

# JJ JOHNSON

## Solos



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Transcribed by JOHN LEISENRING & HUNT BUTLER  
Edited by TOM SENFF  
Engraving and Graphics by PETE & SUSAN GEARHART  
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# CONTENTS

Foreword .....	ii
Now's The Time .....	1
From <i>J.J. In Person!</i> Columbia CL1161	
Blues In The Closet .....	5
From <i>Stan Getz and J.J. Johnson At The Opera House</i> Verve MGV-8265	
Walkin' .....	11
From <i>J.J. In Person!</i> Columbia CL1161	
Blue Trombone, Part I .....	14
From <i>Blue Trombone</i> Columbia CL1303	
Billie's Bounce .....	19
From <i>Stan Getz and J.J. Johnson At The Opera House</i> Verve MGV-8265	
Tune Up .....	24
From <i>J.J. In Person!</i> Columbia CL1161	
Laura .....	27
From <i>J.J. In Person!</i> Columbia CL1161	
Turnpike (alternate master) .....	29
From <i>The Eminent Jay Jay Johnson</i> Blue Note BLP1506, Vol. 2	
Misterioso .....	31
From <i>J.J. In Person!</i> Columbia CL1161	
Yesterdays .....	34
From <i>Stan Getz and J.J. Johnson At The Opera House</i> Verve MGV-8265	
Crazy Rhythm .....	37
From <i>Stan Getz and J.J. Johnson At The Opera House</i> Verve MGV-8265	
Hello, Young Lovers .....	44
From <i>Blue Trombone</i> Columbia CL1303	
When The Saints Go Marchin' In .....	48
From <i>A Touch of Satin/J.J. Johnson Quartet</i> Columbia CS8537	

# FOREWORD

J.J. Johnson is the pre-eminent trombonist of modern jazz. His influence is pervasive. Virtually every contemporary trombonist, jazz or otherwise, has been affected by the innovations attributed to J.J. Johnson. Technical feats that were inconceivable prior to Johnson are now commonplace, and the attitude that the trombone is capable of doing anything that saxophones and trumpets can do is generally taken for granted.

As with Charlie Parker and the saxophone, Johnson's sound has become one of the standards by which trombone sound is measured. His complete command of the instrument from top to bottom, his pioneering efforts to adapt the language of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie for the trombone, his marvelous musicality and his unfailing good taste all support the claim for J.J. as the most important trombonist of the Charlie Parker and post-Charlie Parker eras.

Although J.J. has played all over the world, his major impact has been felt primarily through the hundreds of brilliant recordings to which he is credited. Since his recording debut on December 18th, 1942 with the Benny Carter Orchestra, aspiring trombonists all over the world have used his improvisations as models from imitation, study and analysis, and as points of departure for developing their own voices.

The thirteen solos in this book were chosen by J.J. himself as representative of the best of his past and recorded output. The solos encompass a time period from June 22, 1953 (*Turnpike*) to December 21, 1960 (*When The Saints Go Marchin' In*). The settings vary from quartets (four recordings) to quintets (8 recordings) to sextets (one recording), and these thirteen solos display many facets of J.J.'s playing, among them the following:

1. Thematic Development (*Walkin'*, *Now's The Time* and *Misterioso*)
2. Lyricism (*Laura* and *Yesterdays*)
3. Brilliant Technique (*Turnpike*, *Crazy Rhythm* and *Hello, Young Lovers*)
4. Blues Roots (*Walkin'*, *Now's The Time* and *Billy's Bounce*)
5. Unique approach to the language of Bebop, i.e. cycles, turnbacks, substitutions, the whole range of jazz scales and patterns, and the use of subtle musical gestures common to all of the giants of Bebop.
6. The seemingly endless string of impeccably crafted phrases that present the illusion of inevitability without the faintest hint of predictability.

This book of solos is a most valuable document for anyone interested in the improvisational approaches of one of jazz's most creative artists.

-- DAVID BAKER

J.J. Johnson's Improvised Solo On The Chord Progression to:

# Now's The Time

11 CHORUSES - F BLUES

1 F7 Bb7 F7 F7

Bb7 F7

G-7 C7 F7 G-7 C7

2 F7 Bb7 F7 F7 F7+5

Bb7 F A- D7

G-7 C7 F7 G-7 C7

3 F7 Bb7 F7 F7+5

Bb7 F7 8va D7 G-7

# Walkin'

6 CHORUSES - BLUES IN F

1

F7 Bb7 F7

F7 Bb7 F7

D7 G- C7 F7 D7

2

G- C7 F7 Bb7 F7

F7 Bb7 F7

D7 G- C7 F7 D7

# Misterioso

4 CHORUSES - KEY OF Bb

(This is an elongated blues - 24 measures equals one chorus)

1

2