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Christmas Songs: Jazz Piano Solos Series Volume 25



Synopsis

(Jazz Piano Solos). 21 holiday classics arranged for jazz piano. Includes: Blue Christmas * The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire) * Christmas Time Is Here * Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas * I'll Be Home for Christmas * Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! * My Favorite Things * Santa Baby * Silver Bells * White Christmas * and more. Includes chord names.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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This book is perfect for the holiday gathering where you want to impress with something more than just the typical Christmas tunes out of a hymnal. The arrangements are light and refreshing, and perfect for those of us pianists who aren't up to the challenge of improvisation after a couple of adult beverages. It is not easily sight-readable (be prepared to practice ahead of time), but the book is definitely fun to play, and memorable afterwards. Kudos to the arranger for including the chord symbols as well as the realization. All of the arrangements are perfect as they introduce the tune, do

a little development, and then most return to the tune at the end (but beware the DS al codas, as I found the page turns definitely get in the way). The only tunes that were not to my liking were the Gospel-swing arrangements (Blue Christmas and Silver Bells). While inventive, I felt the style gets old before the pieces have a chance to develop (although this might just be a matter of personal taste). Even if you agree with me, that still leaves 19 pieces that are just about as good as a Christmas piano CD (except live, because you'll be playing them). If you play the book cover to cover, it'll take about an hour (about which time you'll be ready for someone else to take over at the keyboard, with no takers because the arrangements from this book impressed the crowd). I'll definitely be pulling this book out again next year. Oh, and because it doesn't say this anywhere else in the info, these arrangements are by Brent Edstrom.

I'm thrilled about this purchase. Let me explain that as a long-time jazz musician (trombone player) and classically trained pianist (but, surprisingly NOT a jazz pianist per se), this book is like gold. I have not had time to play many of the arrangements, so I am going to keep my preliminary review fairly simple. Surprisingly, the technical requirements of this book should not be beyond that of any intermediate to advanced pianist even with a largely classical training. That is because being based primarily on sight reading rather than chordal improvisation, these arrangements can be accessible to anyone who appreciates but has never truly had time to study the discipline. Having said that, some knowledge of the jazz idiom is extremely helpful. Case in point, when playing chords with multiple accidental alterations, it helps to be able to use the chord notations to verify that you are playing the intended harmonies. What I like most about these arrangements is that they have been written to closely resemble (if not in identical form to) the music that you would hear in commercial recordings. A fairly obvious example of this is "Christmas Time is Here," which blew me away when I first played it because it so closely resembles the Vince Guaraldi version we are used to hearing. It may in fact be a simplified version of what he and other true jazz artists have done with the piece, but it makes the amateur pianist feel as if he or she were playing the original, and that's what this is all about: empowering the performer to expand his/her musical horizons. Indeed, through careful study and rehearsing of these pieces, I believe there is a lot that can be learned about jazz chord progressions and voicings. "A Child is Born" is another arrangements that fits this same pattern. It sounds so much like the versions you hear performed yet continues to be such a hauntingly beautiful piece to play. I'm sure everyone (myself included) could find things to knit-pick about specific songs or settings they like or dislike, but this is one situation where I am going to review based on the whole of the work rather than its individual parts. If you don't like a particular




accompaniment pattern or style, then do what other reviewers have suggested (and done) which is modify or improvise something more to your liking. Play from the chord progressions alone if you are so inclined. In closing, I will echo the sentiments of another reviewer I followed when selecting this book. I look forward to learning these pieces and hopefully someday playing them to entertain others with arrangements that are refreshing, exciting, and truly contemporary sounding. With 20+ pieces to study, this book is well worth the money. For what it's worth, I see that this is one of a long series of books designed to introduce the amateur pianist to a variety of jazz artists and styles. I expect those who play from those other books will find a similarly rewarding experience. I may well have to explore more of them myself.

I cannot arrange myself, but luckily, publishers such as Hal Leonard and Alfred Publishing do it for me. I have a large collection of various Christmas piano books, I can find many I like. This book will surely become one of my best. I received it yesterday and have been learning it all day. The first thing you notice about the arrangements is how professional they sound. The sophisticated and fresh chords, and the phrasing. These arrangements sound similar to the ones I've heard on various easy listening radio stations: jazzy, fresh, never boring, Hal Leonard did an outstanding job picking cream of the crop and transcribing them in one lovely book! My absolute favorites are Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas and Winter Wonderland, but almost every song is just a gem of its own. Hope you'll enjoy it as much I do. Other solos books I liked Yes, of course I can recommend: Check out other books in this wonderful series of Popular Performer by Alfred Publishing, about 30 books, especially the ones arranged by Mark Hayes. Also check out other series such as Steinway Library Piano Music series (about 6 books) and Jazz Piano Solos Series published by Hal Leonard (about 35 books). In addition, check out YouTube an amazing source for piano player especially search for Jazz2511 and Fabrizio Calligaris. Try search words such "piano tutorials" and you will be amazed what pops

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