



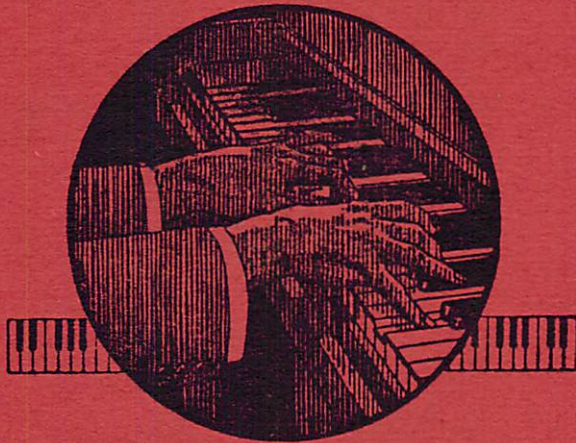
ADVANCED COURSE

IN THE MODERN

RHYTHM

STYLE OF PIANOFORTE PLAYING

LESSON IV



ACCENT BREAKS AND MELODY BREAKS

There are occasions, especially at the finish of a phrase, when the melody is held over four beats or even over eight. We have been given ample material for handling these pauses. We have all our new instruction in fourths, etc., together with very elaborate instruction and examples in the Course in Modern Syncopation. In fact, we have studied everything possible in the shape of harmony and melody for filling in these "waits." And yet, perhaps you are wondering if there is any new effect which can yet be produced to give still further novelty to your rhythmic work.

Well, the answer to the above is "yes, there is." But in order to produce a new effect, we must first of all find a new cause; and—having found it—must reduce it to general working principles before we search for practical applications. We have dealt with harmony and melody. What, then, is left? The answer is—RHYTHM. And in the re-arrangement of your rhythm in breaks and "fill-ins" will be found the answer to your desire for further novelty.

Remember, first of all, that no wait will be longer than two bars, or eight beats in a common-time number. This can be used as a definite working rule. Were these pauses longer, the piece in question would be hopelessly monotonous; not only that, but the "run" or "plot" of the melody would not be in correct form for this type of music.

Then again, remember the other rule concerning waits or pauses which occur at *the end* of passages:—

"The wait will either come on the dominant seventh, or its resolutions, or on the key-note itself."

Waits, as you know, appear at all kinds of places in verses and in choruses. It may be on the "first-time" repeat bars, or on the "second-time" ending; or perhaps on the lead-in from the verse to the chorus. In fact, they can be on any of the usual correct and conventional places. These are always even-numbered bars, and never bars which bear an odd number. You should know this, of course, but it is just as well to remind you here. For these waits there are only two kinds of "fill-in material" which we need to study. This simplifies matters, because "stock" material can be employed to good effect. We refer to material either based on the chord of the tonic (the "key-note chord"), or on that of the dominant seventh. Now for our purpose, it does not matter whether the beginning of our fill-in passage starts *on* the keynote itself or on any other note, *so long as that note is "in" the common chord* (that is, in the same chord as the key-note). The above refers to fill-in phrases which substitute the key-note or its chord; and it holds good, so long as the passage remains "in the harmony" of this chord, no matter what inversion of the tonic chord occurs. This simply means that so long as the harmony remains the same, this rule holds good. But when once the harmony has changed (to the dominant seventh chord, as we said above) then you *must* substitute a fill-in phrase based on this new change of harmony. In other words, **THE HARMONY OF YOUR FILL-IN PHRASE MUST ALWAYS "MATCH" THE ORIGINAL HARMONY IN THE ORIGINAL PHRASE.**

By way of an example, we will now give you a two-bar passage where the harmony remains in that of the common chord of the key :—



Fig. 56

Now, here is a further passage of two bars, in which the harmony moves through to that of the dominant seventh :—



