

Module 1 – Composition Basics

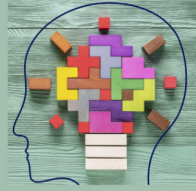
Lesson 1 Introduction



Lesson 2 Leveling



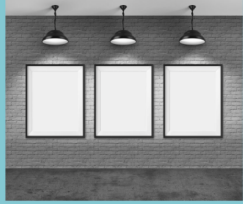
Lesson 3 More Leveling & Concept-Based Pieces



Lesson 4 Melodic Contour



Lesson 5 Parameters



Lesson 6 Patterns



Lesson 7 Arpeggiated Accompaniments



Lesson 8 Modern LH Patterns



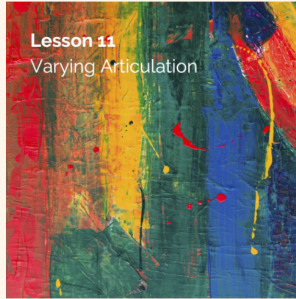
Lesson 9 Ostinato



Lesson 10 Melodic Variation



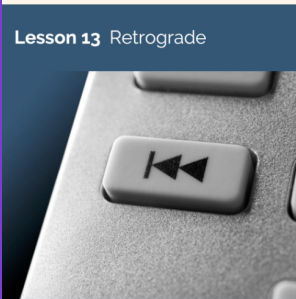
Lesson 11 Varying Articulation



Lesson 12 Pattern & Sequence



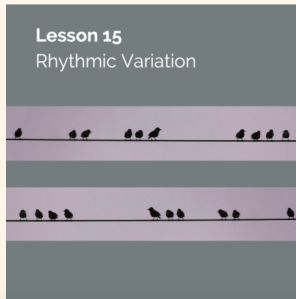
Lesson 13 Retrograde



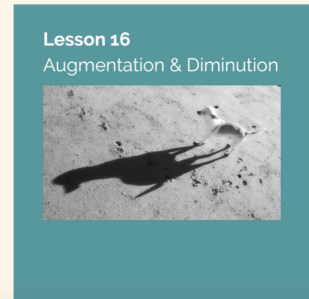
Lesson 14 Melodic Inversion



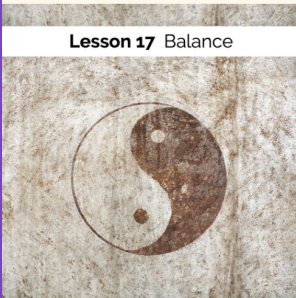
Lesson 15 Rhythmic Variation



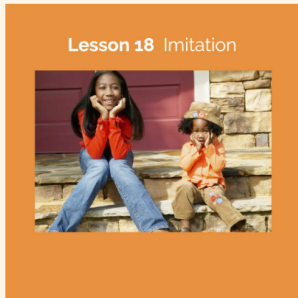
Lesson 16 Augmentation & Diminution



Lesson 17 Balance



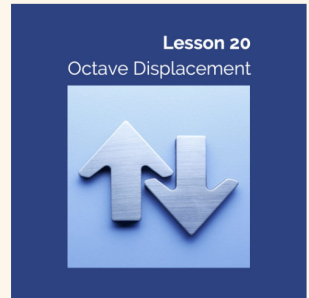
Lesson 18 Imitation



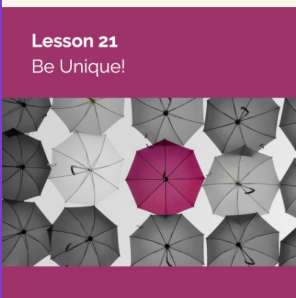
Lesson 19 LH Melodies



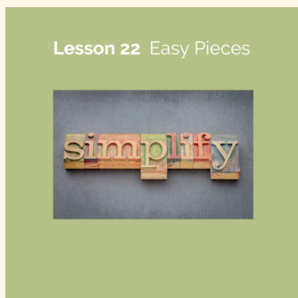
Lesson 20 Octave Displacement



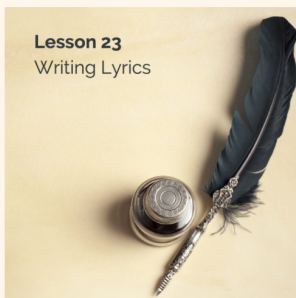
Lesson 21 Be Unique!



