

THE DANIEL L. GARNER  
**PATTERN METHOD**

A COMPLETELY NEW APPROACH TO MAKING MUSIC





Locate   ┌   Lock   ┐   Liberate  
where to start   into safety   into song

The Daniel “L” Garner Pattern Method is a liberating approach to exploring the music landscape.

The secret to unlocking the music already inside of you is using patterns and shapes.

**Just break music down into Ls.**

When people try to take up piano, they rarely know where to begin, and for some, music lessons can confuse more than help. Even if they want to, beginners often don't know how to start practicing or what they should try to memorize. Cooling their hopes, inspiration, and creativity, beginners lack a sense of when they'll be able to start making music of their own.

Banging on piano keys, knowing that everyone can hear them fumbling along, beginners can feel embarrassed and struggle to tolerate the journey, especially if they don't know how long it will take before they can play something that they enjoy.

The Daniel "L" Garner Pattern Method will *locate* you in the music ballpark, *lock* you into safety so that you can generally jam along, and *liberate* you to sound good without fear. For more advanced players, the Pattern Method will help you bridge the gap between knowing about music and freely making music with that knowledge.

You can certainly use the Pattern Method with chords, sheet music, and classical theory if you want, but crucially, the method makes theory optional.

### Why this method is different:

1. Doesn't conflate music theory or reading music with making music.
2. Uses patterns and shapes instead of numbers and notations.
3. Helps you sound good while you learn, not just after you learn.
4. Makes music lessons optional.
5. **Enables you to play music with ease and without end.**

### For beginners, this tool will:

1. Erase the fear of failure: it will be like bowling alley bumpers are up on the piano.
2. Help you see patterns on a keyboard instead of chaos.
3. Provide you with bearings to know where to start.
4. Free you to **just play**.

### For those with more experience:

1. Teach you how to improvise.
2. Enable you to transition between Keys instantly.\*
3. **Inspire you with new music possibilities.**

### Don't forget:

The ability to read music is not the ability to make music.  
It's best to know both skills but not required.

# UPFRONT

The Daniel “L” Garner Pattern Method is especially for people who:

1. Consider themselves more right-brain than left-brain.  
Creative versus analytical.
2. Prefer experimenting over being directed.  
Discoverers versus enactors.
3. Value autonomy.  
Self-teachers versus lesson-followers.
4. Want to make their own music more than play works by others.  
Music-makers versus music-players.

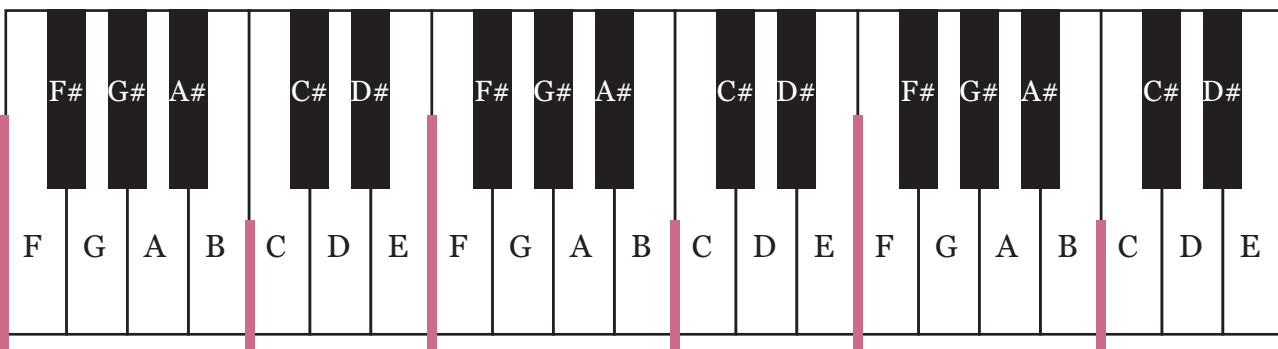
This method is a tool, not a magic trick.

After you learn it, you won't be able to play any piece of music you want instantly, but you'll feel like you finally know how to progress rapidly toward your music goals. The piano won't be a locked safe: the treasure will be in the open for you to see.

The unique advantages of the Pattern Method:

1. Blends practice with creation.
2. Teaches you how to improvise.
3. Teaches you how to jam with other instruments and musicians.
4. Teaches you how to teach yourself.
5. Builds music confidence rapidly.

Piano Note Names  
For Reference, but Not Necessary to Learn



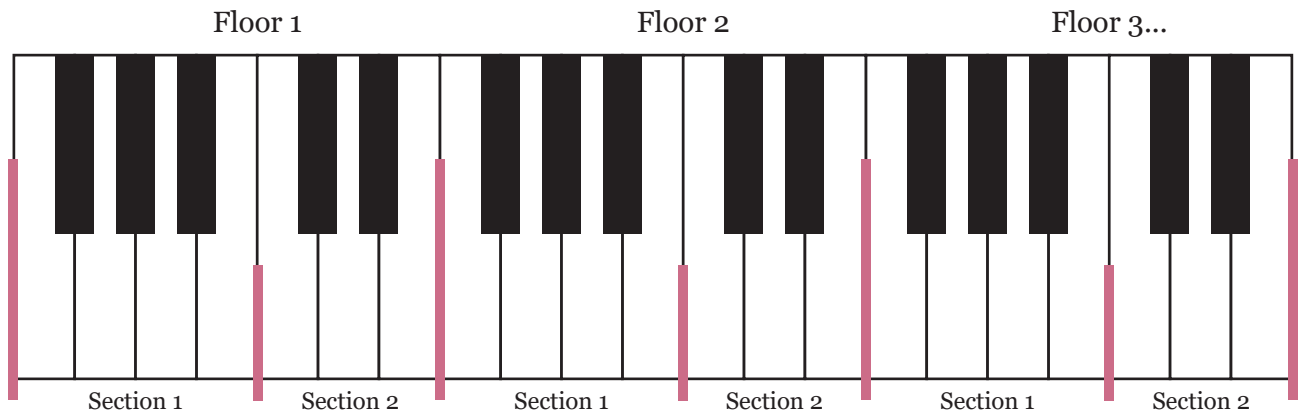
# THE STORY

*The following is optional reading.*

For years I wanted to play an instrument, but I arrived at the University of Virginia not knowing how to play a note. I sang in the high school choir, but that was it.

