



Mining the Gold from Piano-Vocal-Guitar Books
2025 MTC/IL Retreat
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Creative Ways to Use a Piano-Vocal-Guitar (PVG) Book

A PVG book offers more than just accompaniment lead sheets—it's a springboard for creativity, skill-building, and musical exploration. Here are creative ways pianists can make the most of these resources.

Just the Basics

1. Play the accompaniment with LH Note, RH Chords
2. Play the accompaniment with LH Chord, RH Note
3. Advance the LH chords - break them up, BMTM, BTMT
4. Advance the LH chords - roll them, arpeggiate them
5. Reharmonize them simply - i.e., add a 7th, add +2, +6, make them SUS chords etc...Use the Accompaniment One Chord Chart.
6. Read the RH melody & play over LH triads
7. Figure out a playing-based approach to RH melody and play over LH triads
8. Use the chord progression and improvise the RH

More Advanced Techniques

1. Create Solo Piano Arrangements

Use chord symbols to reharmonize, embellish the melody, and expand into rich two-hand arrangements.

2. Improvise Using the Chord Progressions

Treat the chords like a jazz lead sheet. Improvise with left-hand voicings and right-hand melodies.

3. Build Arranging and Composition Skills

Rework songs into different genres, time signatures, keys, or create new sections.

4. Sight Reading and Rhythm Practice

Use the melody for sight-reading and chord rhythms for timing and coordination building.

5. Teach Theory in Context

Identify chord types, progressions, modulations, and analyze song structures.

6. Explore Transposition

Transpose melodies and chords into new keys for fluency and understanding.

7. Use as Ear Training Material

Play accompaniment and sing back melody, or vice versa, to sharpen ears.

8. Assign Song Projects to Students

Have students arrange, perform, or rewrite PVG songs for creative development.

9. Record and Produce

Use a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) to create layered recordings and experiment with production.

Bonus: “Mash-Up” Two Songs

Combine elements from two songs to make something new and fun.