

Teaching Improvisation in the Orchestra



Why Improvisation?

- Personal Expression
- Spontaneous Composition
- Practical Music Theory
- Amp Up your Concerts
- Enrichment for Advanced Students



Call & Response

"I play, you play it back"

With drum track

With backup track

Start with ONE note

A-Minor Pentatonic:

A-C-D-E-G-A



Call & Response

The TEACHER must lead

Make a safe space

Compare improvisation
to conversation



"Next-Step" Options?



Patterns

A-Minor Pentatonic Patterns

25 Basic Scale Pattern 1 Pattern 2 Pattern 3 Pattern 4 Pattern 5

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Bass

The image displays a musical score for the A-Minor Pentatonic scale and its various patterns. The score is organized into six columns: 'Basic Scale', 'Pattern 1', 'Pattern 2', 'Pattern 3', 'Pattern 4', and 'Pattern 5'. Each column contains four staves, labeled on the left as 'Vln.' (Violin), 'Vla.' (Viola), 'Vc.' (Violoncello), and 'Bass'. The 'Basic Scale' column begins with a measure number '25' and a treble clef for the Violin part. The subsequent columns show different rhythmic and melodic variations of the A-Minor Pentatonic scale across the four instruments. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and bar lines to delineate the patterns.



Group Improv Patterns

Basic Rock A Basic Rock B Basic Rock C

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

Bass



Group Improv Patterns

7 Adv. Rock A Adv. Rock B Adv. Rock C

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Bass



Trade 2's

People take turns playing
2 measures at a time.

Teacher – Student

Student – Student

Orchestra – Student



Improvise in Concerts

Method Book Tunes

Repertoire



Concert Options

- Add repeat markings
- Change orch. parts to pizz.
- Use electric instruments
- Create electric instruments using a tuner pickup
- Choose songs with solos



Scale Types

Minor Pentatonic:

D-F-G-A-C-D

Major:

D-E-F[#]-G-A-B-C[#]-D

Mixolydian:

D-E-F[#]-G-A-B-C-D



Scale Types

Blues Scale:

D-F-G-G[#]-A-C-D

Natural Minor:

