

CONTRA PIANO WORKSHOP/SKYPE LESSON

Are you one of these? 1. You want to play contra piano, but you don't know where to start. 2. You have played some contra piano, but you are tired of boom-chucking and are ready to take it to the next level. 3. You have experience playing contra piano and are confident in what you do, but feel like you are in a rut and you want to do more. In fact, you want to knock it out of the park! Well, let's do something about that!

The workshop or lesson(s) can include:

The Role of the Backup Player

- How to play with other backup instruments.
- How to enhance the dancers' experience.
- When to take the lead.
- Playing the role of second lead.
- How to cue the dancers.

At the Keyboard

- **CHORDS:** What are the different kinds and when, where and how can I use them?
 - Major, minor, diminished, augmented, 7th chords and higher.
 - Suspensions, alternate, substitute, percussive, passing and rhythmic chords.
 - Using good voice leading when playing chords.
 - How do I choose which chord to use? Choosing chords for affect.
 - Does register matter?
- **BASSLINES:** how, when, where and why.
 - How to develop a bass line.
 - Consider style. What IS the difference between French Canadian, Old Timey, Celtic and other styles of tunes from the piano bench?
 - Balance.
 - How to cue the dancers.
 - The long build.
 - Life beyond the boom-chuck.
- **TEMPO:** What tempos work for what?
 - Choosing a tempo.
 - The role of the backup player regarding tempo.
- **SCALES:** how are they useful?
 - Major, minor, pentatonic and blues.
 - Modes
 - Using scales for improv
- **OTHER Considerations:**
 - When to use pedal in a contra set.
 - The art of playing waltzes.
 - Practice ideas.
 - Going with the flow, i.e. following your band mates' leads.