Fig. 57

Now you are to join these two phrases ; and you are to join them in a rhythmic manner. There must be no break between them. They are to blend into one, perhaps without even a remnant of the original melody left. The importance of all “ this harmony business ” above is this : unless your harmonies are correct and you understand thoroughly what you are doing in this direction, your efforts at rhythmic fill-ins will descend to the level of this so-called “ hot ” playing, which is only another definition for bad rhythm without anything to excuse it. That is why you must be so sure of what you are doing *harmonically* before you attempt your rhythmic work. Very well, then. This joining of the two phrases spoken of above can be effected by means of “ stock ” phrases. These phrases are not simply proper to any one tune, or melody, but are common to all, because they are *rhythmic* : and it is the *rhythm* which will suit all numbers. So you see, the same “ rhythmic substitution phrase ” which will suit one number will suit another. The only thing to guide you is whether the particular position calls for a tonic or a dominant rhythm-phrase ; and there, of course, the melody and not we, must be your guide.

By now it is clear, we hope, that it is a combination of accents built on correct harmony which makes up these substitution-phrases. Now, for simplicity in the study of them, we will for the moment ignore the dominant seventh entirely. The reason for this is simply that what is the dominant seventh of one key is the tonic of another. Should you doubt this, will you please turn to Exercise O. This has been arranged as a chart to show you how these relations work out. In fact, perhaps you had better turn to this now, before we go any further. So will you do so, please. Don't study it fully (or “ technically ”) for the moment, because we have not yet gone into the actual “ mechanics ” of these fill-in phrases together as yet. All we want you to do is to understand us when we say that all we need study for the moment is the question of tonic fill-in phrases.

Once again, these phrases are a combination of notes and accents ; and the most important part to us is the accents, because the " notes " are already settled for us. There is no novelty to be discovered and brought out in the harmonic part ; so, it is well " up to you " to be as bright as you can in the little matter of accents, especially if your friends who " know it all " are to be made to sit up and take notice !

So, don't forget—rhythm first ! Remember the drummer—he is nothing but rhythm. He can concentrate on that alone, and there is no excuse for him if he is not very " bright." Well, you have got to be like the drummer ! Now, here are two bars in metre form, *without accents*, and split up into eight quavers to the bar :—

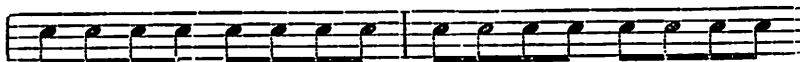


Fig. 58

Now, if we played a metre like this, it would sound ridiculous. Without accents, it would be like a clock. Why, someone knocking at the door would have more rhythm than the above, played as written here ! Therefore, one *must* have accents. Now, after years of experiment and careful study of what is really the best, Billy Mayerl has discovered that the best accent-form to give the best syncopated effect for *all general purposes* is this :—



Fig. 58A

Please do not misunderstand the above. It does not mean to say that others are not good—they are ! But this particular one seems to give an absolute " uplift " to the fill-in phrase more than any other form does. And no matter what type of melody it may be—slow-moving or fast—still this phrase fits in without being blatantly obvious. It never forces its way in : it never " gate-crashes " ; and (most important) it never gives that " patched-on " effect. Play it through, using the one note only as in the example, so as to become familiar with the rhythm. Beat it on the table, if you like, so as to get nothing but simply the sound of the accents. Then, whistle or hum a melody, and accompany yourself by beating out this rhythm in the above manner.

Assuming that this has been successfully done, we can now turn our attention to the business of coupling this accent-form to its correct notation, and find out the most suitable form in which to produce it. Strange as it may sound, but where this accent form is least expected, there it should be played. This gives that odd syncopated effect which is so baffling. You must therefore so arrange your notation that the accent falls in these unexpected places. *The accent should never fall upon a note which is one of those forming the arpeggio of the chord on which the fill-in is written.* There is an exception to this, and it concerns the last beat of the bar. On whatever note this occurs, it should have a kind of " half-accent." It should not be so strongly stressed as the others ; but there should be sufficient accent upon it to denote the finish of the phrase. The above simply means this : the accent falls not only off the " expected " beat, but also off the " expected " harmony. Note that this applies also to one-bar fill-in phrases, of which more will be said later.

