



# ORGAN-IZING

POPULAR MUSIC

by  
**AL HERMANN'S**

## Left Hand Counter-Melodies — Part 1

Improvising or creating a musical counter-melody is one of the most interesting and challenging aspects of playing popular music on the organ.

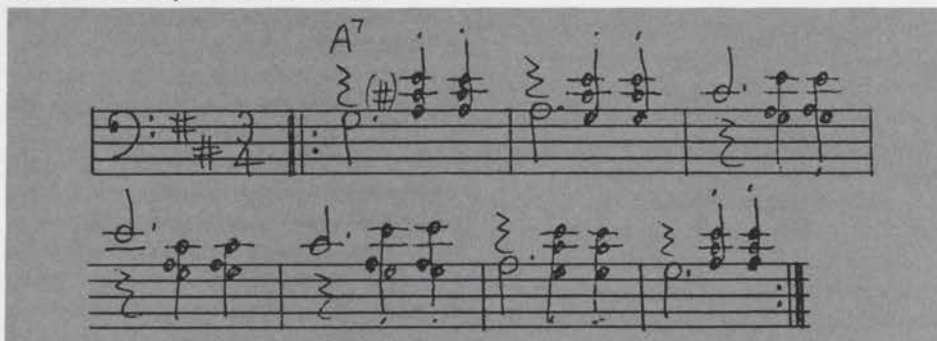
A counter-melody is formed by holding down one note of each chord while playing a rhythmic accompaniment with the other fingers. Leaning on the little finger, sustaining the lowest note of each chord, creates a drone — not a musical counter-melody. It should always harmonize with the main melody of a song, like a duet with a second person singing the alto or tenor part.

A counter-melody can improve the left hand accompaniment in three ways by:

1. Eliminating the choppy effect of a plain rhythm accompaniment;
2. Adding a melodic second voice to the principal theme;
3. Occasionally completing the chord by adding the missing part between the melody and the pedal.

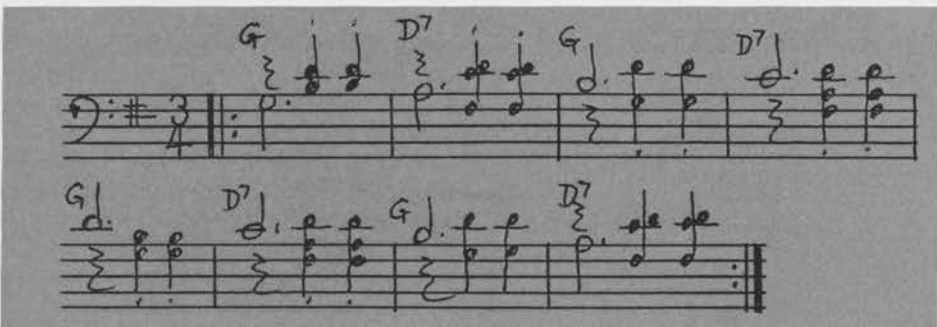
A counter-melody should always be used when playing solo melody. It can also be used when playing detached chord melody, but is not necessary when playing legato chord melody.

If you have never played a counter-melody, the first step will be to practice holding down any one finger while playing all the other notes of the chords staccato — very short. Press the first note of each measure down firmly and lean on it while moving the other fingers down and up quickly. Count time slowly and evenly. Keep all the counter-melody notes connected.



Repeat many times and then do the same thing on many different chords. When your left hand becomes tired, practice a few scales and finger exercises with the right hand while resting the left hand.

The best counter-melodies are those which move to the nearest note in the next chord. Practice this exercise slowly and always listen. You must be able to hold down any finger while playing a staccato rhythmic accompaniment with the other fingers.



Repeat many times and make up similar exercises using other chords. Next time, I'll explain how to apply this procedure in many songs.

# Journal of American Organbuilding

Quarterly Publication of the  
American Institute of  
Organbuilders

This publication is devoted to the dissemination of knowledge regarding the design, construction and maintenance of pipe organs in North America. Although primarily a technical journal for the benefit of organbuilding professionals, it is also a valuable resource for architects and project consultants, church musicians, building committees, seminary and university libraries, and anyone involved with the design or renovation of contemporary worship space.

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