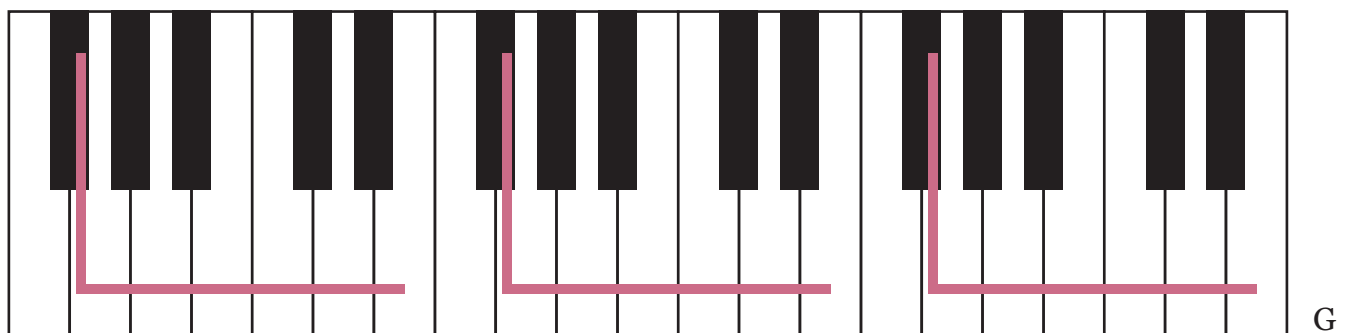
During my first year, I found an old piano in the storage basement of the UVA music hall, Old Cabell, accessible through the back. I could have used the practice spaces inside, but there was something about the secluded basement that I liked. I hit on the piano keys. Nothing sounded right. I went online and looked up the theme song to *The Last of the Mohicans* after I heard a friend playing it before choir practice. After a few weeks, I memorized the tune, but that was all I could muster. I felt limited.

While practicing songs by Alicia Keys, I realized that each section of the piano was identical, that the sections changed octaves but not notes. Each of the seven “floors” of the piano “house” were the same, and each had two sections.



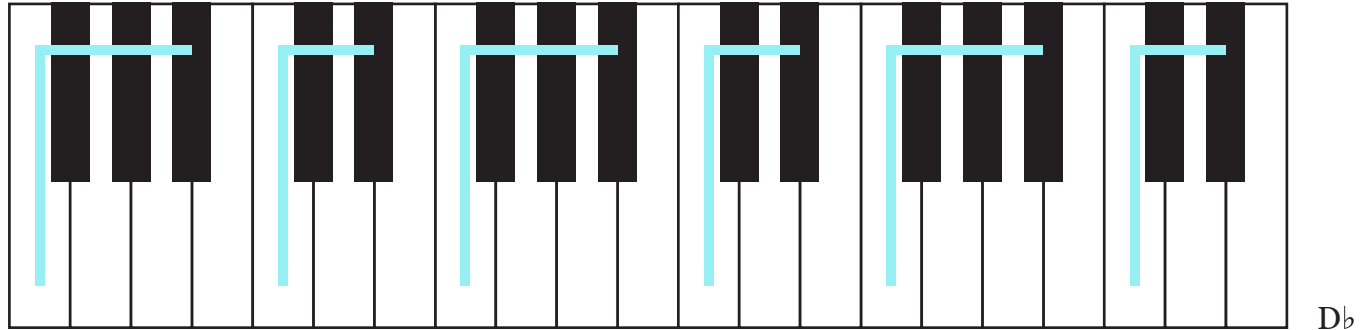
If I played the first black piano key on Floor 1 (Section 1), it was the same note as the first black key on Floor 2, Floor 3, and so on. On each octave, the sections repeated: the floors didn't change. The first white piano key in Section 2 matched the first white key in every Section 2, and so on.

In the basement, days later, though I didn't know the names of the piano keys at the time, I noticed that if I played the F#, G, A, B, C, D, and E keys, the piano sounded pleasant. I already knew that I sounded good if I just played the white keys, but that quickly became boring, so I ventured to the black keys with an F#. I didn't know it at the time, but I had just discovered the Key of G (G); however, in my mind, I was just playing inside a long L-shape.



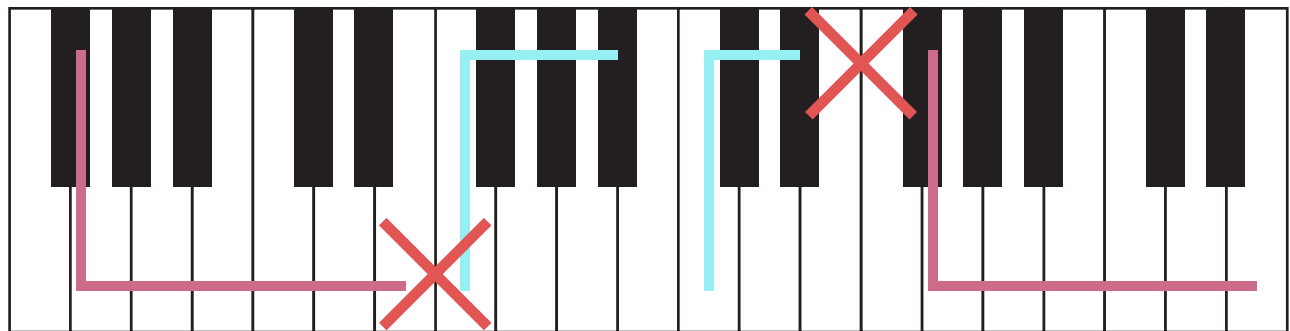
If I stayed in the L, I sounded good. I didn't even know the terms "Keys" or "chords," but I didn't need to: I only needed to memorize the shape. For hours, I started playing and exploring L.

I then wondered if spinning the L would do anything, and to my surprise, discovered another pattern that sounded pleasant. However, this time, I found that the L-pattern became two Ls, one for each section of the floor.