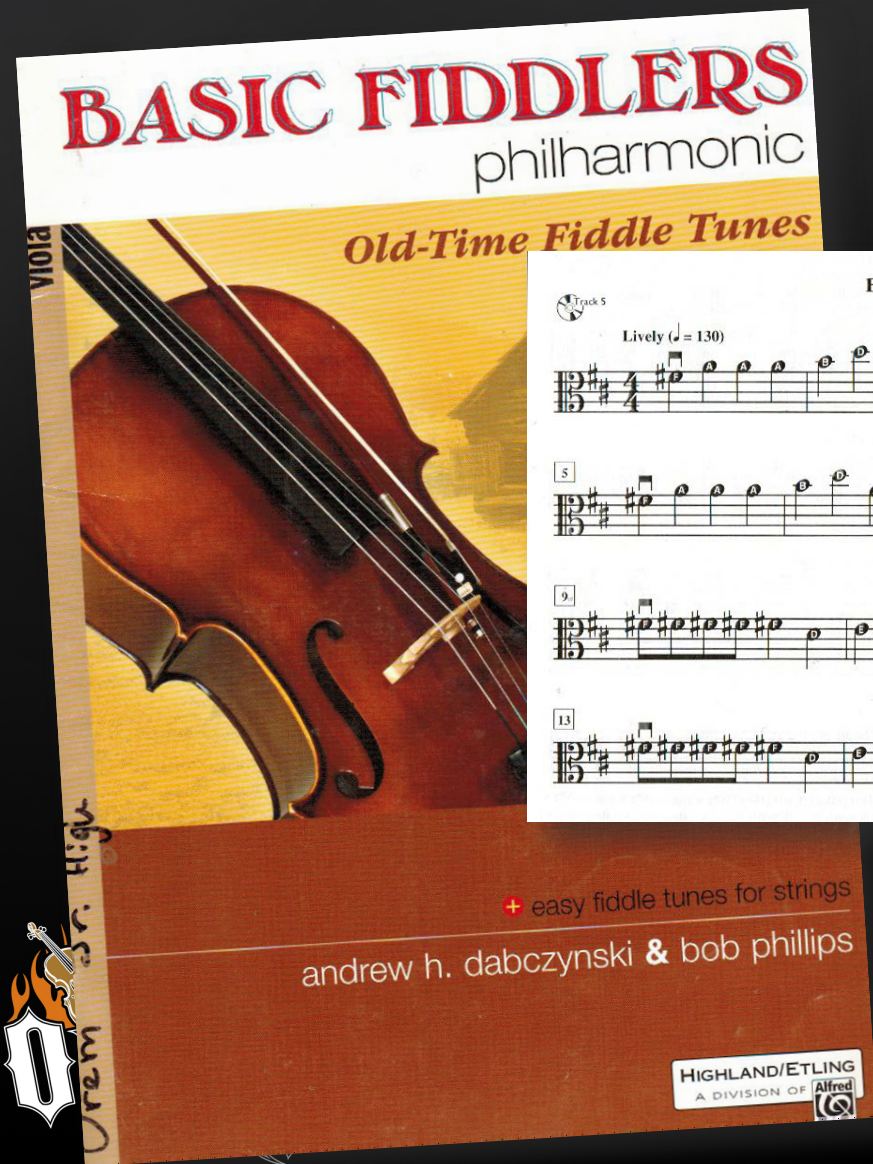
D-E-F-G-A-B_b-C-D

Harmonic Minor:

D-E-F-G-A-B_b-C[#]-D



Basic Fiddlers Philharmonic



Track 5
Lively ($\text{♩} = 130$)
Basic Tune

5

9

13

Track 6
Lively ($\text{♩} = 130$)
Sourwood Mountain
Advanced Tune
American Folk Song

5

9

13

Back-up Directions
Basic back-up — play the notes in each measure as printed.
Regular back-up — play the notes in each measure using the Shuffle Pattern.
Advanced back-up — play the notes in each measure using the On/Off Pattern.

