

Killer Piano Playing Secrets of a Chord Addict!

I wish you could have seen me play the piano when I was just learning. I was the nearest thing to "hopeless" that you could imagine. I was into baseball, not music; and my heroes were Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle, and Ted Williams. (And by the way, I still have a picture of those 3 guys on my wall.) My dream was to hit baseballs like them, not to play the piano.

But an opportunity to play with a combo presented itself to me when I was a freshman in high school. Seems the piano player of the group had graduated the previous year, and nobody else played piano well enough to play in the school jazz combo. I didn't know zilch about playing in a group, and I didn't know chords. But I was excited to have the opportunity to play with older guys, and so I took the job.

The lead sax player told me I really should know chords in order to play in the group, so I searched through a music magazine until I found an ad for a chord chart. It cost two bucks, as I recall, so I sent off for it. When I received it in the mail I slipped it behind the keys on my parents old upright piano, and promptly learned to play my first chord; Dm7. I LOVED the sound of it, and was hooked for life on chords. The 2nd chord I learned was Cmaj7, then Em7, then Ebm7; and before that first night was over I had learned to play "Frankie & Johnnie"; the tune in my right hand, and those fabulous 7th chords in my left hand!

I loved it! LOVED IT! LOVED IT! And it even sounded good enough to impress some of my friends the next day. I suppose that simple chord chart that cost me two bucks has been worth several million over the course of my lifetime. And much more than that, has been worth quadrillions in pleasure and satisfaction and relaxation and lots more.

Even though I came in the back door as far as piano playing was concerned, I learned fast because of what I knew about chords, so college was a snap, and so was my post-graduate Masters Degree at Southern Oregon University. After high school I studied with several of the finest private teachers on the West Coast, including a year with THE finest teacher; his name was Dave; and his studio was on Cauhenga Blvd. in Hollywood. As I would come for my piano lesson, I would often pass a big name recording artist coming to their lesson; and anyone who was anyone in Hollywood in those days took lessons from Dave.

Dave taught me 2 fundamental principles about piano playing:

1. The piano is NOT played with the hands; it is played with the brain. The hands are just tools.
2. If you master chord relationships, you can master music.

I've got little fat hands with short fingers. Hardly the ideal hands for piano playing.

I've also got a lousy sense of rhythm.

But you know what? Because of those two principles Dave taught me, I can play "above" my fat hands and my weak rhythm.

Above?

Yes.

Above.

Once a person "gets into the flow" of understanding chord relationships and then letting the brain knowledge flow into the hands, that person plays "above" his ability.

And the great thing about it is this: It's not some secret formula hidden in the archives of some dusty music conservatory in Prague. Instead it's an open book; there are courses galore on the internet you can take for peanuts compared to a traditional music conservatory. The internet age has provided a way for the average person to become an above-average musician!

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About the Author

Duane Shinn is the author of the popular free 101-week online e-mail newsletter titled "Amazing Piano Lesson Secrets Of Exciting Piano Chords & Sizzling Chord Progressions" available at <http://www.playpiano.com> with over 84,400 current subscribers.