PIANO FINGERING A MYSTERY? THINK GEOGRAPHY + GESTURE!

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ADJACENT FINGER PATTERNS

For melodic patterns or fragments using less than 5 notes choose fingers 1 2 3 rather than staying on the outside of the hand (4 5).

Major/minor Five Finger Patterns use 1 2 3 4 5

Extending adjacent patterns beyond five fingers is achieved by passing a finger over the thumb or passing the thumb under a finger. This is a motion natural and easy for the human hand. It is particularly important when a passage changes direction for just one or two notes. One should generally accomplish the passage with the fewest crosses.

Chromatic

3 on black keys / 1 on white / 2 when two white in a row

Diatonic Major/ Harm Min Never skip fingers or put your thumb on a black key in a scale!

White Keys C D E G 3+4 / 4+3

B, Db, Gb 1 on white / 2 3 on 2 black groups / 234 on 3 black key groups

F Same pattern of grouped 234 / 23 / separated by thumb the 234 & 23 fall on white keys or white + black

Ab Eb Bb Rogue Keys! One hand follows above rules the other puts 2, 3 or 4 in the "wrong" place

When other options aren't workable a legato effect can sometimes be achieved by the substitution of one finger for another. This can be very effective when several voices need to be managed with a single hand. Repeated notes are primary candidates for substitution. This is never a first choice!

BLOCKED/BROKEN THREE & FOUR NOTE CHORDS

3 Note Major / Minor Root Position 1 3 5

First Inversion 1 2 5 (RH) 1 3 5 (LH)

Second Inversion 1 2 5 (LH) 1 3 5 (RH)

4 Notes 1235 or 1245 (intervals should fit the natural spaces of the hand)

Fingerings remain the same whether the chords are blocked or broken (arpeggiated) and whether used as an accompaniment or part of the melodic structure. When arpeggiated patterns are extended beyond a single octave, the thumb is used as a pivot with 2, 3, or 4. Avoid putting the thumb on a black key in an arpeggio that has mixed black and white keys.

PARALLEL INTERVALS OF THIRDS AND SIXTHS WITHIN A SINGLE HAND

Thirds 3 in a Row 3 4 5 123 Reverse for LH

4 in a Row 2345 1123

To extend thirds beyond 4 in a row tip the hand to the right or left to ease the finger crossing. Plan Ahead!

> Example: 3 4 3 4 5

12123

Sixths Detached 55555

1 1 1 1 1 etc.

Legato 4 5 4 5 or 3 4 5

1 1 1 1 etc. 1 1 1 etc.

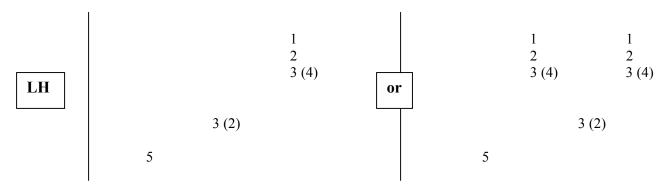
FRAMING LH BASS-LINE + CHORDS

Bass-line Avoid hopping 5 5 5 5 etc. Use 5 4 or 5 3 etc.

Chords Keep the thumb on the top – use 2, 3, or 4 on the bottom to even out the distance

from the single notes and avoid unnecessary hand and wrist adjustments. For

example:



When framing a bass-line always move your arm the shortest distance possible and use the least possible "hops". For instance the fingering 5 / 5 / 1-3-5 instead of the above, would require your arm to cover a larger area and adjust more often. The finger used to take the note between the lowest pitch and the chord is determined by taking into account both the intervallic distance and the natural shape of the hand. The hand should not remain wide open for long periods of time.