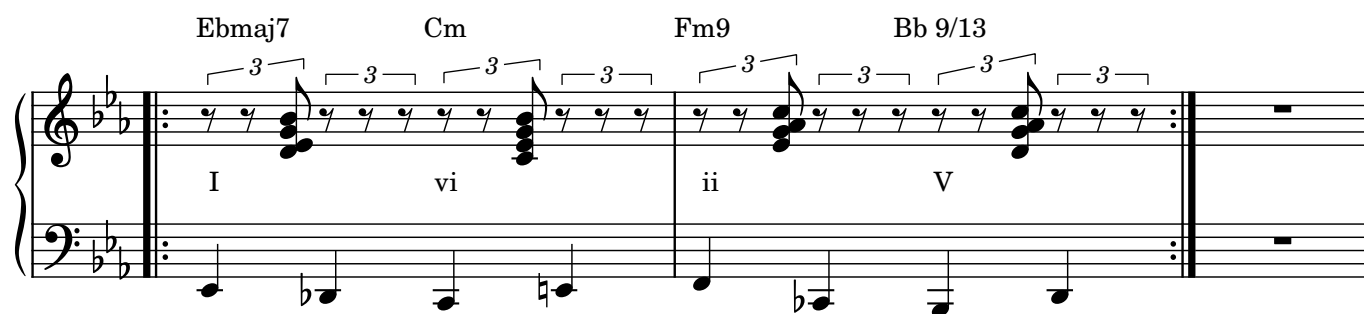
I - vi - ii - V Intros vamp #3 - Triplet feel

Ebmaj7 Cm Fm9 Bb 13

Musical notation for the third vamp with a triplet feel. The treble clef contains chords Ebmaj7 (I), Cm (vi), Fm9 (ii), and Bb 13 (V). The bass clef contains a walking bass line. The notation includes triplets and a final measure with a triplet of eighth notes. The word "Optional" is written above the final measure.

I - vi - ii - V Intros vamp #3 - Walking bass

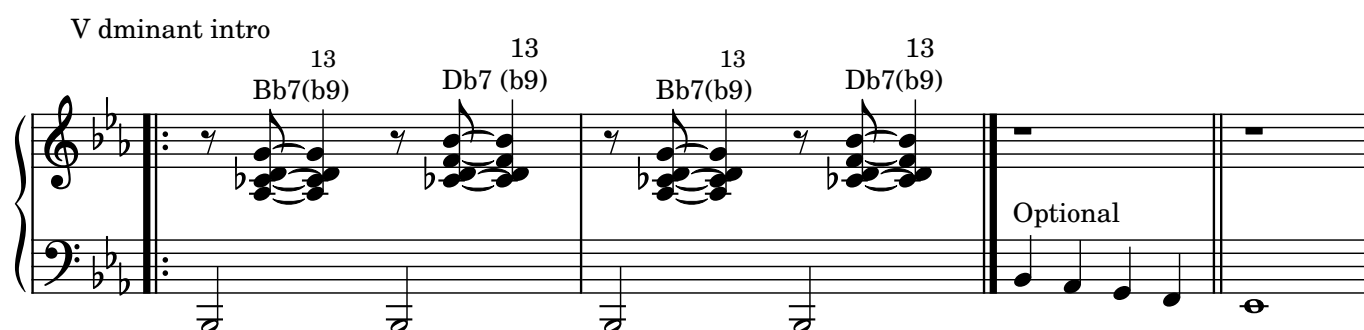
Ebmaj7 Cm Fm9 Bb 9/13

Musical notation for the third vamp with a walking bass. The treble clef contains chords Ebmaj7 (I), Cm (vi), Fm9 (ii), and Bb 9/13 (V). The bass clef contains a walking bass line. The notation includes triplets and a final measure with a triplet of eighth notes.

Altered dominant for jazz intro

V dminant intro

13 Bb7(b9) Db7 (b9) Bb7(b9) Db7(b9)

Musical notation for the altered dominant jazz intro. The treble clef contains chords Bb7(b9) 13, Db7 (b9) 13, Bb7(b9) 13, and Db7(b9) 13. The bass clef contains a simple bass line. The notation includes triplets and a final measure with a triplet of eighth notes. The word "Optional" is written above the final measure.

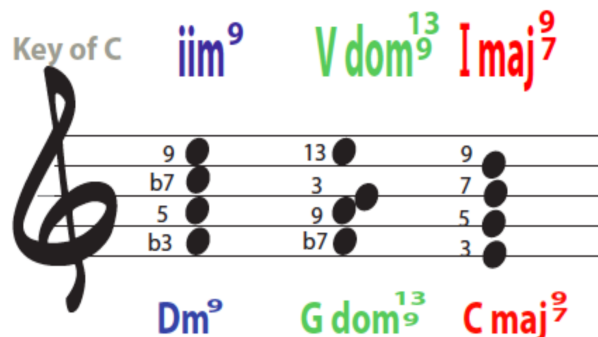
Rootless jazz chords for the ii - V - I intros

Page 2

ii - V - I

Rootless jazz chords are in the domain of jazz pianists. These are the chords that add that distinctive jazz flavor. They are four-note chords that are played with one hand and have no root. The root can be played in the left hand or by a bass player. They are made with extended jazz chord tones 9 and 13, and the 11 can be easily be added to them. (jazz color tones)

Here is a description of the chord tones. They are written for the right hand to play. The root note is played with the left hand. It is a graphic from the *Rootless Jazz Chords* book. If you haven't studied rootless jazz chords or don't understand the chord tones, it's OK, just play the chords as written and learn about them later.



