

ORGAN-IZING

POPULAR MUSIC

by
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The teaching/learning process for arranging popular music for organ consists of three equally important steps. There must be an explanation of each item (fill, ending, chord sequence, etc.) which must be studied and understood. The next step is to practice what you have studied on all the common chords or in the five common keys. Knowing it is one thing, but being able to do it easily at the organ is another matter.

The third step is to apply what you have studied and practiced in many songs in all of the five common keys (C-F-G-B_b-E_b). If you master the various chord changes and arranging techniques in these keys, it is not difficult to transfer the same musical ideas into A_b or other keys. However, I don't recommend wasting time trying to learn everything in keys which you will never use.

In order to explain all musical concepts so that they can be applied to songs in any key, it is necessary to use two sets of numbers. This is not a new idea; it has been a part of music study for hundreds of years. Roman numerals refer to the root of each chord and its position on the scale of the key in which the song is written. The regular numbers refer to the notes of each chord regardless of the key it is in. Capital Roman numerals I-IV-V indicate major chords. Lower case Roman numerals vi-ii-iv indicate minor chords. A 7th or other numbers may be added to either of these to further describe the chord. In the key of K: I-vi-ii7-V7 equals C-A_m-D_m7-G7. In the key of F, the same numbers would equal F-D_m-G_m7-C7. If you understand this example figure it out in G, B_b and E_b and you will have a chord sequence which is useful for all kinds of improvising. More on that later.

The next step is to take any simple song and assign each chord a Roman numeral and each melody note a number indicating its position in its accompanying chord. You can then play that song in any key. This is not difficult — TRY IT.

Ear Training

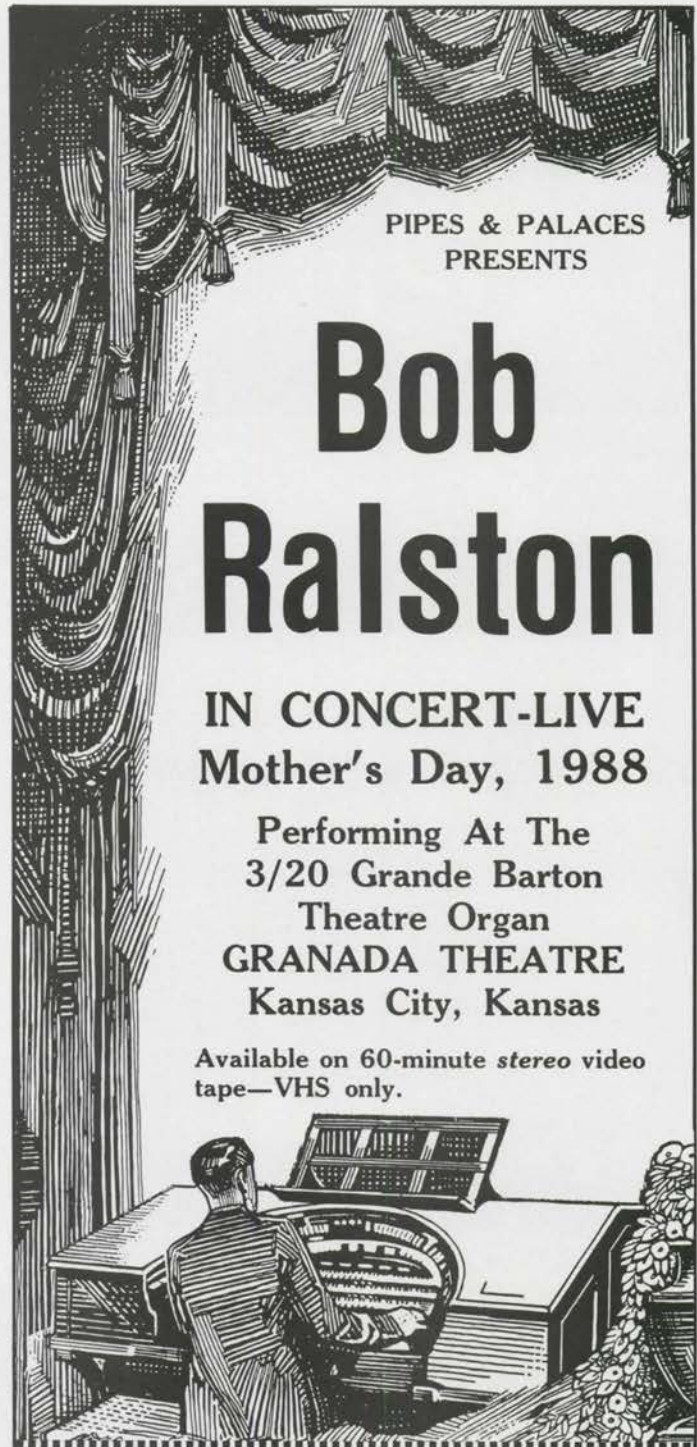
If there is one faculty which can aid a person's musical progress, it is the ability to learn by LISTENING to music. This is a gift which most musicians have in varying degrees. Most people cannot depend entirely on their ears. That is why there is such a big music publishing industry.

Whenever you listen to any kind of music, always try to hear everything that is going on: harmony, bass, rhythm, etc. Pay special attention to tone color and general style of performance.

If you will spend the next two months studying and applying the scale/chord/melody number relationships, you will be able to learn future subjects quickly and easily.

*Music, the greatest good that
mortals know, and
all of heaven that we have below.*

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