

# A Touch of Jazz Program

from Robin Keehn

The Jazz Program is another gem in the Simply Music Curriculum. Today we'll talk about prerequisites, when to introduce it, and approaches you can take to make it a dynamic and productive experience for your students.

## Student Home Materials

- Reference Book- contains 4 Jazz Clues
- Music Book "A Touch of Jazz" - original compositions by Neil in lead sheet format
- Audio - Touch of Jazz songs played by a professional jazz ensemble minus piano
- Optional purchase: Joe Gilman Plays 'A Touch of Jazz' audio file (highly recommended!)

Available in the Store in the Extras section

## Clues 1 and 2 - Solo Arrangement

LH clues

- RH plays the melody from Touch of Jazz (use reading- AND playing-based clues)
- LH uses Jazz Clue 1 or 2 and chords from lead sheets

## Clue 3 - Ensemble Playing: Chord Voicing

What to play - BH chord voicing

- LH uses Jazz Clue 2
- RH uses Acc 1 concepts

## Clue 4 - Ensemble Playing: Rhythm

How to play - rhythm

- Rhythm tracks - structured
- "Dropping in" - free-form (achieving freedom through structure)

## Improvisation Project

One specific project at the end of the program, using a song from Touch of Jazz

## Going Deeper

- More sophisticated solo arrangements - add harmony to RH melody
- Apply the Jazz Clues to other pieces using jazz fake books

Recommendations: The Real Book (6th Ed.), Easy Jazz Standards Fake Book (Hal Leonard), Jazz Standards Fake Book (Hal Leonard)

## Recommendations

1. Do not rush this process - remember, it is another stream so just a few minutes on it each week in class is adequate.
2. Teacher Workshop Series: Jazz 1 by Gordon Harvey
3. Help students master 7ths and major 7th chords before you start.

## Jazz Clue 1 (Solo Arrangement)

- LH plays 1 & 5 of chord
- RH plays melody from Touch of Jazz
- Main challenge: learning the RH melodies which include challenging rhythms
- Only need to process the first 3 songs in Touch of Jazz using JC1

**TIP 1: Use playing-based tools for RH melody (in addition to reading tools).**

- Advanced rhythms are difficult to sight-read
- Self-generative
- Faster & normalizes hybridizing of both playing & reading approaches

**TIP 2 : Process rhythms as MORs**

- Reinforce RR skills
- Reverse-engineer difficult rhythms
- Transcribing exercises

### **TIP 3 - Play RH melody w/ audio before adding LH**

If your students are not doing this on their own - do it during class!

- Get a feel for melody & rhythm
- STP - RH only, with correct rhythm
- Keep students from 'guessing' at (or simply ignoring) the rhythm

### **JAZZ CLUE 2 (Solo Arrangement)**

LH plays 1 & 7 of chord - much more versatile and "jazzy" sounding

RH plays melody from Touch of Jazz

Process through all songs in Touch of Jazz

### **TIP 1 - Teach a 'Rule of Thumb' & Exception for the LH**

Rule of Thumb = LH thumb down a whole step from octave

Exception - Major 7ths (LH thumb down a half step from octave)

- Single Thought Process, easier to remember ONE rule
- CP 7th chords from Accompaniment 1

### **TIP 2 - Process LH alone: Random positions**

Call out random 7th, major 7th, and minor 7th chords

Student plays the LH 1 & 7 position, keeping in mind the Rule of Thumb and Exception

- STP - get used to processing 1 & 7 with no other distractions

### **TIP 3 - Play LH alone: Touch of Jazz project**

- Easier to spot visual patterns when focusing only on LH
  - Discover the chord patterns in each piece.
  - Notice if the LH can move through patterns without changing shapes

- Example: High Five - First 5 measures are all white notes in LH

#### **TIP 4 - Play LH alone: Audio**

- Experience playing with a professional ensemble as the pianist
- Interim step before adding RH helps solidify 1 & 7
  - Solidifies the feeling of the piece - helps with hearing and feeling the piece.

Thanks to Laurie for allowing me to use her fantastic outline in my preparation of this PDF!