Lesson 22 Easy Pieces



Lesson 23 Writing Lyrics



Module 2 – Composing with Modes

Lesson 1
Intro to Modes/Dorian



Lesson 2
Phrygian Mode



Lesson 3
Lydian Mode



Lesson 4
Mixolydian Mode



Lesson 5
Aeolian Mode



Lesson 6
Greek Mode Review



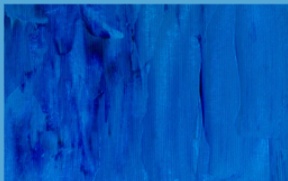
Lesson 7
Major Pentatonic



Lesson 8
Minor Pentatonic



Lesson 9
Blues Scale



Lesson 10
5th Mode Harmonic



Lesson 11
Review & Charts

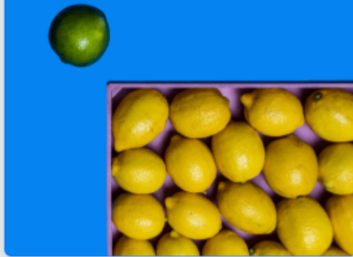


Module 3 – Harmony / Chords

Lesson 1
Harmony Basics



Lesson 2
Non-Diatonic Chords



Lesson 3
Seventh Chords



Lesson 4
More Chords &
Chord Symbols



Lesson 5
Slash Chords



Lesson 6
Chord Progressions



Lesson 7
Blues & Jazz
Chord Progressions



Lesson 8
Pop & Rock
Chord Progressions



Lesson 9
Substitution



Lesson 10
Jazz Harmony



Lesson 11
Writing Easy Jazz & Blues



Composition Exercises & Assignments



Compose with Dorian

• Write a **theme and variation** using the **D Dorian mode**.
For the LH part, use the LH patterns for ballads (slow pieces) that you learned in the first module, and follow the given chord symbols.



- The staff paper given here is set up for 3/4 time, but you could adapt this assignment to 4/4 if you'd like.
- For your melody, choose from the notes of the D Dorian Mode: **D E F G A B C D**
- Be sure that your melody and accompaniment have **balance between movement and non-movement**. You could write so that the hands trade off movement back and forth. Alter the LH rhythmic pattern if you like.

Bonus assignment: compose another short Dorian piece on separate staff paper. Write in ABA form (8 measures per section).

- Choose** key (G Dorian, C Dorian, etc.)
time signature
style of piece
LH familiar pattern or ostinato
harmony (chords)—I II III IV v vi dim VII



Compose with Seventh-Chord Voicings

- This piece will be modeled after Erik Satie's famous "Gymnopédie No. 1." The intro and starting voicings are given, along with chord symbols.
- Add all **pedagogical elements:** phrase marks, fingering, dynamics, tempo, and pedal.



Compose with ABA Form

Using the prompts below, compose a **Late Etym** or **Early Int.** piece with **ABA form**.

A Section (major/mostly legato)



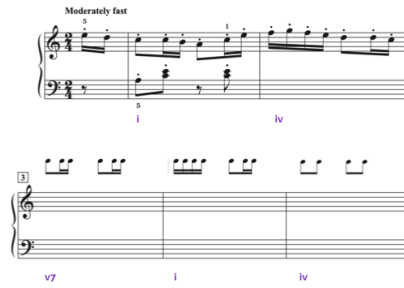
B Section (relative minor/use staccato)



Compose an Etude with Varied Articulation

- First, write in all the LH notes. Follow the initial pattern and the given chord symbols.
- Compose the melody by choosing notes that sound good with the LH part. The small notes above each measure tell you the rhythm to use.
- The étude will be a study in staccato for the first 8 measures. The next 8 measures will emphasize legato; use slurs and pedal markings here. Feel free to make any changes you'd like—this is a framework.

• **ADD:** staccatos, slurs, phrase marks, fingering, dynamics, and pedal.



