

Pop Piano: Lesson 1

Moving from pattern to pattern

by Ron Drotos

This course will lead you through various pop piano styles, with a big emphasis on "flexibility." Rhythmic flexibility, textural flexibility, flexibility between the hands, flexibility with chord voicings, melodic improv, etc. Becoming so comfortable with these elements that you can play freely, improvising rhythms as you move around the keyboard on a given song.

Let's begin with the "Adele" chord progression that we learned in the Flowing Water course. This time, however, we'll begin halfway through the sequence, putting it in a minor key. Taylor Swift and others have used this chord sequence in their songs. Play through this piece in its entirety, noticing how there's a new pattern in each 4-measure section. Then, mix it up by randomly playing one section after another like I do on the video. The idea is to become able to play these chords any way you like, without having to stick with one pattern or set of voicings throughout the entire song. Pianists like Elton John, Billy Joel, Carole King, and John Legend do all the time. They "go with the flow." After a while it gets easy. Have fun!

Slowly

The musical score consists of two systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. Section A is marked 'Slowly' and 'mp'. The bass line consists of sustained chords: Dm (F2, A2, Bb2), Bb (Bb2, D3, F3), F (F2, A2, C3), and C (Bb2, D3, F3). The right hand plays a pattern of chords with a moving bass line: Dm (F2, A2, Bb2), Bb (Bb2, D3, F3), F (F2, A2, C3), and C (Bb2, D3, F3). Section B follows the same chord progression but with a more active right hand melody. The bass line is identical to Section A. The score includes a 'with pedal' instruction at the bottom of the first system.

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C Dm B \flat F C

Exercise C: A four-measure piece in C minor. The right hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The left hand plays a simple bass line: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm, B \flat , F, and C.

D Dm B \flat F C

Exercise D: A four-measure piece in C minor. The right hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The left hand plays a simple bass line: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm, B \flat , F, and C.

E Dm B \flat F C

Exercise E: A four-measure piece in C minor. The right hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The left hand plays a simple bass line: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm, B \flat , F, and C.

F Dm B \flat F C

Exercise F: A four-measure piece in C minor. The right hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The left hand plays a simple bass line: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm, B \flat , F, and C.

G Dm B \flat F C

Exercise G: A four-measure piece in C minor. The right hand plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The left hand plays a simple bass line: C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm, B \flat , F, and C.

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First system of musical notation (measures 1-3). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). Measure 1: Treble clef has a half note D4, quarter notes E4, F4, G4, quarter notes A4, B4, A4, G4, quarter notes F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: H Dm. Measure 2: Treble clef has a half note Bb4, quarter notes C5, Bb4, A4, quarter notes G4, F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: Bb. Measure 3: Treble clef has a half note F4, quarter notes G4, A4, B4, quarter notes C5, Bb4, A4, G4, quarter notes F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: F.

Second system of musical notation (measures 4-6). Measure 4: Treble clef has a half note C5, quarter notes Bb4, A4, G4, quarter notes F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: C. Measure 5: Treble clef has a half note D4, quarter notes E4, F4, G4, quarter notes A4, B4, A4, G4, quarter notes F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: I Dm. Measure 6: Treble clef has a half note Bb4, quarter notes C5, Bb4, A4, quarter notes G4, F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: Bb.

Third system of musical notation (measures 7-9). Measure 7: Treble clef has a half note F4, quarter notes G4, A4, B4, quarter notes C5, Bb4, A4, G4, quarter notes F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: F. Measure 8: Treble clef has a half note C5, quarter notes Bb4, A4, G4, quarter notes F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: C. Measure 9: Treble clef has a half note D4, quarter notes E4, F4, G4, quarter notes A4, B4, A4, G4, quarter notes F4, E4, D4. Bass clef has a half note D3, quarter notes E3, F3, G3, quarter notes A3, B3, A3, G3, quarter notes F3, E3, D3. Chord symbol: Dm. The system ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.