

The

Cocktail

Piano

Michael Gundlach

Method

Volume 2

**Techniques of Stylish
Piano Entertainment**



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Careless Love

Lead Sheet

Traditional
Arr.: Michael Gundlach

Lead sheet for "Careless Love" showing measures 1-14. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The melody is in treble clef with a common time signature. Chords G, D, and C are indicated above the staff. Measure numbers 5, 9, and 13 are marked at the start of their respective staves.

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"Careless Love" is a simple song that requires good interpretation. Looking at the lead sheet, we notice a very simple harmony consisting of the I – IV – V major chords and a rather boring melody rhythm. In the arranged piano version of "Careless Love" (page 27–29) we implement the material we learned in the previous chapters. In order to better understand these techniques, let's examine and compare some of the measures. Measures 6–8 from the lead sheet are well suited for the harmony technique from page 14:

written in measures 6–8

Musical notation for measures 6-8 of "Careless Love". The key signature is one sharp (F#). The melody is in treble clef with a common time signature. Chords G and D are indicated above the staff.

played, Piano Version, measures 10–12 (and 26–28)

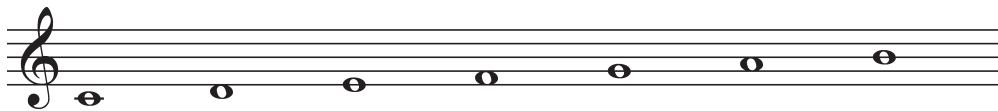
Musical notation for measures 10-12 (and 26-28) of "Careless Love" from the piano version. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The melody is in treble clef with a common time signature. Chords G, A dim, G/B, A/C#, Am/D, and D7#5 are indicated above the staff. Triplet markings (3) are present over measures 11 and 12.

Fills—Part 2

Fills, Six Note Scale

Every cocktail pianist should strive to have a rich repertoire of fills at his disposal. A short improvised melody can consist of just three or four notes, or an entire scale. In the chapter “Fills—Part 1”, we used all the notes of the major scale. As a reminder, here is the C major scale:

C major scale



Now we will learn how we can omit one note to form a six note scale. We will omit the fourth:

C major scale without fourth



These six notes are well-suited for creating short improvised melodies. All the notes of this scale can be used with the chords of the C major scale. We'll show you how this sounds by practicing the Examples 14a–15c in three keys:

14a

Example 14a is a musical exercise in C major. It consists of five measures. The first measure is a whole rest in the bass and a melody in the treble starting on C. The subsequent measures are: Am (A minor), F (F major), G (G major), and C (C major). Each measure contains a whole note chord in the bass and a melody in the treble. The melody is composed of six notes: C, D, E, G, A, and B. The notes are numbered 1 through 5, indicating fingerings. The exercise is marked with a 'Red.' (Reduction) symbol below each measure.

C Am F G C

Red. Red. Red. Red. Red.

Harmony—Part 3

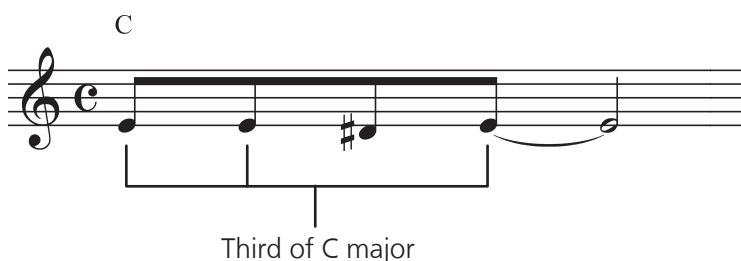
Chromatic Chord Shifting

Creative pianists are always making interesting changes to a song's harmony, even if it is not notated in the written notes. Chromatic chord shifting is an exciting technique. Generally it's possible to shift any chord down (or up) a half-step and return to the original chord. In this chapter we will deal solely with chord shifting down a half-step. We have two possibilities:

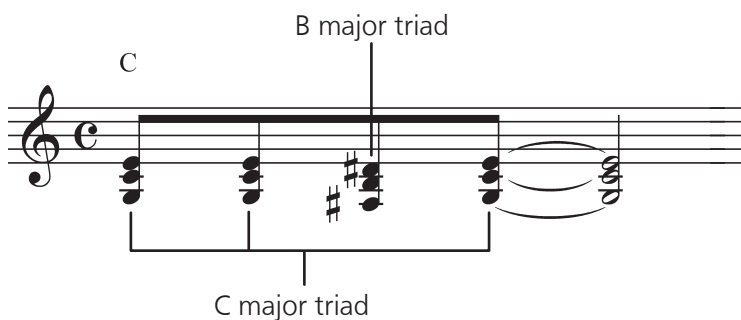
1. We shift only the chord (the notes in the right hand)
2. We shift the entire chord (both hands)