Write a Ragtime Piece Using Pattern & Sequence

• Write the LH notes, following the given chord symbols. Write your rag at any level of difficulty; be sure the LH part reflects your chosen level.

• Use this rhythm for your "pattern"

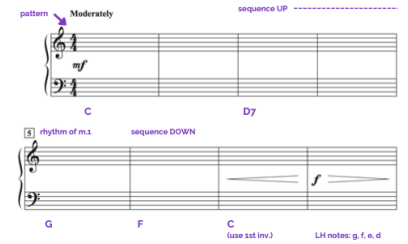
(RH at measures 1-2):



• **ADD:** staccatos, slurs, and fingering.

A note about LH 7 chords:

You may simply use the 3 notes of the triad in root position for your pattern. However, when possible, use "root-third-seventh":

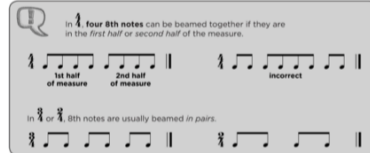


Notation Exercises



Beaming 8th Notes

Single 8th notes have **FLAGS**, while multiple 8th notes can be joined together with **BEAMS**.



- Put an X through the measures with **incorrect** beaming.
- Add stems and beams to the 8th notes.

Notating Pedal



- Add pedal markings to the music below:
 - Pedal **DOWN** on the first note.
 - Pedal **CHANGES** on beats 1 of each following measure.
 - Bonus: add fingering for all the left hand notes.
- Add pedal markings to the music below:
 - Pedal **DOWN** on the first note.
 - Pedal **CHANGES** on beats 1 and 3 of every measure (except last).
 - Last measure, pedal **CHANGE** beat 1, pedal **UP** at the end.

Writing Exercises



Writing Familiar LH Patterns

Write these LH patterns with your choice of different chords. For more practice, use a separate sheet of staff paper.

Waltz

Ragtime

Tarantella

Boogie

With swing

Writing Chords Within Modes

Write half-note chords for each "scale degree" of the modes below. Then, write the chord name in the space below each one.

D Dorian (Finish writing the chord then continue up the scale)

Ex: Dm

E Phrygian

F Lydian

G Mixolydian

Additional Downloads



Lesson 6, continued

Modes with One Black Key (for all white keys)

- D Dorian = D E F G A B C D
- G Dorian = G A Bb C D E F G
- E Phrygian = E F G A B C D E
- A Phrygian = A Bb C D E F G A
- F Lydian = F G A B C D E F
- C Lydian = C D E F# G A B C
- G Mixolydian = G A B C D E F G
- C Mixolydian = C D E F G A Bb C

Pop & Rock Chord Progressions

50s Rock 'n Roll "Doo Wop Changes"

I vi IV V
C Am F G

"Let It Be" Progression

I V vi IV
C G Am F

- All I Have to Do is Dream (Everly Bros.)
- Teenager in Love (Dion & The Belmonts)
- Earth Angel (The Penguins)
- I Will Always Love You (Dolly Parton)
- Crocodile Rock (Elton John)
- Let It Be (The Beatles)
- Take On Me (a-ha)
- Let It Go (from Disney's "Frozen")
- Someone Like You (Adele)
- Don't Stop Believin' (Journey)

"Africa" Progression

vi IV I V
Am F C G

- Africa (Toto)
- Grenade (Bruno Mars)
- (Are You Going to) San Francisco (S. McKenzie)
- Numb (Linkin Park)
- Kids (MGMT)

Low Interval Limits

Chart of Melodic Variation

Inflection

The addition or subtraction of accidentals to vary the melody.

Varying Articulation

Creativity

Workouts & Inspirations



"A lot of great creativity comes from restrictions."

Giles Duley
(Photographer)

Think of a fourth word that connects to the first three. Possible answers at the bottom, but other answers welcome!

Example: time/olympics/holiday (winter)

1. punk hard climb _____
2. left over bag _____
3. post supplies job _____
4. cat hold rental _____
5. dinner home rack _____
6. sheet loud box _____

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Teachers **COMPOSE** CREATIVITY
MODULE 1
Lesson 2

Word Association

Making Connections

"Creativity is a habit, and the best creativity is the result of good work habits."

