

## Playing from a lead sheet

1. Listen to a professional recording of your piece and learn to sing the melody without reference to the lead sheet. Then seek out a lead sheet. (The best strategy, though, is to figure out the melody by ear and forget the lead sheet altogether. This was the strategy taught by Rosario Giuliani at the Roma Summer Jazz Workshop)
2. From the lead sheet clap the melody, without swing rhythm to start, then with swing rhythm if appropriate using the metronome and counting aloud at a comfortable tempo. Notice differences between what you heard on the recording and what you see. Adjust your performance to match the recording.
3. Play the melody, as you heard it on the recording, with the chord roots in the left hand. (The melody doesn't have to be exact, close is fine. Overtime, as your skills improve, you will be able to be more exact in your transcriptions.) These single bass notes are played 2 octaves lower than the melody as half notes or whole notes. In short, following the rhythm of the chords. Write in the fingering for the melody if appropriate. Next, write out the 4 notes jazz chords under the melody. The time spent doing these activities will reap rewards for your long-term retention of the music.
4. Now switch it up, play the basic chord voicing of tri-tone or 3rd/7th in right hand now and a bass line of roots in the left. The right-hand should continue to play these voicings in the middle C area.
5. Play either root/7th or root/3rd in the left hand with the melody in the right hand, aiming for smooth voice leading in the left hand. I call this Sonny's thumbs, in honor of Sonny Stitt who showed them to me as a kid.
6. Play the melody supported with the tri-tone or 3rd/7th intervals in the left hand.
7. Play the rootless chords in right hand and bass line of roots in the left.
8. Play the melody in right hand and rootless voicing in the left.
9. Play scales in the right hand and rootless voicing in the left.
10. Repeat all steps from memory.

Cheers, David Story, B.M., ARCT, R.M.T. Piano Teacher c: 905-330-1349 [www.davidstory.c](http://www.davidstory.c)