

INTRODUCTION

Jazz musicians have always wanted to copy certain things they hear other musicians do. Often, one can learn by just watching a performer. Drummers seem to add to their vocabulary through this method of learning. . . visual with aural. Pianists often like to sit near the piano player so they can SEE how the pianist plays certain voicings, uses the pedal, fingers certain passages and so on. By studying these voicings from the Volume 70 recording, many will be able to upgrade their voicings and by so doing, some of the mystery of voicings will be revealed.

If you listen to several pianists accompany other soloists you will quickly hear a variety of favorite voicings, rhythms, substitute chords, passing chords, sub-melodies, etc. This is to be expected because each player HEARS his role as accompanist differently. Some players are busier than others. Some like to use a wide range of the piano while comping. Some like to leave a lot of space - silence. Some seem to listen more intently to the soloist and therefore create more interplay with the soloist and the rest of the rhythm section. I like to keep my voicings primarily near the center of the keyboard. This allows me to stay out of the way of the soloist. I also use a lot of rootless voicings. I HEAR bass so I don't feel the need to duplicate the bassists notes on the keyboard.

I believe it was Victor Feldman who said, "Comping means 'to compliment.'" A good accompanist wants to compliment the soloist. Make the soloist feel as though they wouldn't have played as well if you had not been comping behind him!

Comping is an art and requires a certain amount of humility. Your reward comes in the overall development of the piece with you being an integral member. Of course you will get your chance to solo and at that time others will accompany you. . . bass, drums, or guitar or maybe even horn backgrounds.

If you want to find out who other musicians think are great compers just look at the personnel on the records in the Blue Note catalog of the 50's, 60's, and 70's. Or, look at the piano players people like Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, or John Coltrane have hired. Since these particular leaders are instrumentalists, they must have felt that by having such and such in the group, they themselves would play better.

A few people who come to mind that seem to have a knack at accompanying are: Wynton Kelly, Red Garland, Herbie Hancock, Horace Silver, Cedar Walton, and Hal Galper and Mark Levine.

These players have the ability to instantly get into whatever tune they are asked to play no matter what the tempo, feel, or mood. Their ears are razor sharp and they have the technique to instantly respond to whatever their co-players seem to play. I feel certain they worked hard at achieving this status and probably gave much thought to their role as accompanist. I also suspect they spent many hours listening to jazz and experimenting with voicings and rhythms that work and ones that do not.

In using this book, it is important to center in on a track that you feel you need to work on. Play a two or four-bar passage over and over until you have it memorized and can play it the way I do on the recording, with the same feel and with all the nuances. Remember, the written notes cannot convey ALL that is being played. Your ear will play an important part in making the overall passage convincing and useful. I would much rather hear a piano player play one or more of my blues choruses over and over using rhythmic variety than leave him or her to their own devices and possibly play triads and repetitive rhythms during their accompaniment.

Your comping should inspire the soloist and others in the rhythm section, but not get in the way or be dominating. Analyze the notes that I play and figure out such things as voice leading, chromaticism, passing chords, substitute chords, keeping the top note of the chord constant while the lower tones change, pedaling, accents, dynamics, etc.

Check out various keyboard voicing books. There are several by such well-known pianists as Dan Haerle, Mark Levine and Phil DeGreg. Above all - be patient with yourself. The great players didn't learn to play overnight!

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Melodies to fit Jamey Aebersold's comping can be found in Jamey Aebersold's *Volume 70 Killer Joe Play-A-Long*. However, **THIS** music in no way constitutes an arrangement of any previously copyrightable material. The music in this book is the original, creative, intellectual property of Jamey Aebersold. This music cannot be reproduced in any form without the express written permission of Jamey Aebersold Jazz, Inc.

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It may be of interest to you to know that when this music was recorded, I played piano as though I was accompanying someone although in actuality there was no instrumentalist playing during the recording. I imagined a soloist and comped accordingly. This technique is something I feel all aspiring pianists should practice. It will help in getting jobs because the leader will feel you already have experience in accompanying. Don't overlook this important part of your practice routine.

Listening to the jazz masters is invaluable. Learn as much as you can about theory, harmony, transcribed solos, and melodic soloing. Listen to recordings and get to the point where you can hear and SEE in your mind the notes as they are being played. Spend time each day listening to people comp. Make notes in a book. List things you like and things you don't like in a person's playing. Your opinions may change, too, as time passes.

