

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	3

CHAPTER 1—REVIEW	4
Diatonic Triads	4
Form and Lead Sheets.....	5
Cycle of 5ths	5
The Twelve-Bar Blues	6
Swing Feel	7
The Major Pentatonic Scale.....	8
The Minor Pentatonic Scale.....	9
Dominant 7th Chords.....	10
Minor 7th Chords.....	10
Dominant 7th Chord Inversions.....	11
Minor 7th Chord Inversions.....	11
The Blues Scale.....	12
Trills and Other Blues Sounds.....	13
Turnarounds	14
Neighboring Chords.....	14
Turning Turnarounds Into Endings.....	15
Intros	15

CHAPTER 2—BLUES HARMONY AND THE EIGHT-BAR BLUES	16
Eight-Bar Blues.....	18
Open Voicings For an Eight-Bar Blues	19
Classic Resolving V-I Lick	20
<i>So Long</i>	21
I-vi-ii-V Harmony in The Blues	22
<i>Foolish Blues</i>	22
Extensions.....	24
<i>Foolish Blues #2</i>	25

CHAPTER 3—IMPROVISING IN A BLUES STYLE	26
More Resolving Licks	26
Playing Diatonic Lines.....	28
<i>It's a Fine Line</i>	28
Improvising With Motifs	30
Harmonizing Lines in 6ths and 3rds	32
<i>September Blues</i>	33
Putting It All Together.....	34
<i>Doin' It</i>	35

CHAPTER 4—FOCUS ON THE LEFT HAND	36
Review	36
Walking Bass Lines.....	38
Roots, 3rds, 7ths and 10ths.....	40
<i>Blues for Lefty</i>	41
Left-Hand Combinations.....	42
<i>Schizophrenic Blues</i>	43
Stride Piano	44
<i>Stride by Stride</i>	45

CHAPTER 5—MORE HARMONY/SLOW BLUES	46
Harmony Overview: Triads, 7th Chords, Extensions, Altered Extensions and Suspended Chords.....	46
Exercises for Playing Altered and Suspended Chords.....	48
Chording the Minor Climb	49
Slow Blues Changes.....	50
Back and Forth and Neighboring Chords	51
Left-Hand Combinations.....	52
<i>Stormy Tuesday</i>	52
Improvising Over a Slow Blues	53
<i>Stormy Solo</i>	53

CHAPTER 6—GROOVING	54
Review of Rhythmic Feels	54
Rhythmic Resolution	57
Syncopation	58
Putting It All Together.....	58
<i>Sister Swing</i>	59
<i>Gettin' Funky</i>	60
Rhythmic Exercises	61
<i>In a Blue Funk</i>	62
The In-Between Zone.....	64
<i>He's Into Something</i>	65

CHAPTER 7—CHICAGO BREAKDOWN	66
The Chicago Blues Story.....	66
Get Physical	68
Variations on a Classic Sound	70
Breaks	72
<i>I Feel So Chicago</i>	74

CHAPTER 8—NEW ORLEANS	78
The New Orleans Story.....	78
<i>New Orleans Rock</i>	79
Octaves and Ornamentation	80
<i>Longhair Blues</i>	82
More on the Left Hand.....	84
More Patterns.....	85
<i>Crescent City Groove</i>	86

CHAPTER 9—WEST COAST “LOUNGE BLUES” AND THE BIRTH OF SOUL	88
Background.....	88
“Lounge Blues” Sounds.....	89
<i>Heartbreak Blues</i>	92

DISCOGRAPHY	94
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tricia Woods grew up practicing the piano in the basement of her family's Tupper Lake, New York home. Her first professional music experiences were as a teenager, playing church organ in the Adirondacks. Tricia earned a degree in biology from Brown University before resuming her musical studies at the University of Washington and Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, WA. While in the Northwest, she led several original music groups, was featured at Seattle's Bumbershoot Festival and studied at the Banff International Jazz Workshop. Tricia moved to New York City in 1995 and currently resides in Brooklyn. In addition to leading her group, "Les Fauves," an original seven-piece brass and rhythm section ensemble, she performs on piano, keyboards and sings in a number of styles including blues, jazz and soul. She has played numerous venues in and around the New York area including The Knitting Factory, Manny's Car Wash and Smalls. Tricia taught keyboards at the National Keyboard Workshop in New Milford, CT.



PHOTO • C. MARDOK

INTRODUCTION

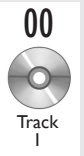
Welcome to *Intermediate Blues Keyboard*. If you have completed *Beginning Blues Keyboard*, or have started to play the blues a bit on your own already, your appetite is hopefully whet for a closer look at specific blues styles, more sophisticated harmonies and lots of grooving. One of the most satisfying aspects of studying the blues is that there is such a variety of playing styles to check out, while at the same time there are certain musical elements inherent to all blues styles. You will recognize these characteristics as a common thread running through all of the information presented here.

