

Guest Author - Time to Create

A Battle for the Creative Spirit

By Dr. Bert Konowitz

I recently phoned a local music school to inquire about their instructional program. My granddaughter, 7 years old, is about to embark on one of the most joyful of human voyages – learning to play the piano. After a pleasant conversation with the Director of the school, I was satisfied to learn about a range of details—recitals, theory classes, the social climate that is maintained. Terrific – I was happy.

“One more thing,” I said. “Is there any activity in which the musical ear and creative

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imagination are explored?” After a moment of silence I added, “Is there any improvisation activity in the lessons?” “Well,” said the Director, “you know it’s only a half-hour lesson, and with all the other things that need to be done, it is very difficult to find the time.....” She is correct. It *is* difficult to find the time.

“A man will be imprisoned in a room with a door that’s unlocked and opens inwards, as long as it does not occur to him to pull rather than push,” said a very smart person.

Here is another way to start a beginner, walking into a studio for the very first time, ready to take the first piano lesson. (Can you hear the rapid



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thumping of the child’s heart and sense the surge of adrenalin that envelops the room?)

“Hi,” I say, “I am so happy that you are going to begin playing the piano. You know, when I am happy I feel like this...” Still standing, I play quick, short, happy BLACK notes in different registers. “I know that if you take one finger (select a finger) and play HAPPY (quick, short, detached) on the BLACK notes, then you too will be able to play like me !” The child plays – hesitatingly at first, but I encourage them. “Could you make it sound sunny? Or like it feels when you are in the playground? Or when you are going to have your favorite dessert? Or.....”

The child improvises....

The child composes....

The child begins the journey of Musical Literacy and the Creative Spirit.

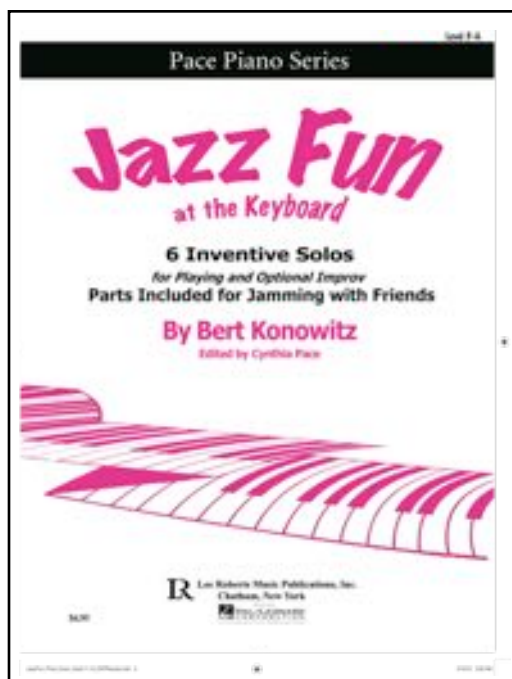
.....Lesson Time elapsed: 6 minutes.

New! Jazz Fun by Dr. Bert Konowitz

Jazz Fun is a set of six early intermediate pieces, uniquely composed to provide a fun and social experience, as students explore various jazz, rock and pop styles. Special parts are included with each solo, so that parents, teachers, friends, or audiences have the option of joining the performance of each piece.

Have fun, reach out to others and discover the wonderful ways that you can be part of the social media experience through music!

Bert Konowitz



Jazz Fun- newly available

He has received awards for his compositions from the National Endowment for the Arts and ASCAP, and the Teachers College Distinguished Alumni Award. His works have been performed at Lincoln Centre, and his presentations include a recent demonstration of his improv/composition work at the NYSSMA Conference, the MENC Eastern - Division Conference, and the MENC National Conference. He presented a demonstration of his new Lee Roberts publication, *Jazz Fun*, at the MTNA 2012 Conference.

Dr. Bert Konowitz, Professor of Music Education (Retired) at Teachers College, Columbia University, is known for his pioneering work in all areas of improvisation. He founded and conducts SPIRIT, the TC Resident Improv Ensemble. SPIRIT's performances have featured Dave Brubeck, Alexander Bernstein (son of Leonard Bernstein), and Dr. Billy Taylor. Many of Dr. Konowitz' improvisational publications are distributed and performed world wide.

Video presentations by Dr. Konowitz: http://www.leerobertsmusic.com/jazz_fun_konowitz.html and http://www.leerobertsmusic.com/dorian_improv_konowitz.html

Jazz Fun - Thematics:

Stomp Your Foot (Syncopated*)



Text Me Some Jazz (Call and Response)



Whose Blue Note Is It, Anyway?!



Easy Walkin' Blues (Walking Bass and Comping*)



Knock, Knock, Who's There? Dorian! (Mode)



Play It Again, Again, and Again (Riffs*)

