

TRANSCRIBED PIANO VOICINGS (COMPING)

from VOLUME 1 Play-A-Long RECORDING

As played by Jamey Aebersold

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INTRODUCTION

This book represents the first published book of transcribed piano voicings which are totally accompaniment - **comping**. David Leonhardt transcribed these voicings as a project to improve his ability to hear voicings and qualities.

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 1 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, 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 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.

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.

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 to his own devices and possibly play triads and repetitive rhythms during his 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.

Be sure to examine page iv, Piano Voicings. Try them in various keys. Be patient.

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 1980 - Revised 1993

ON THE USE OF THE PEDAL

The use of the damper pedal in piano comping (rhythmic accompanying) is a very subjective aspect of a pianist's style. Often one player's overall sound may be readily distinguished from another's simply by the use or misuse of the pedal. The piano's sonority, an accent's brilliance and clarity, the "bent pitch" of a blues line, or the rich flow and overlap of a harmonic progression are all directly effected by the pianist's disciplined and subtle use of the damper pedal.

Relatively speaking, the pedal is employed sparingly in jazz comping, so as not to add a muddy or thick timbre to the ensemble or to give a lumbering, tentative feel to the time. Its use is generally confined to:


1) connecting legato passages (wide leaps, block chord streams, awkwardly fingered chord structures, parallel harmony) not within the fingers capacity to execute smoothly.


2) giving a brighter, "orchestral" shimmer to individual chords. (As the dampers are engaged and rise from the strings, the overtone phenomenon allows the undamped strings to reverberate sympathetically with those strings sounded by the played keys.)


3) allowing the rich overlapping of similar or contrasting harmonies to occur, providing some dazzling textural possibilities, not feasible on any other Western string instrument. (This effect is often exploited at fermatas and cadence points.)

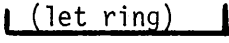
We have attempted in these transcriptions to offer some pedaling suggestions to approximate the sound heard in the recordings. Such a subtle and varied endeavor as a pianist's pedaling could not be precisely detailed by conventional notation. However, we hope that these suggestions (and numerous listenings to this very effective and supportive comping) will serve as a springboard for your individual experimenting with the piano's limitless potential for color and effect.

For those unfamiliar with this system of pedal notation, the following key should prove helpful:

 Indicates the damper pedal (right pedal) is depressed at the point of the vertical line and held down for the duration of the extended horizontal line.

 Represents that the damper pedal having been held down is released at the point of the vertical line.

 "Updown pedaling" - Dictates that the damper pedal is rapidly released and immediately depressed again. This occurs instantly at the moment of the chord change - the point of the arrowhead.

 (let ring)
Instructs the player to depress the damper pedal, and keep it down for the duration of the *fermata* or measure, allowing every note to ring freely, until all notes are simultaneously stopped by the release of the damper pedal, at the player's discretion.

The above information was compiled by Steve Crews of Louisville, Kentucky. My deepest thanks go to him for the many hours he spent in making these transcriptions as accurate as possible.

David Leonhardt of Louisville, Kentucky originally transcribed each song. After he had proofread each piece I would then recheck all notes, rhythms, etc. and send it to the copyist. After Benny Hancock copied each piece, David and myself would again proofread everything. Steve Crews of Louisville, Kentucky made the final proofreading... several times! My greatest thanks to both of these fine pianists for making all of this material available to you.

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. 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 most always be present!** Those tones are most important when conveying the quality of the voicings/chords to anyone listening.

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**.

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 right 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. 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.

Examples using numbers for voicings.

+ & # mean to raise 1/2 step.
+4 and #11 are the same note.
2 & 9 are the same note.

MAJOR

9	9	3	5	6	5	5	7	5	6
7	7	1	3	3	2	2	5	3	3
5	6	7	1	1	6	7	2	7	7
3	3	5	7	7	3	3	6	5	5
							3	1	1

DOMINANT 7th

9	9	5	5	5	6	6	6	5	1	1	9	6	3	3	5
b7	b7	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	6	5	6	2	2	2	2
5	6	b7	2	2	b7	2	2	b7	2	2	2	b7	b7	b7	b7
3	3	b7	b7	b7	b7	3	b7	b7	b7	6	6	6	6	6	3
					6	6	3	3	3	3	3				3

MINOR (Dorian)

9	b3	5	1	5	1	b7	9	9	b3	5	1	5	4	4
b7	1	b3	5	b3	5	5	5	5	b7	b3	5	b3	9	9
5	b7	b7	b3	2	b3	b3	b3	b3	4	b7	b3	b7	b7	b7
b3	5	b7	b7	2	2	b7	2	1	4	b7	4	5	b3	b5
				b7		b7			4	1	b3			4

HALF-DIMINISHED

b5	b3	4	b3	b3	1	b6
b3	1	1	b7	b7	b7	b3
b7	b7	b7	b5	b5	b5	b7
b5	b5	4	b3	b5		
			4			4

DOM. 7th+5+9

+9	+5	1
b7	+9	+5
3	b7	+9
3	b7	3

HALF-DIMINISHED with #2

#2	#2	4	b6	Example
b7	b7	#2	4	Cø#2 = {
b5	b5	b7	#2	
b3	4	b5	b7	
		b3	b5	
			b3	

F	4
D	#2
Bb	b7
Gb	b5
Eb	b3

LYDIAN

+4	6	7	9	3	9	3
2	+4	+4	7	7	7	7
6	3	3	+4	+4	5	5
3	7	7	3	+4	+4	
	5	5				
	1	1				

MINOR with MAJOR 7th

9	7	5	5	4
7	5	b3	2	2
5	b3	2	7	7
b3	2	7	b3	5
				b3

IMPORTANT BOOKS FOR KEYBOARD PLAYERS

COMPING SERIES:

