

Exploring Musical Creativity: “Doodling” with Your Accordion

Mitchell R. “Mitch” White, Ph.D.

Audience: Beginning to early intermediate accordionists

Prerequisites: Knowing the basic chords in simple keys is helpful

Music relies on three fundamental, sound-shaping elements: Rhythm, melody, and harmony. Besides learning the features of their instrument, early-journey accordionists spend a lot of effort on structured learning, with a focus on specific songs and technical elements.

This session will look at a different mode for exploring music with the accordion: Free-form play, or “doodling.” With no focus on any technique or tune, doodling with the accordion can lead to unexpected learning: Chord progressions, melody improvisation, dynamics, song form, tonality and more.

A few starter patterns and “licks” will be demonstrated to get things rolling. Attendees will investigate the fun of accordion doodling with an aim towards learning how to enrich their focused efforts elsewhere in their musical growth. This is a hands-on session, and attendees will spend time “trying it out” and interacting with the session host and other attendees.

What Creative Doodling May Help With:

- Improving familiarity with the accordion
- Increasing skill with music elements (chords, scales, keys, “licks,” song forms, and more)
- Playing music more freely
- Expanding musicality
- “Inventing” music
- Deepening intrinsic motivation
- Assisting the move from musical consumer to musical contributor
- (Maybe, Just Maybe, it gets you beyond “just okay”)

What Creative Doodling Does not Help With:

- Reading music
- Learning the piece your teacher assigned (and due tomorrow)
- Understanding Bach’s Phone Number
- Washing dishes, doing laundry, and other chores (but it will help you forget about them, for a while)