

		Page
<b>Contents</b>	Introduction	8
	How to Use this Book	8
	The CD	8
	Before You Start	9
<b>Chapter 1:</b>		
<b>Major Triads</b>		
	Major Triads	11
	[1][2] <b>Threesome*</b>	12
	Swing Eighth-Notes	14
	Roman Numerals	16
	Major Triad Inversions	17
	[3] <b>No Problem</b>	18
	The Major Pentatonic Scale	19
	Intervals and Ear-Training	20
	Getting to Know your Major Triads in all Keys	21
	The Cycle of Fifths	22
	[4] <b>Major Triad Cycles</b>	24
	Triad Arpeggios	26
	[5] <b>Coincidence Calypso</b> <i>Tim Richards &amp; Kubryk Townsend</i>	28
	Comping	30
	[6] <b>Major Triad Workout</b>	32
	Target Notes and Pick-ups	35
	[7] <b>Y Todavía la Quiero</b> <i>Joe Henderson</i>	36
	Vertical Improvisation Techniques	38
	[8] <b>On Green Dolphin Street (part1)</b> <i>Bronislau Kaper</i>	42
	Spread Position Triads	44
	Developing Fluency with Spread Position Triads	44
	Broken Chords	45
	[9] <b>The Lost Valley</b>	48
	Pentatonic Scale Fingering	51
	Using Motifs	52
	Final Checkpoint: Augmented Triads	54
	Major Triad Quiz	54
<b>Chapter 2:</b>		
<b>Minor Triads</b>		
	Minor Triads	55
	[10] <b>Blue and White</b>	56
	The Relative Minor	57
	The Minor Five-Finger Position	57
	Minor Triad Inversions	58
	The Minor Triad as a II Chord	59
	[11] <b>Mannenberg</b> <i>Abdullah Ibrahim</i>	60
	Thickening the Melody	61
	Pentatonic Scale Improvisation Techniques	62
	[12] <b>Take The 'A' Train</b> <i>Billy Strayhorn</i>	64
	Combining Bass and Chords in the Left Hand	66
	Broken Chords	67
	[13] <b>'A' Train Improvisation</b>	69
	Walking Bass Lines	70
	Run-Ups	70
	The Diminished Triad	71
	[14] <b>Montuno for Monty</b>	73
	Three Different Minor Scales	77
	[15] <b>Natural Minor Workout</b>	78
	Two-Bar Phrasing Concepts	81

\* All pieces are by Tim Richards unless otherwise indicated.

	<i>Page</i>
The Minor Pentatonic Scale	82
Open Triads	83
<sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup> <b>Open Triad Workout</b>	84
<sup>18</sup> <b>Song for Sally</b>	86
Final Checkpoint: Diminished Triads	89
Triad Quiz	90
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	
<b>Seventh Chords</b>	
Major Seventh Chords	91
<sup>19</sup> <b>Dream On</b>	92
Major Seventh Inversions	95
<sup>20</sup> <b>Major Seventh Workout</b>	96
Scale Patterns	98
Scale Patterns – Rhythmic Variations	99
The Key Clock	100
Dominant Seventh Chords	103
<sup>21</sup> <b>Down the Line</b>	104
The Twelve Bar Blues Sequence	106
Playing Dominant Sevenths as Tritones	107
<sup>22</sup> <b>Straight No Chaser</b> <i>Thelonious Monk</i>	108
Dominant Seventh Scales	110
Whole-Tone Scales	111
<b>Monk's Solo on Straight No Chaser</b>	114
Learning Dominant Sevenths in all Keys	117
<sup>23</sup> <b>Dominant Seventh Workout #1</b>	118
Broken Chord Patterns	120
<sup>24</sup> <b>The Theme</b> <i>Miles Davis</i>	122
Improvising over the Tonic Chord	125
Keeping the Form	127
'Rhythm Changes' Chords	127
Minor Seventh Chords	128
The Dorian Mode	129
<sup>25</sup> <b>Drifting</b>	130
Final Checkpoint: Chord/Scale Relationships	134
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	
<b>Functional harmony and modes</b>	
Functional Harmony	135
Two-Handed Voicings for Four-Note Chords	136
<sup>26</sup> <b>Open Up!</b>	138
Modal Improvisation	139
Modal Shapes	140
The II – V – I Sequence	141
The Diatonic Cycle of Fifths	144
Brazilian Rhythms	144
<sup>27</sup> <b>Bossa Nova Comping #1</b>	145
<sup>28</sup> <b>Fly Me to the Moon</b> <i>Bart Howard</i>	146
Secondary Dominants	148
Sixth Chords	148
Minor Sixth Chords	149
Opening Out Four-Note Chords in the Left Hand	149
<sup>29</sup> <b>Autumn Leaves</b> <i>Joseph Kosma</i>	150
Shells	153
The Blues Scale	155
<sup>30</sup> <b>Ornithology</b> <i>Charlie Parker</i>	156
Vertical Improvisation	158

