



Placement Recording Instructions

All students registered for an SJW online program must submit placement recordings and a theory evaluation. Our faculty will use these materials to assess your level and place you into classes that will be perfect to help you improve quickly.

How to make your placement recording

To place you in the classes that are best for you, please submit **two recordings**: one **blues selection** and one **additional song selection**. We'll supply you with sheet music excerpts and play-along tracks to help you practice and record these selections.

First, download the play-along tracks and sheet music, by clicking on this link, and then download the folder that has the name of your instrument on it:

[Click here to download your play-along tracks and sheet music.](#)

If you're new to playing jazz, you may submit just one recording, using either "Dorian's Lament" or "Mr. Stan Ford Funk" (more info on these later).

If you'd like to submit two recordings, please choose either "**Blues of the Day**", "**Tranquil Blues**" or "**Blues for Liddle**" for your blues selection. Listen to the mp3 tracks while you look at the sheet music, and choose whichever blues melody and chord progression fits your skills and ability.

For your additional recording, choose one from the list on the next page.

- **“Dorian’s Lament” / “Mr. Stan Ford Funk”**: These two songs are great if you have little or no improvisation experience.
 - i. “Dorian’s Lament” - An easy swing tune using the concert Bb scale, dorian mode
 - ii. “Mr. Stan Ford Funk” - A funk tune using the concert F scale, mixolydian mode

- **“So What”**: If you’ve done a fair amount of jazz improvisation before, try this. This song includes relatively simple chord changes and a written excerpt.

- **“Blue Bossa”**: If you’ve learned several jazz tunes and you’re comfortable improvising in different keys, try this one.

- **“Ice Cream with Lee”**: Recommended for students who are comfortable improvising over tunes with denser harmony (more chord changes).

- **“Lester Leaps In”**: Recommended for students who are comfortable improvising over tunes with multiple key centers and quicker tempos.

- **“Recordame”**: Recommended for students with extensive improvisation experience. This tune features difficult chord changes, shifting key centers and a more challenging excerpt.

- **“Ko Ko”**: Recommended for students with extensive and advanced improvisation experience. This tune features difficult chord changes, a fast tempo, and an advanced written excerpt.

Select pieces that you’re either familiar with or that seem manageable, so you have an opportunity to demonstrate your current skill as a jazz musician. Don’t choose the most difficult song. Aim to demonstrate a strong grasp of jazz fundamentals rather than focusing on creative risk-taking, or flashy, virtuosic playing. Use these tunes to demonstrate fundamentals such as your harmonic vocabulary, rhythmic concept, phrasing, and ability to maintain the song form.

The written excerpts are based on famous jazz solos, or are composed by SJW faculty. Listen to the original recordings when available. Do your best when it comes to your execution of the written excerpt; pay close attention to the notes, rhythms, and articulations. If there is a portion of the excerpt that is out of your range, simply play those notes or phrase up or down an octave.

Additional guidelines for brass, woodwinds, and strings

1. Blues selection: play the written melody of either **“Blues of the Day”**, **“Tranquil Blues”** or **“Blues for Liddle”**. Then improvise a two-chorus solo, followed by the melody for the last chorus. A “chorus” equals one time through the song’s form.
2. For your additional Placement Evaluation piece, choose a selection from the list above. Play the written melody, improvise a two-chorus solo, and then play the melody again one last time.

Additional guidelines for piano and guitar

For both selections play the written melody once, improvise a two-chorus solo, and then comp the chords for the last chorus as if you were accompanying a soloist. A “chorus” equals one time through the song’s form.

Additional guidelines for bass

For both selections, play the written melody once, then walk a bass line (or play a stylistically appropriate bass) for two choruses. Improvise a solo for your last chorus on each selection. A “chorus” equals one time through the song’s form.

Additional guidelines for drums

1. Blues selection: use the written excerpt (with specific drum hits) for **“Blues of the Day”**, **“Tranquil Blues”** or **“Blues for Liddle”** and do your best to frame and set up the melody that’s being played by the saxophone on the provided play-along audio tracks. “Play the melody” for the first chorus, then play time for the following two choruses. On your last chorus, take a solo! A “chorus” equals one time through the song’s form.
2. For your additional Placement Evaluation piece, use the written excerpt (marked as “piano/vibraphone” charts) for any of the selections listed above. Use this written melody as a reference, and do your best to frame and set up the melody that’s being played by the saxophone on the provided play-along audio tracks. “Play the melody” for the first chorus, then play time for the second chorus. On your third chorus, play as if you were trading with other musicians – i.e., alternate between improvising and playing the groove in four-bar phrases (or whatever division works with the song you choose). On your last chorus, take a full-on solo! A “chorus” equals one time through the song’s form.

How to prepare your placement recordings

Recordings must clearly feature your playing and play-along accompaniment. While recordings must be audible, the overall recording quality does not affect an applicant's placement. **Please use the provided play-along tracks, and make sure that both the accompaniment and your instrument or voice can be heard in the recording.**

You can make your recording using a computer, smartphone, digital recorder, or any other type of recording device. If you are looking for free software to make these recordings, we suggest the "Voice Memos" app, which is available for iOS and Android devices, or **the audio recording and editing program Audacity, which is available for Windows, Mac, and Linux computers by clicking here.**

SJW can accept audio or video files directly from smartphones and tablets. If you're using another device, like a computer or stand-alone audio recorder, please make sure your recordings are one of the following file types: MP3, MPEG, MPEG-4, AAC or WAV format before submitting them. **If you're confused about file types, just send us whatever you've got and we'll contact you if we need anything else.**

Deadline for placement recordings will be emailed to you when you register

How to submit your placement recordings

Create an account (if you don't have one already) and register for Miles Ahead Jazz Online. You will then receive an email with instructions on how to upload your recordings to your account.

Music theory evaluation for Jazz Camp Online, Miles Ahead Jazz Online, Miles Ahead Institute only

All students registered for Jazz Camp Online, Miles Ahead Jazz Online, or Miles Ahead Institute are required to submit a music theory for best placement results into classes. **This evaluation can be taken and submitted online! Click here!**

If your questions aren't answered here, please don't hesitate to contact Steven Lugerner, our Camp Director / Faculty Director at 650-736-0324 x309 or by e-mail at slugerner@stanfordjazz.org