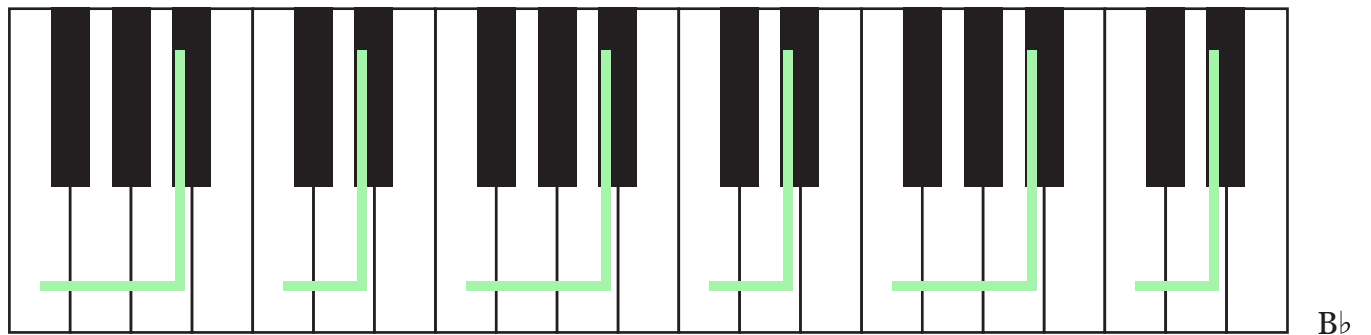


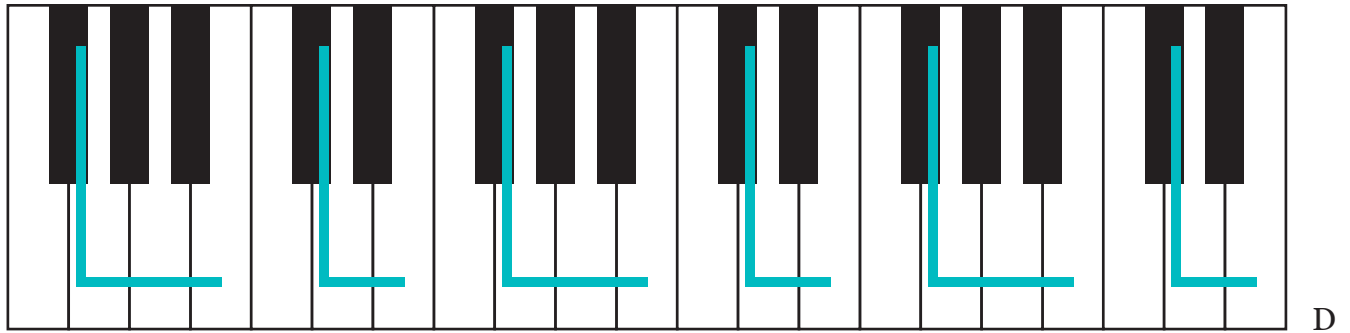
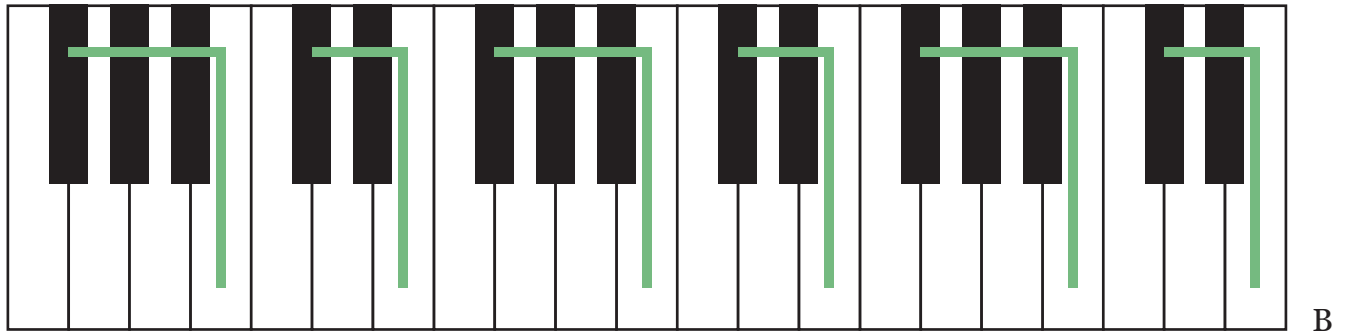
Again, if I stayed in the L(s), I sounded good. Without realizing it, I had discovered the Key of  $D_b$ .

I quickly learned that if I was playing in one L-pattern, I couldn't simultaneously play in another L-pattern and still sound good.



Whatever L-pattern I *located* and picked, I needed to stay *locked* in on all seven floors. Having learned that rule, I began spinning and mirroring the L-shape to find lots of patterns.