Shuffle Pattern

On/Off Pattern

Track 7
Lively ($\text{♩} = 130$)
Back-up Part

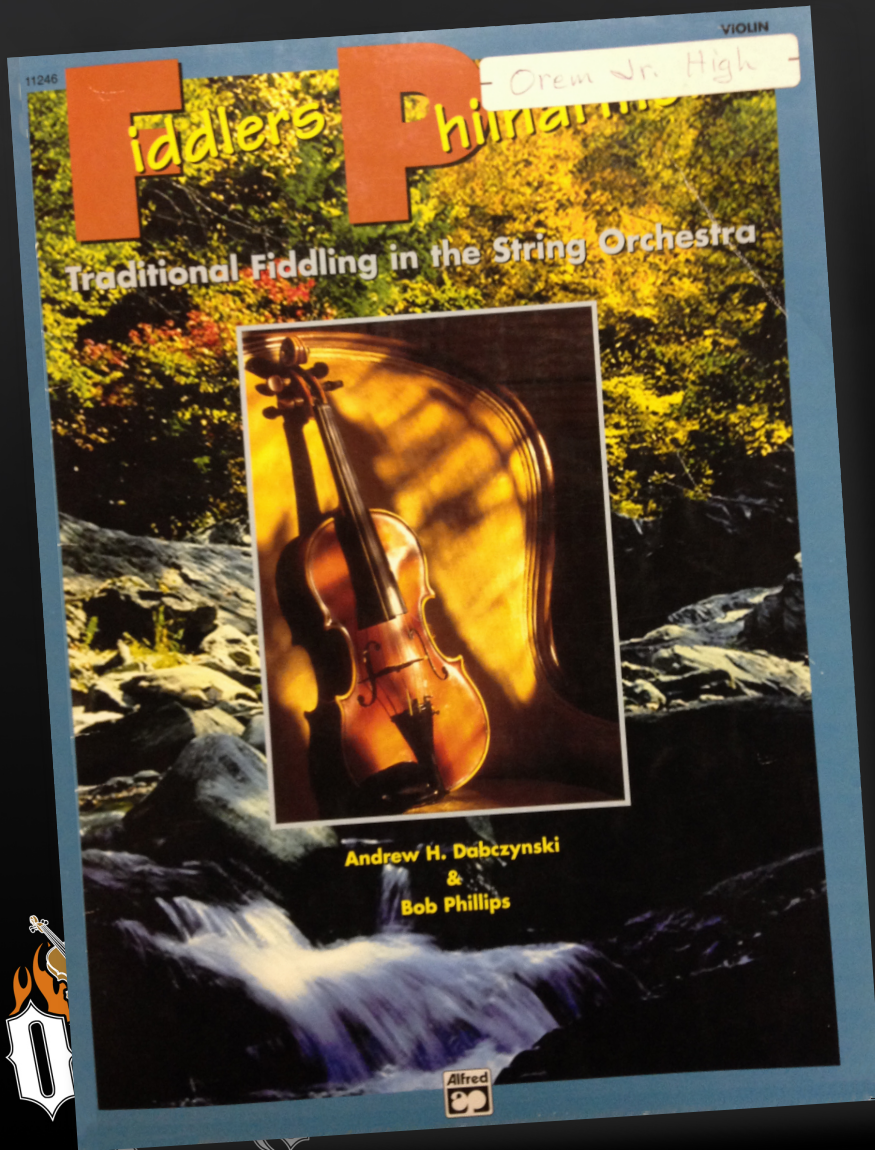
5

9

13

Improvised back-up — On your own, try making up a rhythm pattern and deciding what notes to play (choose from the printed notes, or talk with your teacher about using other chord tones).

Fiddlers Philharmonic



Perhaps one of the simplest yet most satisfying hoe-downs, for the beginner or the expert fiddler, is *Bile 'em Cabbage Down*. The four-note melody can be combined with creative improvisation to produce increasingly complicated variations. Here's a tune for every fiddler.

Bile 'em Cabbage Down
SOLO KEY

Chorus:
Bile 'em cabbage down, down,
Bake 'em biscuits brown, brown,
Only tune I ever did learn was,
Bile 'em cabbage down.

Verse:
June bug he has wings of gold,
The firefly wings of flame,
The bedbug's got no wings at all,
But gets there just the same.

Love it is a killing fit,
When beauty hits a blossom,
And if you want your finger bit,
Just poke it at a possum.

Raccoon and the possum,
Rackin' cross the prairie,
Raccoon asks the possum,
Did she want to marry?

Possum is a cunnin' thing,
He travels in the dark,
And never thinks to curl his tail,
Till he hears old Rover bark.

Tune/Break/Back-Up Tracks 6, 7
GROUP KEY

Kickoff

Tune

Break

Back-Up

Tag

Jazz Philharmonic

making jazz easy in the string

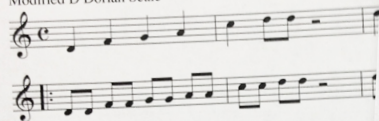
violin

14

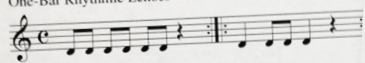
devious preparatory page

"Devious" uses straight or even eighth notes like are many different kinds of Latin rhythms and into their repertoire. Listen to Duke Ellington's "Tunisia". Both of these tunes alternate between is played straight all the way

