

# Improvising on the saxophone

When you improvise, instead of playing music off a printed page, you make up your own music as you go along. Improvising is easy and everyone can improvise!

Try these ideas as starting points for your own improvisations:

- First improvise your own four-bar, short piece just using two notes: A and C. Play everything you create rhythmically and without any hesitation or uncertainty; set yourself a pulse, tap it with your foot or move some part of your body in time and then play. Remember – stay in time with the pulse.
- Now try adding B to the A and C; then try A, B, C, D, E and G. Repeat some of your rhythms so that the listener can follow what you are doing.
- Next, take the same notebank – A, C, D, E, G – and ask someone (your teacher, perhaps) to play with you. While you improvise they could play:



Or, on the piano:



- Finally, remember that you get better every time you have a go. Why not do some improvisation as a warm up at the beginning of a practice or a lesson. Experiment with other sets of notes – scales are good – and ask your teacher to help you find unusual ones.

Here are a few suggestions:

- G, A, Bb, C, D, and F#
- D, E, F#, A, and B
- D, C#, Bb, A, and G

There are opportunities to improvise in Stage 15 of the tutor book.

# Composing on the saxophone

There is no correct or incorrect way to compose; the only thing that matters is whether the music sounds like you wanted it to sound.

Try these ideas as starting points for your own composing. Ask your teacher to help you by writing your ideas down with you and perhaps finding a piano part to go with your composition.

- 1 Write a piece inspired by the title *March of the Zombies*.
- 2 Write a piece using only the notes of G major, and which follows the rhythmic pattern of *Cat's tail swing* in Stage 9 of the tutor book.
- 3 Write a jazzed-up version of any nursery rhyme tune.
- 4 Write a piece in the key of F major which only uses this rhythm:



- 5 Write a piece in D major beginning and ending on bottom D; include top A at some point in the tune.
- 6 Continue this tune:



- 7 Write a piece that illustrates the title *Ghost in the junkyard*. Experiment with all sorts of special effects available on your instrument, for example, blowing noises and squeaks.
- 8 Write a sad piece. Start on A and only use the notes A, B, C, D, E, and F. Give the piece a title.
- 9 Write a piece that includes a big moment of surprise. Give the piece a title.
- 10 Write a piece that is exactly eight bars long and uses the notes A, C, D, E and G. Give the piece a title.