

PART II: CHAPTER 7B

Diatonic Steps and Tonic Triad in the Melodic Minor Scale; Simple Meters, Eighth and Dotted Quarter Notes

Improvisation Activities

See Appendix D for details

Same or Different—Melodic Minor

- **Process:**
 - Basic: Divide class into teams of 5-8. The instructor or Student A sings a known tonal pattern (neutral syllable or tonal syllables); Student B echoes the pattern exactly or improvises a similar but different pattern that uses the elements from Part II, Chapter 7.7. The class or individuals indicate whether the patterns were the same or different.

Same or Different Tonal Patterns (Melodic Minor Scale)

The image shows two staves of musical notation in the key of D major (one sharp). The first staff contains patterns A, B, C, and D. Pattern A is a six-note melodic minor scale: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4. Pattern B is identical to A. Pattern C is a different six-note pattern: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4. Pattern D is identical to A. The second staff contains patterns E, F, G, and H. Pattern E is identical to A. Pattern F is a different six-note pattern: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4. Pattern G is identical to A. Pattern H is a different six-note pattern: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4. The words 'Different' and 'Same' are written below the respective patterns.

- Variation I: One team improvises on a neutral syllable while the other team(s) writes (dictates) each pattern.
- Variation II: Individually practice *Same or Different* using the MP3 tonal files found in Part II, Chapter 7.7, located on the Oxford Learning Link.

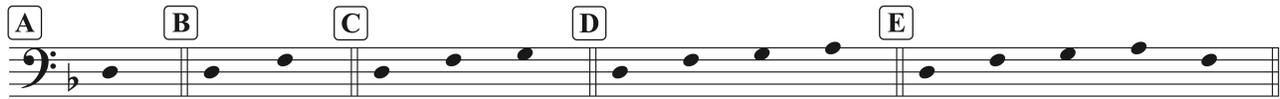
- **Parameters:**
 - Tonal patterns to be selected from Part II, Chapter 7.7.
 - The instructor designates the tonality (major, minor, modal), tonal functions (minor pentachord, harmonic minor scale, etc.), chord tones (tonic, dominant, etc.) and non-chord tones (passing tones, upper and lower neighbor tones, etc.), length of the tonal pattern (3-6 pitches), then reviews known tonal patterns and establishes the tonality and tempo (one pitch per pulse).

This improvisation activity assesses comprehension of aural/oral skills.

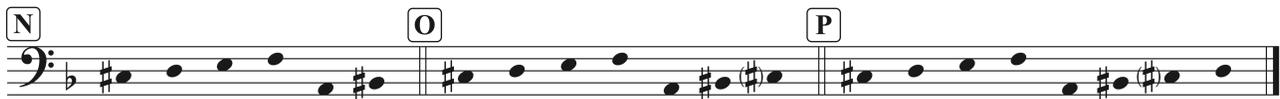
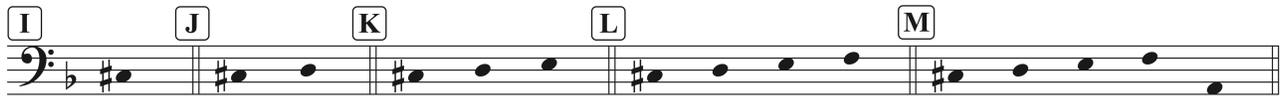
Add A Pitch—Melodic Minor

- **Process:**
 - Divide class into teams of 5-8. Using tonal syllables/neutral syllable, and patterns from Part II, Chapter 7.3, student A sings the tonic, third or fifth of the tonic chord (reference tones); Student B echoes the pitch and adds a different pitch in the melodic minor scale; Student C echoes the pitches sung by Student A and B and adds a different pitch in the harmonic minor scale; Student D echoes the pitches by Student A, B and C and adds a different pitch in the minor pentachord; etc.
 - The instructor or team leader guides students to find an appropriate place to conclude the tonal line on a progressive cadence or a terminal cadence. The student beginning a new phrase selects a reference tone to begin the phrase; etc.