Chromatic Chord Shifting, Major Triad, Right Hand

If you're playing the right hand melody with chords, chromatic chord shifting is a good possibility, especially when the melody note goes down a half-step and back up. If the melody note is also the third, fifth, or root of the chord, chromatic chord shifting is a good option. To understand this better, let's look at a short melody example:



The third of the C major chord, the "E", descends a half-step to "D#" and back up. If we are adding chords to the melody, we can shift back and forth between C major and B major triads:



Common Harmonic Progressions—Part 2

Passing Chords, Minor

Passing chords are a very important topic for all cocktail pianists. They can be used to great effect when harmonizing the melody. Simply defined, passing chords are additional chords that can be added, but are not necessarily indicated in the written music. It is possible to insert additional chords to the ones already notated. In this chapter we want to explore which additional chords can be added to a minor chord.

1st Variation

We can extend this Dm7 chord by adding an Em7 (or C/E) and an F major chord:

written

played

|| Dm7 || → || Dm7 Em7 (C/E) F ||

If we use the example of a II – V – I cadence in C major, the extension would look like this:

written

played

|| Dm7 | G7 | C || → || Dm7 Em7 (C/E) F | G7 | C ||

In Examples 30a–32c we'll see the 1st Variation used in a typical harmonic setting.

Melodie In F

Lead Sheet

Music: Anton Rubinstein
Arr.: Michael Gundlach

Chord progression for "Melodie In F" (Lead Sheet):

Measures 1-8: F C7 F Gm7 C7 F C7

Measures 9-16: C Ebdim Dm7 G7 Dm7 G7 C C Ebdim Dm7 G7 Dm7 G7 C

Measures 17-24: F C7 F Gm7 C7 F C7

Measures 25-32: F C7 F D7 Gm7 C7 F

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"Melody in F", a wonderful composition by Anton Rubinstein, is well-suited for cocktail piano. The diminished chords can be used as passing or added chords. In the Piano Version we see the diminished chord used in 20 measures (measures 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29). The chord consists of 2-4 voices. In measure 1 of the Piano Version (page 73), the diminished chord consists of just 2 voices, on beats 2 and 4:

written in measure 1

Chord progression for "Melodie In F" (written in measure 1):

Measures 1-2: F C7

Conversion, Piano Version, measure 1

Chord progression for "Melodie In F" (Conversion, Piano Version, measure 1):

Measures 1-2: F C

Melodie In F

Music: Anton Rubinstein
Arr.: Michael Gundlach



♩ = 54

F C F F#dim Gm C7 C7b9

Measures 1-3 of the piece. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The time signature is common time (C). The notation includes a treble and bass staff. The bass staff has a 'Red.' marking under each measure. The treble staff has a 'Red.' marking under each measure. The notes are: Measure 1: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 2: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 3: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. The notes are: Measure 1: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 2: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 3: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5.

F/A Abdim Gm7 C7 C7b9 F C F D7#5 D7b9

Measures 4-6 of the piece. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The time signature is common time (C). The notation includes a treble and bass staff. The bass staff has a 'Red.' marking under each measure. The treble staff has a 'Red.' marking under each measure. The notes are: Measure 4: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 5: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 6: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. The notes are: Measure 4: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 5: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 6: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5.

Gm7 C7 C7b9 F C Ebdim Dm7 G7

Measures 7-9 of the piece. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The time signature is common time (C). The notation includes a treble and bass staff. The bass staff has a 'Red.' marking under each measure. The treble staff has a 'Red.' marking under each measure. The notes are: Measure 7: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 8: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 9: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. The notes are: Measure 7: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 8: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 9: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5.

Dm7 G7 C6 C Ebdim Dm7 G7 Dm7 G7 C6

Measures 10-12 of the piece. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The time signature is common time (C). The notation includes a treble and bass staff. The bass staff has a 'Red.' marking under each measure. The treble staff has a 'Red.' marking under each measure. The notes are: Measure 10: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 11: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 12: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. The notes are: Measure 10: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 11: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5. Measure 12: F4, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5, F5, C5.

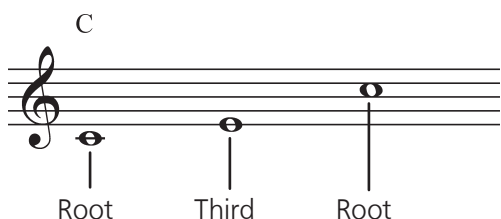
Endings

Ending Fills

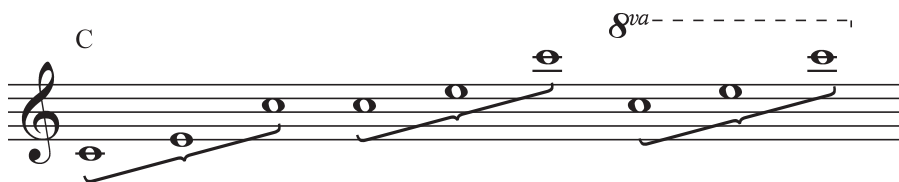
Many of the common harmonic progressions that we have learned can be readily used for endings. At this point we want to look at some ending fills. An ending fill is a short phrase used at the very end of a song.

