

## Handi Variation Theory Lesson

(also known as *the Minor Line Cliché*)

Here is a technique that I call the **Handi Variation**. I call it that because it comes in **handy**. You will be able to use the **Handi Variation** in many songs to keep your piano playing more interesting.

This technique is sometimes called the **Minor Line Cliché** because it uses a **minor** chord, the bottom note moves downward as a **line**, and it can often be overused (**Cliché**).

Here's when you can use the **Handi Variation** and how it works:

When you are playing songs where the **same minor chord** is supposed to be played for **two (2) or more measures** (occasionally for only one measure), you can create *variety* by **lowering the Root** of the chord (its letter name) by **half steps**.

### Part One: How to Play the Handi Variation in Songs with Three Note Chords and /or in Flowing Songs

**Example No. 1** shows the **Handi Variation** in block chords.

Notice the chord symbols above the treble staff. Then look at the bass clef notes that you play for each chord.

Example No. 1 Block Chords

Medium ♩=80

G<sup>min</sup>                      G<sup>min</sup>/G<sup>b</sup>                      G<sup>min</sup>/F                      G<sup>min</sup>/E

Sometimes song books show the following chord symbols for the **Handi Variation**:

(These chord symbols mean exactly the same thing as the chord symbols used in my examples)

**Gmin – Gb+ – Bb/F – C9** or **Gmin – Gmin/maj7 – Gmin7 – Gmin6**

**Example No. 2** shows the **Handi Variation** with the **um pah** pattern.

Example No. 2 Um Pah

Medium ♩=80

G<sup>min</sup>                      G<sup>min</sup>/G<sup>b</sup>                      G<sup>min</sup>/F                      G<sup>min</sup>/E

You can use this pattern with the **Handi Variation** when you are playing three note chords with **um pah** in songs like *Anything You Can Do*.

**Example No. 3** shows the **Handi Variation** with the **alberti bass** pattern (split chords).

Example No. 3 Alberti Bass

Medium ♩=72

Gmin                      Gmin/Gb                      Gmin/F                      Gmin/E

*mf*

You can use this pattern with the **Handi Variation** when you are playing the other three note chords of the song with the **alberti bass** accompaniment or even to provide contrast to fuller accompaniments, e.g. *My Funny Valentine*.

**Example No. 4** shows the **Handi Variation** with **rolling 10<sup>ths</sup>**. This works when you want a fuller and sometimes more dramatic left hand accompaniment style.

Example No. 4 Rolling 10ths

Lento ♩=50

Gmin                      Gmin/Gb                      Gmin/F                      Gmin/E

*mp*

*mf*

You can use the **Handi Variation** with **rolling 10<sup>ths</sup>** in flowing songs such as *The Summer Knows*.

## **Part Two: How to Play the Handi Variation in Songs with Swing Rhythm which use the 10<sup>th</sup> System**

The next three examples will show you different ways to play the **Handi Variation** with the 10<sup>th</sup> system. You can choose which of these you want to use based on the tempo, the accompaniment pattern in the rest of the song, your personal taste and/or ease of playing.



### Part Three: How to Play the *Handi* Variation when it needs to fit into One Measure

**Example No. 8** shows two ways to play the *Handi* Variation when it needs to fit into one rather than the usual two measures, e.g. *Wouldn't It Be Lovely*.

Example No. 8 For One Measure (Two Options)

**Medium swing** ♩=92

Option 1: Four Quarter Notes

Option 2: Swing 8th Notes

Gmin    Gmin/Gb    Gmin/F    Gmin/E    Gmin    Gmin/Gb    Gmin/F    Gmin/E

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