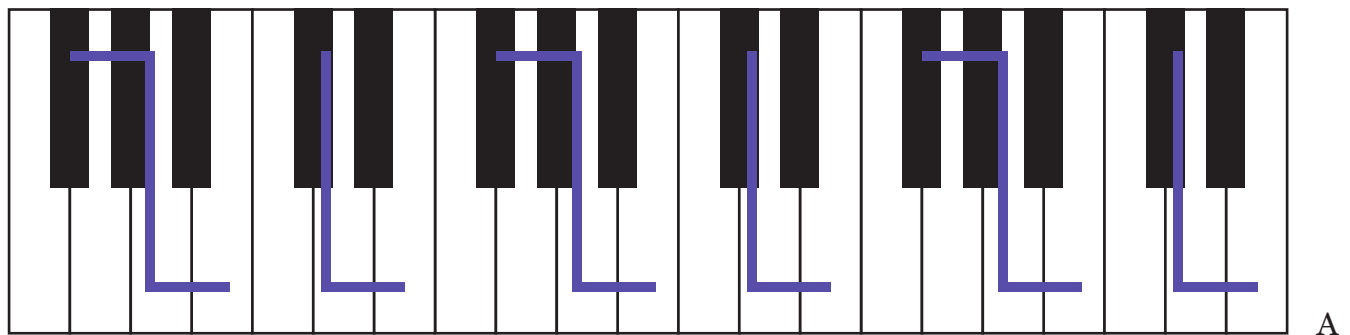




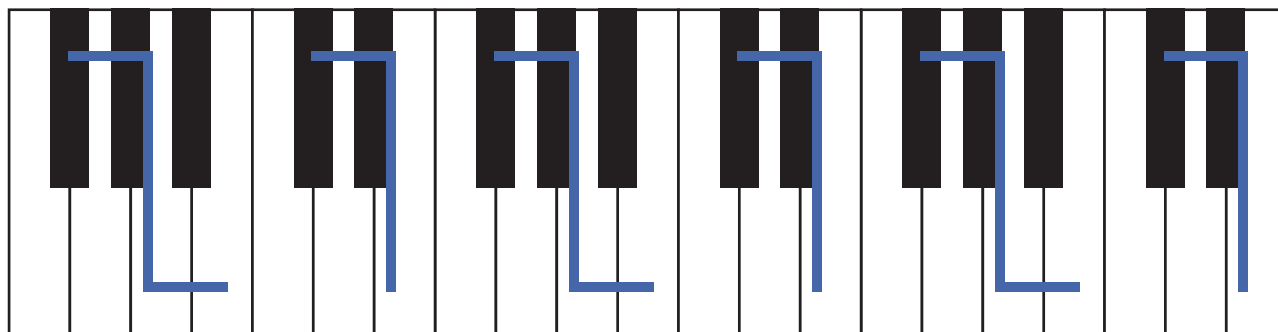
Whenever I *located* a new pattern, I would *lock* myself into it, and then I would be *liberated* to play for hours in that Old Cabell basement. Not only did my confidence that I could play piano grow, but I also finally found it fun, exciting, and creative. I felt like I could invent my own music. It was empowering.

I figured out which L-patterns the Alicia Keys songs I liked were in, and after that, it didn't take long to not only be able to play the songs but also to improvise off of them. **If I stayed in the pattern, I couldn't mess up.**

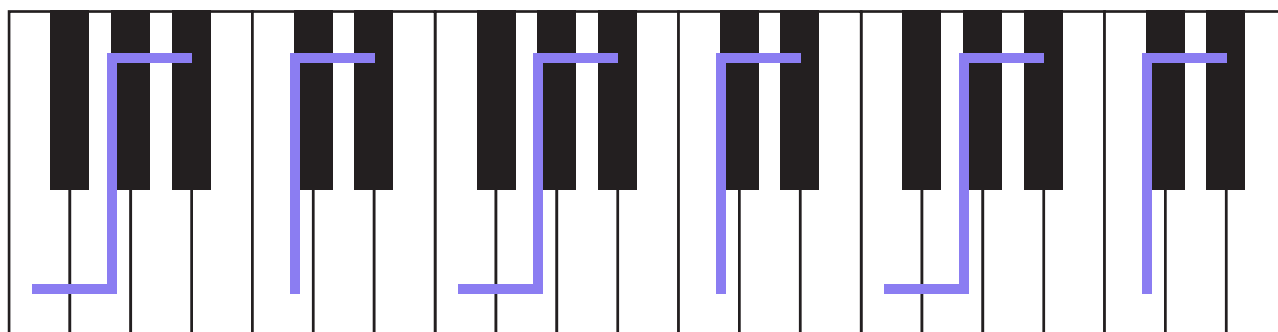
I soon discovered that “an L into an upside-down L” (L) unlocked new patterns, and the piano expanded yet again.



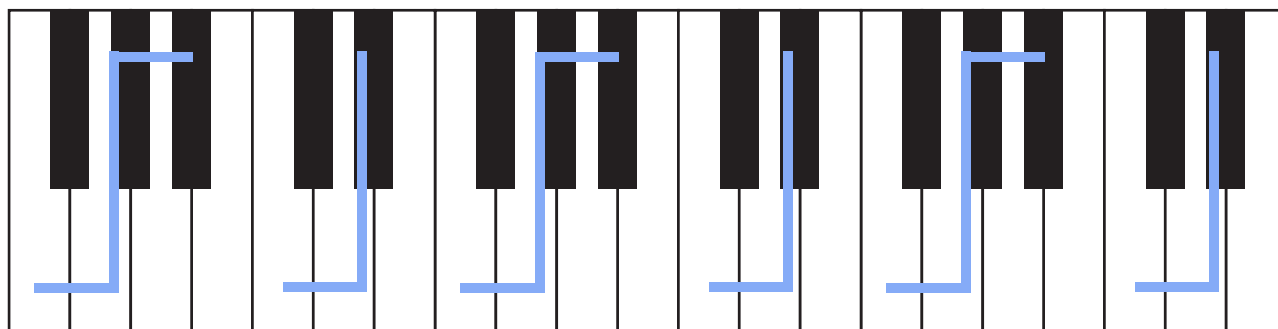




E

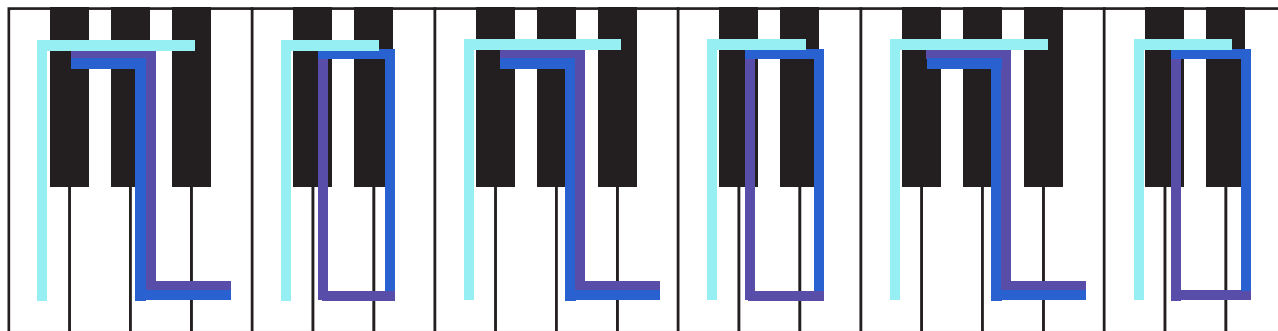


A<sup>b</sup>



E<sup>b</sup>

I figured out which pattern *Moonlight Sonata* by Beethoven started in (A) but noticed that the piece of music moved between three patterns (A, D<sup>b</sup>, and E).