Ending Fills, Two Notes

Generally it's possible to play a fill using the notes of the chord. We can even create an interesting fill using just two notes. If we have a major chord at the end of a song, we can use the root and the third. Adding the root again an octave higher makes it more interesting. Now we have a three note pattern, as we see here:



We can repeat this pattern over several octaves:



At the end of the piano version of "Prelúde" (page 79, measure 40) we see this ending fill pattern over a major chord.

If we have a minor chord at the end of a song, we obviously need to play the minor third in our new pattern. Now let's practice this new ending fill in both major and minor (Examples 41a–c).

41a

C

Cm

8va

8va

Red.

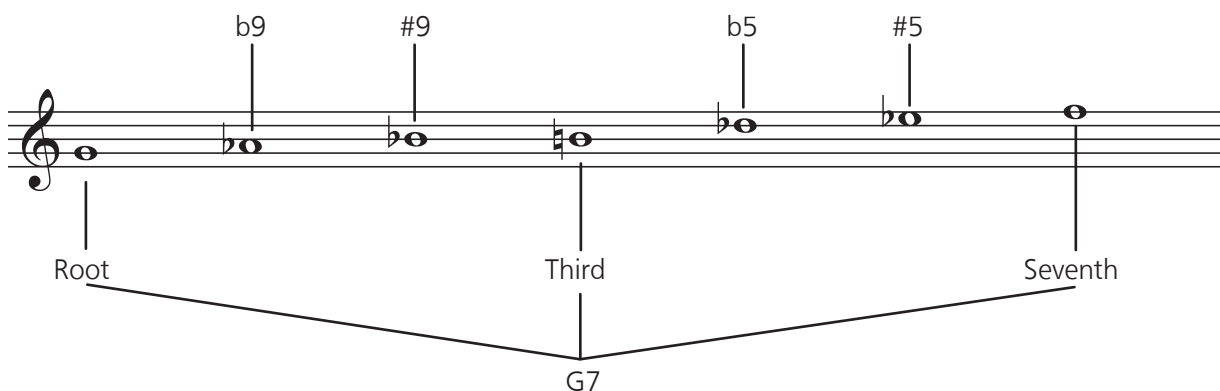
Red.

Fills—Part 3

Fills, Altered Scale

The altered scale is a wonderful and popular device used by cocktail pianists for fills and improvisation. It's important to learn more about this new topic. The altered scale is a dominant scale and fits nicely to the dominant seventh chord. In the altered scale, the fifth and the ninth is raised or lowered. Sometimes you will see the abbreviation "alt" after a chord (e.g. C7alt); it's the pianist's decision how he/she wants to alter the chord. If you raise and lower both the fifth and ninth, you have four alterations in your scale. The altered scale of the G7 looks like this:

Altered scale, G7



As you can see from this example, there is no perfect fifth in the altered scale, rather a diminished fifth (b5) and an augmented fifth (#5). In addition, we have a minor ninth (b9) and a raised ninth (#9). We are also using the root, third and seventh of the original dominant chord. It's a good idea to play these three notes in the left hand (omitting the fifth) while playing altered scale fills. Practical Examples 56a–60c will illustrate the sound character of the altered scale.

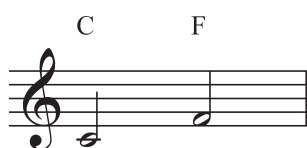
Melodic Interpretation—Part 2

As we saw in the chapter “Melodic Interpretation—Part 1” (pages 8–10), there are many ways to modify the rhythm of a melody. If you also add changes to the notes of the melody, the possibilities are endless. This chapter will offer some suggestions to get you started.

Altering the Melody

The first possible melodic variation involves playing a note a half-step lower than the melody tone and returning to the original tone. Using a simple melody with two half notes, it would look like this:

written



played

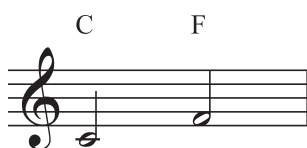


or



Of course the melody tone can also be varied up a whole step:

written



played

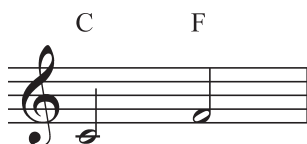


or



Both melody tones could also be connected using notes from the major scale:

written



played

