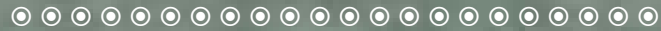


Tutorial 3E: Melodic Patterns



Welcome! In this tutorial you'll learn how to:

1. Understand *SHAPE* & melodic patterns
2. Use sequences to build patterns
3. Develop an approach to creating patterns

Enjoy the learning, and see you in the clouds ...

Other Level 3 Tutorials

- 3A: More Melodic Color
- 3B: Melodic Connections
- 3F: More About Patterns
- 3H: Rhythmic Development
- 3K: Dominant Alterations
- 3L: Learning Standard Tunes

- ▶ Everyone uses melodic patterns, but not many players can create and adapt patterns as they go. Learning what makes a good pattern good is a start – then learn to develop the patterns you create for some solo material.

Part 1 – SHAPE & Melodic Patterns

A) What is a pattern?

*A melodic pattern is a motif that is sequenced (repeated higher or lower) several times in a row, generally using the same rhythms. Below is a typical pattern of a motif plus three sequences:

 Motif sequence sequence sequence



*Many books of patterns are available; most of them stress 8th-note patterns. But you can also create patterns with other rhythms.

B) What are the pros and cons of patterns?

*Melodic patterns are powerful improvisation tools. While they can add unity and excitement to a solo, unfortunately they can also dominate a solo so the vital elements of development and expression disappear.

*Patterns are appealing because they have a sense of repetition (the basic contour and rhythm of a motif are

repeated) plus a sense of variety (each repetition begins on a new pitch).

*Some improvisers rely too much on patterns that sound good by themselves but don't really help to develop a solo. You can memorize patterns, but choosing the right pattern at the right time is harder. Playing patterns at the wrong time leads to stiff, technical solos with more notes than feeling.


*Another problem stems from practicing a pattern in all keys. While this is a good and often necessary thing, remember that you should seldom, if ever, *play a pattern in a solo* with 7 sequences to take you through each step of the scale, or worse, 11 sequences to take you through all 12 keys. Even without going to those extremes, the nature of practicing patterns in all keys (a good thing) can give you the mindset of overplaying patterns.

*My own experience bears this out. When I was first learning to improvise, I memorized as many jazz patterns as I could, thinking that they would instantly work in my solos. Instead, I experienced a revolving door of "in comes a pattern, out it goes, in comes the next one ..." – with little feeling that I was truly creating my own ideas.

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*I had it backwards – I expected the patterns to generate the ideas, but what I really needed was *ideas that generated patterns*. And that ties in nicely to the whole concept of SHAPE and development ...

C) How do SHAPE & development relate to patterns?

- Use SHAPE to see, hear and play interesting motifs
- Develop those motifs into patterns (using the techniques in this Tutorial and the next)
- When an idea you are playing reminds you of a pattern you've learned or memorized, use that pattern briefly then go on with another idea.
- Start a pattern and develop it as you go so it transforms into other ideas. 

*Using this approach, patterns become a more vital and logical part of your solo, not just filler material.

Part 2 – Using Sequences

A) What is a sequence?

A *sequence* is the foundation of a pattern. A sequence is the repetition of a motif that starts on different pitch. A sequence changes the pitches but not the rhythm of the motif. The basic sequences are:


- Diatonic
- Transposing
- Semi-sequences

B) How do diatonic sequences work?

*In a *diatonic* sequence, the sequence notes stay in the original key; no accidentals are added or changed. Some sequence intervals may vary by a half-step from those in the motif.

*The first example below has ascending diatonic sequences (the first note of each sequence descends compared to the first note of the motif). The second example has descending diatonic sequences.

0 ----- 1 ===== 2 ===== 3 =====



(Part 2 – Using Sequences)

0 ----- 1===== 2===== 3=====



0 ----- 1===== 2===== 3=====



- **TRY IT – Basic:** Play a simple motif of 4 eighth-notes in C Major; create 3 diatonic sequences from it. **Medium:** Use F Minor. **Challenge:** Use a motif of 8 eighth-notes in any other key.

B) How do transposed sequences work?

In a transposed sequence, all intervals in the sequence are exactly the same as in the motif. This can change or adds accidentals, and the result may not exactly match the original key. Transposing patterns are usually more dissonant than diatonic patterns, but they work well; they're like mirror images of the motif.

The first motif below has 3 transposed sequences; the starting notes go up by whole-steps. The second has 3 transposed sequences going down chromatically.

C Ma ----- D Ma ===== E Ma ===== F# Ma =====



E m ----- E b m ===== D m ===== C# m =====

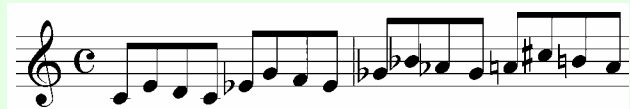


*Below are some examples of transposing sequences whose first notes move up or down by thirds or fourths.