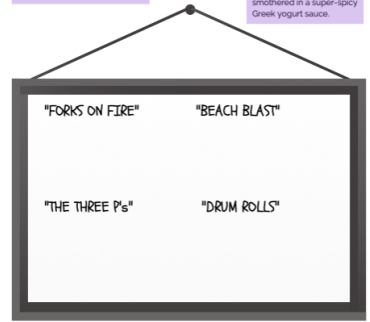
Twyla Tharp
(Choreographer)

For each menu item below, write a short description of the dish.

Menu Items

Making Connections

Example: "Angry Octopus"
Freshly caught octopus smothered in a super-spicy Greek yogurt sauce.



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Teachers **COMPOSE** CREATIVITY
MODULE 1
Lesson 3

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."

Naya Angelou
(Poet/Author)

Write a short story plot, a poem, or a few sentences that connect all four of the images below.



Write:

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Teachers **COMPOSE** CREATIVITY
MODULE 1
Lesson 5

Tell a Story

Making Connections

"Creativity is a wild mind and a disciplined eye."

Dorothy Parker
(Author)

Fill a jar with strips of paper containing random words. (Or you may cheat and use the ones on this page.) Use nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives.

Choose 2-3 words from the jar. Then, using these words, do one or more of the following activities:

- write a small poem
- make up a short story
- write a descriptive sentence

When finished, put the words back in the jar and re-draw as many times as you'd like.



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Teachers **COMPOSE** CREATIVITY
MODULE 1
Lesson 11

Jar of Words

Making Connections

Creativity

Phone Wallpaper



"WHAT KEEPS LIFE FASCINATING IS THE CONSTANT CREATIVITY OF THE SOUL."



"CREATIVITY IS THE POWER TO CONNECT THE SEEMINGLY UNCONNECTED."



Composition Course Concepts by Lesson

MODULE 1 — Composition Basics/Melodic Development

- Lesson 1** **Introduction**
Supplies / Notation Software Info.
- Lesson 2** **Leveling**
Educational Leveling Highlights (Early Elementary–Late Elementary)
Writing Teacher Duets
- Lesson 3** **Writing Concept-Based Pieces**
Educational Leveling Highlights (Early Intermediate–Intermediate)
Concept-Based Composition
- Lesson 4** **Melodic Contour**
Conjunct v. Disjunct
Phrase Repetition and Variation
- Lesson 5** **Parameters**
Restriction or Inspiration?
Composing with Form
- Lesson 6** **Patterns**
About Patterns & Learning
Style Pieces
Stylistic Accompaniment Patterns
- Lesson 7** **Arpeggiated Accompaniments**
Alberti Bass
Broken Cadence Chords
- Lesson 8** **Modern LH Patterns**
LH Ballad Patterns (Basic, Extended, Cross-Over)
- Lesson 9** **Ostinato**
Melodic Ostinato / Rhythmic Ostinato
- Lesson 10** **Melodic Variation / Inflection**
Melodic Tools, Tricks, and Inspirations
Variation Through Inflection
- Lesson 11** **Varying Articulation**

Lesson 12 **Pattern & Sequence**

Lesson 13 **Retrograde**

Lesson 14 **Melodic Inversion**

Inverting Intervals

Melodic Inversion

Lesson 15 **Rhythmic Variation**

Simple Variation

Variation via Displacement

Lesson 16 **Augmentation & Diminution**

Lesson 17 **Balance**

Rest v. Motion

Lesson 18 **Imitation**

Lesson 19 **LH Melody**

Lesson 20 **Octave Displacement**

Lesson 21 **Be Unique!**

How Can I Compose More Interesting Pieces?

