

2026 SUPER SATURDAY!

Junior High Jazz

OVERVIEW

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RECORDING REQUIREMENTS

(WINDS)

- **Three** Etudes
 - One Swing, One Ballad, and One "Latin"
- Improvisation: 12-Bar Blues in F Major
 - Play 1 "chorus" of a blues head, then solo for 2-4 choruses
 - No slower than 100 BPM
- Chromatic Scale
 - Slurred, from lowest comfortable note to highest comfortable note
 - Preferably no slower than eighth notes at 100 BPM

RECORDING REQUIREMENTS

(PIANO/GUITAR/BASS/VIBES)

- **Three** Etudes
 - One Swing, One Ballad, and One "Latin"
- Improvisation: 12-Bar Blues in F Major
 - Play 1 "chorus" of a blues head, then solo for 2-4 choruses
 - No slower than 100 BPM
- No Scales Required! :)

RECORDING REQUIREMENTS

(DRUMS)

- **Three** Etudes
 - One Swing, One Ballad, and One "Latin"
- Grooves:
 - Swing - Trade fours at quarter note = 160.
 - Alternate four measures of swing time with four measures of soloing for a total of 32 measures.
 - Samba - Trade fours at half note = 100.
 - Alternate four measures of samba time with four measures of soloing for a total of 32 measures.

IMPROVISING OVER THE “BLUES”

- **Step 1: Select and learn a Blues “Head” in Concert F**
 - The “head” is another word for the melody
 - Some solid options are:
 - Bag’s Groove
 - Sonnymoon For Two
 - Now’s The Time
 - Billie’s Bounce
 - A Little of This
 - Not all recordings of these melodies are in Concert F, so you may have to transpose!

- **Step 2: Find a play-along track**

- Play-along or backing tracks can be found a variety of places. Some options are:
 - YouTube - *Look up “F Blues Backing Track”*
 - Apps - *iRealPro, RealPlay*
 - Book Resources: *Jamey Aebersold*
- Make sure the track is no slower than 100 BPM. It can be as fast as is comfortable for you!

- **Step 3: Learn the form and chord changes**
 - A blues follows a 12-bar form, meaning each “chorus” is 12 measures long
 - After every 12 measures, the form repeats!
 - Most blues follow a similar chord progression, but there can be slight variations
 - Double-check your selected play-along. They often display the chords in concert pitch

- **Step 4: Practice the chord changes**

Example Exercises:

- 1. Sing along to the roots
- 2. Play the roots as whole notes
- 3. Play each chord tone (1, 3, 5, 7) as whole notes through the form
- 4. “Outline” the chords by arpeggiating the chord tones
- 5. Play a “solo” that uses only one chord tone at a time
 - 1, 3, 5, or 7
- 6. Identify “common tones”, or notes that are shared between chords

IMPROVISING OVER THE “BLUES”

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*Example Chords: *these might not match the play-along you use**

(Shuffle)	Blues - Simple			Exercise
4 4F ₇	B ^b ₇	F ₇	:/	
B ^b ₇	:/	F ₇	:/	
G ₋₇	C ₇	F ₇	C ₇	

- **Step 5: Build a solo!**

- Tips:

- Blues often follow a form called “question, question, answer”. This is a great way to build a convincing chorus!
 - Play a 4-bar phrase, repeat it, and then play a responding 4-bar phrase. (*see video*)
 - Play with good time and rhythm. **Always.**
 - When in doubt, stick to the chord tones.
 - Simple is better!

- **Final Tips and Advice:**

- Avoid using the “blues scale” for your entire solo
 - *Think of the blues scale like sprinkles - yummy on top of your cookie, but less yummy by the handful*
- 2-4 choruses does **not** mean 4 is better than 2
 - *2 really good choruses are better than 4 average ones*
- Avoid playing a pre-written or memorized solo
 - *This can sound unnatural and the people listening will be able to tell!*

- **General Advice:**

- The etudes are a measure of how well you can play your part in the band
 - Be sure to play all written dynamics and articulations exactly as they appear
- Pay close attention to how you **start** and **end** each note
- Stylistic inflections are okay, but don't let them get in the way of basic musicianship
 - *i.e. intonation, tone, rhythm, etc.*
- Practice with a metronome!

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECORDING

- Tune your instrument before you record!
- Ensure there is no audible metronome on your recordings
- If/when recording your chromatic scale, cleanliness is more important than speed
- When recording your blues improvisation:
 - Use 2 devices - one to play your backing track, and another to record sound. This will help with sound quality and balance!
 - Keep a good distance between the microphone or recording device and your instrument/backing track
- Always listen back to your **entire recording** to ensure it contains quality sound and no spoken words