

# Improvising and Composing with Familiar Rhythms, Drums, and Barred Instruments

Lesson 3  
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## INSTRUCTIONAL: Lesson Three

### Introduction

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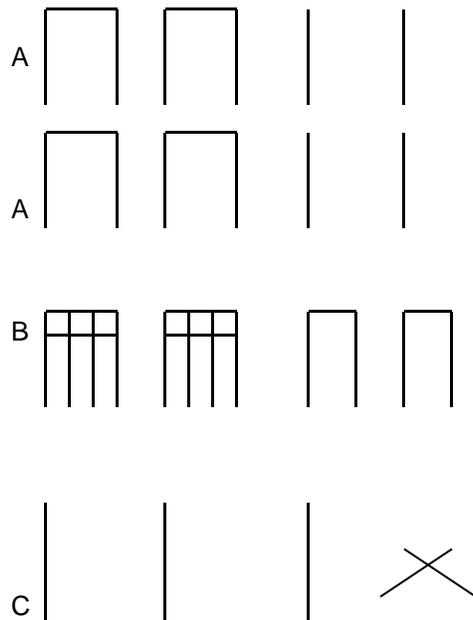
Return to the barred instruments and play the melodic compositions from the previous lesson. After students play their compositions, have them assess their accuracy and comfort level with their composition. The modal exploration and composition to follow will depend upon the success of the current composition.

### Exploration

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Ask students what type of scale was used to construct the current melody: the pentatonic. Ask students what does pentatonic mean: five notes or tones. Ask students what a scale would be named if it had six tones. They may need some prompting by correlating a six-sided shape. Hexatonic is the new scale. Invite students to put the Es back on their instruments that are in F pentatonic.

Because the E creates a half step with the F, careful placement in the melody is needed. Return to the Keetman rhythm and have the students identify the weak parts of the beats:



The weak parts are any part that comes after the initial sounding of the beat. Thus, the second half of paired eighth notes or the remainder of sixteenth notes are weak parts of beats. This is preparing the students to use the half step of the scale as a passing note or upper/lower neighbor ornamentation.

With the papers of their rhythmic compositions, have the small groups identify the weak parts of the beats in their compositions. Once this is identified, have students return to the melodic composition with the goal of adding the E at least once in their compositions. If the E is added in the first A phrase, it must be present in the second A phrase for it to be a true A phrase. Students may need a visual reminder of effective melody

making. These criteria can easily be put back on the white board. Allow students several minutes to work on this composition.

After time for working, allow small groups to play for each other. While the groups are playing, have the rest of the students listen for whether the E was used at least once in the composition and if it was used on a weak part of the beat. Have each group assess itself using the 1-5 scale. When ready, have each group play its melody accompanied by a tonic drone on the low D of a bass xylophone.

Ask students what note is still not on the xylophones (B). Have them return the B to the xylophones. By this point, most students will gather the above process will be repeated. The B also creates a half step and should be approached in the same manner. Remind students that the B needs to be used only once in the composition. Allow time for this note to be worked into the composition. Once students are comfortable, give them ample time to practice their new compositions.

### **Culminating Aesthetic Moment**

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Perform each group's melody with the tonic drone of D on the bass xylophone or D bass bar. At this point, students should solely concentrate on the accuracy and artistry of their compositions:

Barred instrument melody	Eight beats of tonic drone	Barred instrument melody
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Repeat this and have the students evaluate their performances. Explain to students that the next time they come to music class, they will combine their melodies with the drums into a large piece. This will create excitement about the forthcoming composition.

### **Reflection for Learning**

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Composition happens in small deliberate steps. The first steps to diatonic composition should incorporate information that is already familiar with a group of students. Thus, returning to the pentatonic and hexatonic solidifies the elements of effective melody making without being overwhelming. When the time comes for the final half step to be added to the scale, the students will have a full understanding of how these half steps work in elemental style. The process of the Schulwerk creates a context for authentic learning and music understanding.

### **Assessment**

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The assessment part of the lesson simply comes from the accurate utilization of the half steps in this diatonic mode. The 1-5 scale will provide a quick and accurate way for students to communicate their understanding and their comfort level with the new material.