

B) IMPROVISATION EXERCISES

The 2-beat movement implies an inflection on the first beat. To avoid that this repetitive movement cuts the musical line, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the melodic line and the harmonic sequence so that they unfold over several measures.

The upbeat allows to anticipate the action on the first beat. It gives the impulse to the movement. Once this impulse is given, the upbeat is not necessary throughout the improvisation.

(next...)

- ❖ Create a simple, easy-to-sing anacrusic melody - or a mixture of phrases with and without upbeat as in piece #6. It is important to imagine a movement or a dance to avoid playing music that is "standing still". This bodily imagination will immediately inspire a line in the music being improvised. To get the feel of 2/4 right away, we suggest repeating a short rhythmic cell contained in one measure at the beginning of the phrase, before creating a larger line for the cadence.
- ❖ Look for a formula in the bass that makes the strong and weak beats alternate (example: the strong beat is a quarter note, the weak beat is an eighth note followed by a half rest).

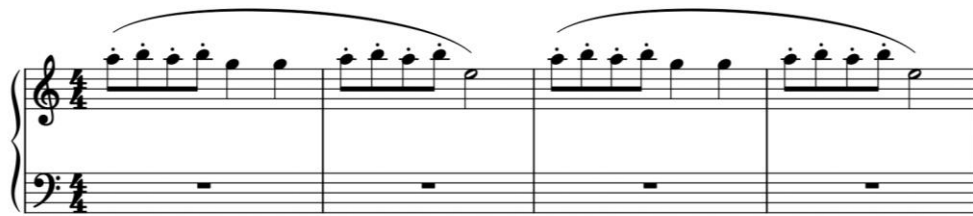
Two voices are enough to create a nice piece of music; a third voice can be added on a downbeat and in the cadences.



The bass ostinato is grouped by 4, and it uses degrees 1 and 5 of the key. This allows for improvisation in a modal style (as in #5), which offers a lot of freedom in moving the voices.

- ❖ Create a modal melody and add a second voice in the alto that follows in parallel (with a fixed interval) for a few sounds; vary with sounds that are foreign to the chosen mode.
- ❖ Take advantage of the regularity of the bass to invent various rhythms in the right hand, especially syncopations; place accents on weak beats.
- ❖ The same bass can be used with a major or minor melody. You are encouraged to experiment freely to find your own pleasant melodies on this bass.
- ❖ You can change the order of the sounds in the ostinato and/or give it a rhythmic structure, for example:





This modal piece has a somewhat oriental feel to it, with a melody in one hand and chords in the other hand. This style makes it easier to improvise because the chord accompaniment moves in an instinctive way. These are 3-tone chords; instead of using 1, 3 5, one could vary with 1, 2 5 or 1 4 5 or even 1 5 6.

How do we develop an ostinato rhythm that repeats throughout an exercise in a varied way?

One can vary the relationship between the two hands - hands close together or far apart;

The rhythm can be set in soprano or bass;

The chord accompaniment can have rhythmic variations.

In the track, there are 4 chords for each phrase; but only two chords could be used.

- ❖ To begin, play the first 8 measures with a simple one-voice accompaniment that fits the melody well. Then enrich this bass with notes from the chords.
- ❖ Then, choose one of the above ideas and apply it.

Let yourself be inspired by the images and colors of the Orient to imagine a story that will feed the improvisation with various sound colors and rhythms.

7

13

19

25

31

In this 3-beat piece, the bass formula (one tone on the first beat only, followed by two notes of the same chord on beat 2 and 3, in the tenor register) makes you want to dance a waltz.

- ❖ Play the score and complete the harmony by ear (2nd and 3rd beat) as played on the track. There is usually only one chord per measure, which makes it easier to identify the harmonic path.
- ❖ Then create your own harmonic structure with a bass that moves only on the first beat. Choose a simple melodic contour in the right hand that harmonizes with the bass.

(next...)

❖ Add the two chord beats in the middle voices that "dress up" this ensemble.

Later on, you will hear eighth notes: these do not modify the harmony.

To place the eighth notes: - arpeggiate the chords or repeat the notes;
- use passing notes

To create a clear form, we suggest to expose a melody a first time in quarter notes (as in the track), then to repeat it by adding eighth notes; this way, you make sure to keep the same phrase length.