Will you now please examine the two figures which follow. These are the same phrases as Figs. 56 and 57 ; but these latter are substituted by fill-in phrases employing this type of accent-metre.

Key-note

Fig. 59 (same as 56 and 57)

Practise in all keys, please.

Will you notice how the accents fall on notes other than those of the arpeggio of the chord. You may now, please, turn back to Exercise O, and study it more fully.

ONE-BAR ACCENT PHRASES

As we have said before, these fill-in phrases *may* only employ four beats, or one bar in common time. As a general working rule in phrases of this length, accents fall on the half beats if the phrase runs in quavers, and on the second and fourth beats if the phrase is played in crotchets.

You will find below two examples of one-bar "waits," before they are "filled in" by one-bar accent-phrases. The same rule holds good about the accents falling on non-arpeggio notes as it does for the two-bar phrases.

Key-note

Dominant 7th

Fig. 60

Here are the same phrases, in which the accent-forms have been substituted for the originals :—

Fig. 61

Now this type of accent-phrasing need not only be confined to waits, but may also be used in the melody proper. But you must treat it more from the point of view of accent than from that of melody. This is where your so-called “ hot ” player goes badly wrong again ; he substitutes melody when he should have substituted accent. If you do it the correct way, you will produce the very effect he is trying to achieve by wrong methods. Refer to Exercise P. In this you will find very valuable examples of the correct method of “ hot ” playing, if one can use such a contradiction in terms. You will find there examples of melody embellished with bits of extra notation *and* accents—especially accents ! Refer also to Exercise Q for examples of one-bar accent fill-ins arranged in the form of a study.

THE MODERN EMBELLISHMENT OF REVERSED BASS

Here we are, back again to the left hand ! We have always told you that the secret of syncopation lies in the left hand, and so it still does. And now that you are familiar with the new-style left hand together with its appropriate right hand, we are ready to go one stage further. Now, nothing can alter our tenth on the first beat, whether it be normal or “ reversed ” ; because, as you know, without the tenth, there would be no question of counter-melody. Nor can we alter our “ single-note ” third beat ; for to do so would be to lose our bass accompaniment. If, therefore, we are to introduce still more syncopation into our left hand, there are only the after-beats on which to do it ; only beats two and four.

Now, you are already familiar with the split after-beat in its ascending or normal form. But in order to bring all our left-hand work into line with our new ideas, it is necessary to reverse the movement of the split after-beat. This gives it a definite “ reverse ” character. And as our new bass must be played as much with an ear for syncopated effect as for accompaniment, we must keep our after-beat well in style with this, and play

it in such a manner that no syncopation is lost. As you know, the after-beat consists of a three-note chord, generally containing the same three notes as appeared in the tenth, only, of course, arranged differently, or in a different octave. Now that we have agreed to ignore the "prop" note (or middle note of the tenth) on the first beat of the bar, it is up to us to make a more definite suggestion of the harmony notes in the after-beat, so that these shall not be lost sight of altogether. We must therefore split the after-beat in such a manner as to introduce the maximum harmony. The ear will supply your link, in just the same way that the eye links up the separate pictures in a kinematograph film.

As we have said, the after-beat must now have a reversed formation in order to match the similar formation of the tenth and single note. And now we will go "one better still" by introducing counter-melody into our after-beat as well as into beats 1 and 3. It is up to us to decide which is the best note to accent, and this accented note will be the counter-melody note. It *must* be one of the three notes contained in the after-beat as it now stands. In splitting up the after-beat, we are *compelled* to use two of the original notes. As a hard and fast rule, we must split the *highest* two notes in the after-beat chord. We cannot split up all the three notes, because the time-value of one crotchet does not allow us sufficient length in which to do it. (The exception here, of course, is a triplet; but this will not be found practical on experiment). The reason why we use the two top notes is because the lowest note, according to the key, will be the fifth degree of the scale; and this would not blend as a counter-melody note. You see, the bottom note of your after-beat is the third beat of your bar, and as such is part of the fundamental bass or structure. Now here is a two-bar example of your ordinary 10th-after-beat-single-note-after-beat bass :—



