

I Got Rhythm

Here are the fingerings that I use to play a jazz chord-melody arrangement of George and Ira Gershwin's 1930 standard *I Got Rhythm* from "Girl Crazy." I play it in the key of G not the original key of Bb. I play the song in a lively 4/4 time. Alternate chord substitutions are indicated in parentheses above the chord I used.

Jazz musicians are familiar with the term "rhythm changes," which is a phrase referring to the chord progressions of *I Got Rhythm*. K. J. McElrath, Musicologist for JazzStandards.com, explains that "In the first few decades of the 1900's, record companies began encouraging musicians to reuse chord progressions of existing popular songs. In that way, they could borrow the harmonic formula of a successful song without running afoul of copyright laws. Although the "rhythm changes" are usually attributed to Gershwin's *I Got Rhythm*, their exact origin is not known; many of the well-known composers of jazz standards, including Gershwin, mined the early jazz clubs for their material.

Regardless of their origin, the "rhythm changes" have been used for hundreds of published songs. Some examples are, *Allen's Alley*, *Don't Be That Way*, *The Flintstones*, *The Jeep is Jumpin'*, *Lemon Drop*, *Lester Leaps In*, *Red Cross*, *Rhythm-a-ning*, *Salt Peanuts*, *Shaw Nuff*, and *Squatty Roo*.

Charlie Parker had a genius for writing songs based on the chord progressions of *I Got Rhythm*. Just a few of these inventions are *Kim*, *Dexterity*, *Ah-Leu-Cha*, *Crazeology*, *Anthropolgy* and *Moose the Mooch*."

Jazz guitarist, John Stowell, commented: "I doubt that George Gershwin could have foreseen that *I Got Rhythm* would be the basis for dozens of other jazz melodies employing his original changes. The melody is cute and endearing, but it's the tempo and rapid progression that have made the tune a litmus test for jazz soloists for 70 years."

A

		(Bbo)		(C6 Bb13)		(Ab7b5)	
GM7	Em7	Am7 D7 D7b9	Bm7 Em7	Am7 D7			
E-----	-----	-----5--5--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
B---3---	---5---	---8---5--4--	---10---	---8---	---5---	---3---	-----
G---4---	---7---	---5---5--5--	---7---	---7---	---5---	---5---	-----
D---4---	---5---	---5---4--4--	---7---	---5---	---5---	---4---	-----
A-----	---7---	---7---5-----	---9---	---7---	---7---	---5---	-----
E---3---	-----	---5-----	---7-----	-----	---5-----	-----	-----
1.		2.	3.		4.		

GM7 G6/B	CM7C6Am7b5D7b9	GM7 D7b9	G6 Am7Ab7
E-----0--	---3--5--8--5--	---7--7--5-7-5--	---3-----
B---3---3--	---5--5--8--4--	---7--7--4-4-4--	---5---5-4-
G---4---0--	---4--5--8--5--	---4--4--5-5-5--	---4---5-5-
D---4---0--	---5--5--7--4--	-----4-4-4--	-----5-4-
A-----2--	---3--3-----	---5--5-----	---5---7-6-
E---3-----	-----	-----	---3-3-5-4-
5.	6.	7.	8.

A

(D+)		(E7#9)		(D7)	
GM7 G#o	Am7 D9	Bm7 Bbo	Am7 Ab7b5		
E-----	-----5--	---5---3---	-----		
B---3---	---8---5---	---3---2---	---5---	---3---	
G---4---	---5---5---	-----0---	---5---	---5---	
D---4---	---5---4---	---4---2---	---5---	---4---	
A-----	---7---5---	---2---1---	---7---	-----	
E---3---	---5-----	-----	---5---	---4---	
9.	10.	11.	12.		

GM7 G13	CM7 D9 Eb9 D9	Bm7 E9 Am7 D7b9	G6 C9
E-----	---3--5--8--5--	---7--7--5-7-5--	---3--3--
B---3---	---5--5--6--5--	---7--7--5---4--	---5--3--
G---4---	---4--5--6--5--	---7--7--5---5--	---4--3--
D---4---	---5--4--5--4--	---7--6--5---4--	-----2--
A-----	---3--5--6--5--	-----7-----	---5--3--
E---3---	-----	---7-----5-----	---3-----
13.	14.	15.	16.

B

F#m7b5 F#m11	B7 B13	Bm7 Bm6	E9 E7
E---7---	---7---9---	---7---7---	---7-----
B---5---	---7---9---	---7---7---	---7---5---
G---5---	---8---8---	---7---7---	---7---7---
D---4---	---7---7---	---7---6---	---6---6---
A-----	---9-----	---9-----	---7---7---
E-----	---7---7---	---7---7---	-----
17.	18.	19.	20.

						(Ab7b5)	
Em7b5	Em11	A7	A13	Am7	Am6	D9	D7
E---	5---	5---		---	5---	7---	---
B---	3---	3---		---	5---	7---	---
G---	3---	4---		---	6---	6---	---
D---	2---	2---		---	5---	5---	---
A-----				---	7-----	5-----	---
E-----				---	5-----	5-----	---
21.		22.		23.		24.	

A

Bm7	Bbo	Am7	D9	Bm7	Bb13	Am7	Ab7b5
E-----				---	5---		---
B-----	5---			---	8---	5---	---
G---	7---	6---		---	5---	5---	---
D---	7---	5---		---	5---	4---	---
A-----				---	7-----	5-----	---
E---	7---	6---		---	5---	6---	---
25.		26.		27.		28.	

GM7	G13	Am7	D9	D7b9	Am7/D	D7b9	G6
E-----				---	5---	8---	5---
B---	3---	5---		---	8---	5---	7---
G---	4---	4---		---	5---	5---	8---
D---	4---	3---		---	5---	5---	8---
A-----				---	7---	5-----	---
E---	3---	3---		---	5-----	5-----	---
29.		30.		31.		32.	

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