

Don't Be Afraid of Melody

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Sample of Content:

Looks at the textural and melodic sides of New Age piano playing and suggests not to discard the use of melody.

Content:

In New Age piano music, there are basically two styles - textural and melodic. The textural style is usually associated with George Winston where you hear beautiful backgrounds created by the left hand while the right improvises melody.

The melodic style popularized by David Lanz, places melody at the forefront.

Many students fall in love with the textural side of New Age piano and while there is nothing wrong at all with this, it's also a good idea to not put melody off to the side. It's a very good idea to familiarize yourself with both aspects of New Age piano playing.

For example, the piece "Egrets" focuses mostly on melody. In fact, the first thing you hear is the theme, which is, repeated two times more after the introduction. It's a simple theme that most would say is "New Age." In the lesson piece Cirrus, we have something entirely different! We have textures created by broken chords. Melody is not playing the lead role here. In fact, there really is no discernible melody at all - although there really is no music without melody - (a whole new topic!)

While I'm the first person to say play what you feel and don't try and force yourself into playing something that's not your personal aesthetic, I'm also an advocate of not brushing off something completely just because it's not "your thing."

Learning how to create pieces with melody at the forefront is a skill that will come in handy whether you enjoy this side of New Age piano or not.

Edward Weiss is a pianist/composer and webmaster of Quiescence Music's online piano lessons. He has been helping students learn how to play piano in the New Age style for over 14 years and works with students in private, in groups, and now over the internet. Stop by now at http://www.quiescencemusic.com/piano_lessons.html for a FREE piano lesson!

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