

1. Styles Series Part 4/8 – Gospel/Church

- a. The gospel sound or piano comes mostly from the removal of 7th chords. To create a church gospel type of sound we are going to only use triads and move the triads over different bass notes to create progressions. These movements are what give us that gospel feel, since all the hymns were written back in the day and weren't using 7th chords. Look at this popular gospel progression starting on the ii chord moving up to the V. Notice how we are using all triads and one diminished chord to create this progression. (see below)



One tip to learning this style in and out is becoming very familiar with your voice leading of triads. All your RH will be doing is voice leading triads all over the place. Your LH can jump around as much as you want but if your RH is just playing root position chords, it's not going to sound great.

Using alt chords is also very popular in the Gospel harmonies. These alt chords are mainly used when leading to a minor chord. For example, on the vi minor chord when moving to the ii minor. In a minor 2-5-1 going to the relative minor of the key you would use it on the V chord. So in the key of C if you had a minor 2-5-1 going to an A-, you would use your altered chord over the E7 in the progression.

As a side note, if you're looking for more of a gospel sound the use of a sus chord on the V7 is usually the way to go. If you are trying to get more of a traditional church sound you can simply play the V chord as a triad. (see below)

Progressions - The common gospel progressions will deal with triads and slash chords a lot, as well as some 7th chords and alt chords. Here are a lot of the common progressions you will see in gospel. (See Below)

1. Sus 4 to resolution.

A musical staff in treble clef showing two chords. The first chord is labeled 'I' and consists of a C major triad (C4, E4, G4). The second chord is labeled 'IV' and consists of an F major triad (F4, A4, C5).

3. 4 to 1

A musical staff in treble clef showing two chords. The first chord is labeled 'IV' and consists of an F major triad (F4, A4, C5). The second chord is labeled 'I' and consists of a C major triad (C4, E4, G4).

4. 5 #5dim 6-

A musical staff in treble clef showing three chords. The first chord is labeled 'V' and consists of a G major triad (G4, B4, D5). The second chord is labeled '#Vo' and consists of a G# diminished triad (G#4, B4, D5). The third chord is labeled 'VI' and consists of an F major triad (F4, A4, C5).

5. ii iii iv ivdim 5

A musical staff in treble clef showing seven chords. The first chord is labeled 'ii-' and consists of a D minor triad (D4, F4, A4). The second chord is labeled 'iii-' and consists of an E minor triad (E4, G4, B4). The third chord is labeled 'IV' and consists of an F major triad (F4, A4, C5). The fourth chord is labeled '#IVo' and consists of an F# diminished triad (F#4, A4, C5). The fifth chord is labeled 'Vsus' and consists of a G major triad (G4, B4, D5) with a suspended fourth (C5). The sixth chord is labeled 'V' and consists of a G major triad (G4, B4, D5). The seventh chord is labeled 'I' and consists of a C major triad (C4, E4, G4).

6. i 6 alt 2min 5sus

A musical staff in treble clef showing five chords. The first chord is labeled 'I' and consists of a C major triad (C4, E4, G4). The second chord is labeled 'VIALT' and consists of an F major triad (F4, A4, C5) with an altered fifth (B4). The third chord is labeled 'ii-' and consists of a D minor triad (D4, F4, A4). The fourth chord is labeled 'Vsus' and consists of a G major triad (G4, B4, D5) with a suspended fourth (C5). The fifth chord is labeled 'I' and consists of a C major triad (C4, E4, G4).

A musical staff in treble clef showing three chords. The first chord is labeled 'VI' and consists of an F major triad (F4, A4, C5). The second chord is labeled 'VIIo' and consists of a G# diminished triad (G#4, B4, D5). The third chord is labeled 'I' and consists of a C major triad (C4, E4, G4).