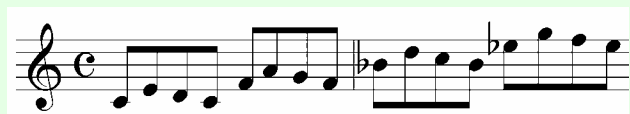


Major 3rd pattern (starting notes are C E Ab C)

(Part 2 – Using Sequences)



Minor 3rd pattern (starting notes are C Eb Gb A)

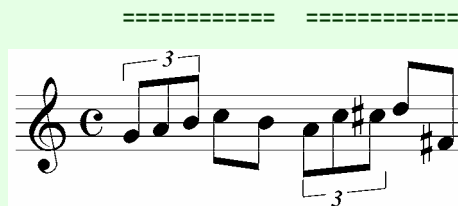
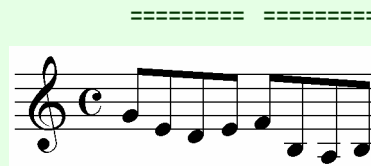


Fourth pattern (starting notes are C F Bb Eb)

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Play a four-note motif in C Major; create a transposing pattern by adding three chromatic sequences. **Medium:** Use whole-step sequences. **Challenge:** Use minor-third or major-third sequences.

C) How do semi-sequences work?

*In a semi-sequence, the contour of the sequence is like the motif, except one or more intervals are larger or smaller. Below are some motifs and semi-sequences. Using the same contour and rhythm lends unity.



- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Play a 4-note motif in C Major; create a pattern by adding a semi-sequence. **Medium:** Add two semi-sequences; **Challenge:** Add 3 semi-sequences.

C) What are linked sequences?

*They smoothly link a sequence to the previous motif or sequence. This means that the end of the motif and the start of the sequence must be a half-step or whole-step apart.

(Part 2 – Using Sequences)

*Linked sequences create transposed patterns that go up or down in range somewhat faster. Linking to a sequence is more interesting if there's a wider distance between the first and last notes of the motif.

*There are four basic link connections between sequences:

- A half-step down
- A whole-step down
- A half-step up
- A whole-step up



Link, half-step up



Link, half-step down



Link, whole-step up



Link, whole-step down

*You can also use a reverse contour in alternating sequences so the pattern doesn't climb or descend so quickly.



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- **TRY IT – Basic:** Play an ascending motif of four 8th-notes; use a linked sequence (whole-step). **Medium:** Use a descending motif with half-step links. **Challenge:** Link three sequences to a motif; reverse the contour at least once.

Part 3 – Creating Patterns

- A) How can I create my own patterns?

*Creating your own patterns lets you go past typical “book” patterns. Here are the basic steps to follow in creating your own patterns:

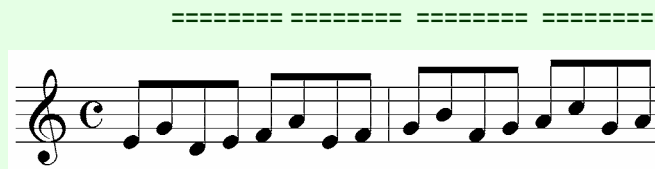
- 1 Choose a flexible scale to use, such as C Major.
- 2 In the flexible scale, play a motif of four 8th-notes.



Example E - Sample motif for a pattern

*You can use skips and steps in the motif. Start simple, such as one skip of a third.

- 3 Add sequences to the motif. Each new sequence repeats the motif starting on a different scale tone, such as the next one above or below. For example:



*You can use this basic process to create many new patterns. Usually you add from one to three sequences to a motif, but you can add more if the pattern is interesting enough.


*As you learn more about patterns, you can create more varied and complex patterns.

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Create a motif of four 8th-notes with one skip of a third; sequence it 3 times to create a pattern. **Medium:** Use two skips of a third. **Challenge:** Skip a 4th, 5th, or more.

That's all for Tutorial 3E!

Next is the Quiz –to get started, go to the next page.

QUIZ - 3E: Melodic Patterns

Click on the letter for the best answer for each question. You'll hear a C Major arpeggio if you're right. If you miss 2 or less, you pass the Tutorial!
Or, click  Back to review the Tutorial before taking the Quiz.

- 1) A linked sequence can connect by
 - A) a half-step up
 - B) a whole-step down
 - C) a whole-step down
 - D) all of these
- 2) Which is not a type of sequence?
 - A) diatonic
 - B) flexible
 - C) semi
 - D) transposed
- 3) In a motif that is 1 2 3 5 in D Major, a linked sequence a half-step down would start on:
 - A) Db
 - B) Eb
 - C) Ab
 - D) F#
- 4) To create your own patterns, start with
 - A) sequences
 - B) flexible scales
 - C) links
 - D) semi-sequences
- 5) A semi-sequence changes one or more
 - A) intervals
 - B) links
 - C) transpositions
 - D) keys
- 6) With a motif of 3 1 2 1 in Eb Major, a transposed sequence up a half-step would start on
 - A) G
 - B) G#
 - C) E
 - D) F
- 7) With a motif of 3 1 2 1 in C Major, a diatonic sequence up a step would start on
 - A) F#
 - B) D
 - C) Db
 - D) F
- 8) Linked sequences
 - A) move up faster than diatonic ones
 - B) move down faster than diatonic ones
 - C) both of these
 - D) none of these



View of Mt. Hood, Oregon

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