

## They Laughed When I Sat Down at the Piano -- but When I Started to Play --

Remember the old ad that used to run endlessly in magazines and newspapers:

"They laughed when I sat down at the piano...but when I started to play..." ?

I remember very well the first time I played piano for a group. They DID laugh. It was a disaster. I overheard the leader say "Let's get somebody with some rhythm in there to play."

Ouch!

That hurt. But I told myself right then and there that I would learn to play the piano so well that no one would ever laugh at me again.

Guess what?

Nobody laughs anymore. And they don't laugh at my students, either.

Why?

Because I discovered...

-- The BACKDOOR to piano playing --

What in the world is the "backdoor to piano playing?"

Chords.

Chords are a way in to the world of piano playing without having to go through the front door: years and years of scales, drills, rote practicing, etc. Chords are really a shortcut to understanding and playing music without all the formal training.

Formal training is fine if you have the time and money. But most adults don't want to wait forever before they can play something enjoyable on the piano. I took lessons when I was a kid, but found it boring. Not only that, but all I could do was play the written music exactly as it was written. Without the sheet music in front of me, I didn't have a clue what to do. So I lost interest in piano playing until the incident described above. But shortly after that, I had the opportunity to play in a school combo -- but to do that, I had to learn chords, and learn them fast.

I didn't really know where to turn, so I sent for a \$2. chord chart advertised in Popular Mechanics, and within hours after I got it I was playing the Dm7 chord and the C6 chord in my left hand while I played the tune with my right hand. Talk about excited! Within a few weeks I could play dozens of songs using chords. And I discovered that my sight-reading speed greatly improved at the same time, because now I understood what I was seeing on the printed page!

So I came in through the back door instead, and now I enjoy what I used to hate! Why? Because I understand what I'm doing because now I understand chords and chord progressions. I eventually went on to get advanced degrees in music and literature from Southern Oregon University -- and it was easy because of all I had learned about music theory and harmony due to playing and understanding chords.

Can you do the same?

There's really no reason why you can't if you have the desire. Start looking at sheet music with new eyes: look for notes that make up chords and then analyze those chords. Before long you'll start seeing a pattern of recurring chords; in other words, chord progressions. Do this for a few months while simultaneously learning about chords and how they are formed, and music will take on a new dimension for you. You'll no longer view sheet music as something you are tied to, but rather you'll see it as a map that you can follow to create the sounds and styles you choose.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

## About the Author

Duane Shinn is the author of the popular free 101-week online e-mail newsletter titled "Amazing Secrets Of Exciting Piano Chords & Sizzling Chord Progressions Piano Lessons for Adults" available at <http://www.playpiano.com> with over 84,400 current subscribers.