

Jazz/Rock Improvisation

A Complete Approach to Improvising on both Acoustic and Electronic Keyboards

Bert Konowitz

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Foreword

Improvisation is a skill that can be learned. It is important because it allows the performer to use music to express individual feelings and ideas. Improvising is a natural part of Jazz/Rock playing—it is an exciting skill and a welcome companion to studying and performing all styles of music.

Jazz/Rock Improvisation, Level 2, lets you improvise right from the beginning. It is correlated page-by-page with Alfred's Jazz/Rock Course, Level 2. Though the Improvisation series (Levels 1–4) may be used independently, when used together with the Jazz/Rock Course (Levels 1–4), the pianist has the unique opportunity to become a well-trained jazz/rock musician.

This book is written to be played on either a traditional acoustic piano or an electronic keyboard. At the bottom of each page, suggestions are offered for ways that acoustic and electronic instruments may be used together:

Acoustic Jamming suggestions offer a supportive left-hand accompaniment that may be added by a teacher, a parent who plays piano, or a more experienced student.

Electronic Jamming suggestions offer specific sound and rhythmic backgrounds that may be used when playing on an electronic keyboard. The electronic rhythm backgrounds may also be added as an accompaniment when performing on an acoustic piano.

To Laura, Mark, Paul, Laurie, Adam and Stacey

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Improv Idea #1: Playing with Different Dynamics

IMPROVISATION ("Improv" for short) is a musical skill that enables you to vary the sound of a written piece of music so that it reflects *your* feelings and imagination. Changing the **dynamics** (volume) creates interesting mood changes.

RAINBOWS

The *IMPROV SCORE* is a step-by-step guide that will make improvising very easy.

**IMPROV
SCORE**

1st time, play the entire piece *p*.
2nd time, play the entire piece *f*.

With energy



ACOUSTIC JAMMING: Play an octave lower. Coordinate dynamics with student's part.



ELECTRONIC JAMMING:

REGISTER: Polysynth

RHYTHM: Rock or Jazz

Improv Idea #4: Creating New Melodies with the G Blues Scale

New melodies can also be created by using the tones of the 5-finger G Blues Scale.

Retrograde means to play a motif *backwards*. Using retrograde is another way to create new melodies.

5-finger G Blues Scale



MIRROR IMAGE

Play as written.

Slowly

motif 1 retrograde motif 2 retrograde

motif 3 retrograde ending

mf

8VA MIRROR IMAGE

IMPROV SCORE

1st time, repeat the motif *RH 8va* at the Improv measures.
2nd time, *retrograde* the motif at the Improv measures.

Slowly

motif 1

1. Repeat motif *RH 8va*.
2. Retrograde motif.

motif 2

1. Repeat motif *RH 8va*.
2. Retrograde motif.

mp-mf

ACOUSTIC JAMMING: Play the left hand an octave lower.

ELECTRONIC JAMMING:

REGISTER: Distorted Guitar/Percussive Organ

RHYTHM: Rock