

TAKE THE A CHORD

Aコードで A行こう

ENGLISH

For 2-4 Players

Playtime: 30 min.

For ages 12+

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Jazz Musicians compete on stage skillfully playing music. In music, harmony is the key. They must prove their skill performing bluesy, lyrical, swing, soulful & earthy jazz with feeling, while keeping the band in harmony.

In Take the A Chord the card's strengths change as you play. Scoring doesn't encourage winning every round you can. More than having good or bad cards, it's skillfully using what you were dealt harmoniously in the moment aiming for victory, while being prepared for surprises. On the stage will you have a keen ear to make the most of sudden key changes & improvisation to gain notoriety and leave a winner? Get ready for a dazzling jazz performance-like game experience.



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Components

35 Feeling Cards (5 colors of A-G)



Key Ring



Leader Marker



Spotlight Token



11 Trick Tokens



5 Improvisation Tokens



*2 L Tokens (Left)



*2 R Tokens (Right)



*Only used in the 2-player game.

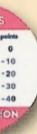
3 Scoring Insets



2 players



3 players



4 players

Key Marker



Score Pad

2 Instruction Manuals (English/Japanese)

Goal of the Game

Each player chooses one card from their hand and plays it then the card's strengths are compared to determine a winner.

In this game it's not about winning every time you can, but about adjusting your strategy, balancing your wins while keeping an eye on your opponent's.

To this end **key changes**, that change the card's strengths, and **improvisations**, that earn you bonus points, should be utilized.

Setup

This is the 4-player game explanation.

The changes for 2/3 players will be described later.

Ring & Marker Placement

Place the Key Ring in the middle of the table.

Insert the 4-player Scoring Inset (with the '4' on the back) face up, into the Key Ring this will be called the "Board".



Place the Key Marker and Spotlight Token near the Board. Place the Trick Tokens & Improvisation Tokens together nearby, but out of the way.

Deal the Cards

Shuffle the 35 Feeling Cards (called Cards), and deal **8 Cards**, facedown to each player.

Stack the 3 unused Cards, unrevealed, out of the way.

Determine the Key

Flip the top card from the 3 unused Card. The Chord (letter) on the revealed Card is the **Starting Key**.

Place the Key Marker on the same letter of the Key Ring portion of the Board.

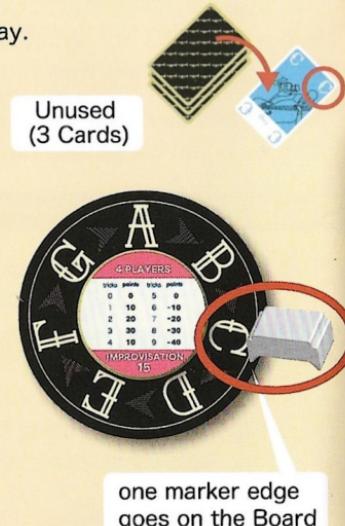
The player who most recently had a musical performance will be the Leader (starting player). The Leader places the **Leader Marker** in front of themselves.

Now you're ready to play.

Game Flow

This game is played in 3 stages. In each stage, each player plays 1 card then a winner is determined, this is called a **Trick**.

Many tricks are played, and when all player's hands are empty one stage is completed. After playing 3 stages the player with the most points wins.



Trick

Here we explain how Cards are played from your hand in each stage.

Playing Cards

Going clockwise, starting with the Leader each player plays 1 Card. When your turn comes choose **one Card** and place it face up in front of you. (In a 4-player game each Trick will have 1 Card from each player, so there will be 4 Cards per Trick.)

The Leader may choose ANY Card to play. The color of the Card the Leader plays is called the **Lead Color**.

The following players must play according to the following rules.

I-a If the player has a card matching the Lead Color they play any one of those matching cards.
(If they only have one matching card that card is played.)

OR

I-b Play a Card matching Chords with a Card already played in this Trick.
(Detailed later in Key Change/Improvisation)

II If the player has NO cards matching the Lead Color they can play ANY card they like.

Once each player has played 1 card the Trick winner is determined. While playing Cards sometimes a **Key Change** or **Improvisation** special event will be triggered.

Special Case Example: Key Change

In 1 trick, playing 2 or more of the same Chord (letter) causes a Key Change. The last player to play the repeated Chord becomes the Key Changer. (details on Pg. 8)

[Key Change]



Special Case Example: Improvisation

When the last player plays the same Chord as the Leader then Improvisation begins. The last player is the Improviser. (details on Pg. 10)

If a Key Change and Improvisation would occur in the same trick, the Key Change is canceled and only Improvisation happens.