	<i>Page</i>
Long and Short II – V Sequences	161
Starting Scales on the Third and Fifth	162
<b>[31] II – V – I Arpeggio Workout</b>	164
II – V – I Sequences in Jazz Standards	166
II – V – I Endings	168
III – VI – II – V Endings	169
Fake Books and Lead Sheets	170
<b>[32] II – V Cycle with Dorian Scales</b>	172
Embellishing Scales	173
Final Checkpoint: Modes	176
Modes Quiz	178
<b>Chapter 5:</b>	
<b>Ninth Chords</b>	
Ninth Chords	179
<b>[33] Still Dreaming</b>	180
Using Pentatonic Scales over Major Chords	182
Pentatonic Scale Patterns	182
The 6/9 Chord	184
Quartal Harmony	184
<b>[33] Dream Improvisation</b>	185
Dominant Ninth Chords	187
<b>[34] Funky Two-Five</b>	188
Top Harmony	190
The b3 Pentatonic Scale	190
Ear-Training	191
Two-Handed Voicings	192
<b>[35] Minor Ninth Chords</b>	195
<b>Cloud Nine</b>	196
<b>[35] More Minor Ninth Shapes</b>	198
<b>[36] Cloud Nine Improvisation</b>	199
<b>Song For My Father</b> <i>Horace Silver</i>	202
<b>Horace Silver's Solo on Song For My Father</b>	204
Playing Scales in Thirds	208
<b>[37] The Minor 6/9 Chord</b>	209
<b>Orinoco</b>	210
The Phrygian Mode	212
<b>[38] Major and Minor Tonic Chord Choices</b>	213
<b>White Russian</b>	214
<b>[39] I – VI – II – V Sequences</b>	218
<b>In a Sentimental Mood</b> <i>Duke Ellington</i>	220
Shearing Block Chords	223
Drop Two Voicings	224
Tritone Substitution	225
Final Checkpoint: Two-Handed Voicings	226
Coda	227
<b>Appendices</b>	
I Suggested Listening (Discography)	228
II Pentatonic Scales	235
III Symbols Used in this Book	236
IV Glossary of Terms	237
Quiz Answers	238
Index	239
CD Track Listing: Vol. 1	256

## Introduction

*Exploring Jazz Piano* is the sequel to my 1997 Schott publication *Improvising Blues Piano*. Overall, the technical and theoretical level is a little higher and players are strongly advised to work through the earlier book first, as it deals with many important (but more basic) concepts in depth. If you have problems with co-ordination between the hands, or with improvising around simple chord sequences, the blues is a great place to begin.

Like its predecessor, this book uses harmony as a starting point for the introduction of various concepts relating to melody, rhythm and improvisation, progressing in Vol. 1 from basic triads to seventh and ninth chords. Vol. 2 continues the progression via eleventh and thirteenth chords, to diminished and altered harmony, featuring more complex and colourful chords and scales. Both volumes contain interesting and challenging pieces to play and improvise over.

Unlike some jazz piano tutors, this method does not place harmony, rhythm and improvisation in separate compartments. As pianists, we are expected to have a good grasp of harmony and to be able to lay down chords for ourselves or others to improvise over. We are also expected to be able to create a good groove or accompaniment. Because of the pianist's unique role as soloist, accompanist, and member of the rhythm section, these topics are dealt with alongside each other throughout the book.

