

An Article on New Age Piano Playing
by Pianist/Composer Edward Weiss

5 Secrets to Playing In the New Age Style!

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So, you think you need to learn a lot before you can create your own music? Nonsense. Read this report and find out what's important when learning how to play in the New Age style.

1. Learn How to Improvise

Learning how to improvise is the key to playing in this style. Period. You must learn to experiment and take musical risks - within certain frameworks of course. You're not going to bang on the keys and expect to make music. This is not the kind of risk I'm talking about. Students thrive best when given a certain set of rules or guidelines to move around with.

For example, in the free piano lesson '*Summer Morning*' available now at <http://www.quiescencemusic.com> you are given a few chords and a specific scale to make music with. In other words, I give you a set of limits from which you play the game of improvisation.

This will free you up from the thousand and one choices you could possibly have. In fact, if you didn't have a set of limitations, you probably would end up banging on the keyboard because while it is important to be free and spontaneous, it is equally important to understand how the game is played.

2. Start By Playing Simply

This one ties for first place. In my opinion, what stops most students from learning all they can from this style is the attitude that they either aren't good enough, or are not ready to learn how to improvise and play piano. Please don't think that.

No one person will ever know all there is to know about any one subject let alone piano playing. You will always be growing but **you must start somewhere and you must start from SIMPLE means.**

Here's a quote that sums it up best: "In the beginners mind there are many possibilities, but in the experts mind there are few." This means that you have an advantage over so called experienced piano players. Your attitude should always be one of receptivity. That is, never force anything to happen because when you force you are already setting yourself up for failure and disappointment.

3. Forget What You Were Taught

Perhaps you were taught that you must learn your scales first and that you must learn how to read music before you can do anything else.

I'm here to tell you that I can't read music, yet somehow, I've been able to put out two CD's of original music! In fact, if anything, reading music will slow you down creatively! If you want to create your very own music, you must forget what you were taught about music in general and **focus on learning how to improvise first and compose second.** Both of which can be taught!

I think I read every book at the library on composition and improvisation and what helped me out the most was a very slim volume on chord changes using 8-bar patterns.

By playing the chords in a set framework (8-bars) I was able to see how to use repetition and contrast to create with. And of course, I listened to the people I loved and learned a lot from just listening. So forget about what you were taught and start thinking about what you want to accomplish and you can do it!

4. Learn Chords

You've heard it before. Learn chords and you can make music. Just learn the 144 chords and voila - you can do it all. Don't believe it! You need to learn chords, but you don't need to learn one hundred chords right away. No. You need to learn probably about 3 chords or less to begin improvising in the "new age" style.

And if you think that you need to learn more than this at the beginning you are wrong. Of course you can learn as many chords as you want but what's the point if you never use them? It's like learning a new vocabulary word each day for the sake of massaging your ego. Nice, but unnecessary.

5. Learn How to Use Chords

Let's assume you've learned a few chords. Now what? What are you going to do with your new chords? You are going to use them to create music with and the best way to do that is to choose a key or mode to play in. This automatically limits your choices.

For example, let's say I sit down and start improvising and I start using a C Major 7 chord. I like what I hear but a problem arises - where do I go from here. Now this won't be a problem if you say to yourself. "OK. I started on C Major 7. Let's just stay in the Key of C Major and see what happens." Now, you are ready to go forward because you do not have a thousand and one confusing choices ahead of you. Do you see how this can free you up? You've limited yourself to using just 6 chords from the C Major scale.

Warmest wishes,
Edward Weiss
Quiescence Music



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