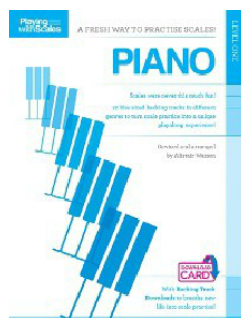


New Music Reviews



(S1) **Playing with Scales, Piano, Level 1**, by Alistair Watson.

Alistair Watson wants to “breathe new life” into scale practice. In order to do so, Watson includes seventy-two backing tracks for a selection of two-octave scales and one-octave broken chords. Teachers can play the accompaniments at the lessons, and

students can use the enclosed download card to practice the accompaniments at home.

Keys included in this book are C, D, G, and F majors and all three forms of A and D minors. Several contrary motion scales are also presented.

The teacher accompaniments use some jazzy-sounding chords and syncopated rhythms, which provide an unexpected and fresh soundscape for scale playing. I tried some of these accompaniments with a ten-year-old student, and he and I agreed that, while some of the accompaniments were really interesting, others were a little too harmonically dissonant or rhythmically complex for the given scale.

Try as I might, I could not get the backing tracks to download properly. I would suggest that if this book is to be of immediate use to students and teachers, the download process should be more easily accessible.

While I plan to use some of the accompaniments with my students, this book will probably not become a staple in my studio. (Music Sales America/Hal Leonard, \$9.99) J.K.

and has both an “unrealized” version and a “realized” version. For example, a tune might list the Charleston as a potential groove. The unrealized version contains only the chord progression and the melody. The realized version is a grand-staff arrangement of the tune with Charleston comping rhythms. Theory novices and intermediate students who can play Clementi sonatinas should be able to learn these well-written etudes fairly readily.

For classical musicians who are visual learners, Siskind’s before-and-after approach will be helpful. All jazz musicians, however, learn by listening, and players will benefit from the recorded examples that come with the book (downloadable from Hal Leonard’s website). There are two recordings of each etude: one with piano and one without.

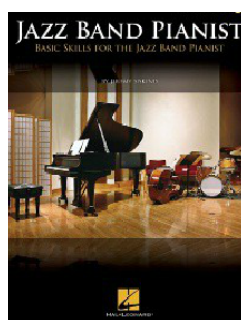
The book’s best feature is that it is progressive. Students begin with root-position triads, move through root-position seventh chords, simple progressions, and basic shell and rootless voicings. At the end of each chapter is a “To the Shed” section, where students quiz themselves and check their answers in the back of the book.

The hardest part of this book is the interpretation of the rhythms; luckily, the suggested listening list in the back of the book will help the student develop jazz styles. Although hardly comprehensive, Siskind’s volume is surely a good start for aspiring jazz players.

Since these lovely etudes are not jazz standards (yet!), they will not come in handy on a gig. I would thus recommend that advancing jazz students combine work from this book

(S3-4) **Jazz Band Pianist: Basic Skills for the Jazz Band Pianist**, by Jeremy Siskind.

This book of etudes is written for classically trained piano students interested in reading chord progressions and realizing jazz charts. Each composition explores a common type of chord progression and groove,



Grade Levels

1 Beginning: five-finger patterns and simple rhythms

2 Easy: scales and simple syncopation

3 Intermediate: beginning counterpoint and complex rhythms (Bach notebooks, Bartók *Mikrokosmos* I-II)

4 Late intermediate: technical and rhythmic sophistication (Bach inventions, Bartók *Romanian Folk Dances*)

5 Difficult: for competent pianists (Mozart sonatas, Brahms Rhapsody, Op. 79, No. 2)

6 Very difficult: for advanced pianists (Chopin etudes, Beethoven Sonata, Op. 57)

Categories

S - Solo
E - Ensemble

Quality rating

Thumbs up (👍): repertoire that is highly recommended

with transcriptions of both melodies and solos from their favorite recordings.

My only beef with this book is its title. The skills gained by mastering this book would benefit a pianist in any jazz group, large or small, and not just

those in a school band, as the title implies. That being said, the etudes are well written, expressively recorded, and fun to play, and therefore this book is highly recommended. (Hal Leonard, \$19.99) L.C.

This issue's contributors:

Susan Geffen is a Managing Editor of *Clavier Companion*. She is active as an educator, adjudicator, presenter, panelist, critic, and specialist in Recreational Music Making. She recently served on the Classical Screening Committee for the 2015 Grammys.

Laura Caviani has toured and recorded with many jazz greats, and *Downbeat* has praised her recordings as "piano jazz trio of the highest order." She is head of the jazz program at Carleton College in Northfield, MN, and is a coach and adjudicator for high school festivals nationwide.

Vanessa Cornett is the Director of Keyboard Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, where she teaches courses in piano and piano pedagogy. She is an international clinician and performing artist and works as a performance coach and certified hypnotherapist for musicians struggling with performance anxiety.

Julie Knerr holds a Ph.D. in Music Education with an Emphasis in Piano Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma. She has taught piano at the University of Missouri and at Oklahoma City University and is coauthor of an innovative piano method, *Piano Safari*. She is currently on the piano faculty at the Hartt School of Music, Community Division in West Hartford, CT.

Suzanne Schons teaches music courses at the University of St. Thomas and Valley City State University, and piano lessons at the K&S Conservatory of Music. She holds a Ph.D. in Music Education-Piano Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma.

Carolyn True has been a member of the Trinity University music faculty since 1990. She is active as a soloist and chamber musician and is a prize winner in national and international competitions. Dr. True holds a D.M.A. from the Eastman School of Music, an M.M. from the University of Maryland-College Park, and a B.M. from the University of Central Missouri.

The National Federation of Music Clubs invites you to our

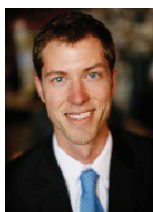
58TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION

June 16 – 20, 2015
in Fargo, North Dakota.

NFMC has many enjoyable activities and magnificent performances planned. Award winning pianist Richard Glazier will present his NFMC sponsored PBS special, "From Broadway to Hollywood." Tim and Christine Baumann will speak at a luncheon regarding the many opportunities provided by the International Music Camp. Dayna Del Val will hold a lecture outlining the many objectives of Fargo's "The Arts Partnership" program. The Biennial Young Artist Competition will take place at North Dakota State University, of which the winners will represent NFMC over the next two years. In addition to all the great music NFMC will host a wonderfully relaxing tour of Red River Valley!



Richard Glazier



Tim Baumann



Christine Baumann



Dayna Del Val

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Music of the Heartbeat