Jamey Aebersold - Fall 1996

PIANO VOICINGS

Piano voicings have often been a mystery to the up-and-coming pianist. I would like to list some voicings which I hear the "masters" use when accompanying others on recordings. I group the voicings according to QUALITY, i.e., Major, Minor, Dom. 7th, Half-Diminished. The numbers represent the notes from the scale which we will use to form the actual voicing. The voicings always read from bottom (lowest note) to top (highest note in voicing). The horizontal line divides the right hand from the left. Notes above the horizontal line are usually played in the Right Hand, notes below are usually played in the Left Hand. The numbers 2 and 9 are actually the same note!

I encourage you to experiment by occasionally leaving off the top note, or the bottom note. The important thing to remember in chord voicing is - **the 3rd and 7th should almost always be present!** Those tones are most important when conveying the quality of the voicings/chords to anyone listening. Try to keep your hands near the center of the keyboard.

To quickly get the **FEEL** of any voicing, I highly recommend learning voicings in this manner:

- a. Pick a voicing that appeals to you. It can be **ANY** quality.
- b. Play that voicing in the key of C, then the key of Db, then D, and continue up the keyboard **CHROMATICALLY** until you again reach C.
- c. Memorize what you just played and be able to stop on any voicing, any key, and recite to yourself the **KEY, QUALITY, and NUMBERS of each tone**.
- d. Now, play the same voicing, in the same C key, same quality, but this time go **DOWN CHROMATICALLY** until you reach the key of C.
- e. Several other root sequences I highly recommend are: up and then down in **WHOLE STEPS**, up and then down in **MINOR 3rd's**, and the **CYCLE of FOURTHS** (C F Bb Eb Ab Db Gb B E A D G C).

The **Volume 21 "Gettin' It Together"** recordings are excellent for practicing the above suggestions. You can turn the piano channel on your stereo off and practice these voicings along with the bass and drums on the left channel.

The purpose for learning several good-sounding voicings for **each quality** is to allow you to move from one chord to another and maintain smooth voice leading thus avoiding unnecessary leaps. For instance, if one were to take the voicing 3, 5, 7, 9 and play it all the way through a song, on each different key and quality, the comping would sound very monotonous and choppy. Hence, the need for a variety of voicings for each chord symbol. Also, the register of the keyboard often dictates which voicing(s) to use. Usually the better accompanists use the center of the keyboard - approximately D or E below middle C and on up to D or E one octave above middle C.

See the next page for examples

8

B $\flat$ 7

85

Measures 85-88. Measure 85: Treble clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 86: Treble clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 87: Treble clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 88: Treble clef has a triplet of eighth notes (Bb, Db, F) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes (Bb, Db, F) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb).

E $\flat$ 7B $\flat$ 7B $\flat$ 7

G7

89

Measures 89-92. Measure 89: Treble clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Measure 90: Treble clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Measure 91: Treble clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Measure 92: Treble clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb).

93

C-

F7

B $\flat$ 7

G7

C7

F7

Measures 93-96. Measure 93: Treble clef has a half note chord (C, Eb) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (C, Eb) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 94: Treble clef has a half note chord (C, Eb) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (C, Eb) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 95: Treble clef has a half note chord (C, Eb) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (C, Eb) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 96: Treble clef has a half note chord (C, Eb) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (C, Eb) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab).

9

B $\flat$ 7

97

Measures 97-100. Measure 97: Treble clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 98: Treble clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 99: Treble clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Measure 100: Treble clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab). Bass clef has a half note chord (Bb, Db) and a quarter note chord (F, Ab).

101

E $\flat$ 7B $\flat$ 7

Measures 101-104. Measure 101: Treble clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Measure 102: Treble clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Measure 103: Treble clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Measure 104: Treble clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb). Bass clef has a half note chord (Eb, Gb) and a quarter note chord (Ab, Bb).

237 **A $\flat$ 7** **G7+9** **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9**

241 **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9** **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9**

245 **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9** **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9**

249 **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9** **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9**

253 **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9** **C -** **A7+9** **D7+9** **G7+9**