

CLOSE ENOUGH FOR JAZZ

When you're improvising, sometimes it's the bits you leave out that really make the difference.

Answers are clued in order, but when writing in the grid entries, you'll have to skip certain squares, sometimes even within an answer.

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Across

- 1 Sudden convulsive movement • Finger or toe
- 2 It's smaller than a city • Not any
- 3 Solo • Lose intensity or luster
- 4 Poorly mannered • Nameless, briefly
- 5 Highlight of many an opera • Strike down from the heavens
- 6 Set of methods
- 7 Later, not-as-sharp years • County in eastern England
- 8 Ease up on the gas • More recent
- 9 Withdrew, as floodwaters • Director Scott
- 10 Cattle ranch sounds • Totally focused
- 11 Ornamental tree • Back in style
- 12 First Biblical character to die • Common cook-book verb
- 13 Senate Majority Leader since 2007 • Paying customer, as of a lawyer
- 14 Items connected to a ring • White, sticky stuff

Down

- 1 Certain valuable musical instruments, briefly • Start on a journey
- 2 One let go early
- 3 Came to a landing, as a bird • Seabird with blue feet
- 4 "The March King" • TV series based on the novels of forensic anthropologist Kathy Reichs
- 5 When said twice, a hit for The Mamas and the Papas • Loose talk
- 6 Network of underground pipes • Best Supporting Actor nominee for "The Aviator"
- 7 London's theatre district
- 8 Decides what to call • Actor Bana
- 9 Cotton twill fabric, frequently used in pants • Twisting, spirally pattern
- 10 Knowledge • Actor who played Ricky
- 11 Small beard • Some Starbucks orders
- 12 Back-of-the-book material • Many a "Reader's Digest" article
- 13 Very small • Rich, cake-like dessert