

PIANO *for* LIFE

Three volume sequel to
“PIANO *for* QUITTERS”

THREE IMPORTANT KEYS TO THIS SERIES

One of the primary goals of this series is to demonstrate the transformation that takes place when we clearly understand chords.

The simple structures in harmony are easy for everyone to understand. Constantly keep in mind, throughout the series, that the musical examples played are always based on the structures that have been explained. Many musical examples provided happen too quickly for you to be able to follow by watching the hands. You will be able to reproduce the sounds by your understanding of the chord structure.

The pace we will be traveling during the lessons in this series requires only one thing - knowing the names of the keys! Can you picture each of the seven unique white keys as soon as it is named? Can you picture each of the five black keys when named, even though each one has two names?

All of the information in this series is based on a practical analysis of standard concepts in music theory. The traditional terminology is introduced gradually once the concepts are understood.

Volume One

Lesson 1... Harmony in Motion

Musicians understand that every piece of music has a simple working skeleton. This consists of the activity of the melody and the three note chords that accompany it. The simplicity of this skeletal structure surprises everyone!

Lesson 2... The Heart of Harmony

All chord structures, in fact all music, is based on 3 note chords called triads. There are only four kinds of triads. They are amazingly simple in structure. All four can be built from two simple building blocks explained during this lesson.

If you have seen the introduction video “Piano for Quitters”, you will notice we are streamlining the strategy so we can move on to new chords:

Major = bright dark

Minor = dark bright

Diminished = dark dark

Augmented = bright bright

Lesson 3... Random Sequence

Here is a family of four chords that connect musically no matter what order you play them. Start with the Dm chord and end with the Dm chord. Other than the beginning and ending, the order that the chords are played is completely flexible. You may also use Dm at any time during the progression.

As a general rule each chord should be played for 3 or 4 beats before going to the next chord.

Dm Gm B^b A Dm

Dm Gm Dm A

B^b Gm A Dm

Lesson 4... Professional Sounds

All of the music in lesson 4 comes from the chords below even though the symbol may not always be displayed on your screen.

Toward the end of the lesson the chords are played in various positions (inversions) a skill you will soon have!

Below the backslash in a chord symbol is a specified bass note — the low note under the chord.

F C/E F/E^b

B^b/D B^bm/D^b F/C

D^m/B B^b/C F

Lesson 5... Legitimate Shortcuts
Lesson 6... Minor to Major = Music
Lesson 7... Variations

TWO IMPORTANT GOALS

First, these lessons give an overview and road map for the future of how we can “picture” and remember all of the major and all of the minor chords.

Second, a presentation of interesting ways to play a majestic sounding chord sequence that will encourage you to eventually play all the major and minor chords.

We promise the information covered in these three lessons will mean much more to you in the future! Please keep in mind that it is difficult to appreciate the importance of this overview material, when first introduced, apart from the lessons that are presented later in the series.

Don't let the next chord sequence scare you - just remember this is reference material for an important goal!

C _m	D	C _m	D	D _m	E
D _m	E	E _m	G ^b	E _m	G ^b
G ^b _m	A ^b	G ^b _m	A ^b	A ^b _m	B ^b
A ^b _m	B ^b	B ^b _m	C	B ^b _m	C
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F _m	G	F _m	G	G _m	A
G _m	A	A _m	B	A _m	B
B _m	D ^b	B _m	D ^b	D ^b _m	E ^b
D ^b _m	E ^b	E ^b _m	F	E ^b _m	F

Volume Two

Lesson 8... A Close Friendship

Our ability to learn new music efficiently is directly related to our ability to see the continual relationship between the melody and the chords that support it.

Lesson 9... Colorful Suspensions

A suspended chord (sometimes sus 4) has a temporary unfinished sound until it resolves back to a major or minor triad as in the following progression:

C C^{sus} C C^{sus} F F^{sus}
 F F^{sus} E E^{sus} E E^{sus}
 A^{sus} Am A^{sus} Am D^{sus} Dm
 D^{sus} Dm G^{sus} G C

Lesson 10... The Language of Harmony

You are much closer than you think to being able to interpret any chord symbol! Even the most complicated chords are built with a few simple building blocks.

Lesson 11... "Haunting" Progressions

These progressions are so easy to understand and play that we can concentrate on the even flow of the rhythm.

C^{maj7} Am⁷ C^{maj7} Am⁷
 Dm⁹ G⁹ C⁹
 C⁹ C^{aug 9} F^{maj7(6)}
 Fm^{maj7(6)} C⁹

C^{maj7} C^{dim} Dm⁷

D^{dim}/_G C^{maj7}

G^{maj7} G^{dim} Am⁷

A^{dim}/_D G^{maj7}

C C^{aug} F G^{aug} C

D D^{aug} G A^{aug} D

Lesson 12... Advanced Random

Advanced sounds with a flexible sequence. Start and end with the first chord in the group. Other than that you may play this group of chords in any order you wish. They all connect musically!

D _m	G _m ⁷	E _m ⁷⁻⁵
B [♭] ₇	G ^{dim} / _A	D _m ⁶

A _m	D _m ⁷	F ⁷
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B _m ⁷⁻⁵	D ^{dim} / _E	A _m ⁶
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Lesson 13... Priceless Shortcut

There are two chord symbols for the diminished chord. The symbols C^{dim} and C^o mean exactly the same thing. This lesson includes insights that will save you countless hours of practice!

Lesson 14... Augmented Shortcut

There are two chord symbols for the augmented chord. The symbols C^{aug} and C⁺ mean precisely the same thing. Like diminished chords the inversions leap frog over the top of each other. Learning four augmented chords actually teaches us all twelve augmented chords.

Volume Three

Lesson 15... Expressive Playing

A comprehensive scheme that combines physiological (kinesthetic) knowledge of the keyboard with emotional power. Imaginative application will lay a solid foundation for musical playing.

Lesson 16... Accelerated Development

Many regard Josef Hofmann as the greatest keyboard “technician” of all time. He recommended a simple exercise that will greatly improve our physical abilities.

A _m	G	F	G
D _m	C	B ^{dim}	A _m

Lesson 17... Component Skills

Franz Liszt taught all of his students that all complex musical structures can be divided into simple parts. Becoming familiar both mentally and physically with the simple components of music is the most efficient means to rapid progress.

Lesson 18... Chromatic Run

Many of the special keyboard skills can be learned before we run across them in music. Each hand should learn this run in both directions - up and down the keyboard.

Lesson 19... Music Notation

Learning music notation is really no different than learning the meaning of new vocabulary words. The difference is the amount of material involved. The number of symbols necessary in order to read music is microscopic in comparison with the amount of information that must be learned for any language.

Lesson 20... Timing in Music Notation

Understanding when to play a note, and how long to hold a note, may be learned initially as a separate skill.

When playing chord charts, it is wise to play familiar songs so that the timing aspect of notation is far less critical. This way you can learn as many songs as you want before you are an experienced reader. We can improve the skill of reading the timing while playing fully written arrangements.

Playing both by chord charts and written arrangements is one of the secrets that will ensure continual growth in all areas.

Lesson 21... The Backdrop to Harmony

Musicians over the centuries have weighed the relative importance of certain tones in relation to the central tone of a piece and have come up with a group of scales.

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