

PART II: CHAPTER 2

Diatonic Steps and Tonic Triad in the Major Scale; Simple Meters, Undivided Beat

Improvisation Activities

See Appendix D for details

Same or Different—Major

- **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 2.3 and 2.7. The class or individuals indicate whether the patterns were the same or different.

Same or Different Tonal Patterns (Major Scale)

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains patterns A, B, C, and D. Pattern A is a four-note ascending scale (G-A-B-C). Pattern B is a four-note ascending scale (G-A-B-C). Pattern C is a four-note ascending scale (G-A-B-C). Pattern D is a four-note ascending scale (G-A-B-C). The word "Different" is written between B and C, and between D and the end of the staff. The second staff contains patterns E, F, G, and H. Pattern E is a four-note ascending scale (G-A-B-C). Pattern F is a four-note ascending scale (G-A-B-C). Pattern G is a four-note ascending scale (G-A-B-C). Pattern H is a four-note ascending scale (G-A-B-C). The word "Same" is written between F and G, and between H and the end of the staff.

- 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 2, located on the Oxford Learning Link.

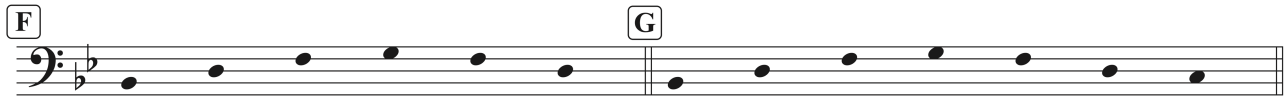
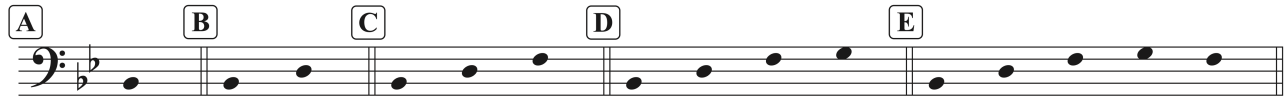
- **Parameters:**
 - Tonal patterns to be selected from Part II, Chapter 2.3 and 2.7.
 - The instructor designates the tonality (major, minor, modal), tonal functions (minor pentachord, harmonic minor scale, etc.), chord tones (tonic, dominant, etc.) and non-chord tones (passing tones, upper and lower 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.

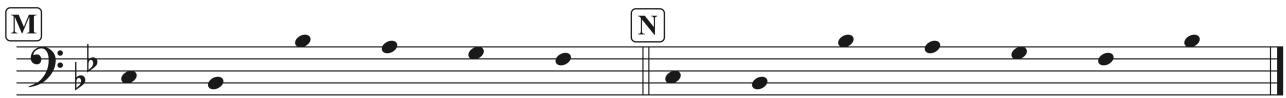
Add A Pitch—Major

- **Process:**
 - Divide class into teams of 5-8. Using tonal syllables/neutral syllable, and patterns from Part II, Chapter 2.3 and/or 2.7, 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 major scale; Student C echoes the pitches sung by Student A and B and adds a different pitch in the major scale; Student D echoes the pitches by Student A, B and C and adds a different pitch in the major 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 (Major Scale)



Phrase 1, Progressive Cadence



Phrase 2, Terminal Cadence

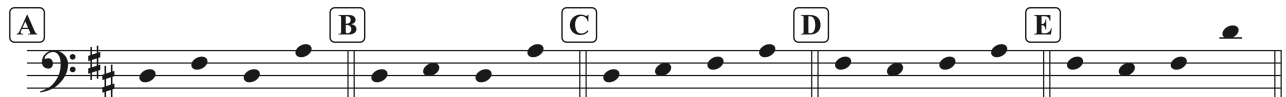
- Variation I: One team improvises on a neutral syllable using the process listed above while the other team(s) writes the patterns (dictates) the patterns.
- Variation II: Integrate accents, articulations and/or dynamic into the rhythm patterns.
- **Parameters:**
 - Tonal patterns to be selected from Part II, Chapter 2.3 and 2.7.
 - 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—Major

- **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 2.3 and/or 2.7. 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.

Tonal Patterns with One Change



Tonal Patterns in Retrograde

Tonal Variation I

Parameter: Using the pitches in the major scale, incorporate at least one skip (M3, m3, P4, P5) from the tonic triad in either direction (↑ ↓) and a step (M2). Student B must start on the last pitch sung by Student A, Student C must start on the last pitch sung by Student B, Student D must start on the last pitch sung by Student C, etc.

Tonal Variation II

Listen to each tonal pattern.

After each pattern improvise a different pattern incorporating the indicated parameters in the major scale.

1. Passing tone + Interval (M3, m3, P5, P4) in Tonic Triad Chord.

Call

Response

2. Upper Neighbor Tone + Interval (M3, m3, P5, P4) in Tonic Triad Chord.

Call

Response

3. Lower Neighbor Tone + Interval (M3, m3, P5, P4) in Tonic Triad Chord.

Call

Response

4. Passing Tone + Neighbor Tone + Interval (M3, m3, P5, P4) in Tonic Triad Chord.

Call

Response

- Variation III: The instructor/Student A sings a call from Part II, Chapter 2.3 and 2.7; the entire class reproduces the same pattern as closely as possible (including accents, articulation and/or dynamics.) or repeats the pattern in retrograde (reverse). The instructor or a different team member sings a new call and the class reproduces the same pattern or the pattern in retrograde.

Call and Response, cont.

- 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 2, located on the Oxford Learning Link.
- **Parameters:**
 - Tonal patterns to be selected from Part II, Chapter 2.3 and 2.7. 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.

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.

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.