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INTRODUCTION

How Do You Start?

Anyone who has performed a song in front of an audience knows just how important a musical introduction to it can be. An intro sets the mood of a piece, establishes a key, and prepares the listener for what's to come. Most commonly, an intro will present an important piece of melodic material—the last part of the chorus of a song, for example—to establish a theme. While this can be a very effective technique, an intro can be any number of things. It can serve as a cue for other musicians or performers (see *Hyman*, p. 50); it can establish a characteristic “groove” (*Scivales*, p. 132); or it can suggest extra-musical clues, such as clock tower bells (*Morris*, p. 29). An intro can even be deceptive, beginning in one tonality and leading into another (*Morris*, p. 69). Indeed, there are as many ways to introduce a song as there are piano players in the world. (And at last count there was no shortage!) But the truth is, sometimes the greatest hurdle to creating a successful performance is starting out in the right way.

This book is designed to offer piano players a source of intros from which to draw for a variety of musical settings. While we've included categories specific to well-established styles—*Latin*, *country*, *waltz*, etc.—the majority of the pop and jazz intros are divided into three broad classifications: *ballads* (for slower tunes), *medium tempo* (for many swing tunes and other moderately-paced songs) and *up tempo* (for faster songs). This will allow the individual player to select intros based on tempo, since many of the intros can be adapted to fit different styles. However, this is not to say that an intro found in the *ballad* category, for example, *has* to be used for a ballad: the categories (and tempo indications) contained herein should be used simply as guides. We've also included a special Ellington category that will allow you to play in the style of this great jazz master. And since transposition is so often a factor in performing, we've set each example in three keys.

In addition, our arrangers have provided suggestions for tunes that work well with a particular intro, which we've organized into a handy index for quick reference. Naturally, these are simply suggestions—most of these intros are “generic” and can be used for any number of tunes.

Ultimately, this book will best serve as a way to help you develop your own personally-styled intros and arrangements.