

Masterclass: Jazz Piano Mastery — May 27, 2026

RH/LH Coordination & Half-Time Swing Feel – Exploring "Alone Together" in F Major

Focus: Mastering the integration of a left-hand half-time swing bass line with right-hand melody and chord voicings played together in a complete arrangement of the classic standard "Alone Together" (Arthur Schwartz / Howard Dietz) in F major (starting on D minor).

We'll review the full written-out arrangement featuring coordinated RH (melody + supportive inner chord voicings) and LH half-time bass, practice locking the hands together with authentic half-time swing feel, then develop and perform a targeted solo over one full chorus of the changes. Emphasis will be placed on rhythmic precision between hands, clear voice leading, dynamic balance, and achieving a confident performance at approximately 120 BPM with a submitted recording. Overview

This masterclass uses "Alone Together" as the vehicle—a harmonically sophisticated standard that begins on the ii chord (D minor) and offers beautiful melodic opportunities with rich changes. The central skill developed is "fitting the RH with the LH": the right hand carries both the melody and integrated chord voicings simultaneously, while the left hand provides a foundational half-time swing bass line that supports the groove without overcrowding the texture.

Lesson Plan Breakdown

Warm-Up and Review:

Play the II-V-I bebop scales in D minor in swinging eighth notes at approximately 120 BPM.
Suggested daily practice: 10–15 minutes

1. The Written-Out Arrangement: Hands-Together Coordination

- Review the complete arrangement of "Alone Together" in F major with integrated RH melody + chord voicings and LH half-time swing bass line.
- Play through the form section by section, concentrating on precise rhythmic alignment between the RH melody/chords and the LH bass pulse.
- Key coordination concepts: How the RH melody and inner voices sit rhythmically over the half-time LH foundation.
- Maintaining consistent half-time swing feel in the LH (relaxed pulse, often slightly behind the beat) while the RH delivers the primary rhythm and melody.

Suggested daily practice: 25–30 minutes

2. Tempo Work, Full Performance & Solo Application

- Bringing it to tempo: Use metronome or backing track to gradually raise the full arrangement to performance speed (~120 BPM). Record practice passes and self-assess coordination, groove, clarity, and balance.
- Practice any transitions or measures where the RH chord/melody movement feels at odds with the LH bass motion.
- Soloing over the changes: Perform one complete chorus of improvisation in the RH while maintaining a simplified or arranged version of the LH half-time bass line (or tasteful light comping). Incorporate targeted phrasing techniques from previous lessons—chord-tone targeting (especially 3rds & 7ths), enclosures, chromatic approaches, and smooth voice leading.

3. Recording goal:

- Submit a musical recording of the complete arrangement followed immediately by one solo chorus. Aim for steady tempo, confident hand coordination, and authentic half-time swing feel throughout.

Suggested recording time: 20 - 30 minutes

- Performance Objective: By the end of this masterclass you should be able to perform the full written arrangement of "Alone Together" at 120 BPM with solid RH/LH coordination and then seamlessly transition into a musical one-chorus solo while preserving the half-time swing foundation. This is a key step toward developing a professional solo piano or trio-ready approach to standards.

Why “Alone Together”?

"Alone Together" is an excellent vehicle for developing the essential skill of coordinating the right and left hands in a half-time swing feel. Its elegant harmonic movement, beginning on the ii chord (D minor), provides a strong yet flexible foundation that allows the left hand to lay down a supportive half-time bass line while the right hand carries both the melody and integrated chord voicings.

Tips for Success

Refer to the provided written arrangement, masterclass recording, and any reference materials for guidance. Focus first on locking the hands together with a solid half-time feel, then gradually bring the performance up to tempo. Once the arrangement feels comfortable, begin experimenting with your own solo ideas over the changes.

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