

Resources for Popular Styles: Improvisation, Analysis of Styles, Ear-Training

This is a short list of some of our favorite resources for popular styles, ear training and improvisation. Links are for more information from the publisher. You can get most of these books from local and online retailers.

Aebersold, Jamey. *How to Play Jazz and Improvise, Vol. 1*. New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold Jazz Inc, www.jazzbooks.com. An amazing, dense compilation of knowledge, for the absolute beginner through advanced. Much sage advice, as if Jamey were your personal tutor. Includes scales, exercises, licks, theory, essential discography and tune list, inspirational quotes, and playalong CD. Wow. Note: Jamey's free(!), downloadable Jazz Handbook duplicates much of this material.
http://www.jazzbooks.com/mm5/merchant.mvc?Screen=FQBK&Store_Code=JAJAZZ

Alldis, Dominic. *A Classical Approach to Jazz Piano Improvisation*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Publishing, www.halleonard.com. A comprehensive yet highly approachable study of key components in jazz piano, including blues and rock. Solves the mystery of soloing by drawing parallels to J.S. Bach. A highly-recommended entry into jazz/popular styles improvisation for both the classical-based teacher and intermediate student.

Cotter, Jeanne. *Keyboard Improvisation for the Liturgical Musician, Book One*. Chicago: GIA Publications, www.giamusic.com. A step-by-step approach to interpreting Christian contemporary music, putting theory into practice. Includes essential instruction in leading congregational song, so necessary and neglected in musical education. Includes practical examples and study assignments. All examples are from the Catholic contemporary hymnal, *Gather*, published by GIA, but can be applied to other Christian contemporary songs. Intermediate level.
http://www.giamusic.com/search_details.cfm?title_id=3479

Hal Leonard Style Series, various authors. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Publishing. Individual books, each focusing on a particular popular style: gospel, stride and swing, blues, boogie woogie, smooth jazz, bebop, rock piano, jazz/rock, salsa, rhythm and blues (r&b), country, and more. For the intermediate player. Excellent!
<http://www.halleonard.com/search/search.do?menuid=1003&seriesfeature=HLKSS&subsiteid=64>

Levine, Mark. *The Jazz Piano Book*. Berkeley, CA: Sher Music Co. A follow-up to the Alldis book, to continue your jazz education. Comprehensive in chord voicing, scale theory, and jazz harmony. This book clearly explains all, with cogent examples. Thank you, Mark Levine!

Mann, Martan. *Improvising Blues Piano*. New York: Amsco Publications. From the blues sprung jazz, boogie woogie, rock and roll, gospel, and more. It's essential to understand these keyboard styles, and this book is your entry. Covers the theory and offers plenty of examples, as found on accompanying CD, to get in your fingers. For intermediate players.
<http://www.halleonard.com/search/search.do?menuid=1003&seriesfeature=HLKSS&subsiteid=64>

The Real Easy Book, Level 1. Pasadena: Sher Music Publishers. An entry-level collection of jazz standards by well-known artists, in a variety of jazz styles. Easy-to-play tunes are in lead sheet format. Helpful supplements alongside include suggested basic piano voicings, recommended scales for soloing, a notated bass line for instructor accompaniment, and guitar voicings. A good resource for applying newly-minted improvisational skills. (Be sure to order the "C" instruments version for piano students.)
<http://www.shermusic.com/new/1883217156.shtml>