[Improvisation]



Determining the Trick Winner

After each player has played 1 Card, the Winner of the Trick is determined.

Card Strengths

The Key (the letter where the Key Marker is) is currently the strongest Chord, followed clockwise. (When A is the Key, B is the next strongest then in order CDEF, finally G is the weakest.)

Each played Card is compared. Whoever played the strongest Card wins the trick. Only the Chords are compared. The colors are ignored.



If there are multiple strongest Cards then the one in the Lead Color wins. If there were none in the Lead Color then the first one played wins.

Exception: When Improvisation Occurs

When Improvisation occurs a winner is not determined.

Each player turns the Card they played facedown, and no winner is declared, and another trick is played. However if the limit of 3 Improvisations is reached or it is the last Trick of a Stage then a winner is determined. Facedown Cards are never used in Determining a Trick Winner.

Earning Trick Tokens

The winner of the Trick takes 1 Trick Token, and places it in front of themselves, so that everyone can see.

Exception: A Trick taken after Improvisation

If there were facedown cards played the winner takes one Trick Token for each card that they played (face up & facedown).

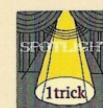
(In the case of 1 face up & 3 facedown then 4 trick tokens are taken.)

Additionally the winner takes an Improvisation Token.

Note: Regardless of the number of times Improvisation occurred the winner of an Improvisation only gets 1 Improvisation Token.



Acquiring the Spotlight Token



If the winner of the trick played the current Key's Chord then they take the Spotlight Token. There is only 1 Spotlight Token, so if another player already had it then the winner takes it from the previous owner.

During Score Calculation the Spotlight Token is equivalent to 1 Trick Token.

Key Change: A New Key

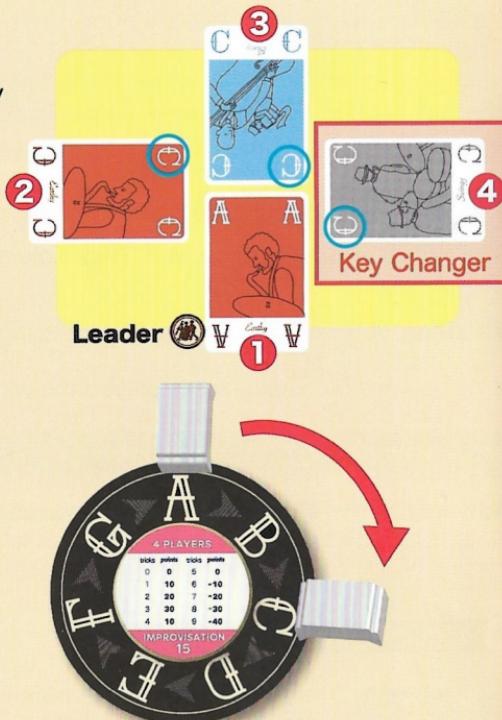
When to Change Keys

In 1 Trick if the same Chord (letter) is played 2 or more times then a Key Change occurs. The last player to play the repeated Chord is the Key Changer.

 Key Changes don't occur in the last Trick of a Stage. In such a situation the Key doesn't change and a winner is determined normally.

Changing the Key

After determining a winner, the Key Changer moves the Key Marker to the Chord that they played. From the following Trick this will be the new Key.



The Key Changer moves the Key Marker to the new Key.

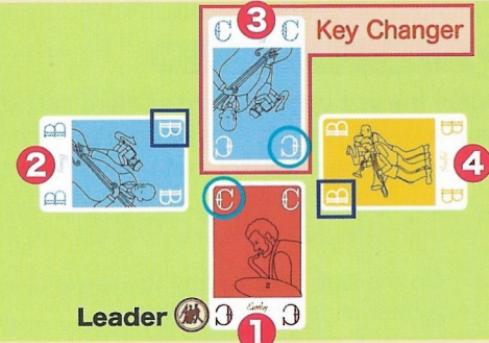
The Key Changer Becomes the Leader

The Key Changer becomes the next Leader and takes the Leader Marker.

[Special Ex.1]

When 2 pairs of Chords are played.

When **2 pairs of Chords** are played then the player who played the **same Chord** as the leader becomes the Key Changer.



[Special Ex.2]

The current Key causes a Key Change

Even when 2 or more Chords of the current Key are played a Key Change occurs. The Key Marker stays in the same place, so only the Leader Marker moves. The Key Changer is the next Leader.



The current Key is B.

