

MichMusic Personal Study

(www.micheleweir.com • www.michmusic.com)

MENU DESCRIPTIONS

I. SINGING/PERFORMING

a. **Fearless Vocal Improvisation** (Level I)

Designed for beginners in vocal improvisation. Covers syllables, feeling rhythm and groove, constructing melodic shapes thru motive development, learning to hear chord progressions, and gaining basic fluency in improvisation. Sessions include a combination of simple theory, call and response, and specific exercises.

b. **Fearless Vocal Improvisation** (Level II)

Level II Vocal Improvisation ventures into more advanced melodic territory such as the bebop language, and the art of navigating through more challenging chord progressions. Sessions include specific exercises and singing along with recorded solos.

c. **Solo Singing I** - The Essentials of Jazz Singing

Introduction to solo jazz singing and the creative interpretation of jazz standards.

Includes instruction and practice in singing ballads, swing tunes and bossa novas in a true jazz style. Perfect for singers that are new to jazz and/or coming from a classical background.

d. **Solo Singing II** - Playground for Jazz Singers

Exploration of the finer points of jazz singing, including the most critical element: soulful and creative expression of the emotion behind the text. We'll explore the many creative tools available to a jazz singer including deeply feeling the groove, ornamenting the melody and rhythms, inflection, use of vibrato, phrasing, use or word stress, and so on.

e. **Working with the Rhythm Section**

Everything you need to know to get comfortable in working with the rhythm section, including count offs, terminology, what info they need when you're sitting in, cueing endings, and so on. This topic will help you gain confidence with the players while also earning their respect.

f. **Preparing for Your Gig, Concert or Tour**

Choosing tunes and creating effective set lists, what you need to find out about the venue before the gig, organizing set up and sound check time, contacting players and communicating necessary info to them, setting up rehearsals, advertising and so on. Also, we'll talk about how to get the gig in the first place!

g. **Performance Essentials**

Stage presence and the power of nonverbal messages, cueing rhythm section on stage, talking with the audience in a way that's genuine and interesting, sound reinforcement basics (including what equipment you need), mic technique, and dealing with stage fright.

h. **Recording Your Demo or CD**

Everything you need to know to prepare for your recording: choosing and preparing the music, contacting the players, finding the right studio and cd duplication house, creating the artwork, the importance of singing freely without self judgment in the studio. Michele has a small pro tools set up so you can practice recording yourself to a track with headphones on, similar to how it would be in the studio.

II. THE COMPLETE MUSICIAN

a. **Jazz Piano Made Easy** (Level I)

Jazz Piano Level I is for singers and other non-jazz pianists (drummers for example) who want to learn to play authentic sounding jazz chords. **YOU CAN GO FAR IN JUST 6 MONTHS.** Begin by learning chord types and simple 3-note voicings. At that point, you will already be able to open a fake book and play jazz chords. Then, you'll move on to simple 4-note voicings and apply them to swing and bossa nova styles.

b. **Jazz Piano Made Easy** (Level II)

Level II jazz piano starts where level I left off, with an exploration of interesting 5-note voicings and extensions, breaking up chords to sound more flowing and pianistic, creating intros, and playing the melody of the tune for solo piano gigs.

c. **Jazz Piano - Playing With the Rhythm Section**

This topic covers what you need to know to play in a rhythm section: comping (rootless chord voicings) and right hand soloing. You'll also learn how to harmonize the melody of the tune with a combination of block chords and right hand melodic lines.

d. **Jazz Ropes** - Things You Need to Know

Everyone should select this topic! Covers all the basics that singers and players should know about jazz: chord types, song form, groove names and characteristics, terminology and definitions, performance format, and so on.

e. **Lead Sheet Writing 101**

Learn to write a clear and easy to read lead sheet in your key with chord symbols, intro, endings, and road map markings such as D.S. al Coda.

f. **Creative Rhythm Section Arranging**

How to turn your lead sheet into a distinctive and unique arrangement through use of rhythm kicks, written out bass lines, reharmonized chord progressions, interesting structural elements, key changes, tempo changes, and so on.

g. **Reharmonization Madness**

In depth study of the many ways a simple tune can be transformed through reharmonizing the chord progression. Includes study of tritone and common tone subs, diatonic choral movement, approach chords by 1/2 step, by 3rds, interesting vamps, pedal tones, modal concepts, and so on.

h. **Organizing Your Gig Book**

Gather all of your lead sheets into a 3-ring binder gig book, and include a table of contents with songs organized by key, and style. Learn how to deal with 2 and 3 page charts, and organize your book to accommodate a section for holiday(or other) music and more elaborate (concert) arrangements.

i. **Music Fundamentals**

Music fundamentals is for those who have never studied music, or need a refresher course. it covers all of the basics you need to know: treble and bass clefs, key signatures, meter signatures, counting rhythms, simple note reading, and so on.

j. **Sight Reading/Ear Training**

Dig in and refine your sight reading and ear training skills. specific exercises for both, including methods for improving skills in the fastest and most effective way. Ideal for vocal group singers, and very useful for any musician.

k. **Building a Music Career You Love**

So, you love singing jazz, but how do you do it as a career? Explore and define the steps toward build a unique career that you love. Being in the music business doesn't have to mean you're strictly a performer - there are numerous options for both professional and semiprofessional music careers, including the business of music, sound reinforcement (live), recording, publishing, promotion, management, writing/arranging, teaching, and so on.

l. **Vocal Group Arranging (Level I)**

Basics of writing a capella and accompanied vocal group charts in 2 and 4 part (four-way close and drop 2.) Covers intros and endings, creative note, rhythm and chord progression alterations, and overall arrangement structure.

m. **Vocal Group Arranging** (Level II)

Designed for more experienced arrangers. We'll study arrangements you've already written to consider options for refinement. You'll also write new arrangements and explore various creative chord voicings, reharmonization, arrangement structure, and so on.

III. TEACHER TOPICS

(Also see above topics which may be applicable to teachers.)

a. **Starting a Vocal Jazz Ensemble**

For teachers who want to start a vocal jazz program, everything you need to know to get started: auditioning, where to find literature, preparing for rehearsal, numerous tips on running your rehearsal effectively, working with sound system and rhythm section, and so on.

b. **Your Jazz Choir - Raising the Bar**

For directors with established vocal jazz programs, tips and techniques for getting the group to sound it's best: clean up the intonation, balance, blend, sing with a beautiful tone, feel the inner rhythm to really swing, sing dissonant chords with ease, tighten up entrances and releases, and so on. We'll explore various styles of arrangements and address any questions you may have.

c. **Teaching Vocal Improvisation and Solo Singing**

This topic explores methods of teaching vocal improvisation and solo singing within the jazz choir rehearsal using group activities and games. Because of time limitations you probably have in rehearsal, efficiency will be emphasized, as well as ideas for student activities outside of class.

d. **Coaching Your Student Rhythm Section**

Everything you need to know about working with your student rhythm section: parts of the drum set and how to play common styles, set ups and fills, and how to construct walking bass lines and piano comping chords from chord symbols. Information on how to get your rhythm section to play with strength and consistency as a solid team.

IV. VOCAL GROUP COACHING

Coaching is available for established professional (local or visiting) and high school or college vocal groups. General feedback on all aspects of the music and performance, fine tuning, tips and so on.