

Hands-On Review: JodyJazz Jazz Instructional DVDs and CDs Multimedia Tools for Learning Jazz with the Greats

By Jon Chappell, Senior Editor, Harmony Central

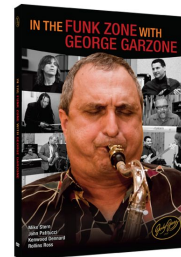
JodyJazz is an established mouthpiece manufacturer that also produces a line of top-tier multimedia jazz instruction materials. The company offers DVDs and audio CDs that feature world-class artists, and four recent additions to the company's growing catalog include titles by saxophonist George Garzone and pianist Kenny Werner. One thing to bear in mind is that JodyJazz sessions are structured to be used by all musicians, regardless of the instructors' chosen instrument. In other words, you don't have to be a saxophonist or pianist to appreciate what Garzone and Werner are laying down! Let's give these discs a spin and see how they can improve our playing.

In the Zone with George Garzone

"In the Funk Zone" is a comprehensive two-disc DVD instructional package on learning and applying pentatonic scale concepts that viewers can watch, listen to, and practice along with. Disc 1 contains full-length performances of four tunes (over 27 minutes worth of music) with a world-class ensemble. This gives you the opportunity to see how solos are played in a real-world context. And with players such as guitarist Mike Stern and bassist John Patitucci, you're talking inspiration of the highest order.

Disc 1 also contains the Lessons, which comprise six chapters and 29 subsections, each focusing on a specific concept. Mr. Garzone goes step-by-step from the basics to advanced applications, but he always makes it sound musical through his fluid and lyrical playing. This is perhaps the essence of the DVD: well-presented and thought-out concepts that are put into practice, all thanks to the effortless mastery of Garzone. A nice coda to the first disc is three separate discussions in the chapter "Garzone on Time."

On Disc 2 you get to participate, using either the Play Along mode or the Trading sections, which gives you the opportunity to swap choruses, eights, and fours (and sometimes twos) with Garzone and his band. The PDFs of all the written material are here too: chord charts in concert, Bb, Eb, and bass clef versions, plus the 41-page e-book with notated music examples (scale definitions, transcriptions of performances on disc, supplemental exercises, and explanations of important concepts). Also included are interviews with the band, in a Q&A with host and publisher Jody Espina.



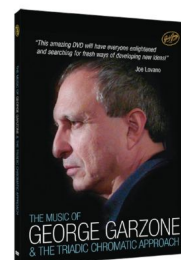
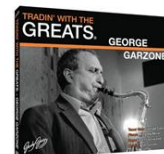
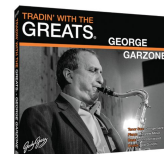
Tradin' with George

JodyJazz also offers audio-only instruction in the form of the "Tradin'" CD series. "Tradin' With The Greats: George Garzone" is a two-CD set featuring the music of a quartet of world-class musicians: Mulgrew Miller on piano, John Lockwood on bass, Bob Gullotti drums, and of course the great George Garzone on tenor sax. The 12 tunes are a mix of standards and originals, and cover a wide range of jazz styles. The essence of this CD package is trading alternating choruses or phrases with other musicians in the ensemble.

Garzone provides a number of different schemes for trading. Sometimes it's entire choruses, sometimes eight bars, sometimes four or two. This always keeps things fresh and challenges musicians to develop ideas of different lengths. One of the great things about having Garzone as your trading partner is that he plays with such variety. One strategy I found was to simply follow his lead in developing ideas, which got me playing lines that were alternately lyrical, bluesy, boppy, virtuosic, intervallic, and harmonically inside and outside. You can also match his motivic gestures, or even cover the same registers he does. It might be tough to keep up sometimes, but following Mr. G. ensures an all-around musical workout. There are so many ideas to try, and so much great playing by Garzone to emulate or complement, that you will never run out of material.

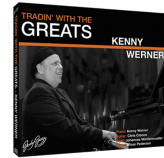
The Triadic Chromatic Approach

JodyJazz offers many other titles in both DVD and audio CD formats. For the more accomplished player, there's "The Music of George Garzone & the Triadic Chromatic Approach" DVD, a two-disc set that presents a systematic approach for applying successive triads in random inversions to achieve freer, more chromatic improvisation. The ingenious concept focuses on triads (major, minor, augmented and diminished), their inversions, and coupling them together through half-step movement. This formula introduces chromaticism in your playing that is varied and unpredictable, and leads your ears to combinations they might not come up with on their own.



Tradin' with Kenny Werner

Also check out "Tradin' with the Greats: Kenny Werner," which provides musicians a chance to trade and play along with Kenny Werner, a pianist whose prolific career includes stints with Joe Lovano and Jack DeJohnette. As with other titles, this 10-song, two-CD package includes performances, trading sessions, play-along tracks, and chord charts for all tunes (in concert, Bb, Eb, and bass clef versions). Print them out or display them on your mobile device, and you have a handy visual reference to help keep yourself oriented as you play along.



Conclusion

You rise to the level of the talent you keep company with, and JodyJazz's instructional DVDs and CDs match you up with the best instructors in the world. What these particular discs give you is the best possible setting, whether you're just listening to Garzone and Werner do their thing, or when you're actively participating in the session and it's your turn to blow. Either way, JodyJazz instructional materials capture world-class musicians at their finest, and provide an expertly produced lesson format that is comprehensive yet casual, and an inspiration for your improvising and soloing.

For a chance to jam along with the world's greatest jazz musicians, check out the DVD and audio-CD instructional packages from JodyJazz. Order today from The Woodwind and Brasswind and get our 45-Day Total Satisfaction and Lowest Price Guarantees.

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