Prepare for the Next Trick

After this continue to "Prepare for the Next Trick". (Pg. 13)

Improvisation Continue Around Again

Here we explain **Improvisation**. When Improvisation is triggered the Chord's strengths change, the Trick winner determination is delayed, and the Trick continues for another round.

Triggering Improvisation

When the last player's Card's Chord (letter) matches the Leader's then Improvisation occurs. The last player becomes the **Improviser**. The Improviser takes the Leader Marker and begins the next round of the Trick.

If Improvisation and a Key Change would occur in a single Trick **the Improvisation happens while the Key Change is cancelled.** (Ex.2)

On the last Trick of any Stage Improvisation is ignored, and the Trick winner is determined normally.

Turning Cards Facedown

All Cards played when Improvisation occurs are turned facedown. No winner is determined. An extra Trick round immediately begins.

The next Trick's Cards are played on top of these facedown Cards. (Ex.1)

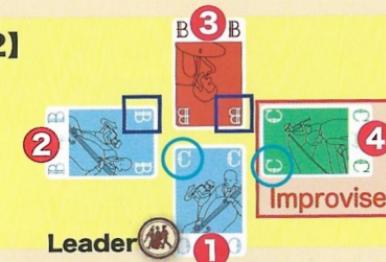
【Ex.1】



The 4th player's Card is the same Chord as the Leader's, triggering Improvisation.

The used Cards are put facedown. The improviser takes the Leader Marker and begins.

【Ex.2】



③plays a B Chord which has already been played causing a Key Change, but then④causes Improvisation taking priority.

Changing the Key

When Improvisation occurs the Improviser moves the Key Marker to the Chord they played. This will be the new Key.

Triggering Improvisation in the Current Key

The Key Marker doesn't move, but Improvisation is triggered, so **the Leader Marker is taken by the Improviser**, and becomes the Leader.

2nd & Further Round's Tricks

The new Leader starts the next Trick. Only the newest round's cards are used to determine the Trick winner. The facedown Cards are ignored.

Repeated Improvisation

Improvisation can be repeated. If the 2nd round's last Card's Chord matches the Leader's then Improvisation is retriggered. The 2nd round's Cards are turned facedown, and a 3rd round begins.

Improvisation Limit

Improvisation can be triggered a maximum of 3 times in a row (for a total of 4 rounds).

If Improvisation would be Triggered a 4th Time.

Improvisation is not triggered, and it is treated as a Key Change with the last player as the Key Changer.

Playing Cards Example

In this example the 4th Player (④) is about to play with 5 Cards left in his hand.

C A 'C' Card has already been played, so this can be played. If played it will cause a **Key Change** and ④ will be the next Leader. The Trick winner will be ③ as they played the first 'C'.

B This is the Lead Color, so it can be played. If played it will **win** the trick and earn 1 Trick Token. 'B' is the current Key, so they would earn the **Spotlight Token**. They would become the next Leader.

F This is the Lead Color, so it can be played. If so the winner would be ③ who played the 'C'.

D A 'D' is in play, so this is legal. If played **Improvisation** would be triggered, ④ would become Leader. No winner would be declared, and a second Trick round would begin.

A ④ has a Card of the Lead Color, so this can not be played.



Prepare for the Next Trick

1. The Leader Marker Moves

After determining a winner, we see who's the next Leader.

The winner of the Trick becomes the **next Leader**.

If there was a **Key Changer** or an **Improviser** then they are the next Leader, instead.

When no Key Change and no Improvisation occurs

The Trick winner takes the Leader Marker, and is the next Leader.

When a Key Change or Improvisation occurs

The Key Changer/Improviser takes the Leader Marker, and is the next Leader.
The Key is Changed. The Key Marker moves to the new Key.

2. Clear Away the Trick's Cards

The Cards used in the Trick and collected in a stack, and put off to the side.

Finishing a Trick (Summary)

Determining the Trick Winner

The winner gets 1 Trick Token.

*If the Trick was won by the current Key take the Spotlight Token.

*After Improvisation: also take 1 Improvisation Token & (1-3) extra Trick Tokens.

Preparing for the Next Trick

The winner takes the Leader Marker.

*If there was a Key Changer or Improviser then they take the Leader Marker. Change Keys.

Clear the played Cards

Scoring

After all player's hands are empty the stage is over, and we do Stage Scoring. Players score based on the number of their Trick Tokens as described in the chart on the Board(inset). A player with the Spotlight Token counts it as 1 Trick Token.

Next we get bonus points for Improvisation. Each Improvisation Token earns 15 points.