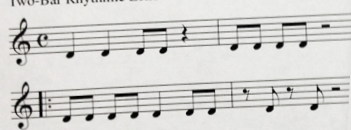
Modified D Dorian Scale



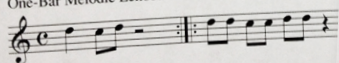
One-Bar Rhythmic Echoes



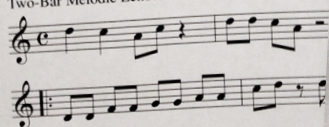
Two-Bar Rhythmic Echoes



One-Bar Melodic Echoes



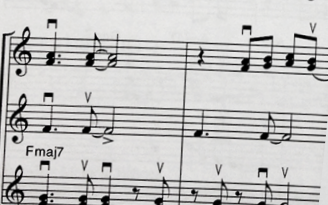
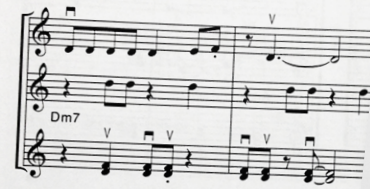
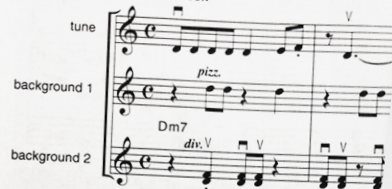
Two-Bar Melodic Echoes



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devious tune and background

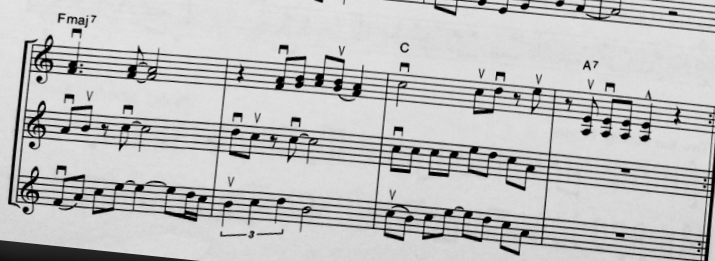
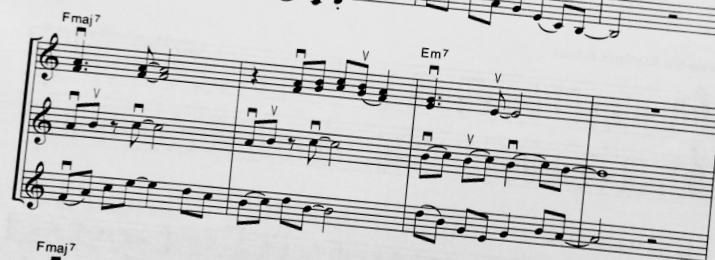
Latin rock



Preparatory Page—see page 14.

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devious solos

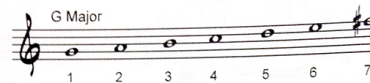


Jazz Basics for Strings

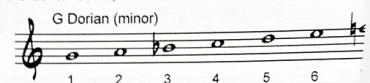
Correlated with
Jamey Aebersold Volume 2
"Major and Minor in Every Key"

Unit 4: G Minor, Swing Eighth Notes

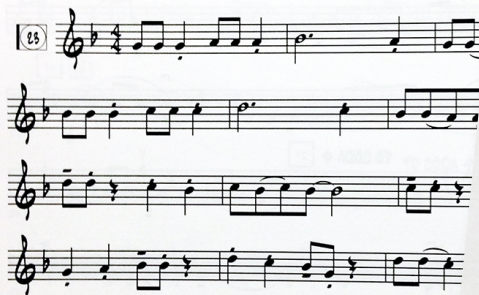
The basis of this unit will also be on the dorian scale – this time begin with the major scale starting on the same note:



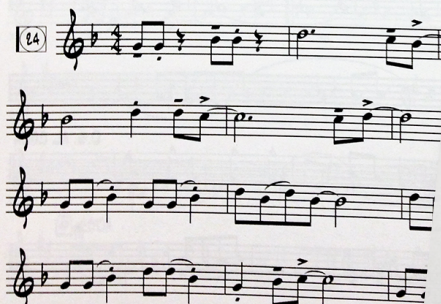
To create the dorian scale, lower the 3rd and 7th notes of the scale:



20. G Minor (Dorian) Scale (♩-♩-♩)



21. G Minor Triads (♩-♩-♩)



60/1255H-14

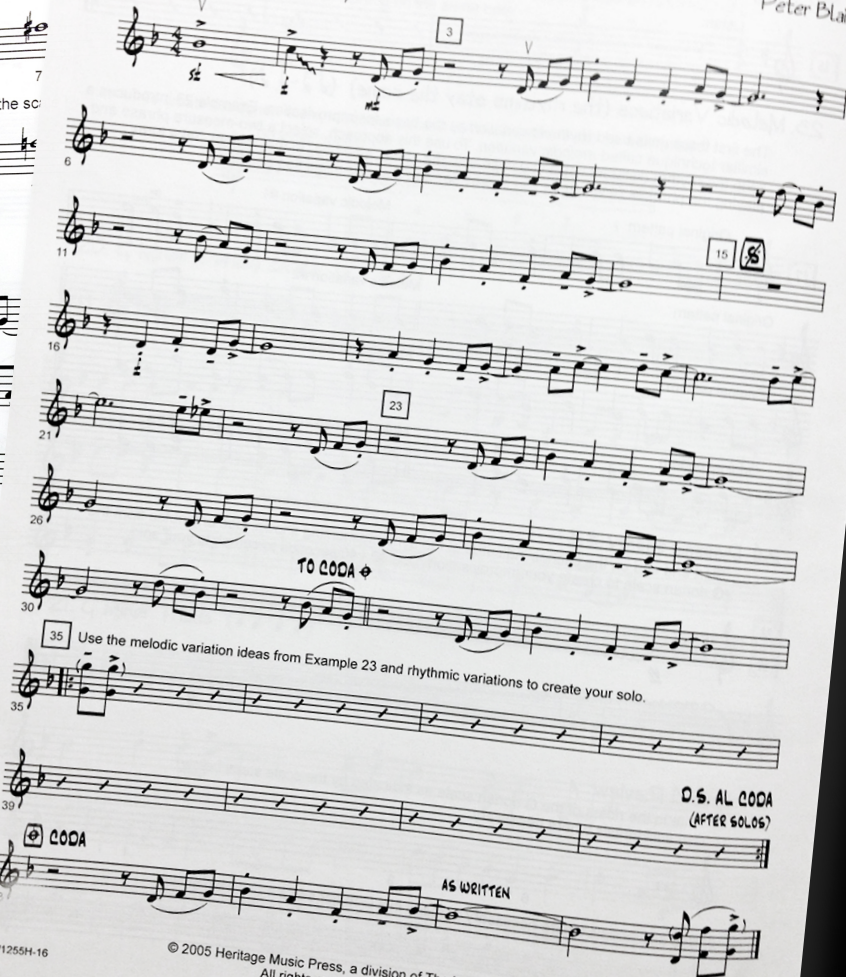
16

Violin I

Inside In

Peter Blair

STRAIGHT AHEAD (♩ = 112)



60/1255H-16

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Repertoire

Search jwpepper.com:

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improvise"

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Rock Style

Arizona Sun, Mark Wood - **A Major**

String Thang, Mark Wood - **E Minor Pentatonic or E Blues**

Hunters of Avatar, Mark Wood - **E Minor Pentatonic**

Pepperoni Pizza Rock, Brian Balmages (Very Easy) - **E Minor Pentatonic**

Ballad Style

Blue Skies and Bright Stars, Matt Turner - **C Major**

Prarie Waltz, Matt Turner - **C Major or C Pentatonic**

Star Lake, Matt Turner - **D Major**

Fiddle Style

Fiddle Somethin', Larry Clark - **D7 (D Mixolydian)**

Japanese Hoedown, Keiko Yamada - **D Pentatonic or D7 (D Mixolydian)**

Swing Style

Shuffleupagus, Matt Turner - **G Minor Pentatonic or G Blues**

Other Styles

Spy Vs Spy, Matt Turner (Tango) - **B Harmonic Minor**

Calypso, Martin Norgaard (Calypso) - **G Major**



Educational Objectives

- Improv with 1 Scale
- Improv with many scales
- Improv over chords
- One improv song/year
- One improv song/concert



Free Stuff

www.stepwisepublications.com

Click on "Free Stuff" tab:

- Asha's A-Minor Backup Track
- Call & Response Patterns
- Group Improv Patterns
- Full Song: "Fractured Elements"



Questions?



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