

Harmonizing a Melody in a Minor Key

Harmonizing a melody in a minor key is similar to harmonizing a melody in a major key. Since the i, iv, and V (or V⁷) chords contain all the notes of the harmonic minor scale, many melodies in a minor key can be harmonized with just these three chords.

To determine the chords to be used, analyze the melody notes. Consult the following chart to see which chord is generally used with each melody note. When more than one chord can be chosen, your ear should always be the final guide.

Scale Degree	Chord
1, 3, 5	i chord
2, 4, 5, 7	V (or V ⁷) chord
1, 4, 6	iv chord

Here is an A harmonic minor scale (raised 7th) that is harmonized using only the i, iv and V (or V⁷) chords.

Am E or E⁷ Am Dm Am Dm E or E⁷ Am

Scale Degrees: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1

A minor: i V or V⁷ i iv i iv V or V⁷ i

Most harmonizations usually begin and end with a i chord.

A V (or V⁷) chord usually precedes the last chord.

Exercises

- Harmonize the E and D harmonic minor scales with the i, iv, V (and V⁷) chords using inversions, where necessary, to achieve a smooth progression between chords (see page 97). Write the chord symbols above the staff and the Roman numerals below the staff for each chord.

Em B/D# or B⁷/D# Em Am/E Em Am/E B/D# B⁷/D# Em

i V⁶ V⁶₅ i iv⁶₄ i iv⁶₄ V⁶ V⁶₅ i

Dm A/C# A⁷/C# Dm Gm/D Dm Gm/D A/C# A⁷/C# Dm

i V⁶ V⁶₅ i iv⁶₄ i iv⁶₄ V⁶ V⁶₅ i

Composing a Melody in a Minor Key

Composing a melody in a minor key for an existing harmony is similar to composing a melody in a major key. The melody is created based on the tones in the chord accompaniment.

Begin by analyzing the chord progression and writing the Roman numerals under the chords—then add the chord symbols above the staff. By using chord tones and adding non-harmonic tones (passing and neighboring) to make the melody more interesting, you can compose your own unique melody.

Remember that the first and last note of a melody tends to be the root of the i chord, and a V (or V7) usually precedes the last chord. The numbers between the staves refer to the melody notes. They are the intervals of the chords used in the bass accompaniment.*

Pat-A-Pan

French Carol

*R=Root U=Upper Neighboring Tone L=Lower Neighboring Tone P=Passing Tone 3=3rd 5=5th

Exercises

- * **1** Analyze the harmony provided. Write the Roman numeral below the staff, then add the chord symbols above the staff. Write a melody (without rests) and circle any non-harmonic tones used.

- * **2** Analyze the harmony provided. Write the Roman numeral below the staff, then add the chord symbols above the staff. Write a melody (without rests) and circle any non-harmonic tones used.

*Correct student answers may vary.

12-Bar Blues Chord Progression

In addition to the major and minor chord progressions introduced on pages 87 and 97, another chord progression that is widely used is the BLUES progression. The music known as "the blues" has its roots in America's south where musicians combined west African rhythms and gospel singing with European harmonies. The blues can often be found in jazz, rock and pop music.

A BLUES CHORD PROGRESSION is usually 12 measures (or "bars") long, and while there are many variations, a traditional blues progression generally consists of the **I** chord (4 measures), the **IV** chord (2 measures), the **I** chord (2 measures), the **V** or **V7** chord (1 measure), the **IV** chord (1 measure), and the **I** chord (2 measures).

The C Major 12-Bar Blues Progression

Chord progression for C Major 12-Bar Blues Progression:

- Measures 1-4: **I** (C)
- Measures 5-6: **IV** (F)
- Measures 7-8: **I** (C)
- Measure 9: **V** (G) or **V7** (G7)
- Measure 10: **IV** (F)
- Measures 11-12: **I** (C)

Exercises

- 1** Write the Roman numerals and the chord symbols for the chords in the following B \flat blues progression.

Chord progression for Exercise 1 (B \flat blues):

- Measures 1-4: **I** (B \flat)
- Measures 5-6: **IV** (E \flat)
- Measures 7-8: **I** (B \flat)
- Measure 9: **V7** (F7)
- Measure 10: **IV** (E \flat)
- Measures 11-12: **I** (B \flat)

- 2** Write a 12-bar F blues progression using the **I**, **IV** and **V7** chords. Write Roman numerals below the staff and chord symbols above the staff.