Record the Scores

Write the scores on the Score Pad. Write each player's score in their row and in the lower part of the box place a check for for each Improvisation Token they earned.

4-Player Scoring Example

- P1: 1 Trick Token & the Spotlight Token: 2 Tricks = 20 (Points)
- P2: 2 Trick Tokens & 1 Improvisation Token: $20 + 15 = 35$
- P1: 5 Trick Tokens & 2 Improvisation Tokens: $0 + 30 = 30$
- P1: 0 Trick Tokens: 0

Name	Stage 1
P1	20 □□□□□
P2	35 ✓□□□□
P3	30 ✓□□□□
P4	0 □□□□□

Stage End

After Stage Scoring, return all the Trick Tokens, Improvisation Tokens & the Spotlight Token. Gather all 35 Feeling Cards (including the ones set aside) into a new deck, and shuffle it. Go back to 'Deal the Cards' and begin the next Stage. The next Stage's first Leader is the player who scored the least in the previous Stage, if tied, the tied player closest in turn order to the previous Stage's first Leader's left neighbor starts.

Game End

Total all 3 Stage Scores.

The player with the highest total wins. If tied the player who earned the most Improvisation Tokens wins. If still tied there are multiple winners.

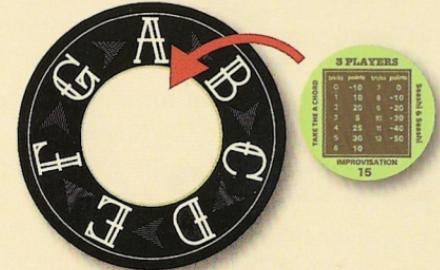
Rules for 3 Players

The rules are the same as the 4-player game, but the number of Cards in hand (and Tricks) is different.

3-Player Setup

Board Setup

Insert the Scoring Inset for 3 players (with the 3 on the back) face up into the Key Ring.



Deal the Cards

Shuffle the 35 Feeling Cards, and deal 11 Cards, facedown to each player. Stack the 2 unused Cards, unrevealed, out of the way.

Determine the Key

Flip one of the unused Cards to determine the Starting Key.

Playing Cards

There are no big changes in the way Cards are Played in a 3-player game. Just Play as in the 4-player 'Playing Cards' rules.

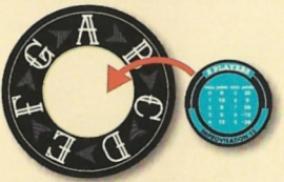
Rules for 2 Players

For 2 players the main change is that each player has a set of L & R Tokens that they play to, and each Stage is played in a **first and second half**.

2-Player Setup

Board Setup

Insert the Scoring Inset for 2 players (with the 2 on the back) face up into the Key Ring.



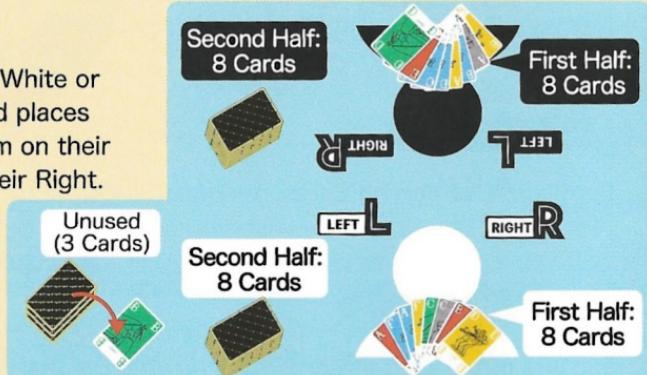
L & R Token Setup

Each Player takes one set (White or Black) of L & R Tokens, and places the L Token in front of them on their Left and the R Token on their Right.

Other Tokens and Setup is as in the 4-player game.

Deal the Cards

Shuffle the 35 Cards, and **deal 4 piles of 8 Cards**. Each player takes 1 pile of 8 Cards in to their hand. The remaining 2 piles are kept face down out of the way. These will be the player's hands for the second half of the Stage.



Determine the Key

Place the 3 unused Cards out of the way.

Flip one of those 3 unused Cards to determine the **Starting Key**.

Playing Cards in a 2-Player Game

Each player has one set of L & R Tokens. Each player during each trick will play one card each to their own L & R Tokens.

On the 1st Stage's 1st Trick play begins from the white L Token.(Ex.1) The Leader Marker is placed near the white L Token. The owner of the white L Token plays one card to the white L Token.

After the white L play continues clockwise: black R, black L then white R. The black player plays to the black L & R, and the white player plays to the white L & R.

