



LEAD SHEET LEVEL-UP



But-the-Pieces Plan: 8 Week Lead Sheet Level-Up

Overview

This 'But-the-Pieces' lesson plan is designed to help students take the next step when it comes to playing lead sheets and creating arrangements of songs. I recommend students go through the [Lead Sheet Kickoff](#) course a few times (with different pieces) before moving on to this course.

You will need to choose 1 piece to work on with your student throughout this process. There are 4 sample lead sheets included at the end of this PDF for convenience, but please don't feel restricted to those. You can use any lead sheet you or your student chooses; it will be even more beneficial if it's a song your student is invested in learning.

The first time your student completes Lead Sheet Level-Up, it will most likely take a lot longer than 8 weeks. You may have to spend 2 or even 3 weeks on one stage for them to get really comfortable, and that is totally fine. If it is taking them longer than 3 weeks to master a certain stage, however, I recommend going back to the [Lead Sheet Kickoff](#) process with them instead.

You can repeat this process as many times as you wish with different songs. Eventually, this will become more automatic for your student but that takes practice. This framework helps provide the system to give them that practice.

Quick Look Lesson Plan

WEEK	STAGE	NOTES:
Week 1	Foundations	
Week 2	Octaves	
Week 3	Arpeggios	
Week 4	Root5Root & RootRoot3	
Week 5	Jump bass	
Week 6	Substitutions	
Week 7	RH embellish- ments	
Week 8	Introductions	

WEEK 1: FOUNDATIONS

The first week is just about getting to know the melody and chords very well. Make sure your student is able to play their chosen piece quite fluently in these 3 ways before they start experimenting with different patterns and embellishments.

ROOT + MELODY

- Right hand plays the melody as written and left hand plays just the root note of each chord. (If there are slash chords, the left hand should play the note after the slash.)

Chords: C, F, C, G7

Lyrics: Proud - ly swept the rain cloud by the cliff as on it glid - ed through the trees.

ROOT + CHORD

- Right hand plays the melody as written and left hand plays the full chord, using inversions as necessary to make it as “lazy” as possible.

Chords: C, G7, C, F, C, G7, C

Lyrics: My grand - fa - ther's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood nine - ty years on the floor.

ROOT + MELODY/CHORD

- Right hand plays the melody and some chord tones while the left hand plays just the root note of each chord. Start by adding just one note from the chord to the bottom of the right hand and, if suited to the piece, add more chord tones to the right hand as your student is ready.

Chords: C, G, F, C/E, F, G, C

Lyrics: Down by the Sal - ley Gar - dens my love and I did meet.

WEEK 2: OCTAVES

This is really an extension of the *Root +Melody/Chord* version from last week and an opportunity to start experimenting a little more.

For this version, the right hand plays the melody and some chord tones while the left hand plays the root in octaves. The octaves can be in unison or separated. Encourage your student to try out different rhythms and always have them try the pattern for the full piece – even if it doesn't suit the piece very well – so that they get used to applying rhythm patterns in real time.

Chords: Dm, Gm, A

Lyrics: I am a poor way-far-ing stran-ger while trav-'ling through this world of woe.

Chords: C, F, C, G7

Lyrics: Proud-ly swept the rain cloud by the cliff as on it glid-ed through the trees.

Chords: C, G7, C, F, C, G7

Lyrics: My grand-fa-ther's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood nine-ty years on the floor.

WEEK 3: ARPEGGIOS

Arpeggios can be used in all sorts of patterns and permutations to make the left hand sound more interesting.

Have your student try different arpeggio ideas in the left hand while the right hand plays the melody/chords. The arpeggios can be ascending or descending and the rhythm should be adjusted to fit the piece. They might also like to revert to the octaves they used last week in certain sections.

Chords: C, G, F, C/E, F, G, C

Lyrics: Down by the Salley Gardens my love and I did meet.

The left hand plays ascending arpeggios for the first six measures and a descending arpeggio for the final measure.

Chords: Dm, Gm, A

Lyrics: I am a poor way-far-ing stran-ger while trav-ling through this world of woe.

The left hand plays ascending arpeggios for the first three measures and a descending arpeggio for the final measure.

Chords: C, F, C, G7

Lyrics: Proud-ly swept the rain cloud by the cliff as on it glid-ed through the trees.

The left hand plays ascending arpeggios for the first three measures and a descending arpeggio for the final measure.

WEEK 4: ROOT5ROOT AND ROOTROOT3

This week your student will explore more open voicings using these two patterns which I like to call *Root5Root* and *RootRoot3*.

Teach them the patterns at first using the most common chord in their piece. For example, if the piece is in C Major teach them the pattern C-G-C or C-C-E. Then have them work out the same pattern for all the chords in their piece.

