

CREATIVITY – Nothing to be afraid of

Mike Tracy – saxophone
Harry Pickens – piano

Materials to consider:

Effortless Mastery by Kenny Werner

Playing music should be as simple as drawing a breath, yet most musicians are hindered by self-consciousness, apprehension, self-doubt and stress. Before we can truly express our inner self, we must first learn to be at peace and overcome the distractions that can make performance difficult. Kenny's remarkable work deals directly with these hindrances, and suggests ways to let our natural creative powers flow freely. Includes an inspiring CD of meditations designed to initiate positive thought.

Free Play by Stephen Nachmanovitch

This book of improvisation in life and art has inspired thousands to seek out new methods of creativity through their own uniqueness and ingenuity. Endorsed by Keith Jarrett and many others, this book is a superb guide for anyone who aspires to create, whatever the medium.

Guided Imagery for Jazz Mastery by Harry Pickens

Jazz pianist and motivational speaker Harry Pickens has produced a masterpiece of soothing meditations and self affirmations accompanied by a calm, hypnotic musical soundtrack, designed to instill a sense of relaxation, confidence and natural flow in your music and your life.

Before we can bring chord, melody and lyric into harmony, we must first bring harmony to our own mind, body and spirit.

This method requires your full attention and open mind in a quiet, uninterrupted environment. Trust the music within you!

The Inner Game of Music by Barry Green

Jazz Improvisation & The Inner Person by Gordon Brisker

A guidebook for the novice improviser on basics such as harmony, tone and listening to more aesthetic areas as attitudes, marketing your talents and the subconscious.

Piano Voicings from the Vol. 1 Play-along – “How to Play and Improvise”

Piano Voicings from the Vol. 54 Play-along – “Maiden Voyage”

Piano Voicings from the Vol. 70 Play-along – “Killer Joe”

Each featuring Jamey Aebersold. From the world's most popular improvisation method. Every note is written exactly as played by Jamey Aebersold with chord symbols, passing chords, pedal markings, etc.

Ever listen to a great jazz pianist and wonder “what's he doing there?” Now you'll know! Here, as never before, is an opportunity to see REAL jazz piano voicings and comping over REAL songs in REAL live musical settings. These historic books contain NOTE-FOR-NOTE transcriptions, exactly as recorded, of the exciting piano accompaniment from the world famous Aebersold Play-along series. Not just for pianist, there are many ways for ALL MUSICIANS to use these wonderful musical tools:

Pianists: First, listen closely to the pianist on the respective play-along recording (sold separately). Next, reading from the book, play along with him, imitating his style. Finally, TURN HIM OFF (using the special stereo separation on all CDs) and play along by yourself with the bass and drums. With the techniques learned, you'll soon be improvising your own accompaniment!

Non-Pianist: Horn players, arrangers and vocalists can use these books like dictionaries to look up favorite voicings they've heard on a particular play-along track. Written clearly for two hand, even the most novice pianist can play many sections of these books.

Teachers/Educators: Give your combo piano students instant jazz voicings and harmonies over a variety of standards and styles. As personal tools, they will enhance your own understanding of voicing and voice movement and provide you with better skills for accompanying your students.

Jazz Keyboard Harmony: Piano Voicing Method for all Musicians by Phil DeGreg – Book/CD

A practical and systematic method that teaches how to practice jazz piano voicings so that they become automatic and intuitive. The method progresses step-by-step from 2-voice to 7-voice structures with fourths and upper-structure triads. Each chapter presents essential harmonic progressions written and spelled out in all keys, along with fingerings to help non-keyboardists. Also provided are songs, written out for both hands, which utilize the techniques and voicings just learned. Includes comping rhythms, bass line techniques and practice strategies. Excellent for both classroom and individual study.

Jazz Piano Voicing Skills by Dan Haerle

A graded course on piano voicing skills, starting with simple block chords over Major and Minor, logically and methodically processing into more exotic and advanced polychords and substitutions. Includes 123 skills in all twelve keys, designed to initiate a feel and understanding of piano voicings and how they work. Each new chapter includes a page of concise instructions for the teacher or the students. Works well for both classroom or individual study.

The Jazz Piano Book by Mark Levine

For everyone wishing to learn the basics of contemporary jazz piano. Over 300 pages of scales, voicings, tritone and other substitutions, theory, comping and much more. Sample voicings and 25 superb solos. This is one of the most popular books about jazz piano ever published.

Jazz Conception Series by Jim Snidero

21 solos etudes in a variety of feels and styles, performed on the CD by famous jazz musicians. Play with the soloist and then try it by yourself with a first class New York rhythm section.