Fig. 62

Just note the above carefully, will you, please? Then look below at the same bar with your new style first and third beat. Study and compare these carefully :—

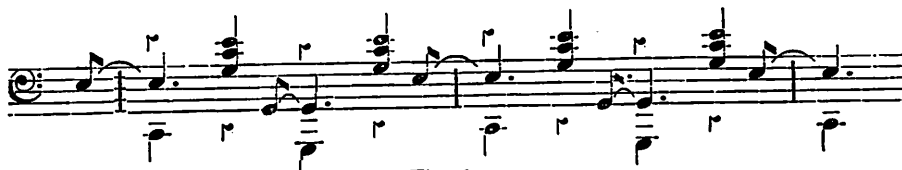


Fig. 63

Now look below again at the complete bars treated in the new style, employing the split after-beat :—



Fig. 64

Please refer to Exercise R for examples of the above in all dance keys. In connection with this exercise, notice that all the above holds good just as much when you are playing the dominant seventh chord in conjunction with the split after-beat. So all should be plain sailing.

A REMINDER

In your enthusiasm for new styles and materials, do not overlook fundamentals; and remember that the first principles taught you still hold good. On no account forget the "golden rule for the left hand." We make no apology for repeating it here :—

"Whenever you have a bar in which the harmony remains the same, you always play the four beats as follows :—

1st. A tenth.

2nd. An after-beat made up of the same harmonies as your tenth.

3rd. A single note.

4th. An after-beat."

BUT—

when the harmony changes, you start your "new" harmony on a tenth.

This is just as true now as it was when you first took up the study of syncopation.

GENERAL SURVEY OF NEW WORK AND MATERIAL

We have now come to a stage where it is our duty to remind you about important points generally. One is so apt to forget the old in the interest created by the new. Very well, then; first of all, avoid monotony. But at the same time, avoid confusion just as much. Remember what has been said about changing in the middle of a phrase.

Don't overdo the new style and don't despise or neglect the old on account of it. The old style is no more out-of-date than it will ever be. Use each in its right place. Moreover, the foundation is *still* the foundation, and unless the foundation be sure, the fabric will fall.

Remember that the new style is new rather in accent than in notation. Hence again the importance of the old material. Bear in mind that the new style is VERY TRICKY to perform successfully. It needs more care and discreet handling than does the original. Hence the number of bad "hot" players.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUSTAINING PEDAL IN THE NEW EFFECTS

This much-abused portion of the piano needs *most* careful handling in conjunction with the new style, because of the more unusual harmonies employed. Such harmonies as, for example, the added fourth, which is apt to sound discordant unless produced very lightly. Again, the additional syncopation in the left hand will sound very muddy unless the "loud" pedal (as such mis-called!) is most carefully used. Generally speaking, the more accents there are, the "less pedal" there should be. If the pedal is kept down, the

accents are ruined. Try it for yourself and see ! In fact, one might almost say, with the new-style playing, ignore the pedals ! Cultivate a light, firm touch instead—a *real* touch, in fact. Remember that your sustaining is done with the thumb of your left hand and the fingers of your right hand, so your touch *must* see you through—or let you down ! So feel your control in your *fingers* on the keyboard rather than in your *feet* on the pedals. In fact :—

Don't " drive on your clutch " !

Why wear out good shoe leather ?

And why ruin :

Your piano ;

Your shoes ;

Your bank balance ; and

Your reputation

?

Billy Mayerl

[In the next, and last, lesson we shall bring your work to a conclusion. There will be further important practical applications, effects and instructions, some concluding matter, and the Billy Mayerl Personal-Demonstration Gramophone Record.]

STUDENTS SETTLING FEES BY INSTALMENTS
are reminded that the final lesson cannot be despatched until their final instalment has reached us (see "Instructions", Lesson I).