Chords: Dm, Gm, A

Lyrics: I am a poor way-far-ing stran-ger while trav-'ling through this world of woe.

The score shows a piano accompaniment for the first line of the song. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The chords are Dm, Gm, and A. The lyrics are written below the melody.

Chords: C, G7, C, F, C, G7, C

Lyrics: My grand - fa-ther's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood nine-ty years on the floor.

The score shows a piano accompaniment for the second line of the song. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The chords are C, G7, C, F, C, G7, and C. The lyrics are written below the melody.

Chords: C, F, C, G7

Lyrics: Proud-ly swept the rain cloudby the cliff as on it glid-ed through the trees.

The score shows a piano accompaniment for the third line of the song. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The chords are C, F, C, and G7. The lyrics are written below the melody.

WEEK 5: JUMP BASS

Splitting up the chord within the left hand is another great option and can work with or without chord tones in the right hand, depending on the piece.

Have your student start by playing the root note down low and then jumping up to the full chord with their left hand. Once they get used to this they can experiment with different chord inversions and rhythms as shown below.

Chords: C, G, F, C/E, F, G, C

Lyrics: Down by the Sal - ley Gar - dens my love and I did meet.

The first system of musical notation shows a piano accompaniment for the first part of the song. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The left hand (bass clef) plays a 'jump bass' pattern, starting with a single root note in the lower register and then jumping to a full chord in the upper register. The chords are C, G, F, C/E, F, G, and C. The lyrics are: 'Down by the Sal - ley Gar - dens my love and I did meet.'

Chords: Dm, Gm, A

Lyrics: I am a poor way-far-ing stran-ger while trav-ling through this world of woe.

The second system of musical notation continues the piano accompaniment. The right hand plays a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The left hand continues the 'jump bass' pattern. The chords are Dm, Gm, and A. The lyrics are: 'I am a poor way-far-ing stran-ger while trav-ling through this world of woe.'

Chords: C, G7, C, F, C, G7, C

Lyrics: My grand - fa - ther's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood nine - ty years on the floor.

The third system of musical notation shows the final part of the piano accompaniment. The right hand plays a melody of eighth and quarter notes. The left hand continues the 'jump bass' pattern. The chords are C, G7, C, F, C, G7, and C. The lyrics are: 'My grand - fa - ther's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood nine - ty years on the floor.'

WEEK 6: SUBSTITUTIONS

From here on, your student can stick to their favourite left hand pattern or keep experimenting with those they've explored so far and new ideas they mine from their repertoire.

Explain to your student how to find the relative major/minor, if they don't already know. Have them write in the relative of each chord and play the piece with these new chord substitutions. Get them to circle the chord substitutions that they like, then play the piece using the original chords plus just those few substitutions that they circled.

Am Dm Am Em

Proud - ly swept the rain cloud by the cliff as on it glid - ed through the trees.

The first system of musical notation for 'But-the-Pieces Plan'. It consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: 'Proud - ly swept the rain cloud by the cliff as on it glid - ed through the trees.' The chords are: Am (Proud - ly), Dm (swept), Am (the rain cloud by the cliff), and Em (as on it glid - ed through the trees).

Am Em Dm Em Dm Em Am

Down by the Sal - ley Gar - dens my love and I did meet.

The second system of musical notation. The melody continues in the treble clef, and the bass line continues in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'Down by the Sal - ley Gar - dens my love and I did meet.' The chords are: Am (Down), Em (by the), Dm (Sal - ley), Em (Gar - dens), Dm (my love), Em (and I), and Am (did meet).

Am Em Am Dm Am Em Am

My grand - fa - ther's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood nine - ty years on the floor.

The third system of musical notation. The melody continues in the treble clef, and the bass line continues in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'My grand - fa - ther's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood nine - ty years on the floor.' The chords are: Am (My), Em (grand - fa - ther's), Am (clock), Dm (was too large), Am (for the shelf), Em (so it stood), and Am (nine - ty years on the floor).

WEEK 7: RIGHT HAND EMBELLISHMENTS

There are lots of ways to dress up the right hand and add some creative flair. Here are three embellishments to get your student started:

- Steal part of one note value and give it to its neighbour.
- Add an acciatura from the note above or below on notes you want to emphasise.
- Add a trill or turn at the start of a long note.

Chords: C, G, Dm, C/E, F, G, C

Lyrics: Down by the Salley Gardens my love and I did meet.

The score illustrates three embellishments in the right hand: a note value steal (quarter note from 'Sal' to eighth note in 'ley'), an acciatura (eighth note from 'Sal' to 'ley'), and a trill (on the 'G' of 'Gardens').

Chords: Dm, Gm, A

Lyrics: I am a poor way-faring stranger while 'ling through this world of woe.

