

5 Improv Projects to Try Today!

from Robin Keehn

Let's get right to it, right now! Sit at your piano and we'll make improvisation happen today!

Overcoming Challenges in Improvisation

-Common Issue: Teachers often have a few improvisation tricks but lack a sense of how to proceed when those ideas are used up.

-Solution: Develop self-generation skills by experimenting with new ideas at the piano.

Starting Points for Improvisation

1. Experiment with Song Placement:

- Play your songs in different positions (e.g., DCT, NS, FE, Dog, The Pipes).
- Convert major songs to minor keys.
- **Assignment:** Try this for yourself now.

2. Create Riffs and Find Chords:

- Make up a little riff with your right hand (RH) and find accompanying chords with your left hand (LH).
- **Assignment:** Practice this with your students regularly.

3. Enhance Simple Songs:

- Take a song with single notes in the LH and play it with chords instead.
- Experiment with different types of chords (e.g., CM to Cm, CM to C7, +6 chords).
- Use the Accomp 1 book to explore various chord options.

4. Arpeggio Songs:

- Pick a starting point and build an arpeggio of triads.
- Transform those triads into minor chords, 7th chords, M7 chords, 11th chords, 13th chords, or diminished chords.
- Refer to the Accompaniment 1 book chord chart for a wide range of chord options.

5. Advanced Chord Techniques:

- Instead of playing a solid triad, break it up into different patterns (e.g., BMTM or BTMT).

6. Arrange Accompaniment:

- Take an accompaniment piece and improvise the LH.
- Play the chords in various ways (rocking, broken, rolling).

Practical Tips

Consistent Practice: Regularly practice improvisation.

Exploration: Continuously explore new chords and techniques using available resources like the Accompaniment 1 book.

Creativity: Allow room for creativity and experimentation without fear of making mistakes.

Resources

Accompaniment 1 Book: A valuable resource for exploring a wide range of chord options and improvisation techniques.

Community Support: Engage with fellow music teachers to share ideas and experiences.

Thank you for attending! I hope these strategies inspire you to integrate more improvisation into your teaching practice.

