

Musical Embellishments

In this worksheet package you will learn different ways to embellish your piano accompaniment on existing hymns that are written in SATB format.



Tip #1 - move an octave higher

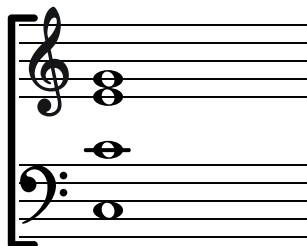
For a gentler sound, play the original notes but move both hands an octave higher. This creates a more intimate sound, suitable for a second verse.



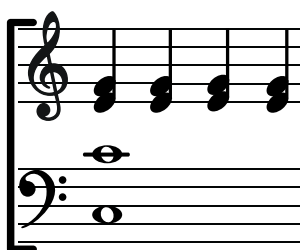
Tip #2 - repeat notes

If the congregation is holding a long note, you can repeat some of the notes on the remaining beats, thus maintaining the pulse:

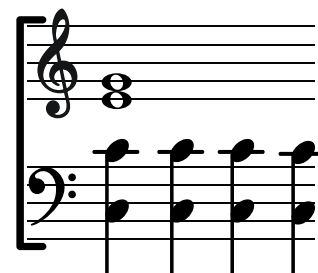
congregation sings



you could play this



or this



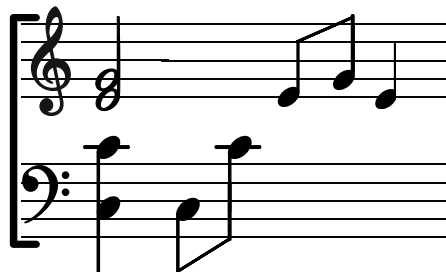
Tip #3 - arpeggiate chords

If the congregation is holding a long note, you can spread out the notes over the remaining beats.

congregation sings



you could play this





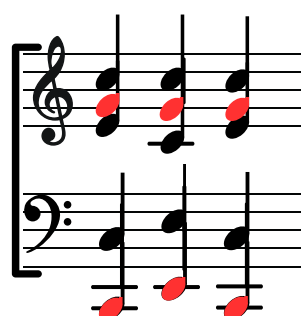
Tip #4 - re-arrange RH = S+A+T and LH = Bx2

Bring the tenor note in the right hand part (if needed, re-arrange the notes so that your hand can easily catch them all without stretching beyond the span of one octave). This allows your left hand to double the bass note to an octave. This will render a very deep sound and the congregation will feel grounded harmonically.

congregation sings



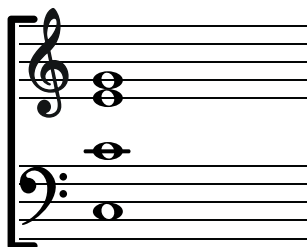
you could play this



Tip #5 - repeat chords up and down

Similarly to Tip #2, this time you'll move up and down using the existing notes. We call these "chord inversions" but you don't need to know the terminology in order to play well. Simply use the existing notes and cluster them together. Also, you could incorporate Tip #4 so that the RH plays a three-note chord and the LH plays an octave. This will render a fuller sound.

congregation sings



you could play this





Tip #6 - full sound

Get ready to pull out all the stops! Your RH will double the soprano note as a full octave and include the alto and tenor notes in between (like a sandwich). Your LH will will double the bass note as an octave. Given that this tip is more complex than the others, I suggest you break it up in three steps:

original

Step 1 - play the soprano notes in octaves

Step #2 - add the bass notes in octaves

Step #3 - fill in the RH octaves with remaining notes, include all options that fit well within each octave, borrow notes from alto, tenor, and / or bass.

Playing the G+F next to each other is difficult; you can ignore one or the other, so long as you keep the higher F on the top of the chord with finger 5. Alternatively, you can play just an empty octave since this beat is only a passing tone (this is fancy harmonic jargon; you can learn more about it in the course Piano Brains!). Try and see which version feels best for your RH!

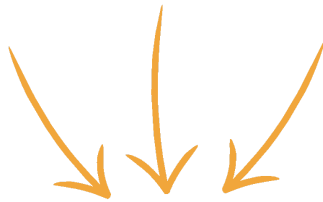


Tip #7 - let the text lead you

Not sure which of the above tips to use at any given point? Read the text. Are the lyrics triumphant? Then use a tip that renders a full sound (i.e. Tip #6). Are the lyrics more intimate? Then use a tip that renders a quiet sound (i.e. Tip #1)

If you've enjoyed this lesson and want to learn more about playing piano by ear and improving your chord theory, check out my online course - Piano Brains!

CLICK the link below (or copy-paste it in your browser) to LEARN MORE!



www.ralucabojor.com/pianobrains