Each player plays to 2 different locations, and these 4 locations are treated as different players and obey the rules of a 4-player game.

Determining the Trick Winner in a 2-Player Game

The Trick winner is determined as in a 4-player game with the black L & R and white L & R each being treated as a player. **If either the L or R Token that you own wins a trick you take 1 Trick Token.**

If you win with a Chord of the current Key you get the **Spotlight Token**. The Spotlight Token may change between the white and black players.

[Ex. 2] After Ex. 1 above, the next Trick is started from the black L. The black player plays to the black L, then the white player plays to the white R, then to the white L, finally the black player plays to the black R.



The current Key is B.

The black player who played the 'B' wins. The Leader Marker is moved near the black L. The black player earns 1 Trick Token & takes the Spotlight Token.

Ex. 2



Key Changes with 2-Players

As each L & R tile is treated as a separate player Key Changes happen as in the 4-player game. If one of your L/R Tiles would cause a Key Change then the Leader Marker is placed near that L/R Token and the next Trick begins there.

[Ex. 3] The black player played the Yellow 'A' to the black L causing a Key Change. The black L is the next Leader.

A Key Change in a 2-Player Game

Improvising works as in a 4-player game with white L & R and black L & R considered different players.

[Ex. 4] The white player played the green 'C' to the white L causing Improvisation. The white L is the next Round's Leader. All played cards are turned facedown, and the Trick begins a 2nd round.

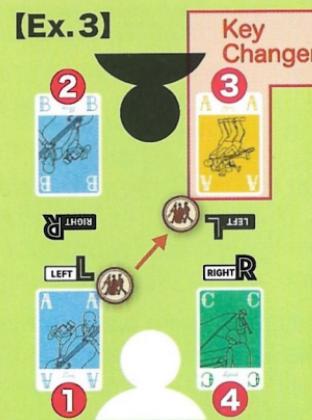
Improvisation Winner

If your L or R Token wins Improvisation then check the spot that won the Trick and take Trick Tokens according to the total Cards played to that spot (Face up + facedown).

(If your R wins and you have 1 face up and 2 facedown Cards played on your R Token then you take 3 Trick Tokens. Your L is ignored.)

Continuing Improvisation

Just like in the 4-player game Improvisation can continue. The maximum limit is the same at 3 times (4 Rounds).



Improvisation in the Last Trick of the First Half of a Stage

Improvisation doesn't trigger on the last Trick of the first half of a Stage. Improvisation cannot carry a Trick over to the second half. If such an Improvisation would occur, the Improvisation is ignored, and it's treated as a Key Change. The final player becomes the Key Changer.

Preparing for the Second Half

When all 8 Cards have been played the Stage's first half finishes, and we move to the second half. Each player takes one of the Piles that was set aside to become their hand for the second half.

After the last Trick of the first half (including handling Key Changes), the Key Marker & Leader Marker & Spotlight Token all stay where they are.

Next Leader

The Second Half's First Leader

The second half's first Leader is the L or R Token with the Leader Marker. That Token's owner starts the first Trick of the second half from there.

Stage End

After each player has played all 8 Cards the second half finishes. Then we do Stage Scoring. Scoring uses Trick Tokens and Improvisation tokens combined from the first and second half to score just like in a 4-player game. (Each player scores once. The R & L Tokens are not considered players for scoring.)

Then the Stage ends as in a 4-player game then we return to the 2-Player version of 'Deal the Cards', to start a new Stage.

The next Stage's Leader is the L Token of the person who earned the fewest points in the previous Stage. In case of a tie the player who didn't start the last Stage begins.

♪ Playing Cards

I-a Lead Color Card (If you have more than 1, then any 1)

OR

I-b A Chord matching a Card played in this trick

→Key Change/Improv

II If you don't have the Lead Color, then any Card you like.

♪ Finishing a Trick

Determining the Trick Winner

The Strongest Chord Card's Player wins. Ignore Color.

*If tied for strongest, the tied Card in the Lead Color.

*If still tied, the tied player who played first.

*If Improvisation occurs, no one wins, flip cards down.

→Prepare for the Next Trick

After Determining a Winner

The winner takes 1 Trick Token.

*If won with the current Key then they take the Spotlight Token.

*If Improv just finished take an Improv Token & 1-3 extra Trick Tokens.

Prepare for the Next Trick

The winner of the Trick takes the Leader Marker.

*If there was a Key Changer or an Improviser they take the Leader Marker

→Change Keys

Clear the played Cards