Add A Pitch (Melodic Minor Scale)



Phrase 1, Progressive Cadence



Phrase 2, Terminal Cadence

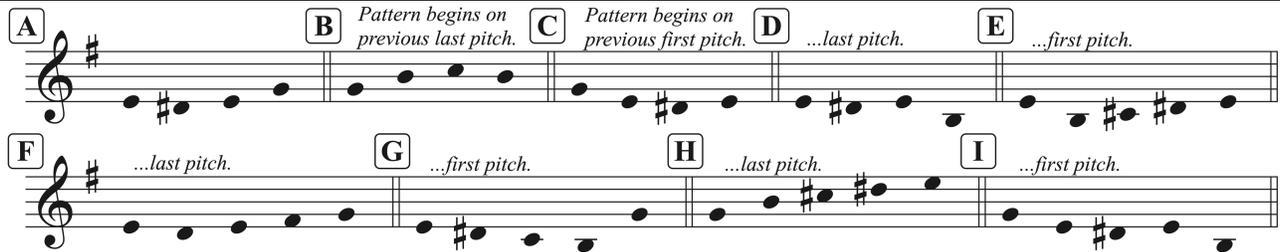
- Variation I: One team improvises on a neutral syllable using the process listed above while the other team(s) writes the patterns (dictates) the patterns.
- Variation II: Integrate accents, articulations and/or dynamic into the rhythm patterns.
- **Parameters:**
 - Tonal patterns to be selected from Part II, Chapter 7.7.
 - The instructor designates the tonality (major, minor, modal), tonal functions (pentachord, major/minor scale, etc.), chord tones (tonic, dominant, etc.) and non-chord tones (passing tones, upper and lower neighbor tones, etc.), then reviews known tonal patterns and establishes the tonality and tempo (one pitch per pulse).

This activity also works musical memory!

Call and Response—Melodic Minor

- **Process:**
 - Basic: Divide class into teams of 5-8. The instructor or Student A musically sings a tonal pattern on a neutral syllable or tonal syllables from Part II, Chapter 7.7. Student B (a) repeats the pattern as closely as possible, (b) makes only one change in the pattern, or (c) repeats the pattern in retrograde (reverse); Students C and D, etc. engage in the same process.
 - Variation I: Each new call begins with either the first pitch or the last pitch of the previous call as designated by the instructor or team leader.

Call and Response: Variation I



Call and Response, cont.

- Variation II: Using the pitches in the melodic minor scale, incorporate at least one skip (m3, M3, P4, P5) from the tonic triad in either direction (↑ ↓) and a step (M2 or A2). Student B must start on the last pitch sung by Student A, Student C must start on the last pitch sung by Student B, etc.
- Variation III: Listen to each tonal pattern. After each pattern improvise a different pattern incorporating the indicated parameters in the melodic minor scale.
 - Passing tone + Interval (M3, m3, P5, P4) in Tonic Triad.
 - Upper Neighbor Tone + Interval (M3, m3, P5, P4) in Tonic Triad.
 - Lower Neighbor Tone + Interval (M3, m3, P5, P4) in Tonic Triad.
 - Passing Tone + Neighbor Tone + Interval (M3, m3, P5, P4) in Tonic Triad.
- Variation IV: Tonal: Each new call begins with either the first pitch or the last pitch of the previous call as designated by the instructor or team leader.
- Variation V: One team improvises on a neutral syllable using the basic process while the other team(s) writes (dictates) the patterns.¹
- Variation VI: One team improvises on a neutral syllable or tonal syllables while the other team(s) labels the non-harmonic chord tones (passing tone, upper/lower neighbor) and/or tonic/dominant chord tones using the cards in PII, Improvisation, Chapter 1 or a white board/ipad.
- Variation VII: Individually practice *Call and Response* alternating the three options listed in the basic process, using the MP3 tonal files found in Part II, Chapter 7.3, located on the Oxford Learning Link.
- **Parameters:**
 - Tonal patterns to be selected from Part II, Chapter 7.7. The instructor designates the tonality (major, minor, modal), tonal functions (major/minor pentachord, major/minor scale, etc.), chord tones (tonic, dominant, etc.) and non-chord tones (passing tones, upper and lower neighbor tones, etc.), length of patterns (3-6 pitches), then reviews known tonal patterns and establishes the tonality and tempo (one pitch per pulse).
 - Remember to perform the patterns (a) with inflective expression (foundation of phrasing) and (b) while moving to meter, macro beat, or micro beat (facilitates understanding of rhythm).²

The goal is to develop spontaneous, rapid, automatic reaction to what is heard.

