



## Placement evaluation instructions for beginning improvisers

Never improvised before? Don't worry! Our play-along evaluations are easy and fun to do, and they give our faculty a chance to get to know you and your level of musical experience, so we'll be able to make sure you have the best possible time in an SJW program.

### 1. Download the play-along materials!

Sheet music excerpts and play-along recordings (mp3s) are waiting for you online, just click the link below to access them:

[Click here to access your play-along materials.](#)

Select the folder that matches your instrument and download it. If you have any problems downloading this folder, or if you have questions about which folder to download, just email Steven Lugerner, Camp Director – [slugerner@stanfordjazz.org](mailto:slugerner@stanfordjazz.org) and he'll help you out and email you a ZIP file instead.

When you open folder or the .zip file, you'll find materials for "Dorian's Lament" and "Mr. Stan Ford Funk," two songs that are great for beginning improvisers. You'll find mp3 play-along tracks for rhythm section instruments as well as horns and strings in each folder.

### 2. Listen, choose a tune, play the melody, and try improvising

- Listen to the mp3 play-along recordings while looking at the music to help you decide which one you'd like to use for your placement evaluation recording. Only one song submission is required, but if you have time to work on both "Dorian's Lament" and "Mr. Stan Ford Funk," we'd love to hear both selections!
- When you've decided which selection(s) you would like to play, practice the written melody until you feel comfortable playing it. Don't worry if the melody seems too difficult, just do your best, as your recording will help us place you in the right classes for your level of experience. If the written melody goes higher or lower than you can play on your instrument, you can play it in whatever octave is comfortable.
- After you've played the written melody along with the mp3 track, you'll have a chance to improvise a jazz solo. Use the notes of one of the suggested scales you see on the sheet music, and just make up your own melody.

Even if you've never improvised before, give it a try on your placement evaluation recording. Don't worry if this is new to you – you'll have plenty of opportunities in your classes to learn more about improvisation. Improvisation is a big part of what makes playing jazz so much fun, and everybody is a beginner.

Do your best, on your own. This will help us to place you in the optimal ensembles and classes.

### 3. Make your audio or video recording

When you're ready, record yourself playing along with the corresponding mp3 play-along. Listen back to the recording and make sure you can hear yourself playing or singing and the play-along track clearly.

You can make your recording using a computer, smartphone, digital recorder, or any other type of recording device. Begin by playing the written melody, and then improvise over the chord progression to the best of your ability. Your recording doesn't have to be perfect – we just want a general sense of your skills so that our faculty can help you learn what you need to really enjoy playing jazz.

#### Guidelines for horn players and string instrument players

- Both “Dorian’s Lament” and “Mr. Stan Ford Funk” have 16 measures, so they’re what we call 16-bar forms. Each play-along recording goes through the form a total of four times.
- Play the melody during the first time through the form
- Improvise a jazz solo (use the suggested notes on the sheet music!) during the next two times through the form (32 bars total).
- Play the melody again for the last time through the form (the last 16 bars of the recording).

#### Guidelines for piano and guitar players

- Both “Dorian’s Lament” and “Mr. Stan Ford Funk” have 16 measures, so they’re what we call 16-bar forms. Each play-along recording goes through the form a total of four times.
- Play the melody during the first time through the form. Piano players can play the melody in the right hand and chords in the left hand if you can.
- Improvise a jazz solo (use the suggested notes on the sheet music!) over the next two times through the form (32 bars total).
- Play just the chords for the last time through the form, pretending there is another musician playing a solo and you’re accompanying them (16 bars).

#### Guidelines for bass players

- Both “Dorian’s Lament” and “Mr. Stan Ford Funk” have 16 measures, so they’re what we call 16-bar forms. Each play-along recording goes through the form a total of four times.
- Play a quarter-note, walking bass line (“Dorian’s Lament”) or play a bass groove (“Mr. Stan Ford Funk”) for the first two times through the form (32 bars).
- Improvise a jazz solo (use the suggested notes on the sheet music!) over the next time through the form (16 bars total).
- If possible, play the melody during the last time through the form (16 bars). If that’s too hard, just play a walking bass line or a groove bass line.

#### Guidelines for drummers

- Both “Dorian’s Lament” and “Mr. Stan Ford Funk” have 16 measures, so they’re what we call 16-bar forms. Each play-along recording goes through the form a total of four times.
- Play a swing feel (for “Dorian’s Lament”) or funk groove (for “Mr. Stan Ford Funk”) over the first two times through the form (32 bars total), read the melody on the sheet music to help you determine where to fill in the spaces and to help keep your place.
- Improvise a solo (to the best of your ability) over the next time through the form (16 bars total).
- For the last time through the form, trade 4-bar solos with the play along recording. For example, play time for the first 4 bars, take a 4-bar solo – then do the same thing again, play time for 4 bars, then take another 4 bar solo until the end of the recording!

## 4. Additional recording & submission instructions

When you record your evaluation, 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. We need to hear both parts clearly in order to place you in the optimum ensembles and classes for you.

You can make your recording using a computer, smartphone, digital recorder, or any other type of recording device. There are many apps and programs that can make audio recordings, so you are welcome to use whatever software you're familiar with. 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 Audacity, an audio recording and editing program available for Windows, Mac, and Linux computers by clicking on the link below.

[Click here to download the audio recording app Audacity.](#)

We accept audio and video files sent 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 the files don't work with our registration system.

### Deadline for placement recordings will be emailed to you once you register

Deadline for placement recordings: The deadline for placement recordings is June 1st, 2022 for all of SJW's summer programs. If you are registering after June 1st, please submit your placement recordings as soon as possible after registering. If you are submitting placement recordings for one of SJW's year-round programs, please submit your recordings as soon as possible after registering for a program.

### How to submit your placement recordings

- Create an account and register for your chosen program.
- We'll send you an email with instructions on how to upload your recordings to your account.

[Click here to go to our registration page.](#)

## Music theory evaluation for Jazz Camp and Jazz Camp Online

All students registered for Jazz Camp or Jazz Camp Online must take an online music theory evaluation for optimal placement in classes.

[Click here to take the theory evaluation now.](#)

The theory evaluation is **not required if you're attending Giant Steps Day Camp or Jazz Institute.**

If you have any questions, 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](mailto:slugerner@stanfordjazz.org).

We look forward to seeing you this summer!