A/D<sup>b</sup>/E

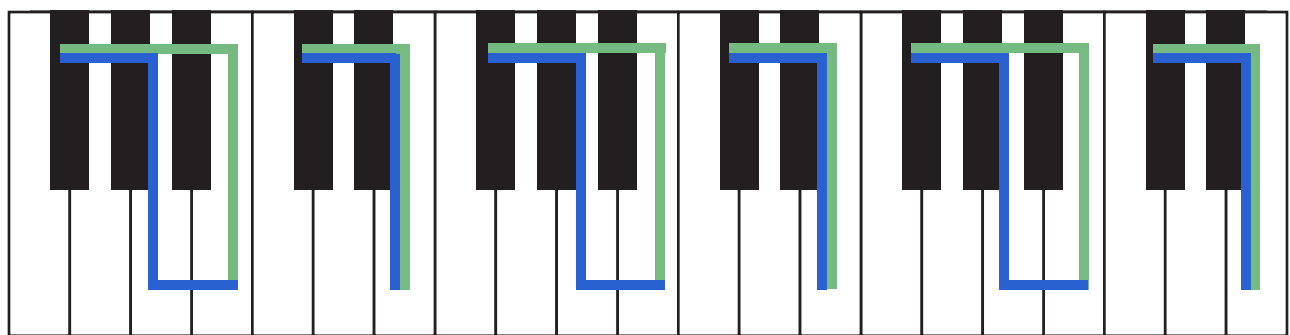
I felt like I was missing something and signed up for a music theory class. The professor was great, but I was struck by what felt like unnecessary complexity. Why use numbers instead of patterns? I remembered “the map isn’t the territory” and that something too technically correct can be too hard to use. Still, the class was helping students, so I didn’t want to disregard theory as useless.

In my view, the class implied that to learn an instrument, you first had to learn how to read music. No, if asked directly, most people don’t think the skill of playing an instrument and the skill of sight-reading are identical, but that was suggested by how music was taught. I doubted I could ever learn sight-reading, though thanks to my own experimentation, I was glad to know it wasn’t required. I wondered how many students gave up on instruments because they thought there was no alternative.

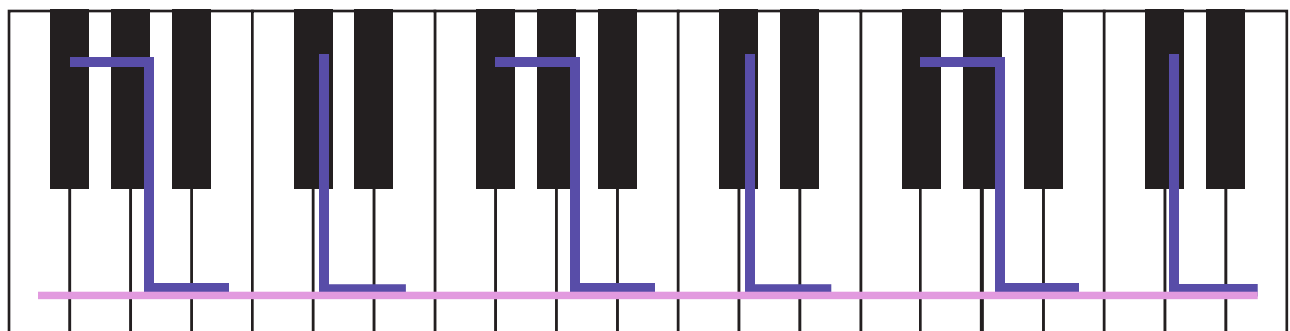
Around this time, I became involved in an arts organization called Eunoia, located on Jefferson Park Avenue, in walking distance from Old Cabell. Eunoia fortunately had a piano, so my days in the storage basement were over. Musicians played at Eunoia regularly, and I saw several jam sessions in person. I wanted to join but didn’t know how.

One day, while friends were practicing, I forced myself to sit down at the piano. I listened to the music and realized that the guitarist was playing in one of the L-patterns. I *located* it, *locked* myself in, reminded myself I couldn’t mess up, stayed on beat, and went for it. To this day, *liberated*, there is hardly anything I enjoy more than jamming on the piano with other instruments.

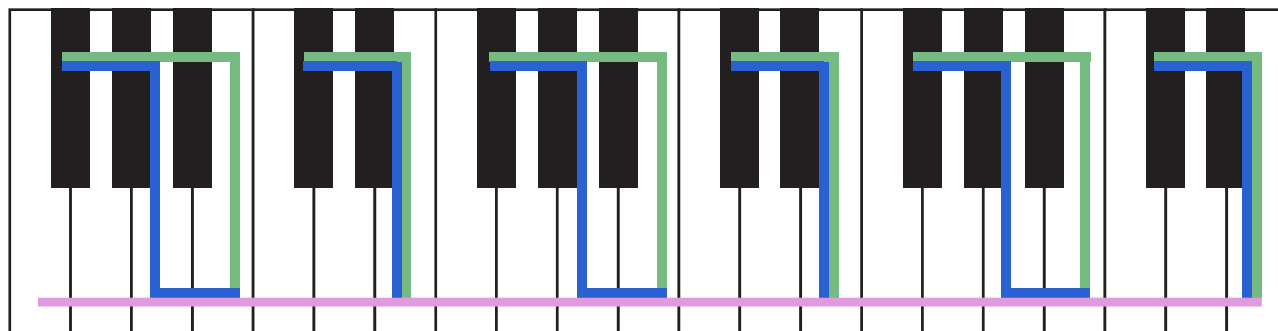
Practicing and creating music at Eunoia, I solved the mystery of *Moonlight Sonata*: I discovered L-pattern transitions. **If my fingers were on piano keys that were in overlapping L-patterns at the same time, I could switch between the patterns instantly without unintended dissonance, like effortlessly shifting between lanes on a highway.** In the opening of *Moonlight Sonata*, Beethoven modulated between the Keys of A, D $\flat$ , and E without conflict because he moved between them from shared notes (like F $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ , and C $\sharp$ ). **I realized that where patterns overlapped, patterns could be switched.**