Pass the Pattern—Melodic Minor

- **Process:**
 Basic: Divide class into teams of 5-8 individuals. Using the elements from Part II, Chapter 7.3, the instructor or Student A sings a known tonal pattern (neutral syllable or tonal syllables). Student B improvises a similar but different tonal pattern that MUST start with the **last** pitch of the pattern chanted by Student A. Student C improvises a similar but different tonal pattern that MUST start with the **last** pitch sung by Student B.

¹ Dimhoff. *Improvisation games*.

² Edwin Gordon, *Basics of Vocal and Instrumental Harmonic Improvisation* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2013), 11–12; Azzara and Grunow, iv–v. See page 12 for definition of macro and micro beat.

Pass The Pattern, cont.

- Variation I: Each new statement (a) begins with either the first pitch or the last pitch of the previous statement or (b) alternates the first and last pitch of the previous statement.
- Variation II: One team improvises on a neutral syllable while the other team(s) writes (dictates) each pattern.
- Variation III: Using the pitches in the melodic minor scale, the statement (5-6 pitches) and response must incorporate (a) an upper neighbor or lower neighbor tone, (b) an ascending or descending interval (m3, M3, P5) in tonic triad (root position) and (c) a variety of ascending and descending steps (M2, m2). The response starts on either the last pitch or the first pitch of the statement as designated above.
- Variation IV: Using only the pitches in the minor tonic triad, the statement (4-6 pitches) and response must incorporate the pitches found in the first inversion (me—so—do^l or do—mi—la^l). The response starts on either the last or the first pitch of the statement as designated above. Incorporate the me—do^l (do minor) or do—la^l (la minor) ascending and descending intervals when possible.
- Variation V: Using only the pitches in the minor tonic triad, the statement (4-6 pitches) and response must incorporate the pitches found in the second inversion (so_l—do—me or mi_l—la—do). Start on either the last pitch or the first pitch of the statement as instructed. Incorporate the so_l—me (do minor) or mi_l—do (la minor) ascending and descending intervals when possible.
- Variation VI: Using the pitches in the harmonic minor scale, the statement (5-6 pitches) and response incorporate an (a) upper or lower neighbor tone, (b) a passing tone, (c) an ascending/descending interval in the tonic triad with either a so_l—do^l (do minor) or mi_l—la^l (la minor) and (d) a variety of ascending and descending steps (M2, m2). The response may start on either the last or the first pitch of the statement as designated.
- Variation VII: Individually practice *Pass the Pattern* using the MP3 tonal files found in Part II, Chapter 7.7, located on the Oxford Learning Link.

Remember to improvise with inflective expression (foundation of phrasing).

• **Parameters:**

- Tonal patterns to be selected from Part II, Chapter 7.7; known elements include: harmonic minor scale, seconds, and tonic triad intervals in do minor (do^l and so_l) or la minor (la^l and mi_l).
- The instructor or team leader sets the tempo (one pitch per pulse) and establishes tonality.

Pass the Pattern—Melodic Improvisation—Melodic Minor

- Integrate rhythms in Simple Meter from Part I, Chapters 1- 4 into the tonal parameters for *Pass The Pattern*.
 - Practice echoing the melodic patterns, B1-B24 found in Part II, Chapter 7.7.
 - The instructor or team leader designates (a) basic tonal or a tonal variation, (b) the meter, (c) number of measures, (d) physical motion (metric motion, heel march, and/or down-up motion with hands), (e) sets the tempo and (f) establishes tonality.

The musical notation is presented in three staves, each in bass clef and 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The first staff contains measures A, B, C, and D. The second staff contains measures E, F, G, and H. The third staff contains measures I, J, K, and L. Each measure is separated by a double bar line, and the entire piece concludes with a final double bar line.

Benefits of Improvisation

Develops:

- Readiness for learning to read and write;
- Rapid, automatic reaction to what is heard;
- Vocabulary;
- Self-efficacy (efficiency and ability) with the materials;

Demonstrates:

- Comprehension of higher-order skills;
- Musical independence;
- Transfer of learning;

Promotes:

- Higher-order abilities, problem solving, decision making and choice;
- Sensory and perceptual encoding, memory storage and recall; motor control, performance monitoring;
- Creativity and musical expression;
- Musical collaboration and social interaction.