Chord progression for Exercise 2 (F blues):

- Measures 1-4: **I** (F)
- Measures 5-6: **IV** (B \flat)
- Measures 7-8: **I** (F)
- Measure 9: **V7** (C7)
- Measure 10: **IV** (B \flat)
- Measures 11-12: **I** (F)

- 3** Write a 12-bar G blues progression using the **I**, **IV** and **V7** chords. Write Roman numerals below the staff and chord symbols above the staff. Use a smooth chord progression and omit the 5th of the V7 chord.

Chord progression for Exercise 3 (G blues):

- Measures 1-4: **I** (G)
- Measures 5-6: **IV** (C)
- Measures 7-8: **I** (G)
- Measure 9: **V7** (D7)
- Measure 10: **IV** (C)
- Measures 11-12: **I** (G)

The Blues Scale

The special sound of the blues style is not only derived from the chord progression, but also from its unique scale. As compared to the major scale, the BLUES SCALE has only 7 notes and includes a flatted 3rd, 5th and 7th. The flatted notes are often called BLUE NOTES.

C Major Scale



To change a major scale into a blues scale:

1. Remove the 2nd and 6th scale degrees

2. Flat the 3rd and 7th scale degrees

3. Add a flatted 5th

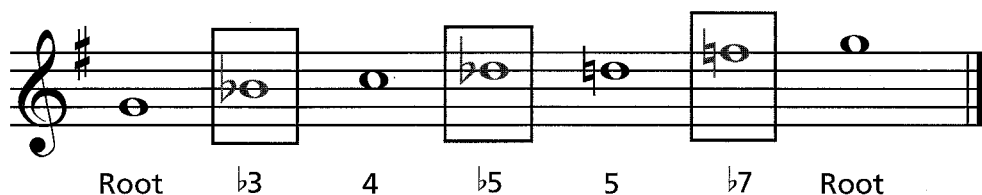
C Blues Scale



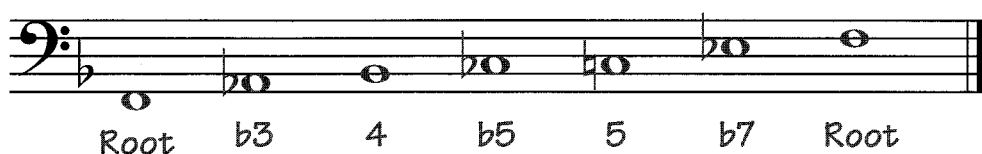
By writing or IMPROVISING (to spontaneously create a unique solo) the notes of a blues scale over a blues chord progression, the special sound of the blues is created.

Exercises

- 1** Fill in the missing notes in the following G blues scale.



- 2** Write an F blues scale.



Page 112 of Student Book:

1 Play Example 1.

Track 24

1 Listen to the harmonization of an A harmonic minor scale with a smooth chord progression.

Am E/G# Am Dm/A Am Dm/A E7/G# Am

i V⁶ i iv⁶ i iv⁶ V⁵ i

2 Play Example 2.

Track 25

2 Listen to the melody and chords. Write the missing chords in the bass clef (i or V⁶ chords only), the Roman numerals below the staff and the chord symbols above the staff. Circle the non-harmonic tones and write a P above the note if it is a passing tone and an L if it is a lower neighboring tone. The example will be played twice.

Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho

African-American Spiritual

Em P L P B7/D# Em P P

i V⁶ B7/D# P i Em

3 Play Example 3.

Track 26

3 Listen to a 12-bar blues chord progression. A common practice in writing music is to use a / on each beat with the chord symbols written above. The rhythm section keeps time throughout the chord progression. The soloist can use the chord symbols as a guide to improvise.

C F C G7 F C

Track 27

4 Listen to a C major scale followed by a C blues scale.

C Major Scale

C Blues Scale

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 b3 4 b5 5 b7 8

Write whether each example is a major (M) or blues scale (B).

a. M b. B c. M d. B e. B

4 Play a C major scale followed by a C blues scale (Exercise 4, above). The student writes whether each of the following is a major (M) or blues scale (B)

a. M b. B c. M d. B e. B