Rootless jazz chords - ii - V - I intro

Optionally substitute dominant 13(b9) for the final V chord on all examples



Rootless jazz chords same as above - Arpeggiated - Expression #1



Rootless jazz chords same as above - Arpeggiated - Expression #2



Rootless jazz chords same as above - Arpeggiated - Expression #3



Rootless jazz chords in the introduction progressions

Page 3

iii - VI7 - ii - V - I

Rootless jazz chords again, as on the previous page, but this time used for the elongated iii - VI7 - ii - V - I (V) introduction.

Key of C

Musical notation for the rootless jazz chord progression iii - VI7 - ii - V - I (V) in the key of C. The notation is written for piano (left hand) and treble (right hand). The chords are: iii (Em9), VI (A13), ii (Dm9), V (G13), I (C6/9), and V (G13). The bass line consists of single notes: C, F, D, G, C, G. The treble line shows the rootless chords. A note in the final V chord (G13) is marked with a double sharp and the text "Add b9 optionally".

Rootless jazz chords same as above - Arpeggiated - Expression #1

Musical notation for the rootless jazz chord progression iii - VI7 - ii - V - I (V) in the key of C, arpeggiated - Expression #1. The notation is written for piano (left hand) and treble (right hand). The chords are: iii (Em9), VI (A13), ii (Dm9), V (G13), I (C6/9), and V (G13). The bass line consists of single notes: C, F, D, G, C, G. The treble line shows the rootless chords arpeggiated in a specific pattern.

Rootless jazz chords same as above - Arpeggiated - Expression #2

Musical notation for the rootless jazz chord progression iii - VI7 - ii - V - I (V) in the key of C, arpeggiated - Expression #2. The notation is written for piano (left hand) and treble (right hand). The chords are: iii (Em9), VI (A13), ii (Dm9), V (G13), I (C6/9), and V (G13). The bass line consists of single notes: C, F, D, G, C, G. The treble line shows the rootless chords arpeggiated in a different pattern from Expression #1.

Rootless jazz chords same as above - Arpeggiated - Expression #3

Musical notation for the rootless jazz chord progression iii - VI7 - ii - V - I (V) in the key of C, arpeggiated - Expression #3. The notation is written for piano (left hand) and treble (right hand). The chords are: iii (Em9), VI (A13), ii (Dm9), V (G13), I (C6/9), and V (G13). The bass line consists of single notes: C, F, D, G, C, G. The treble line shows the rootless chords arpeggiated in a third pattern.

Minor song intros

iiim7b5 - V7b9 - im

There are not many actual minor songs amongst standards in the *Great American Songbook*. The most common intro we use for them is to play a minor ii - V - i progression, which is:

iiim7b5 - V7b9 - im. (two minor 7b5, followed by dominant 7b9 and ending with the one-minor chord)
The minor progression derives from the harmonic minor scale. If you want to know more about the minor jazz progression there is a video lesson for it on the website. (glenrosejazz.com)

The example below is for tunes normally played in Am, such as, *Theme from Black Orpheus*, *Gentle Rain*, *Masquerade*, *What are You Doing the Rest of Your Life*, etc.. The minor progression can be played once or repeated before the song begins on the Am chord.

Intro

Bm7b5 E7b9 Am7

iim7b5 V7b9 im7

The song begins on the im chord

The example below is for tunes normally played in Dm, such as, *Beseme Mucho*, *Look of Love*, *Yesterdays*, *Alone Together*, *I Will Wait for You*, etc.. The minor progression can be played once or repeated before the song begins on the Dm chord.

Em7b5 A7b9 Dm7

iim7b5 V7b9 im7

The example below is for tunes normally played in Cm, such as, *My Funnny Valentine*, *Invitation*, *Angel Eyes*, *Blue Bossa*, etc.. The minor progression can be played once or repeated before the song begins on the Cm chord.

Dm7b5 G7b9 Cm7

iim7b5 V7b9 im7

Creating Cocktail Piano Introductions

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 6. Use rootless jazz chords for the iii - VI7 - ii - V introduction
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- Page 55 Intros for minor tunes
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Pages 1 through 10 are repeated again in the following pages in the five common piano keys so you can use them for reference on songs you play in those keys.

11. Key of F
12. C7^{13(b9)} Introduction run for the key of F
13. Play ii - V - I for basic introductions using four-note 7th chords
(To add the b9 to dominant chords refer to page 1 in the key of C)
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18. I - vi - ii - V progressions for intro vamps – The vi chord is minor
I - vi - ii - V with walking bass line for intro
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Classic Walk-up introductions