

# Tip of the Month - Right Hand Improvisation Part 1

The first thing we teach our students to do when they begin to improvise from a fake book or lead sheet, is to use a variety of different left hand rhythm patterns. See Tip of the Month - March 2010 – for those ideas.

The second thing we do is to begin improvising with the right hand. That's what this month's Tip of the Month will cover.

The easiest kind of right hand improvisation is to change the rhythm of the song, by adding more eighth notes using the melody notes.

A simple fake version of Michael is shown below. On the following page you will see sheet music which goes three times through the tune of Michael over simple quarter note LH chords. Each time the arrangement gets more complex by adding more and more extra eighth notes.

For example, in the first version, the 2 quarter notes in the first measure have each been changed to 2 8<sup>th</sup> notes.

Often these additional rhythm notes make the song “swing” so play the 8<sup>th</sup> notes as uneven pairs of long-short.

You can hear the full example of the three times through Michael with the additional rhythm 8<sup>th</sup> notes right here on the website. Simply go to Recordings – Demo Improvisations – then it's the first example in the Right Hand Demo section.

Take any fake book you have and change the rhythm by adding extra 8<sup>th</sup> notes of the melody. Have fun!

## Michael Row the Boat

The musical notation for "Michael Row the Boat" is presented in three lines of a single system, all in treble clef and 4/4 time. The first line starts with a C chord and contains the first three measures of the melody. The second line starts with an F chord in measure 4, followed by C and Em chords, and contains measures 4 through 6. The third line starts with a Dm chord in measure 7, followed by C, G7, and C chords, and contains measures 7 through 9. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a dotted quarter note in measure 3 and measure 6.

# Michael - Extra Rhythm Notes Improvisation Example

Measures 1-5 of the piece. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of chords.

6

Measures 6-9. The right hand continues the melodic pattern with some phrasing slurs, and the left hand maintains the chordal accompaniment.

10

Measures 10-13. The right hand shows a more active melodic line with eighth notes, and the left hand continues with the chordal accompaniment.

14

Measures 14-17. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand provides the accompaniment.

18

Measures 18-21. The right hand features a melodic line with some phrasing slurs, and the left hand continues with the chordal accompaniment.

22

Measures 22-25. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand provides the accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final chord in the left hand.