



# Lesson Twenty Eight

## Extending Arpeggios

Gigajam Keyboard School Lesson 028 IKS EA

### Lesson Objectives

- Introduce broken chords.
- To be able to play arpeggios between both hands.
- Introduce open voicing

### Extending arpeggios

The previous lesson introduced playing triplets, including extending arpeggios using both hands together. This lesson will also feature extended arpeggios, this time based on eighth notes.

Arpeggios have appeared throughout this course since they were first introduced in Lesson 7. Arpeggios are a way of playing a chord – one note after another (consecutively) rather than together (simultaneously). This is sometimes referred to as playing broken chords.

Having established these two different ways of playing the notes in a chord, it is now time to learn how to combine them to create a new approach.

In the key of F major, play an arpeggio using the notes of the F major chord. The arpeggio is played root, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and octave – that's F, A, C and F. The first three notes are played in the left hand. Only the octave is played in the right hand. Notice how the octave F note is tied over. Ties were studied in Lessons 25 and 26. Revise these lessons if you need to.

### Exercise 1

lesson028.iksea.01



### Right hand too

At the moment, the left hand is doing most of the work. This leaves the right hand free to do something else. Why not play the whole chord in the right hand to complete the arpeggio. The tied rhythm is exactly the same.

### Exercise 2

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The right hand completes the picture and finishes what the left hand started – it's a kind of question and answer.

Introducing a second chord will help you to practise this. Add a Gm chord to the F. First, play just the arpeggio.

**Exercise 3**  
lesson028.iksea.03



Now complete the picture with the right hand answering the left – broken chord followed by chord.

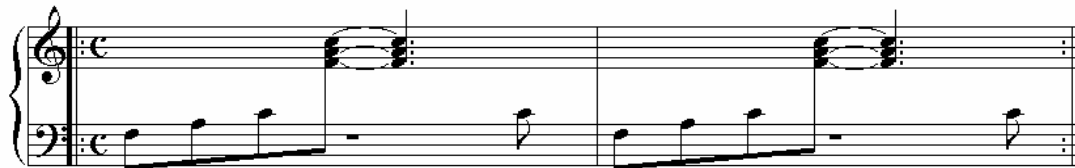
**Exercise 4**  
lesson028.iksea.04



## More movement

It's easy to create a little more movement by making only a slight adjustment. Change the rhythm by playing the 5<sup>th</sup> on the way back down to the root.

**Exercise 5**  
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This rhythm now involves both a tie and dotted notes. Make sure you understand the rhythm of this exercise – the last eighth note (C) falls on the 'and' of beat 4.

Try that again with the F to Gm chord sequence.

**Exercise 6**  
lesson028.iksea.06



As always, remember to practise each exercise slowly and carefully at first. Only increase the tempo when you feel comfortable to do so. It is good to be able to play things a little faster, but makes sure you are playing correctly firstly.

## Opening out

The previous lesson introduced the idea of opening out the chord voicing. This means playing the notes of the chord in a different order.

As an accompanist, a keyboard player might want to open out the chord voicing to spread out the sound. So for F major, instead of spelling out all the notes of the chord played as an arpeggio of F, A, C in the left hand, you could play F, C, F for example – that's root, 5<sup>th</sup> and octave.

As you can see, there is no A – the third is missing. All the notes of the chord must be present and played – the third especially, because it defines the tonality and lets us know whether the chord is major or minor. The only time this is desirable is for a power chord (see lesson 19).

The A can be played in the right hand – not on its own but as part of a chord. In fact, it's a good idea to put the A on top of the right hand chord – it is the third after all. So the right hand chord voicing will be C, F, A. Now all the notes of the chord are present, shared between both hands. The next exercise illustrates this.

**Exercise 7**  
lesson028.iksea.07



Make sure you can do this comfortably and then move it to another chord, say Gm.

### Exercise 8 lesson028.iksea.08



Ideally, as a keyboard player, you should be able to do this for any chord.

## Thinking ahead

Moving comfortably from chord to chord is very much part of the role of a keyboard player. This outlines the chord progression, supports the band and lets everyone know exactly what's going on – including the audience!

There is a certain amount of forward thinking required in navigating your way around how to play the chords in a song in terms of voicing the notes involved.

So far, there are two chords in the sequence we are working on namely: F and Gm.

Adding another chord is simple enough, say: Bb.

Look at the notes of the Bb chord before you play them: **Bb**, **D** and F.

Now compare these with the notes of the previous chord in the sequence, Gm: G, **Bb** and **D**.

Two of the notes are the same: **Bb** and **D**. The only difference is that one has a G and the other has an F.

This way of thinking may remind you of studying triads, inversions and economy of movement way back in Lesson 6. It means only one note needs to be changed to effect the move from a Gm chord to a Bb chord. This is valuable information.

The left hand will still have to move to play the root, 5<sup>th</sup> and octave of the new Bb chord. The right hand, however, has only to change one finger from G to F. It would be easy to overlook this and move the right hand even though it is unnecessary.

A good keyboard player is always aware of this. That's why it's important to have a good understanding of the harmony and theory of music – ultimately it makes the music sound better.

First, check out the right hand finger movement required to change from Gm to Bb.

**Exercise 9**  
lesson028.iksea.09



Notice how the B $\flat$  is on top in both chords – and the D is on the bottom. Only the middle note changes.

Now play the next exercise, which combines everything covered so far in this lesson.

**Exercise 10**  
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The final exercise in this lesson adds one more chord to the sequence.

Only the left hand moves this time, from B $\flat$  up to C. As usual, play root, 5<sup>th</sup> and octave.

The right hand doesn't move at all – it stays exactly where it was for the B $\flat$  chord. This is a neat little trick, often used by keyboard players. This last chord is still a C chord because of the left hand notes – although it's obviously not a 'straight ahead' C Major or minor. It works nicely here because it sets up the return back to the first F major chord. It does sound very cool.

Exercise 11  
lesson028.iksea.11



5