Complete COMPING transcriptions of play-a-long recordings (see ad, page 54)

- Volume 1 "How To Play Jazz and Improvise" by Jamey Aebersold
- Volume 41 "Body and Soul" by Dan Haerle
- Volume 50 "The Magic of Miles" by Mark Levine
- Volume 54 "Maiden Voyage" by Jamey Aebersold
- Volume 55 "Jerome Kern's Jazz Classics" by Hal Galper
- Volume 60 "Freddie Hubbard" by Mark Levine and Dan Haerle
- Volume 64 "Salsa/Latin Jazz" by Mark Levine
- Volume 70 "Killer Joe" by Jamey Aebersold

OTHER BOOKS:

- JAZZ ROCK VOICINGS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY KEYBOARD PLAYER - Dan Haerle
- VOICINGS FOR JAZZ PIANO - Frank Mantooth
- THE JAZZ PIANO BOOK - Mark Levine
- JAZZ IMPROV FOR KEYBOARD PLAYERS - Dan Haerle
- 1000 KEYBOARD IDEAS - various artists
- HORACE SILVER'S BEST OF JAZZ - Horace Silver
- JAZZ PIANO VOICING SKILLS - Dan Haerle
- JAZZ KEYBOARD VOICINGS AND HARMONY - Phil DeGreg

Any of the play-a-long recordings can be used by keyboard players. The stereo separation is such that the existing piano player on the recording may be turned off by switching off the right channel of your stereo (balance knob). This will leave the bass and drums on the left channel and you can play along with them. Volumes that are particularly good for keyboardist are: Volumes 1, 16, 21, 42, & 47. Many of these volumes cover material in all twelve keys and are well suited for the aspiring keyboardist.

There is no better lesson for learning the voicings that great jazz keyboard players use than listening to recordings, over and over. Your ear, in time, will begin picking up key voicings, subtle melodic concepts that take place behind a soloist, and rhythmic nuances that you may not hear the first several times you listen to a recording. What you experience is exactly what the artist wants you to hear...*they make it sound so easy and logical*. In time, you'll be able to do the same thing. ***Listen and play, listen and play.***

1. F MINOR, Eb MINOR, D MINOR (Eight-measure phrases)

4 CHORUSES

(SWING) $\text{♩} = 132-138$

F- (1ST 14 BARS ARE PLAYED IN RIGHT HAND ONLY)

①

Musical notation for the first system (measures 1-4). The right hand has a melodic line starting on F4, and the left hand has a bass line starting on F3. Dynamics include *mf-f* and *R.H.* is noted.

Musical notation for the second system (measures 5-8). The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand continues the bass line. Dynamics include *R.H.* and a fermata is present over the final notes.

Eb-

Musical notation for the third system (measures 9-12). The right hand has a melodic line starting on Eb4, and the left hand has a bass line starting on Eb3. Dynamics include *R.H.*

Musical notation for the fourth system (measures 13-16). The right hand has a melodic line starting on D4, and the left hand has a bass line starting on D3. Dynamics include *R.H.* and a triplet is present in the final measure.

D-

F-

②

E_b-

First system of a musical score. It consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a melodic line with various ornaments and a fermata. The lower staff contains a bass line with chords and a fermata. A bracket labeled "L.H." is positioned above the lower staff, indicating the left hand part.

D-

Second system of the musical score, continuing the two-staff format. It features melodic and bass lines with various musical notations, including slurs and ties.

Third system of the musical score, continuing the two-staff format. It features melodic and bass lines with various musical notations, including slurs and ties.

Fourth system of the musical score, continuing the two-staff format. It features melodic and bass lines with various musical notations, including slurs and ties. A circled number "3" is written to the left of the first measure of the lower staff. A fermata is placed above the first measure of the upper staff.

Fifth system of the musical score, continuing the two-staff format. It features melodic and bass lines with various musical notations, including slurs and ties.

E_b-

Handwritten musical notation for the first system, featuring a treble and bass staff with various notes and rests. A fermata is placed over the final notes of both staves.

[EVEN 5/8]

Handwritten musical notation for the second system, featuring a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a bracketed section labeled "[EVEN 5/8]" above it. A fermata is placed over the final notes of both staves.

D-

Handwritten musical notation for the third system, featuring a treble and bass staff with a large slur over the treble staff. A fermata is placed over the final notes of both staves.

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system, featuring a treble and bass staff with a large slur over the treble staff. A fermata is placed over the final notes of both staves.

F-

④

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system, featuring a treble and bass staff. A circled number "4" is written to the left of the staff. A fermata is placed over the final notes of both staves.

First system of a piano score. It consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains several chords and melodic lines, including a triplet of eighth notes. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line with eighth notes. A bracket under the first two measures of the lower staff is labeled 'L.H.' and '3'. There are dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f' throughout the system.

Second system of a piano score. It consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains chords and melodic lines. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line. A bracket under the first two measures of the upper staff is labeled 'Eb-' and 'L.H.'. There are dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f' throughout the system.

Third system of a piano score. It consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains chords and melodic lines. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line. A bracket under the first two measures of the upper staff is labeled 'L.H.'. There are dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f' throughout the system.

Fourth system of a piano score. It consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains chords and melodic lines. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line. A bracket under the first two measures of the upper staff is labeled 'D-'. There are dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f' throughout the system.

Fifth system of a piano score. It consists of two staves. The upper staff has a treble clef and contains chords and melodic lines. The lower staff has a bass clef and contains a bass line. A bracket under the first two measures of the upper staff is labeled 'D-'. There are dynamic markings like 'p', 'mf', and 'p'. The system ends with a double bar line and the text '(LET RING)' below it.