

Bob Kauflin

# THE PIANO IN CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

## I. Welcome

## II. General Principles

### A. Excellence.

1. Excellence in all dimension of worship expression, including music, must not simply be defined by cultural standards of sophistication, but by the ability of the expression to strengthen, deepen, and develop faith. – (Bryan Chapell, *Christ Centered Worship*, 140)
2. We don't strive for excellence so that we will be seen and honored, but so that Christ will be seen and honored.
3. Our gifts and talents are slaves to Christ.

### B. Melody, rhythm, harmony.

1. Often contributing all three. Don't need to.
2. Rhythm and harmony most important. People can carry the melody.

### C. Groove

1. Not a strength for pianists
2. Time is a metronome. Groove is based on time, but has accents.
3. Inner pulse serves as the framework for everything else.
4. Involves thinking in larger segments of time
5. Different ways to communicate groove
  - a. Whole notes
  - b. Guitar feel in RH (dotted 8<sup>th</sup> – dotted 8<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> tied to half note)
  - c. LH thumb
  - d. Arpeggiated
  - e. Rely on percussion or other instruments

### D. Dynamics.

1. Chord to chord
2. Section to section
3. Growth over the song
4. Number of notes vs. force of attack

- E. Confidence.
  - 1. Sets people at ease.
  - 2. Tempo, key, chords and notes...
- F. Deliberate practice.
  - 1. Geoff Colvin in *Talent is Overrated*:
    - a. Designed to improve performance
    - b. High degree of repetition
    - c. Immediate, measurable feedback
    - d. Mentally challenging
    - e. Hard work
  - 2. Metronome
  - 3. Chord knowledge
  - 4. Song knowledge
  - 5. Practicing with others

### III. Playing with a Band

- A. Be aware of the audio spectrum.
  - 1. Guitars – 80-880 Hz
  - 2. Bass – 40-260 Hz
  - 3. Vocals – 110-660 Hz
  - 4. Piano – 27-4200 Hz
- B. Fills.
  - 1. Distinct and memorable
  - 2. Don't tread on others
  - 3. Octaves
- C. Use your LH wisely.
  - 1. With the bass player
  - 2. Around the bass player
  - 3. More with just a guitar, acting like a kick drum
  - 4. Not at all
- D. Acoustic piano vs. electric keyboard
  - 1. More overtones with acoustic.
  - 2. Play less.
  - 3. More dynamics possible.

**IV. 3:10-4:30 Select Topics**

A. Chord Coloring

1. Open 5ths
2. Add2 (cluster, no 3<sup>rd</sup>, over 3)
3. Add4 (minor and major)
4. Maj7 (cluster or spaced)
5. Maj9 (add 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, G/C or A/D)

B. Inversions

1. Purpose – variety, effect
2. Ways of playing them – dense vs. sparse, one vs. two hand (space allows others to fit in)
3. Keep the bass player in mind. The lower your lowest note, the more you compete with the bass player.
4. Higher is better with a band.

EX Practice arpeggiated inversions, scalar inversions.

C. Hymns

1. Melody driven
  - a. Hymn parts
  - b. Altered chords
2. Feel driven
  - a. Simplify chords
  - b. Alter chords
  - c. Repeating patterns
3. Know the melody to serve the melody. Let the melody sing!
4. Serve the lyrics

D. Introductions

1. Confidence is crucial – setting up tempo, key, starting note, and when to start singing.

2. Options:
  - a. Last line of chorus
  - b. Turn
  - c. Repeated chord pattern or single
  - d. Chord progression not found in the song

#### E. Transitions

1. Not always needed
2. Use chord progression from previous or next song.
3. In tempo vs. ad lib. In tempo can encourage spontaneous singing.
4. Prolonged crash can encourage “spillover” from previous song.

#### F. Playing behind someone speaking

1. Focus on what the speaker is saying.
2. Allow space for their words.
3. Use music to support not supplant the words being said.
4. It can sometimes be less distracting to move to the tempo and key of the next song while someone’s speaking rather than when they finish.
5. Make sure your volume isn’t overpowering.
6. Repeated vs. ad lib
7. Melodic vs. chordal
8. Song vs. non-song
9. Chord options
  - a. 1 – 4 – 1 – 4 (D – G – D – G)
  - b. 1 – 4/1 – 5/1 – 4/1 (D – G/D – A/D – G/D)
  - c. 6m – 5 – 4 – 1 (Bm – A – G – D)
  - d. 1 – 3m – 4 – 5 (D – F#m – G – A)
  - e. 4/5 can be substituted for 5

#### G. Modulations

1. Whole step: 1 – 3m (2m in new key) - 4/5 - 5
2. Half step: 1 – 5 – b3m (2m in new key) - 5
3. Find chords common to both keys.
4. Play a melodic pattern in the old then the new key.
5. Cold modulation.

## V. Class Participation