

”Keyboard Concepts for Playing in the Band”

Simple steps to learn chords used in:

Pop, Christian, Broadway Music

by Gene Roberson

Playing piano or keyboard with a group is sometimes different than playing solo. Your job is to support the other musicians with basic chords and rhythms. If your group has a bass player, you will want to be careful not to override their part.

This chapter will introduce you to the chords with the inversions that are most commonly used when playing keyboard, piano, organ in most modern bands.

Each chapter is available at Gene Roberson's Sheetmusicplus Library.

Lesson #1. Major & Minor chords and their inversions

Lesson #2. Suspended Chords

Lesson #3. Simple rhythms and Simple fills

MAJOR & MINOR CHORDS

Gene Roberson

**Note: I am using the second inversion of the triads.(Chords). This is most common with Pro keyboard players. The 3rd on top allows for easy improv around the 3rd of the chord as we progress towards advanced playing levels.

MAJOR CHORDS

Piano

6

Pno.

Detailed description: This section contains two systems of musical notation for major chords. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers measures 1 through 5. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers measures 6 through 10. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The chords are: C (measures 1-2), F (measures 3-4), Bb (measures 5-6), Eb (measures 7-8), and Ab (measures 9-10). The bass line for each chord is a single note in the second inversion (the third of the chord).

MINOR CHORDS

Pno.

11

Pno.

Detailed description: This section contains two systems of musical notation for minor chords. The first system, labeled 'Pno.', covers measures 11 through 15. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers measures 16 through 20. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The chords are: D (measures 11-12), G (measures 13-14), Cm (measures 15-16), Fm (measures 17-18), and Bbm (measures 19-20). The bass line for each chord is a single note in the second inversion (the third of the chord).

** The chord progression in this preparation (my term for exercise or lesson topic) uses the Circle of Fourths aka: "THE MUSICAL CLOCK"
For more information on the Musical Clock and Circle of Fourths, go to:
GeneRoberson.com and read my important article on Circle of 4ths vs. Circle of 5ths!

Piano accompaniment for measures 21-25. The music is in 4/4 time. The chords are: Em, Am, Dm, Gm. The bass line consists of whole notes: E2, A1, D2, G1, C2.

Practice and memorize the Major and minor chords in all meters; 4/4, 3/4, 6/8 etc.

APPLICATION (Applying what you have learned to a familiar song) as follows:

Top note for singer
or solo instrument

* see note below

Piano accompaniment for measures 27-32. The music is in 4/4 time. The chords are: C, Dm, Dm/G, C, Em, F, Dm. The bass line consists of whole notes: C2, D2, G2, C2, G2, F2, D2.

Piano accompaniment for measures 33-36. The music is in 4/4 time. The chords are: Em/G, Dm/G, C, C. The bass line consists of whole notes: G2, G2, C2, C2.

* Note: Some chord symbols use a different BASS NOTE! You will always see a chord letter followed by a slash then the required bass note.

IMPORTANT NOTICE to REMEMBER: "When playing with a band that included a BASS Guitar or Acoustic Bass, let them play have full range of the Bass part. In the preparations you have learns so far, I have included one whole note per bar so you can play the chord complete with Bass.

Lesson #2 Suspended Major and Minor Chords

Piano

C2 C F2 F Bb2 Bb Eb2 Eb Ab2 Ab Db2 Db

This system shows the first six measures of piano accompaniment. The right hand plays chords in the soprano register, while the left hand plays single notes in the bass register. The chords are: C2, C, F2, F, Bb2, Bb, Eb2, Eb, Ab2, Ab, Db2, Db.

Pno.

7 Gb2 Gb B2 B E2 E A2 A D2 D G2 G

This system shows measures 7 through 12. The right hand plays chords in the soprano register, and the left hand plays single notes in the bass register. The chords are: Gb2, Gb, B2, B, E2, E, A2, A, D2, D, G2, G.

Pno.

13 C4 C F4 F Bb4 Bb Eb4 Eb Ab4 Ab Db4 Db

This system shows measures 13 through 18. The right hand plays chords in the soprano register, and the left hand plays single notes in the bass register. The chords are: C4, C, F4, F, Bb4, Bb, Eb4, Eb, Ab4, Ab, Db4, Db.

Pno.

19 Gb4 Gb B4 B E4 E A4 A D4 D G4 G

This system shows measures 19 through 24. The right hand plays chords in the soprano register, and the left hand plays single notes in the bass register. The chords are: Gb4, Gb, B4, B, E4, E, A4, A, D4, D, G4, G.

25 Cm2 Cm Fm2 Fm Bbm2 Bbm Ebm2 Ebm Abm2 Abm Dbm2 Dbm

Pno.

31 Gbm2 Gbm Bm2 Bm Em2 Em Am2 Am Dm2 Dm Gm2 Gm
actually Ab-Bbb-Db

Pno.

It is suggested that learning the "Spelling" of all these chords is as important as simply reading the music. Take time to write out all the spelling (letters) of the chords as you start to use these chords with the lead sheets.

Lesson # 3 Simple Rhythms and Simple Improv Fills

The following chord preparations* include easy rhythmic notes that allow the keyboard player to add more interest to the band accompaniment, continuing to stay away from the melody line.

37 C F C Bb Eb

Pno.

41 Ab Db Gb B

Pno.

* I like to use the term "Preparation" instead of "exercise". Then the "Application" is what we play with the actual song.

45 E A D G

Pno.

49 Am Dm Am Cm Dm Dm2

Pno.

54 Gm2 Dm Dm2 Eb Cm

Pno.

59 Ab Bb4(sus) Bb Eb AbMaj7

Pno.

62 Db2 Ab C2 C

Pno.