


# WARMING UP UNDER THE GUN

by Josh Dodes

**Finding time to practice is difficult** for all of us. Whether you're on the road, running from one gig to the next, or dealing with distractions at home, it can be daunting to keep your chops up. Whether at sound check or the beginning of a session, it's always important for me to get my hands and ears moving in as little time as

possible, and often, only a few minutes are available. That's why I've come up with these exercises for myself, each of which focuses on a different element of my playing, depending on what kind of gig it is. Try the ones I've outlined here, then make up your own to incorporate your favorite licks and runs in your daily warm-up routine. 

New York City keyboardist Josh Dodes has toured and recorded with Marc Cohn, Toby Lightman (shown), and Julian Velard, as well as with his own Josh Dodes Band, featured on VH1's "Bands on the Run." He currently writes for [thisisyourson.net](http://thisisyourson.net), a custom songwriting service he co-founded in 2005. Hear Josh play these lessons at [keyboardmag.com/lessons](http://keyboardmag.com/lessons). Jan Regen



**Pedal points.** I often end up playing a pedal point on one note with accented chords around it. You can do this in any key, with different accent chords. The important thing is to keep the single-note line as fluid as possible across both hands, even with the chords moving around it.



**Blues licks.** I typically start this exercise in *F*, then move down a half-step at a time to *C*, then start again at *F* and take it up by half-steps to *C*. Different licks feel better in different keys, so I'll often do variations on these runs as I move around the keyboard.



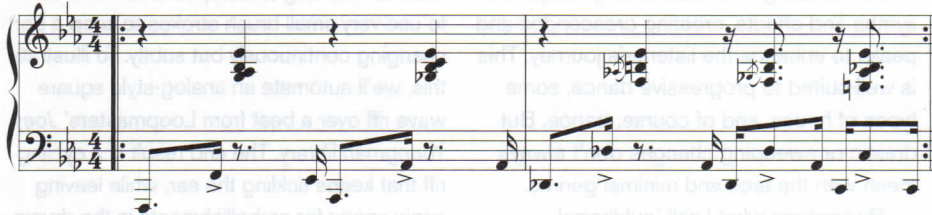
**Left hand arpeggios.** The idea here is to get a fluid, expressive left hand arpeggio moving under an ostinato pattern in the right hand. I'll usually go up a half-step at a time, periodically altering the right hand phrase in the fourth bar.





**Pop-ups.** These kinds of percussive pop-ups are particularly good on funkier songs if you're playing solo. They bring a little bit of slap bass feel to your left hand. You can play this exercise in any key; the important thing is for the right hand part to feel like it's being "propelled" by your left thumb.

Shuffle



**Two-handed percussion.** This is based on my song "Shakespeare Monkey," and is a good way to focus on syncopation and rhythmic precision at fast tempos. I'll usually loop this, moving up a half-step every four bars.



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