

ow it all comes together.

Here's something not many people know: **Beethoven could NOT play anything more than chords! HONEST!**

So how'd he write all that great symphony music? Just using chords?

**You bet!**

Remember the "C" chord: the keys are C E and G. Well Ludwig just gave the C to the violins, the E to the oboes and the G to the cellos : **instant symphony!**

Well, I just gave you all the tools you'll need to improvise your own music.

You know how to take one note and make it a three-key chord.

You can even make it a minor or a seventh.

You know how to find which other chords (or keys) will go with it, and

You know how to find the minors that go with the majors.

And you've learned that you can play them all three keys at once, two keys at once, or just one at a time, or any combination of these.

**So what is playing?**

Well, **the notes you play, are just the notes which make up the chords:**

**don't play any notes which don't fit into the root chord, the fourth or the fifth. Play mainly the notes in the root and the fifth.**

With your left hand, play the chords in a rhythmic beat like pattern, and **always, always** keep the beat going evenly. Concentrate on your **LEFT HAND** while you're learning: keep the beat!

With your right hand, play the same chord notes, but one at a time (or maybe two occasionally), and **don't just imitate the chord** (after all, your left hand is already doing that!). Alter the pattern: it is just this alteration which makes music interesting and listenable.

**If you confine yourself to playing the keys which fit into the root, the fourth and fifth, then you**

won't ever hit a "wrong" note. Just go for it.

Here's a hint: don't let your two hands get too close together: try to keep at least one "empty" octave between them while you're playing. That's because it's easier to hear the difference between the high and low octaves and your playing won't sound "muddy".

I mentioned the importance of keeping the beat a second ago. Here's how you do it: just count, like we did earlier. Hold down a key, or chord with you left hand and just count: 1...2...3...and then hit the next note 1...2...3... and the the next, and so on.

If you count 1...2...3... very slowly, that's what a lot of classical music uses for a beat. If you count 1..2..3.. a little faster, that's a waltz!

If you count 1.2.3.4. for each note then if its slowly, that's a ballad, folk music or a love song. Count to 4 a little faster and you've got most all our music, including country and western, rock and roll!

## IMPROVISING

(OK...following this will take some concentration, and you should be at the keyboard, reading along. We're going to go step-by-step, finger-by-finger here...)

So, to improvise, try this: an octave or two below middle C, press down and hold the "C" key, while you count 1...2...3... and let up.

Do it again.

Do it enough times so that you get the beat of holding down the key for a count of three in a regular rhythm or pattern.

But count to yourself, out loud if it helps.

Next, [instead](#) of counting 1...2...3...,  
with your right hand, (an octave or two above middle C)  
[press the keys which make up the C chord,](#)  
[one at a time, one for each count:](#)  
[C...E...G..., C...E...G..., C...E...G...](#)

That is, play the left hand "C"(with your pinkey(5))  
and the right hand "C" (with your thumb (1))  
at exactly the same time, thinking to yourself "1".

Still holding down the left hand "C",  
think "2", while hitting the "E" with your middle finger(3);  
think "3" and hit the "G" key with your pinkey (5).

Do this a couple of times to get the feel of it.

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OK, remember we could find other chords which sound good with the skip 4, skip 1 method. Thus with "C", "F" and "G" also sound good.

If the pinky of your left hand is still on "C", then the index finger should be on "F", and your thumb over the "G". (Pretty convenient, eh?)

So let's try what we did with the C chord above, but do it with "F" instead:

Put the thumb of your right hand on the "F" key (in the same octave you used for the "C"). Notice that (conveniently) your middle finger is now above the "A" and your pinky is above the (higher) "C". These are just the keys needed to make the "F" chord (remember? skip 3, skip 2).

So just like with the C, press down your left hand index finger on the lower "F" and your right hand thumb on the higher "F" (think "1"); next your right hand middle finger on the "A" (think "2") and finally your pinky on the high "C" (thinking "3").

Next, do it all again, without moving your left hand, but pressing down your left hand thumb on the "G". Shift your whole right hand up one key, so your thumb is now over the "G", and do it again.

Finally, since you started with "C", do it all one last time with the C chord again, and with your right hand, make sure the last key you hit is the "C" key. You always want to end on the same key you began with.

**Congratulations! You have just done the C, F, G chord series. There are literally HUNDREDS of songs written with only those three chords. What's different is the order they're played in and the beat...that's all!**

You can do the same thing with ANY chord. We just concentrated on "C" because it keeps you off the black keys, and that's easier to start with. Also, don't forget that while we used the fourth and fifth (skip 4, skip 1 : "F" and "G") you could ALSO have used either of the minor chords (skip 2 left). The minor chords in C are Am, Dm & Em and they are also all white keys. (When you start playing around with other chords besides "C", you won't be so lucky...somewhere along the line each uses at least one black key...but don't worry, [all the rules still apply!](#))