Jazz piano is a complex and demanding subject, requiring many years of study and practice before anything approaching mastery can be achieved. Throughout the book I have stressed the importance of listening to jazz recordings, playing with other musicians, and hearing live jazz as an essential part of the learning process.

I hope that *Exploring Jazz Piano* sends you on a journey from which you will gain a lifetime's enjoyment. Good luck on your travels!

Tim Richards  
London 2005

## How to use this book

As with IBP (as I shall refer to it in future) each chapter in *Exploring Jazz Piano* is approximately graded within itself, the pieces towards the end of the chapter becoming considerably harder. This means that there are relatively easy pieces in the book at the start of every chapter.

However, this grading is not quite as clear-cut as with IBP – a certain basic competence is assumed, and some quite challenging topics or pieces are occasionally introduced quite early on. You may wish to skip these pages the first time you work through a chapter, returning to them at a later date. It is recommended that you work through the book several times, selecting the easiest material first, so that you have a superficial understanding of the whole. Then go over it again in more depth, progressing further through each chapter and increasing your skill and knowledge. You'll probably need to repeat this process several times over a period of months or years.

I believe that this non-linear approach most closely duplicates the way that most professional musicians learn their craft. Understanding comes in layers – if you get bogged down in one chapter, move to the easier pieces at the start of the next, coming back later to the harder material.

## The CD

Every piece in the book can be heard on the CD. Get into the habit of listening to it as well as reading the music – learning pieces by ear is a viable alternative.

Tracks played on piano alone are recorded in stereo, just like an ordinary audio CD. However, some of the other tracks may sound a little strange as the instruments have been panned left and right for educational purposes.

If you've just picked up this book, and would like to get a taste of the pieces it contains, programme your CD player to play the following tracks:

3 – 5 – 7 – 9 – 12 – 13 – 17 – 18 –  
25 – 28 – 33 – 34 – 35 – 36 – 39

Select the 'mono' setting on your amplifier, if it has one, to eliminate the panning.

● **Drums** Tracks with drums accompaniment have been recorded with stereo separation. Although drums and piano were recorded at the same time, they have been panned left and right in the recording studio. If you wish to eliminate the piano from the recording, you

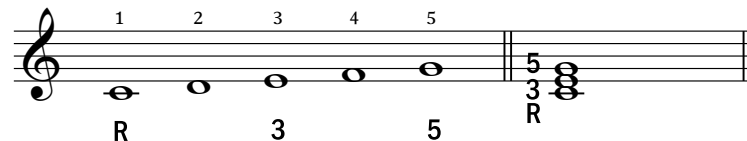
# Chapter One

# Major triads

Triads are three-note chords, the basic harmonic building blocks of Western music. A thorough knowledge of them is essential to help you deal with the more complex chords found later in this book.

There are four types of triad: major, minor, diminished and augmented. In this chapter we'll deal with major triads, which are formed from the first, third and fifth notes of the major scale. The first note of a scale is called the 'root', indicated by a bold **R**. Other notes of the scale are given numbers according to their position in the scale. These also appear in bold type. **R35** therefore describes the formation of a major triad.

**Fig 1.1: Derivation of C major triad from the first five notes of C major scale**



The numbers above the notes are the fingering:

Thumb = 1   Index finger = 2   Middle finger = 3   Ring finger = 4   Little finger = 5

In Fig 1.1 make sure you allocate a different finger for each note, ending with the little finger on G. This hand position is called a 'five-finger position'. The major triad should be played with 135 fingering, from the same hand position.

Now try playing the chord in the left hand (an octave lower) with the little finger on C and the thumb on G. Notice how the fingering, 531, is the opposite way round. Now with the right hand play the first five notes of the scale, up and down:

**Fig 1.2: Five-finger exercise with left-hand accompaniment**



The chord symbol C is a standard abbreviation for 'C major triad'.

In preparation for *Threesome* overleaf, play Fig 1.2 for the chords of F and G, with the right hand playing the first five notes of the scales of F and G major.

- 1 straight 8s  
2 swing – with play-along section

# Threesome

♩ = 120

The melody and improvisation section of this piece are based on the three five-finger positions of C, F and G major.

Tim Richards

A1

A2

Solo

B