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Introduction

This is a book of improvisation exercises. It is meant to be used and the exercises are designed to be played over and over. The 8-bar phrases are written in a way that much new age music is - that is, the chord changes mostly come every 2 bars.

If you have never improvised before, read the beginning of this book and follow the first four exercises to get used to the Open Position Chord. This is the chord structure you will be using throughout this book. You will be learning how to play chord changes in all 12 keys using the Open Position Chord. This is how the author got started and it is an excellent beginning point. Once you master this chord structure, you will be able to see how to use it in other ways.

The comments in this book are structured so that you get inspiration from them. I don't tell you how to do something as much as point out the important principles of improvisation and composition. This will be a far greater service for you as you learn on your own and come back to the comments for assurance.

The exercises are for you to not only learn chord changes, but also composition. You will be learning the principles of repetition and contrast - the backbone of composition. You will learn how to create using the A-B-A form and how to use the principles of repetition and contrast to build your own unique composition. But mostly, this is a book of doing.

It is highly suggested that you adapt the guidelines for creativity to your practicing. They are the bedrock from which all else comes. The author has continuously returned to them throughout the years and they have stood the test of time. They are invaluable for cultivating the proper attitude - which is to say that without starting with them, you may get off to a bad start.

New age music is here to stay it seems. It started in the early 1980's and while not as popular as it was then, has developed its own group of fans.

All you need to learn about how to play in this style is here in this book. By learning how to play in phrases, you learn one of the most important skills in composition - sectionality. Most compositions are sectional. They usually are A-B-A in structure but can be just one long A section. You will learn to adapt what you like by learning the phrases. As you play, you will understand about beginnings and endings naturally. The chord changes are written so that you can end the pieces whenever you like.

Have fun playing these exercises. Take your time and you will accomplish much.