

Piano Lesson: Learn Piano Improvisation Through Classical Piano Music

Piano improvisation in a classical music way is an interesting complement to ordinary piano improvisational practicing. Let me suggest a way to practice!

Piano sheet music is a means and not an end. It's a way to notate what to play on the piano.

You can find a lot of interesting passages in classical piano solos. These solos can help you collect improvisational material to work on to make your piano improvisations more interesting.

How to develop your classical piano improvisational skills?

May I suggest that you begin with an easy piano solo with just one voice in your left hand and your right hand.

Learn a phrase with a few bars by heart. Play the melody over and over again as you try to change the melody slightly without losing the classical touch.

One advantage of using classical piano music in piano improvisation exercises is that you will find many interesting and melodic basslines in counterpoint style that you can use to enhance your piano improvising.

The use of playing separate melodic lines together in this way to create music is called counterpoint. Counterpoint is a musical technique involving the simultaneous sounding of separate musical lines.

Classical piano compositions are filled with wonderful licks that you can incorporate in your playing.

What can you do with a classical piano composition to improve your piano improvisational skills? Here are some examples:

1. Study different ways used to play left hand bass patterns. Play around with the patterns and try to transpose them into different keys.
2. Study interesting chords. Experiment with them, change keys and positions.
3. Find chord progressions to develop.
4. Find interesting passages with unusual musical material.
5. Many more things.

As I can see it there are two different approaches to learn and work with the before mentioned material:

1. You can memorize the classical material and start a growing bank of chords, unusual melodic phrases, chords progressions and other classical piano oriented material you'll find in the piano compositions for further use in your piano improvisations.

This approach will of course develop your skills but it will also be very time consuming and maybe overwhelming if you can't devote all your time to piano playing. Who would that be?

Another drawback is that you might lose interest in this type of piano skill development because of the stress involved in learning so many different skills and maybe the joy of playing piano will diminish.

2. Another approach is to use the before mentioned methods in a more laid back way without learning everything by heart. Let me give you an example from my childhood:

When I was quite young I used to read a lot of books on popular science from the public library. I had a bunch of books laying beside me as I lay comfortably on my bed with pillows and just having a good time.

I never felt compelled to read a book from cover to cover or to read in a certain way. The only thing I did was to read the things I was interested in, looking at pictures and enjoying what I did.

I know I learned a lot from these nice reading experiences. If I had a goal it was to feel good and I was reading because of curiosity.

I think you can do the same with the classical music you play. As you enjoy to discover the secrets in the piano sheet music the way I have mentioned you are sowing seeds that will sooner or later manifest themselves in your playing.

The classical music will creep out in your fingers and you will feel new ideas coming up in your piano improvisational endeavors!

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