



Pressure

Billy Joel

♪ Niveau 55/100 (Ambitieux)

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PRESSURE

Words and Music by Billy Joel

From the album *The Nylon Curtain*, released in 1982.

In "Pressure," Billy Joel writes of a situation we've probably all been in; we feel trapped by an avalanche of pressure coming at us from all sides—work, family, school, and relationships. The metallic synthesizer, chattering frantically in a constant pattern of eighth notes, captures this feeling perfectly.

Figure 13 – Intro/Verse/Chorus

The intro and chorus make prominent use of diminished and diminished 7th chords. Diminished triads and diminished 7th chords have been a standard device used to evoke tension since the days that pianists accompanied silent movies. The verse features another staple of the Billy Joel piano style—rolling octaves in an eighth-note rhythm in the left hand. This propels the music forward, while syncopated 3rds and 6ths in the right hand add rhythmic and harmonic interest.

20	Full Band
21	Slow Demos
	Piano meas. 6-9, 14-17
	Synth meas. 6-9

Fig. 13

Intro
Moderately bright ♩ = 148

1 Piano Gsus2 Dsus4

8vb loco

Synth (Brassy patch)

1. C/D D 2. C/D D

6 Dm E°/D C#7°/D Dm B°/D Gm/D A7/D Dm

sim. sim.

f

The musical score for 'Pressure' is presented in 4/4 time with a tempo of 148. It features three staves: Piano (treble and bass clefs), Synth (treble clef), and Chords. The piano part begins with a piano introduction (measures 1-5) marked 'Moderately bright' and 'mp'. The bass line consists of rolling octaves in eighth notes. The synth part enters in measure 6 with a 'Brassy patch' and plays a constant eighth-note pattern. The main piano part (measures 6-17) features a series of chords: Dm, E°/D, C#7°/D, Dm, B°/D, Gm/D, A7/D, and Dm. The piano part includes dynamics like 'f' and 'sim.' (simulacrum). The synth part includes dynamics like 'mf' and 'f'. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending at measure 5 and the second system starting at measure 6.