Lesson 22 **Writing Easy Pieces**

Texture (Thin Versus Thick)

5 Ways to Improve Your Piece

Leveling Review

Lesson 23 **Writing Lyrics**

Writing to Artwork

Abstract & Literal Inspirations

Duple or Triple Meter

Using Rhyming Dictionaries

MODULE 2 — Composing with Modes

Lesson 1 **Intro to Modes / Dorian**

About the “Greek Modes”
Dorian Mode
Tips for Composing with Modes

Lesson 2 **Phrygian Mode**

Writing Intros / Freeform Intros (“Taximi”)

Lesson 3 **Lydian Mode**

The Sound of the Lydian Mode

Lesson 4 **Mixolydian Mode**

Chords Within the Mixolydian Mode
Songs Using Mixolydian Chords

Lesson 5 **Aeolian Mode**

Familiar Aeolian Melodies
Songs with the “Aeolian Progression”

Lesson 6 **Greek Mode Review**

Chart of Modes
Chart of Color Tones

Lesson 7 **Major Pentatonic**

Familiar Major Pentatonic Melodies
Familiar Major Pentatonic Riffs

Lesson 8 **Minor Pentatonic**

Familiar Minor Pentatonic Melodies
Familiar Minor Pentatonic Riffs

Lesson 9 **Blues Scale**

Blues Scale in Rock/Pop
Writing Blues for Students

Lesson 10 **5th Mode Harmonic**

Modes Generate from the Harmonic Minor Scale
5th Mode Harmonic Minor Scale (“Double Harmonic”)
Use of 5th Mode Harmonic

Lesson 11 **Review & Charts**

Mode Review & Additional Scales
Review of Greek-Mode Color Tones

MODULE 3 — Harmony / Chords

Lesson 1 **Harmony Basics**

Polyphonic v. Homophonic
Consonant v. Dissonant
Tertian v. Quartal Harmony

Lesson 2 **Non-Diatonic Chords**

Diatonic and Non-Diatonic Chords in Major Keys
Secondary Dominants

Lesson 3 **Seventh Chords**

Diatonic Seventh Chords
Major 7, Minor 7, Dominant 7, Half-Diminished Chords
Voicings for Seventh Chords

Lesson 4 **More Chords & Chord Symbols**

Augmented, Diminished, Diminished-Seventh Chords
Sus Chords, Add Chords, and 5 Chords

Lesson 5 **Slash Chords**

Slash Chords Explained
False Slash Chords
Sus Chords with V/I Slash Chords

Lesson 6 **Chord Progressions**

Chord Types in Popular Music (Trends from the 60s Forward)

- Early to Late Beatles, Elton John
- 1970s Songwriters and Progressions (Burt Bacharach, Carole King, et al.)
- Pop Use of Seventh Chords
- Rock and 1990s Use of Sus and 5 Chords

1–4–5 Progression
Circle of Fifths Progression

Lesson 7 **Blues & Jazz Chord Progressions**

Tritones Explained
2–5–1 Voicings with Seventh Chords
Traditional 12-Bar Blues
With Added 2–5–1 Cadences

Lesson 8 **Pop & Rock Chord Progressions**

Doo-Wop Changes, “Let It Be” Progression, “Africa” Progression,
“Hey Jude” Progression, Aeolian Progression, Flamenco Progression

Lesson 9 **Harmonic Substitution**
Reharmonization Explained
Chord Family Substitution
Secondary Dominant Sevenths
Tritone (Flat-2) Substitution
2–b-2–1 Voicings with Seventh Chords

Lesson 10 **Jazz Harmony**
Chord Extensions (9, 11, 13)
Voicing Chords with Extensions (9 Chords, 13 Chords)
Chords with Alterations

- Dominant Seventh Chords with Altered 9's
- Seventh Chords with Sharp 11's
- Chords with Flat 13's
- Chords with Multiple Alterations

The Altered Scale
2–5–1 Voicings with Extensions and Alterations

Lesson 11 **Writing Easy Jazz & Blues**
Guidelines for Composing Easy Jazz & Blues
Writing with a Thin Texture
Thin Texture via Implied Root Notes
Using Familiar Jazz & Blues Patterns

- Walking Bass Lines
- Boogie LH Patterns
- LH Comp Rhythm for Chords
- Hands-Together Chromatic Passages
- Alternating Chromatic Thirds, Grace Notes

Flat-9 Interval Rule
Low-Interval-Limits
Upper Structure Triads