

Jazz Improv Materials Handbook by Rich Willey

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What does this book hope to help students accomplish?

Students are told all kinds of things to do to help them learn jazz improvisation. What they're not usually given is a clear cut plan of action. This volume hopes to remedy that to a certain extent.

Of course, students need to listen to great jazz players repeatedly and intently. No book can ever teach them how the jazz language sounds; that can only occur through listening to recordings and live performances.

Time spent daily in each of the three overarching categories above (*Intervals*, *Scales*, and *Melodic Building Blocks*) will set this plan into motion. Beginning with the interval study, the student begins to amass a certain knowledge of his instrument that cannot be taught, it just has to be experienced. This interval study is a long-term project, but one that is beneficial even if only five minutes a day are spent working on it. The scale study unit of this volume is not the last word in scale practice by any means. Working on a key per week or even a key per month is suggested as there is no rush to finish this work. The *Melodic Building Blocks* can be started at any time, and will be more enjoyable and more accessible if played with the accompanying play-along CD.

A 30-minute per day plan might be: 5 minutes of intervals, 10 minutes of scales, and 15 minutes in the "Melodic" unit.

A 60-minute per day plan could just double those periods. Touching upon all these areas daily will soon leave enough "musical residue" in the students' systems that it'll start coming out in their jazz improvisation efforts.

When the student starts writing out and working out his own ideas, then you know he's on his way. As Rich wrote in 2003, "Now go ahead, work out of these and write your own studies. That's where the real growth takes place, in my opinion!"

Incidentally, when referring to any nameless individual in this book, the word "he" or "his" was used, just like back in the good ol' days before the blatant censorship of "political correctness."

About the author:

Rich Willey (trumpeter/bass trumpeter) is a devoted student of the late Dr. Donald S. Reinhardt (creator of the *Pivot System*). Rich studied jazz improvisation at North Texas State University with Dan Haerle, Rich Matteson, and Jack Petersen, and studied composition there with Merrill Ellis. Rich studied theory with David Baker (via Jamey Aebersold) in 1979 and participated in the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop from 1989-90 studying with Manny Albam and Bob Brookmeyer. After years of freelancing as a player (recorded w/Mel Tormé and others) and arranger, Rich earned a bachelors degree in music education from University of South Florida (studying trumpet with Don Owen), and then a masters degree in jazz performance at Manhattan School of Music studying trumpet with Byron Stripling, composition and arranging with Mike Abene, jazz improvisation with Garry Dial, and film scoring with Ed Green. In the fall of 2001, Rich toured with Maynard Ferguson's *Big Bop Nouveau* playing 2nd trumpet (the "jazz" chair) and in 2002 began doing tours with *The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra* under the direction of Buddy Morrow. In addition to his busy performing and writing schedule, Rich also teaches at the University of North Carolina, Asheville, NC, and at Clemson University, Clemson, SC.



"This book is dedicated to the loving memory of Rich Matteson, the guy who really taught me to learn how to improvise jazz. I give an extra special thanks to my Heavenly Father for everything, especially for great music teachers! Thanks to my good friend and fellow trumpeter Oscar Oñoz who suggested turning the original "condensed" version of this book into the "Herbert L. Clarke's Technical Studies" of jazz improv books. And thanks especially to my beautiful and supportive wife Janet for all she does for me. I'm really no good without her!" — Rich Willey