

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.

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,

Creating Cocktail Piano Introductions

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Classic Walk-up introductions

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 (Bb). The progression consists of four measures: 1. Dm7 (labeled 'ii') in the right hand, with a single Bb note in the left hand. 2. G7 (labeled 'V') in the right hand, with a single Bb note in the left hand. 3. C6 (labeled 'I') in the right hand, with a single Bb note in the left hand. 4. G7 (labeled 'V') in the right hand, with a single Bb note in the left hand. The G7 chord in the fourth measure is marked with a fermata.

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 |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Raise root note G one half step to Ab</p> | <p>Raise root note G one half step to Ab</p> | <p>Raise root note G one half step to Ab</p> | <p>Raise root note G one half step to Ab</p> |

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 (Bb). The progression consists of four measures: 1. Dm7 (labeled 'ii') in the right hand, with a single Bb note in the left hand. 2. G7b9 (labeled 'V') in the right hand, with a single Bb note in the left hand. 3. C6 (labeled 'I') in the right hand, with a single Bb note in the left hand. 4. G7b9 (labeled 'V') in the right hand, with a single Bb note in the left hand. The G7b9 chord in the fourth measure is marked with a fermata.

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

Cocktail and jazz intro using rootless jazz chords Play iii - VI7 - ii - V - I (3-6-2-5-1) for the intro

Rootless jazz chords - iii - VI7 - ii - V - I intro

Musical notation for the rootless jazz chords intro. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The notation shows six measures of chords in the right hand, with corresponding Roman numerals in the left hand. The chords are: Dm9 (iii), G13 (VI), Cm9 (ii), F13 (V), Bb6/9 (I), and F13 (V). An annotation 'Add b9 optionally' points to the F13 chord in the final measure.

Rootless jazz chords as above - with expression #1

Musical notation for the rootless jazz chords with expression #1. The key signature is B-flat major. The notation shows six measures of chords in the right hand, with corresponding Roman numerals in the left hand. The chords are: Dm9 (iii), G13 (VI), Cm9 (ii), F13 (V), Bb6/9 (I), and F13 (V). The first four measures feature a melodic line in the right hand, while the last two measures feature a sustained chord in the right hand.

Rootless chords as above - with expression #2

Musical notation for the rootless jazz chords with expression #2. The key signature is B-flat major. The notation shows six measures of chords in the right hand, with corresponding Roman numerals in the left hand. The chords are: Dm9 (iii), G13 (VI), Cm9 (ii), F13 (V), Bb6/9 (I), and F13 (V). The first four measures feature a melodic line in the right hand, while the last two measures feature a sustained chord in the right hand.

Rootless jazz chords - iii - VI7 - ii - V - I With expression #3

Musical notation for the rootless jazz chords with expression #3. The key signature is B-flat major. The notation shows six measures of chords in the right hand, with corresponding Roman numerals in the left hand. The chords are: Dm9 (iii), G13 (VI), Cm9 (ii), F13 (V), Bb6/9 (I), and F13 (V). The first four measures feature a melodic line in the right hand, while the last two measures feature a sustained chord in the right hand.

Key of C

Dominant suspended for intro

Dm7
G

Dm7
G

4/4

Classic walk up intros

C walk up intro #1

G7

4/4

C walk up intro #2

G7

4/4

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