



Placement evaluation instructions

Recordings. All instrumentalists and vocalists registered for a 2022 SJW program must submit a placement recording. Our faculty will use your recordings to place you into classes and ensembles that will be optimal for your level of playing experience.

If you are age 17 or under and you're applying for Jazz Institute, you must submit two recordings to be accepted into the program. One of your recordings must be "Blues for Liddle," and your second recording can be either "Recordame" or "KoKo." Sheet music excerpts and play-along tracks are available at the link below. You can submit the same recording for acceptance and placement, using the directions in this guide.

Music theory evaluation. Jazz Camp and Jazz Camp Online participants must complete an online music theory evaluation for optimal placement in music theory classes. If you're registered for Jazz Camp or Jazz Camp Online, you can take the theory placement evaluation by clicking on the link below:

[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, or any of SJW's year-round programs.**

How to make your placement recording

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. If you are a vocalist, please refer to the "Additional guidelines for vocalists" section later in this document for specific instructions.

First, download the play-along tracks and sheet music, by clicking on the link below, 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. Stanford Funk" (more info on these on the next page).

If you have previous experience playing jazz, please submit two recordings. Start by choosing 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 this list.

“Dorian’s Lament” / “Mr. Stan Ford Funk” These two songs are great if you have little or no improvisation experience.

“Dorian’s Lament” - An easy swing tune using the concert Bb scale, dorian mode

“Mr. Stan Ford Funk” - A funk tune using the concert F scale, mixolydian mode

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

“Blue Bossa” If you’ve learned several tunes and you’re comfortable improvising in different keys, give this fun tune a try.

“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 at 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 familiar with or that seem manageable, so you have an opportunity to demonstrate your current skill as a jazz musician. 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. Don’t worry about choosing the most difficult song.

The written excerpts are based on famous jazz solos, or are composed by SJW faculty. Listen to the original recordings where 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 phrases 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.

Placement recording guidelines for vocalists

If you are a vocalist registered for one of SJW’s summer programs, please submit two recordings of yourself singing contrasting jazz selections of your choice. These selections can be jazz standards, American Songbook tunes, or anything that demonstrates your current level as a jazz vocalist. If you are inexperienced singing jazz, simply send us any recordings that display your current ability as a vocalist.

All vocal placement recordings must include play-along or backing track accompaniment.

How to prepare your placement recordings

Listen to your recordings before you submit them to us. We need to be able to hear your playing and the play-along accompaniment. While your recording must be audible, the overall recording quality will not affect your 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 on the link below.

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

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 either 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.

The deadline for your 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 your preferred program. You will then receive an email with instructions on how to upload your recordings to your account.

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.

Music theory evaluation for Jazz Camp and Jazz Camp Online

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

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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.

We look forward to seeing you this summer!