Expect to see repetition in this book. There are two reasons for this. First, and most importantly, we learn to play well through repetition. Playing the blues is not about being able to improvise using twenty different scales over one chord. It is about playing every chord and every note with just the right feeling. You can only achieve that by becoming very comfortable with the blues language. Secondly, the blues is folk music, passed from one player to the next. That means that as you look at a particular style, you will see new elements unique to that style as well as recurring elements common to other styles. Certain sounds and phrases that pop up in Chicago blues, for example, and again in New Orleans-style playing, even though the two styles are quite distinct.

As you progress through *Intermediate Blues Keyboard*, be sure to include lots of listening in your learning approach. When you listen to a recording or a live band, focus on specific elements of the music. What is the bass player doing? What is the drummer playing? Imagine yourself as the keyboard player. Expect to find yourself hearing things that you didn't notice before. This is a natural process which will occur more and more as you continue to practice, study and listen. It is a process you should be very pleased with. Look forward to having, described by another musician, "big ears." As a blues keyboard player, it's one of the highest compliments you can be paid.

Good luck, have fun, and remember "... the blues is alright."

A compact disc is available for this book. This disc can make learning with this book easier and more enjoyable. This symbol will appear next to every example that is on the CD. Use the CD to help insure that you are capturing the feel of the examples, interpreting the rhythms correctly, and so on. The track numbers below the symbols correspond directly to the example you want to hear. Track 1 will help you tune your electronic keyboard to the CD.



Have fun!

CHAPTER 1

Review

DIATONIC TRIADS

Diatonic means “of the key.” *Diatonic triads* are triads found within the scale of a particular key.

Every major scale contains the following pattern of major, minor (min) and diminished (dim or ^o) triads:

Roman Numeral Review
Roman numerals: I, ii, iii, IV, V, vi, vii^o
Arabic equivalents: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

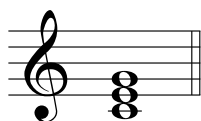
C Dmin Emin F G Amin Bdim
I ii iii IV V vi vii^o

We use Roman numerals to label the diatonic triads according to the degree of the scale they are built on. Upper-case numerals indicate major triads. Lower-case numerals indicate minor and diminished triads.

Let's take the key of C and build a triad on each degree of the scale using only notes found in the C Major scale.

C D E F G A B C

From the root, the notes are C, E and G—a C Major triad. This is the I chord.



From the second note of the scale, the notes are D, F and A—a D Minor triad. This is the ii chord.



Continuing up the scale we'll get:

E Minor, iii
F Major, IV
G Major, V
A Minor, vi
B Diminished, vii^o

The natural minor scale contains the following pattern of diatonic triads:

i, ii^o, III, iv, v, VI, VII

Amin Bdim C Dmin Emin F G
i ii^o III iv v VI VII

CHAPTER 2

Blues Harmony and the Eight-Bar Blues

To play the blues well, you need to know some rules but you can't follow them blindly. You always need to use your ears first.

Blues music is a fusion of African and European sounds. In this chapter, we will focus on incorporating diatonic harmony (see page 4) into your blues playing—or, more simply put—understanding and playing the key.

In *Beginning Blues Keyboard* we didn't concern ourselves with playing diatonic harmony. Rather, we focused on playing blues sounds. This is because all three chords in a twelve-bar blues progression are almost always dominant 7th chords (I7, IV7 and V7). Only the V7 is actually diatonic—the diatonic I and IV are major 7th chords. Since the harmonies in a blues are not strictly diatonic, one need not always think diatonically to improvise.

There is a place, however, for diatonic harmony in the blues. In fact, the peculiar combination of sometimes incorporating diatonic harmony, and sometimes bending all of its rules, is what makes the blues sound so intriguing. It is also this combination that makes learning to play the blues well an integral aspect of being a great piano player. Keep this in mind later in this chapter (starting on page 22) as you deal with information about the application of the cycle of 5ths to the blues progression.

The following exercises will reinforce your knowledge of where the major chord tones (R, 3rd, 5th and $\flat 7$) are for each chord in a twelve-bar progression, and help your hands to learn a placement for each key. Each exercise takes you through one key. Practice each in all keys. These exercises include a classic turnaround that you should learn in every key.

Swing 8ths

$\text{♩} = 66$

$\text{♯} = \text{Repeat previous measure}$

1
Track 2

C7 F7 C7

F7 C7 G7