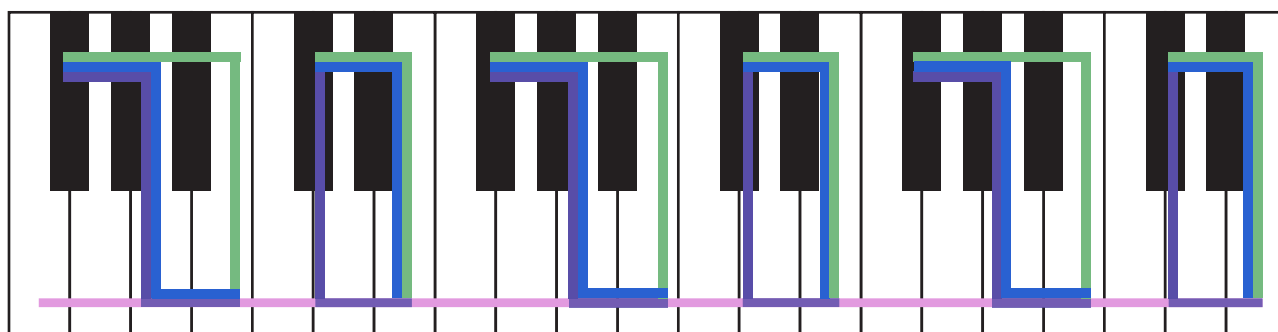
E/B



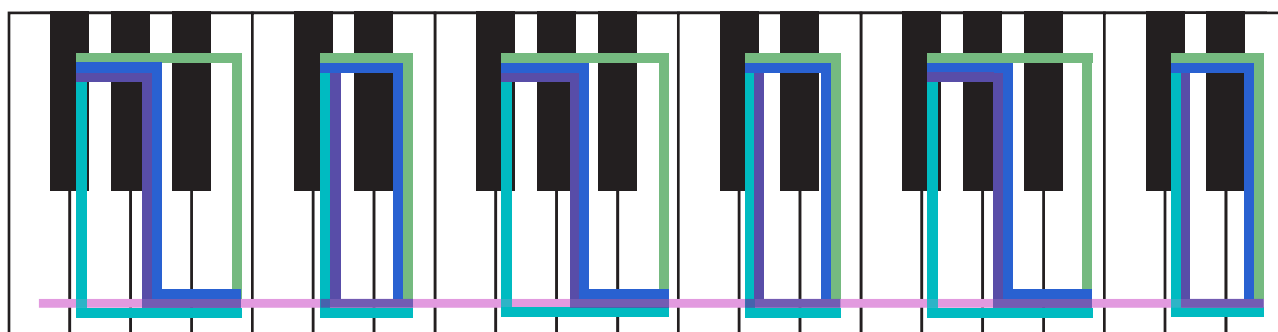
C/A



E/B/C



E/B/  
C/A



E/B/  
C/A/D

I now play the piano all the time. Thanks to the Pattern Method, I've been able to compose my own music, jam with other musicians, and increase my overall quality of life. **It works on all instruments with keyboards like a piano**, such as xylophones, organs, and accordions.

Personally, the most significant benefit of the Pattern Method was music confidence. Until I discovered the method, learning an instrument seemed impossible. I didn't have the numerical mind or time for it, but thanks to *locating* L-patterns that *locked* me into safety, I was finally *liberated* to make the music I wanted to hear.

I hope that your music confidence will skyrocket thanks to the Daniel "L" Garner Pattern Method and that you too will be blessed by the joy of freely making music.

# MAKING MUSIC USING THE PATTERN METHOD

Remember:

1. On all seven “floors” of the piano “house,” stay in the L-pattern you pick.
2. Stay on beat.
3. Don’t stop: if you hit a wrong note, just flow back into the pattern.

There are three basic steps:

## LOCATE

the L you want to play in.

## LOCK

yourself into the L-pattern.

## LIBERATE

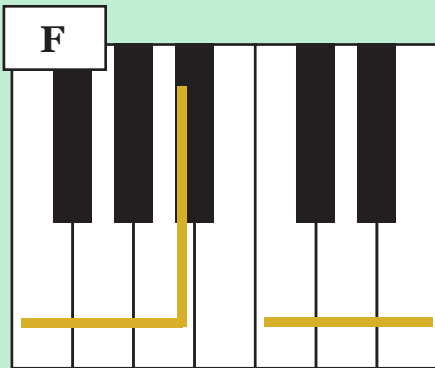
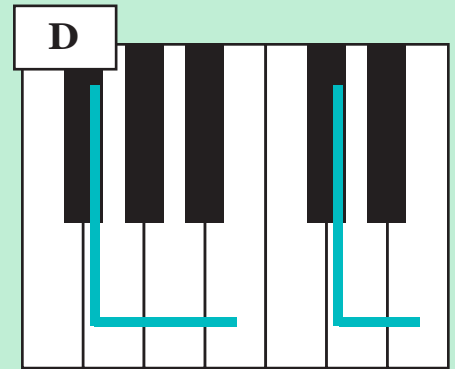
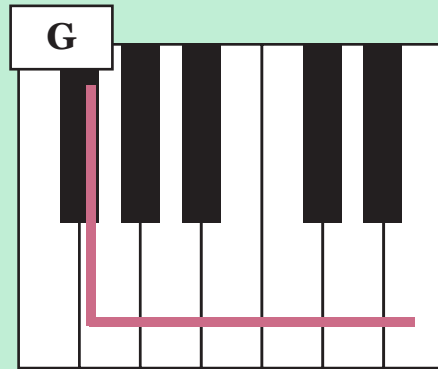
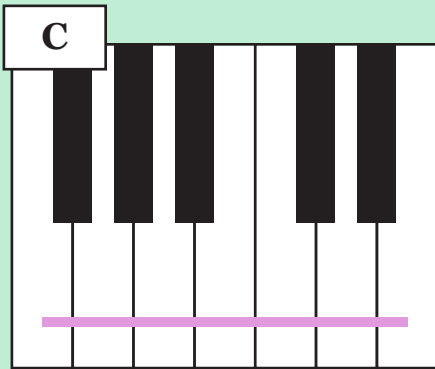
yourself to play within the L-pattern without worrying what you sound like: if you’re in the L-pattern, you’ll sound good.

Everything takes time, and learning the piano, even with the Daniel “L” Garner Pattern Method, is no different. However, memorizing a few patterns is much easier than memorizing music theory. Some points to keep in mind:

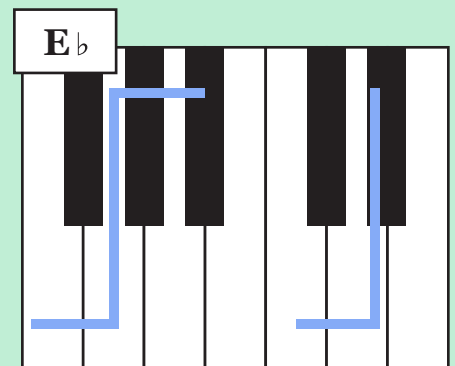
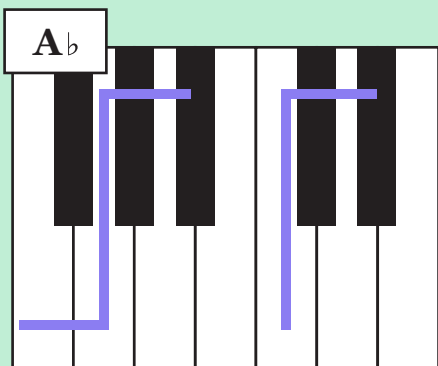
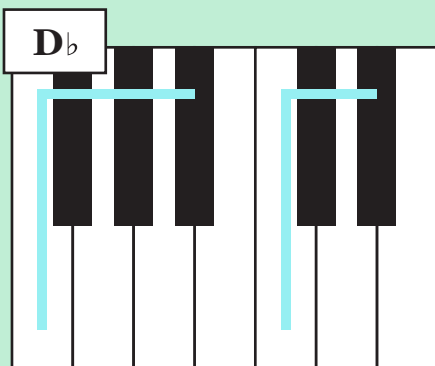
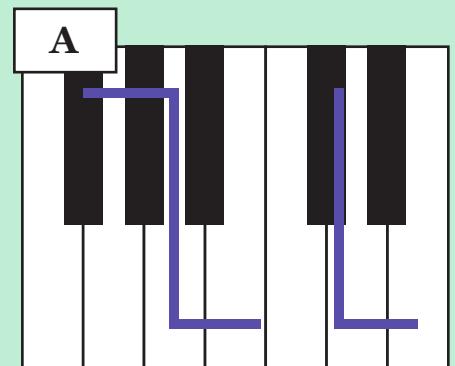
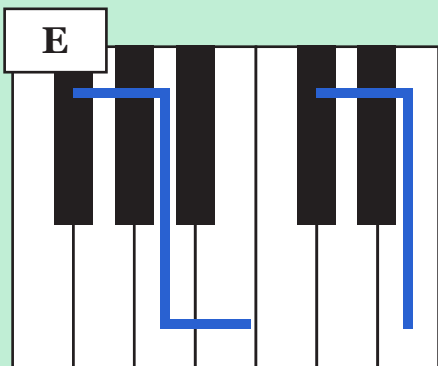
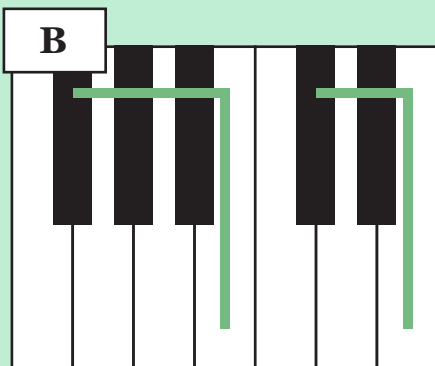
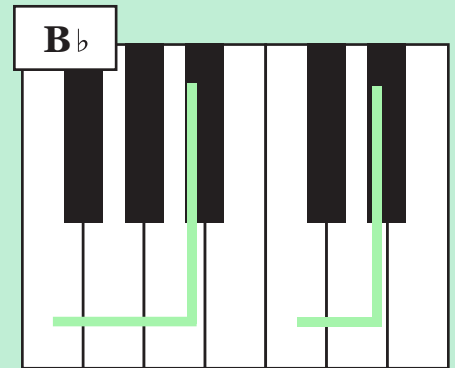
- 1. This method works even if you’ve never studied traditional theory.** Though the terms “chords,” “Keys,” and the like are used in this book, knowing them isn’t necessary.
- 2. A Key or L-pattern could be called a “family” of notes that sound good together.** In the family, you are safe. Later, after you memorize patterns and are ready for transitions, families can blend.
- 3. Chords belong in the same family, but not everyone in the family must talk at the same time.** You make a chord by pressing multiple piano keys in the same L-pattern simultaneously, but you can press the piano keys within a pattern however you want.
- 4. Each L-pattern is a collection, not a movement: you can hit the piano keys within a pattern in whatever order sounds good to you.** If you stay in a pattern, you can explore.

