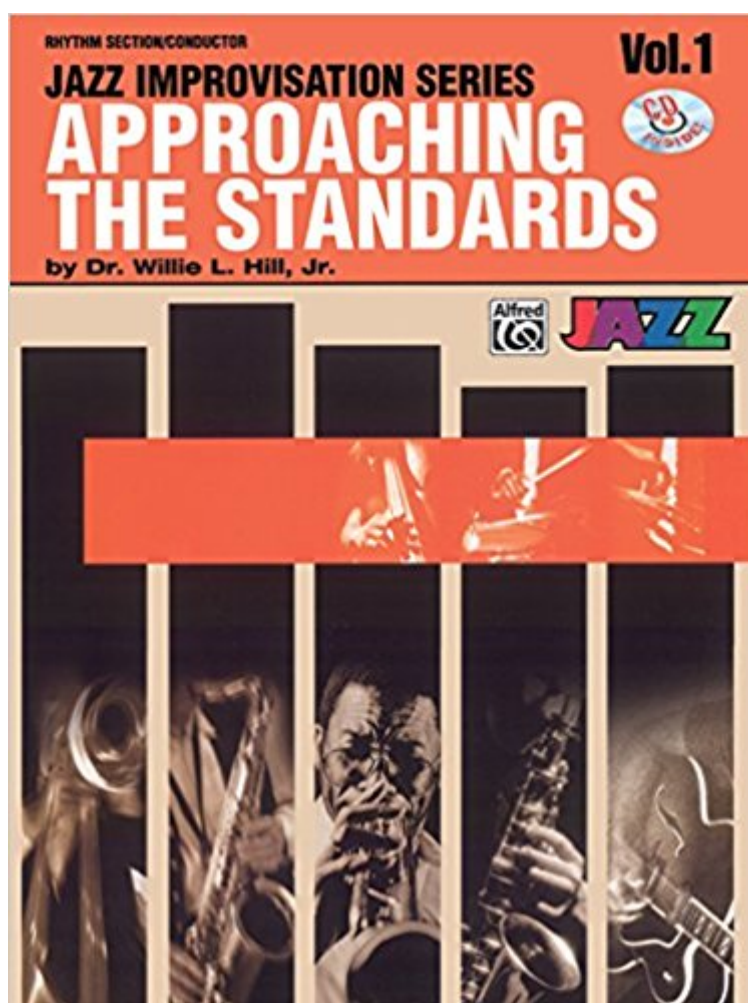


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Approaching The Standards, Vol 1: Rhythm Section / Conductor, Book & CD (Jazz Improvisation)



Synopsis

For the "fearful to the fearless," *Approaching the Standards* is an innovative, user-friendly approach to jazz improvisation. Designed for the individual or group, each of the three volumes of this play-along CD contains eight classic jazz tunes. Each volume features a jazz group demo recorded by top pros in a jazz gig setting, clearly written musical examples, jazz vocabulary, transcription opportunities, informative composer insight, and a useful discography. Everything you need to begin improvising or to improve your jazz skills is included in Volumes 1, 2, and 3, available for C, B-Flat, E-Flat, and Bass Clef instruments. Volume 1 includes: Billie's Bounce * On the Trail * Cantaloupe Island * The Preacher * Summertime * Satin Doll * C Jam Blues * I Got Rhythm.

Book Information

Series: Jazz Improvisation

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

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Customer Reviews

This review is written from the standpoint of a bass player: I own more than 200 play-along book and CD sets including those from I think every publisher out there. In my view, the Alfred Jazz Play-Along for Rhythm Section series is top drawer, particularly for a bassist, because: (1) they include play-along recordings that are complete except with the bass entirely removed; (2) the tunes don't just have a vanilla head played by the soloist followed by a verse of only the rhythm section--the soloist also takes a real improvised solo, too. But it they still contain some purely rhythm-section measures to solo in. The Alfred Jazz Play-Alongs for rhythm section do not have written out bass lines, but they do have the melody written in bass clef. THIS play-along is something

different. The Alfred Approaching the Standards series, of which this book/CD set is Volume 1, contains helpful instructions to each player for each of the eight tunes included. Being a bass player, I bought this Conductor/Rhythm Section version of this Volume. The book contains an actual suggested bass line for the bassist, which is the bass line used on the accompanying CD. The CD itself contains an excellent ensemble and there are two versions for each tune: A Jazz demo track so you can hear the full ensemble's treatment of each tune, and a "play-along" track that has the soloists removed. For example, the "I Got Rhythm" jazz demo track has two soloists: a trumpet and a trombone who both improvise solos after the trumpet plays the head. The play-along track was a disappointment. This is the version of Approaching the Standards for Conductor/Rhythm Section, so I would have thought that the CD would have versions of the tune with rhythm section instruments removed, like the Jazz Play-Along for Rhythm Section series. Not so. The piano, bass, and drums are just as audible on the play-along track as they are on the demo track, and the play-along is in full stereo--it does almost no good at all to pan the balance control left or right--all of the rhythm sections instruments are clearly heard in both channels. That's why I've awarded only four stars to this otherwise-perfect set. HOWEVER, if you use an audio editor like Audacity, you can make your own bass play-along from the jazz demo track here. For example, for the tune "I Got Rhythm" I used Audacity's Equalization feature to drop out almost all the sound below 131 Hz, which included the highest note played by the bassist in this tune. (That's where the bass line being set out in the book was really handy--I could easily identify the bassist's highest note.) The result was a great-sounding play-along for a bassist, with the bass part so dim as to be inaudible along with the user's own live bass. I have used Audacity to make other such play-alongs out of regular performance CDs, but having the written-out bass line here made it particularly easy with this Approaching the Standards CD. Unfortunately, pianists and drummers won't be able to do this so easily. Nonetheless, I'm going to immediately order the remaining volumes of this Approaching the Standards set because the plusses greatly outweigh the one minus for me. The ensemble players are great to play behind, I like having the written bass lines from the CD, and the instruction for each tune is valuable.

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