The score illustrates three embellishments in the right hand: a note value steal (quarter note from 'poor' to eighth note in 'way-faring'), an acciatura (eighth note from 'poor' to 'way-faring'), and a trill (on the 'G' of 'Garden').

Chords: C, G7, C, F, C, G7, C

Lyrics: My grandfather's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood ninety years on the floor.

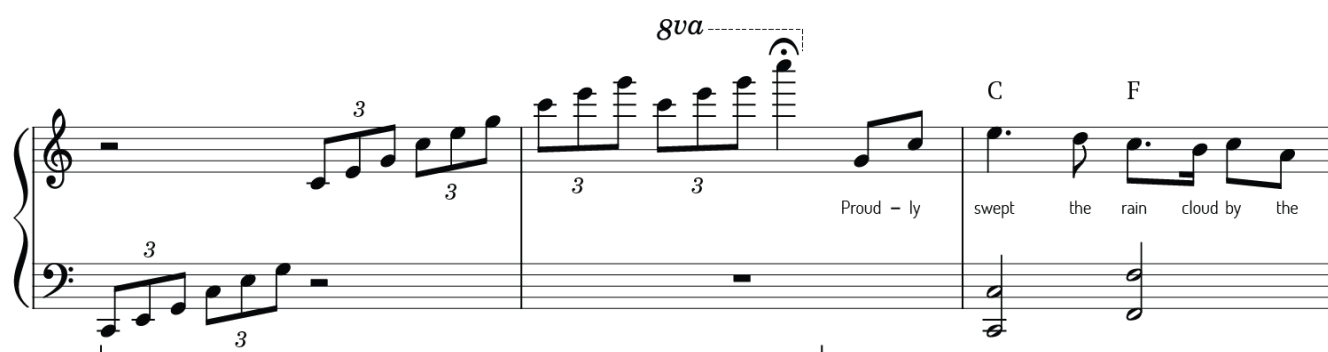
The score illustrates three embellishments in the right hand: a note value steal (quarter note from 'grand' to eighth note in 'father's'), an acciatura (eighth note from 'grand' to 'father's'), and a trill (on the 'C' of 'Clock').

WEEK 8: INTRODUCTION

The last thing we're going to add is an introduction. Three simple tricks for creating the introduction are:

- Playing part of the left hand accompaniment along with a simplified right hand.
- Using the last 2–3 bars (measures).
- Playing the tonic arpeggio across the full piano.

Encourage your student to also keep their eyes open for introduction ideas in their repertoire. Most arrangers have a few tricks up their sleeve which they pull out again and again!



Aloha Oe

Queen Lili'uokalani

Proud - ly swept the rain cloud by the cliff as
 on it glid - ed through the trees. Still____
 fol - low - ing with grief the li - ko, the
 a - mi - mi - la - mua of the vale. Fare - well to thee, fare -
 well to thee, thou charm - ing one who dwells a - mong the
 bow - ers. One fond em - brase be -
 fore I now de - part, un - til we meet a - gain.

Wayfaring Stranger

Traditional

1 Dm

I am a poor_____ way - far - ing stran - ger while trav - 'ling

3 Gm A Dm

through_____ this world of woe. Yet there's no

5

sick - ness, toil nor dan - ger in that bright

7 Gm Dm Bb C7

world_____ to which I go. I'm go - ing there_____ to see my

10 F Bb C7

Fa - ther, I'm go - ing there_____ no more to

12 Dm

roam. I'm on - ly go - ing o - ver

14 Gm Dm

Jor - dan, I'm on - ly go - ing o - ver home.

Down by the Salley Gardens

William Butler Yeats

Herbert Hughes

The musical score is written in 4/4 time on a single staff. It includes lyrics and guitar chords for each measure. The lyrics are: "Down by the Salley Gardens my love and I did meet. She passed the Salley Gardens with a little snow-white feet. She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree; But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree." The chords are: C, G, F, C/E, F, G, C, C, F, G, C, Am, F, Em, Am, G, C, C7/Bb, F/A, C/G, F, G7, C.

Down by the Salley Gardens my love and I did meet. She passed the Salley Gardens with a little snow-white feet. She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree; But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

Grandfather's Clock

Henry Clay Work

My grand - father's clock was too large for the shelf so it stood nine-ty years on the

floor. It was tall - er by half than the old man him-self tho' it

weighed not a pen - ny-weight more. It was bought on the morn of the

day that he was born and was al - ways his treas - ure and pride. But it

stopped short, nev-er to go a - gain, when the old man

died. Nine - ty years with - out slum - ber - ing, tick, tock, tick, tock. It

stopped short, nev-er to go a - gain, when the old man died.