

Video 1 - LH Solo Piano Components

1. Solo Piano Series Part 1 – LH Role in Solo Piano

a. LH Components

The LH in solo piano plays roots and serves as a foundation for the RH. The LH is responsible for the bass notes, and the main harmonies within the written chords (usually the root, 3rd and 7th). We will add harmonies from the LH to the RH in future chapters, but for now the root, 3rd, and 7th, must be played somehow between both hands. At first the LH can be overwhelming, but once you understand its top function, it is simpler. A lot of the times, the tempo and register of a tune will dictate your best LH option. Here are some common LH approaches:

1. Only bass notes – When just playing bass notes, your RH needs to add 3 +7 under the melody if your LH is going to use this option. (figure 17.8)

Figure 17.8



2. Bass note then shells - This method is great for medium swing tunes. It allows you to cover the bass and harmonies at the same time. It is a little tricky at first but it'll come very easy with a little practice (see figure 17.8)

Figure 17.9

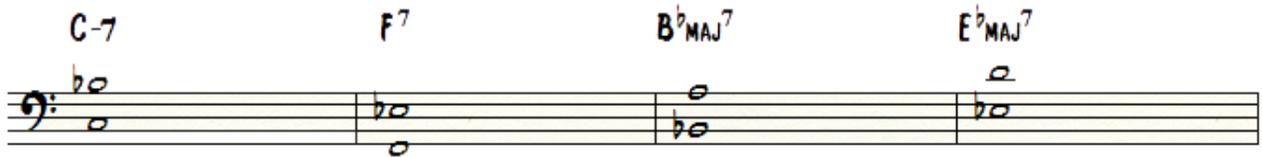


3. Bass note then full chord – Just as we jumped to our shells in the previous step, we can also jump to a full chord. This chord can be an inversion or rootless voicing.



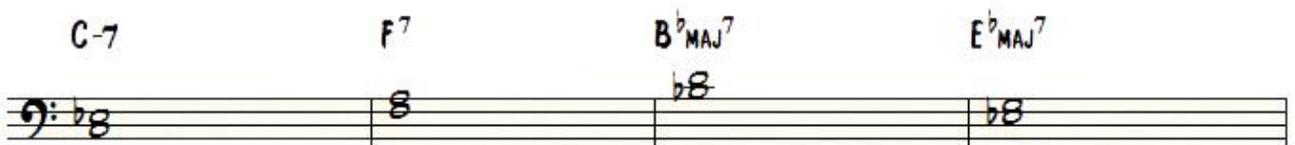
4. Root and 7th – This is an easier way to add bass notes. I named a root in this example only because when we use the root and 7th, our LH will be just below the middle register. When we play one bass note, we will play this note in the low end of the piano. If we play the 1 +7 in that low end it will sound muddy. (*Note. RH has to include the 3rd underneath the melody when your LH is playing 1+7 to account for 1, 7, and 3). See Figure 17.10

Figure 17.10



5. Root and 3rd – Playing the root and third is a similar way to add in bass notes but again with this step we need to stay below the middle register for the two notes to blend. The lower we get, the worse this will sound. (*Note. The RH has to account for the 7th when your LH is using this option). See Figure 17.11

Figure 17.11



6. Root and 3rd, (a tenth apart) – This is a great way to voice the root and 3rd option, as a tenth. This gives a nice spread of the voices and will work great when we add the RH to this combination (see Figure 17.12)

Figure 17.12

The figure shows a single bass clef staff with four measures. Each measure contains two notes forming a tenth interval. Above each measure is a chord symbol and the notes are written below the staff lines.

Chord	Notes (Tenth)
C-7	C ₂ and E ₃
F7	F ₂ and A ₃
B ^b MAJ7	B ₁ and D ₃
E ^b MAJ7	E ₁ and G ₃