Jazz Piano Voicings for the Non-Pianist by Mike Tracy

Every musician should have a basic understanding of how and why pianists voice chords in certain ways. This book, designed by a horn player, addresses and explains the basics of authentic, hip sounding chord voicings in simple, non-pianistic language. You'll be comping on your own over Standards in a short period of time. Includes written voicings over many of the most popular Aebersold play-along tracks, so you can comp with bass and drums backing you up! No piano skills are required to use this book effectively. Play great jazz voicings today!

CREATIVITY – Nothing to be afraid of

a presentation

1. Demonstration – let's make music

2. Principles to ponder

- Reconnect with your own creativity
- See the flower in the seed
- Adopt a learner – centered perspective
- Make it fun
- Dare to enter the learner's world; build bridges between their world and yours
- Train the ear AND the eye
- Engage the senses
- If it's not working, try something else – keep track of your experiences
- Pretend to 'be' the student
- Take care of yourself. (No more pouring from an empty cup.)

3. Let's Brainstorm: A smorgasbord of ideas

- Teach your students how to play from chord symbols – basics – major, minor, sevenths
- Play lots of duets
- Play simple songs by ear
- Create 'chamber music' opportunities for your students to play with others – recognize the power of positive peer relations and teamwork
- Have them bring in a song with scenes, pictures – 'soundtracking'
- Play music along with poetry and stories/readings
- Ask them to bring in a favorite book/story/poem – add music to it
- Use other instruments – drums, flutes, bells – play duets, make sounds of the other instrument and attempt to duplicate on the piano

- Play short, fun recordings – imitate them
- Develop a repertoire of 2 and 3 – chord songs that you can teach and play in five minutes
- Discover their areas of passion and make a connection
- Play ‘name that tune’ games
- Dance and move with the music
- Network with good elementary/middle school music teachers; brainstorm ways to reach students more effectively
- Find a mentor; ask for help/support/coaching
- Use the power of your creative imagination – see yourself and your students succeeding
- Play imagination games – play a piece – have them close eyes – make up a story, picture
- Play the pieces for them – give them a strong and positive multisensory model of possibility (this is Not cheating – it is working WITH the brain-mind system, not against it)
- Learn about different learning styles – match your teaching to your student’s learning needs
- Use group lessons to build enthusiasm, support, excitement
- Read – A Soprano on Her Head – Elouise Ristad
- Read – Indispensables of Piano Playing – Abbey Whiteside
- Read – Just Being at the Piano – Margaret Porter Chase
- Familiarize yourself with the music students listen to – build bridges between ‘their’ music and that which you want them to learn
- Remember why you play/teach music – Do whatever it takes to reignite your original passion, joy and excitement
- Emotional intelligence research – emotions are contagious – creating a positive, receptive emotional state is the FIRST step in effective teaching /learning/leadership

- Triune brain theory – under stress, we automatically ‘default’ to fight, flight or freeze – many children live in chronic stress; our first job ought to be to create an environment of safety, discovery, exploration and play.
- Dare to learn to improvise – to create your own spontaneous music – this could be the single most important step you can take to liberate the full musical capacities of your students – you don’t have to be great at it – you DO need to enter into the spirit of play, discovery, trust and exploration with courage

4. **Questions for reflection**

- What do I do really well as a music teacher? What are my greatest strengths?
- Describe one of your most memorable experiences teaching music – a time when your student(s) ‘broke through’ to a new level of creativity and/or proficiency
- Tell a story about one of your most positive and memorable experiences as a music student. What made the experience memorable? What role did your teacher(s) play? What insights might be applied to your own music teaching?
- What have I most fully experience my own creativity?
- In what area of my life am I naturally most creative?
- Where is my greatest area of creative comfort?
- What conditions tend to call forth my creativity?
- In which areas could I express greater creative courage?

5. **Action steps**

List three specific actions you can take – this week – to begin to release more of your own natural creativity as well as that of your students.

1

2

3

Great Piano Improvisers

Lil Armstrong
Kenny Barron
Count Basie
Eubie Blake
Dave Brubeck
Ray Charles
Nat King Cole
Chick Corea
Dorothy Donnegan
Duke Ellington
Bill Evans
Red Garland
Herbie Hancock
Barry Harris
Gene Harris
Ahmad Jamal
Keith Jarrett
Bunk Johnson

James P. Johnson
Wynton Kelly
John Lewis
Meade Luc Lewis
Thelonious Monk
Phineas Newborn
Oscar Peterson
Harry Pickens
Willie 'the Lion' Smith
Art Tatum
Billy Taylor
McCoy Tyner
Fats Waller
Teddy Wilson
Joe Zawinul

These are just a few