

Incidentally, one of the commonest mistakes beginning backup pianists make is in holding notes too long, whether left-hand octaves or right-hand chords. This makes the ensemble sound muddy, it shaves off the exciting peaks of melody and rhythm. Make your notes staccato, short and swift. (And loud!) To use an old boxing maxim, float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. Additionally, the upbeat chord should be placed around middle C, for the most part. This keeps the piano from interfering with the usually higher-pitched melody instruments.

I played this way for quite a while and was fairly soon looking for more interesting things to do. One of my favorite sayings came into play, 'Boredom is the father of invention'. The bare oom-pah style is very functional, and very boring! It was time for a few bass runs.

Bass runs make walking transitions between chords. The commonest are these three-note ones:

Example 2

The musical notation for Example 2 consists of three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The bass runs are as follows:

- System 1:**
 - Run 1: D (upbeat) → G (downbeat)
 - Run 2: D (upbeat) → A (downbeat)
 - Run 3: G (upbeat) → C (downbeat)
- System 2:**
 - Run 4: G (upbeat) → D (downbeat)
 - Run 5: Em (upbeat) → B (downbeat)
 - Run 6: B (upbeat) → F (downbeat)
- System 3:**
 - Run 7: F (upbeat) → C (downbeat)

The bass run starts on the upbeat and arrives at its destination just in time to