## The Daniel “L” Garner Pattern Method

### Liberating Piano Key Theory

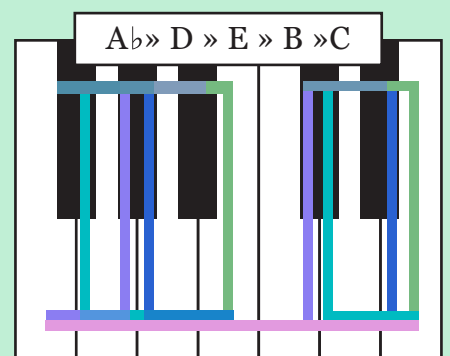
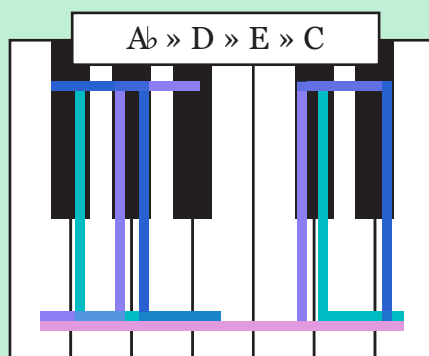
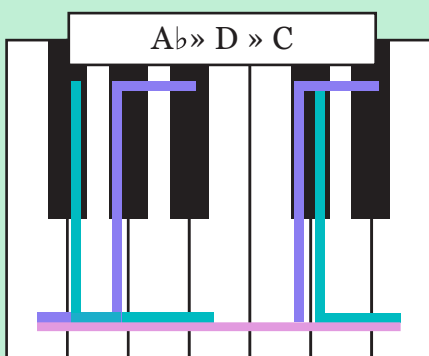
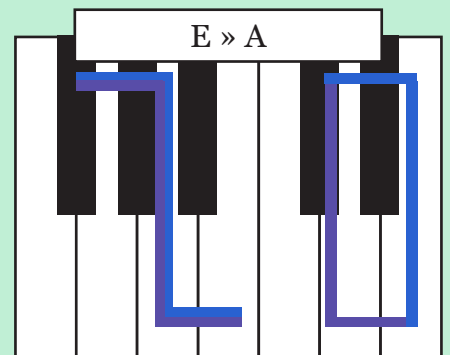
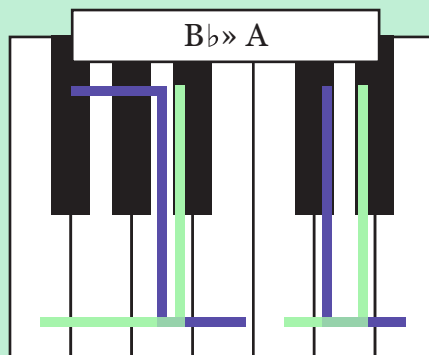
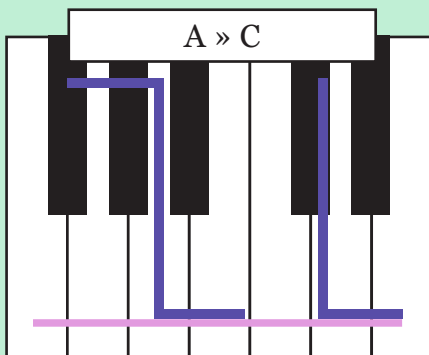
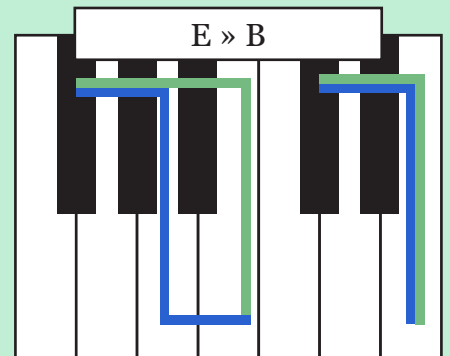
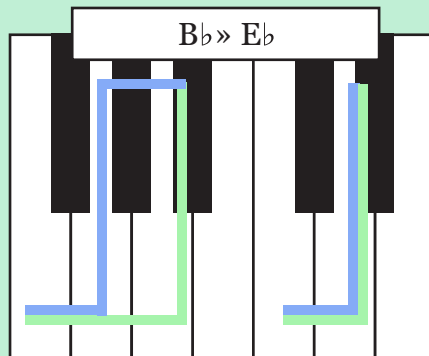
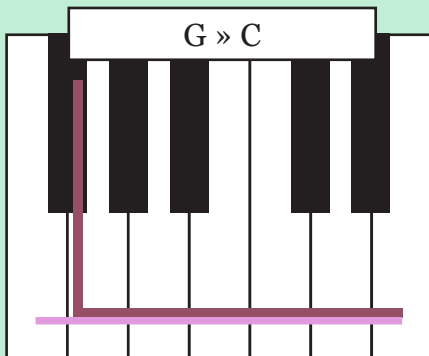
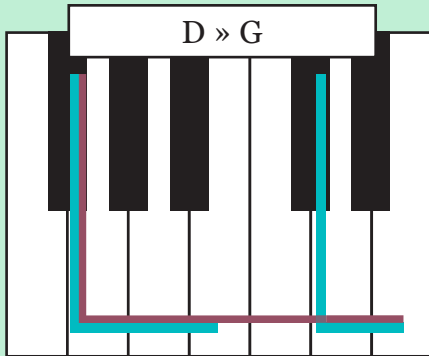


Music is often played in a specific Key. Using the Pattern Method, you will be able to *locate* the correct notes, *lock* yourself into a Key, and be *liberated* to play. Any note within the Key pattern will sound pleasant to the ear. Combinations of 2, 3, or even 4 notes in a Key will make a chord.



# The Daniel "L" Garner Pattern Method Key Transitions

There are many more possible transitions than those shown here.



If you play within a pattern, you won't make any unintended dissonance. If you decide to play in G and play within that (long) "L" on any "floor" of the piano, the notes will all sound great together. G consists of F#, G, A, B, C, D, and E. If you wanted to switch to B, stay within the two upside-down L-shapes. B consists of F#, G#, A#, B, C#, D#, and E.

Starting out, just focus on memorizing and practicing the patterns on page 13. Later, you can advance to transitions and learn how to move between patterns freely and easily.

## Tips

1. Enjoy playing with your dominant hand first. Work your way to then using your non-dominant hand to play a simple "anchor" that holds the beat within your L. It takes practice before you're able to move both hands equally fast. Being right-handed, I like to call my right-hand "the dance hand" while my left is "the metronome hand."
2. You don't mess up until you stop. Don't freeze if you hit a piano key outside a pattern you're practicing: just flow back into the pattern as if nothing happened. Music is about freedom, and if you're afraid to make a mistake, you'll trap yourself outside of music.
3. As you're starting out, hold down the rightmost foot pedal: it will keep notes "in the air" longer as you practice patterns, providing you more time to explore.
4. If you like, purchase some colored stickers for the piano keys to help you see and follow L-patterns.
5. Download, print, or take a picture with your phone of the pattern on the chart you want to practice and place the phone on the piano's music stand to help you learn.
6. Though flats are listed on the charts, for simplification, their enharmonic equivalents are not. Minor Keys are also left off. If these interest you, information about them can be found online.
7. You're encouraged to play piano however is most natural to you, but if you'd like a guide to conventional piano fingering, check out Tim Stein on *Pianist Magazine's* amazing YouTube channel.

## Ideas

1. Ask a friend to play something on a different instrument in a Key (say G) and try to play along. Ask your friend to be the "anchor" and keep repeating a melody so that you have a chance to practice. You can also play with music online once you figure out the Key it's in, and using the Pattern Method, that won't be hard: just keep trying different patterns and narrowing down possibilities.
2. Learn a piece of music you like—say *Moonlight Sonata*—and then improvise your own version of it by staying in the relevant pattern(s). *Moonlight* moves between A, D $\flat$ , and E, so that piece is also good practice for transitions. Technically, *Moonlight* is in the Key of C#-minor.
3. Use the method on an electric keyboard to make beats and experiment with different sounds.
4. Try mixing and improvising musical works together that you find are in the same pattern. *Fallin'* by Alicia Keys can be mixed with the opening of *Gymnopédie No. 3* by Erik Satie, for example.
5. Use the Pattern Method on instruments with a piano-like layout, such as a xylophone or accordion.
6. The videos on [dlgpm.com](http://dlgpm.com) can greatly expand your enjoyment and understanding of the method.
7. For bonus material like the F# pattern, please join our online mailing list.

# IN CLOSING

Everyone learns differently, and what “clicks” for some people won’t “click” for others. I hope that the Daniel “L” Garner Pattern Method will help people learn to play piano when traditional methods didn’t “click,” to expand the horizons of those already musically inclined, and to simultaneously blend creation with practice. The dream is that players are enabled to improvise easily, to play along with other instruments, and to freely sit down and create.

*Locate* the pattern you want to play, *lock* yourself in, and enjoy the *liberation* only music can provide.

Daniel Lewis Garner

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