

INTRODUCTION

As a young musician, I can remember how exciting it was to advance to each successive level because it meant I was getting to play with highly skilled musicians. That's the secret to improving your game—play with musicians who are better than you. Even though it can be a little intimidating at times, or even embarrassing a few times in my case, spending time paying your dues with accomplished players is a great way to accelerate your musical growth. Accordingly, I believe this book will provide you with a unique opportunity.

I count myself as one lucky guy, to lead a band with the caliber of musicians who make up the Big Phat Band. The players in the band are uniquely skilled and are without exception, masters at playing big band jazz in a variety of styles. They fearlessly attack the most difficult material I throw at them. Not only do they routinely achieve technical mastery of these charts but they also elevate the music to a new level beyond the notes on the page.

The Big Phat Band Play-Along Series gives you the opportunity to sit in with outstanding players to improve and measure your own ability to in a big band. Make no mistake—the music in this book is challenging. The Phat Band has been playing these charts for years, and it *still* keeps us on our toes! But if you hang in there and keep at it, you will make huge strides toward the exhilaration and art of playing in a big band, along with becoming a stronger musician.

There are some minor alterations from the original published charts. For example, I added some inner trumpet lines to the trumpet and trombone books, and solo chord changes to all the books, so the horn players can solo. There are also a few notes that vary from the recorded tracks. Books are available for alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, trumpet, trombone, and drums.

The main goal of these books is to teach the art of ensemble playing. You will learn volumes of information about style, phrasing, tone, dynamics, technique, articulation, playing in time, Latin grooves, and a variety of swing styles as you play along and listen to the players in the Phat Band.

Participating in this series are the lead players from the Big Phat Band. These musicians are all world-class performers, and their guidance will be invaluable as you dig into this music.

- Wayne Bergeron is a one-of-a-kind lead trumpet player whose strong chops and great musicality make him one of the most in-demand musicians in Los Angeles.
- Bernie Dresel, one of the most musical and well-rounded drummers on the scene today, can play in any style, sight-read anything, and is also an accomplished orchestral percussionist.

- Eric Marienthal, a remarkable saxophonist, can be heard on recordings with the Chick Corea Electric Band and the Rippingtons, as well as on many recordings under his own name.
- Andy Martin, a superb improviser and one of the most facile trombonists in Los Angeles, sets a new standard for jazz trombone.

Since improvisation is an important facet in jazz, I have included chord changes for the solo sections in the saxophone, trumpet, and trombone books. The play-along CD has the solos mixed out so that you can jump in and blow! Selected transcriptions of some of the solos recorded by various band members are included in the saxophone, trumpet, and trombone books. You can use these transcribed solos to study, practice as etudes, or simply play in the solo sections. On the drum book CD, the original horn solos have been kept intact so you can play off the soloist. In addition, a Q&A session with Bernie Dresel and myself discusses aspects of big-band drumming.

To get the most out of the play-along CD, you can of course use headphones as you play along with the tracks, but for me, the most realistic acoustical environment is to listen to the music through speakers with your ears unhindered by headphones. The key is to be able to hear yourself as well as everybody else in the band, and headphones can sometimes prevent you from hearing yourself well enough unless you take one ear off.

I have a policy in the Big Phat Band: on our gigs we come to play. The band works hard, no one makes excuses, and every player goes for it every night, all the while havin' a blast. I hope you have fun working with this book and it helps you grow as a musician.

www.gordongoodwin.com

Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band CDs—*Swingin' for the Fences*, *XXL*, and *The Phat Pack*—are available on

Silverline Records (www.silverlinerecords.com)

Photography by Rex Bullington (www.Rexbullington.com)

Additional photos by Tessa Viles and Linda Griffin

Editor: Pete BarenBregge

Production Coordinator: Sharon Marlow

Art Design: Thais Yanes

Engraving: Rick Fansler

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CONTENTS

Gordon Goodwin Biography	3
Eric Marienthal Biography	4
Transcribed Saxophone Solos.....	60

	Page #	Demo track	Play-Along track
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SWINGIN' FOR THE FENCES.....	6	Track 1	
(Swingin' for the Fences, Silverline – 85002-2)			Track 2
LA ALMEJA PEQUEÑA.....	10	Track 3	
(The Phat Pack, Silverline – 284404-2).....			Track 4
HUNTING WABBITS.....	16	Track 5	
(XXL, Silverline – 281206-2)			Track 6
WHODUNNIT?.....	21	Track 7	
(The Phat Pack, Silverline – 284404-2).....			Track 8
COUNT BUBBA'S REVENGE.....	27	Track 9	
(The Phat Pack, Silverline – 284404-2).....			Track 10
GET IN LINE.....	32	Track 11	
(The Phat Pack, Silverline – 284404-2).....			Track 12
HORN OF PUENTE.....	37	Track 13	
(XXL, Silverline – 281206-2)			Track 14
THE JAZZ POLICE	43	Track 15	
(XXL, Silverline – 281206-2)			Track 16
HIGH MAINTENANCE	47	Track 17	
(XXL, Silverline – 281206-2)			Track 18
CUT 'N RUN.....	53	Track 19	
(The Phat Pack, Silverline – 284404-2).....			Track 20

Full-version CD and DVD dual disc of all of these titles are
available from your favorite music store.

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SWINGIN' FOR THE FENCES



TENOR SAXOPHONE

GORDON GOODWIN (ASCAP)

FAST SWING

32 **SOLI**

1 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64

16