
Unit 4 Advanced Harmony: Jazz IAP Level 4, Accomplished

Unit 4 Overview

Unit 4 is a unit based on Advanced Harmonic progressions which involve more complicated forms as well as chords that are outside the restrictions of a single key signature. This unit explores through advanced harmonic analysis, the justification of chords outside of a particular key signature, minor harmony and chord inversions. In Unit 4 Advanced Harmony, students will explore the following areas and concepts:

- The vocabulary related to advanced harmony.
- The justification of chords outside of diatonic harmony.
- The application possibilities of pentatonic, modal and blues scales to advanced harmonic progressions.
- The Harmonic Analysis of advanced chord progressions.
- The interpretation of chord symbols that indicate extensions or additional tones that are commonly added to basic triads.
- The performance of memorized scales with a given harmonic accompaniment.
- Aural skill development involving Rhythmic, Harmonic and Melodic Dictation.

Unit 4 Motivation:

The motivation for this unit should focus on the understanding of tunes which feature more advanced harmonic ideas. The predominant series of chord changes that have been selected for this unit is a standard collection of harmonies that is commonly referred to in jazz circles as “Rhythm Changes” because the progression was made popular by George Gershwin’s famous song, “I Got Rhythm.”

A common question students often ask is, “Didn’t George Gershwin copyright his tune?” The answer is that he did. However, artists are permitted to copyright lyrics and melodies but the government will NOT copyright chord progressions. Remember the previous unit on blues? There are many similarities between the harmonic material of blues tunes. In Jazz, many artists “borrowed” the series of chords Gershwin used for “I Got Rhythm” to form their own tunes. From Charlie Parker’s “Anthropology/Thriving From a Riff,” to Horace Silver’s “Room 608,” to Sonny Rollin’s “Oleo,” to the theme song from popular television program, “The Flintstones” Rhythm changes are a standard harmonies with which all musicians learning to perform jazz, should become familiar.

Activity 4.5c features “rhythm changes” in the key of Bb which can be performed by concert pitch instruments. The Unit 4 Review features Rhythm Changes in the

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key of G (for Eb instruments to perform with concert pitch instruments) and the Unit 4 Exam features Rhythm Changes in C Major (transposed for Bb instruments).

Lesson 1 : Minor Harmony

I. Objectives, Skills Attained & Motivation:

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Interpret and perform basic rhythmic patterns through review of the Basic Rhythmic Foundations (Rhythmic Breakdown Sheets I through IV).
- Explain the function of the “Leading Tone” in the harmonic relationship between two chords.
- Explain the purpose of the raised 7th degree of the Harmonic Minor scale (in terms of V7 to i).
- Construct Major and relative harmonic minor scales.

II. Homilies

It is common practice for all foreign language classes to take trips to the countries where the language they study during class is indigenous. In addition to learning about the culture, students who visit foreign lands are afforded the opportunity to refine their language skills. Students who study strictly from books are likely to have an “American Accent.” By visiting a foreign land and speaking the language with those who have spoken it all their lives, students may learn to improve their skills through listening and imitation of the inflections of the dialect.

The same is true with all types of music. To be fluent in any language (including the language of music) one must be able to read and write as well as listen, interpret, understand and express thoughts and emotions. Students who study jazz strictly “from a book” are likely to have “accents” that can expose deficiencies in listening skills and nuances in their playing. To learn to play music, one must listen and imitate in order to pick up the aspects of style and context that are so much a part of quality performances. Just like learning to speak a language.

In addition to becoming familiar with a particular style, transcription also allows students to see exactly how jazz artists are constructing their solos through their playing. Melodic ideas presented by professional artists are an excellent source of ideas that are available for students of the art form.

In the Jazz IAP Achievement Level 4 audition for the “Accomplished” status, students are to obtain their own recording of a jazz solo and transcribe 24 to 32 measures of the recorded solo. Students are expected to be able to perform the solo from memory and with the recording.

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If the Jazz IAP is unavailable, students should still be assigned the same exercise. Explain to each student that they are responsible for obtaining their own copy of a recording of a professional jazz soloist (preferably one who performs on their instrument, but this is a suggestion and not a requirement).

III. Starter Activities

Explain the performance involving the transcription and memorization of a 24 to 32 measure solo by a professional artist.

You may wish to ask students to come to class with the copy of the recordings that they plan to use to insure that the solo is by a legitimate jazz artist and that the performance is within the technical ability and range of the student.

Students performances should be given immediately following the Unit 4 exam.

Review Basic Rhythmic Foundations by “counting & clapping” selected lines from “Rhythmic Breakdown Sheets” I through IV in the Introductory Chapter.

IV. Directions

Ask students to read the Vocabulary and the paragraphs explaining the Structure and Function of Harmonic Minor Scales in the Applied Jazz Theory Textbook at the beginning of Unit 4.

Use guided questions to prompt students to explain and discuss the differences between the “Natural Minor Scale” and the “Harmonic Minor Scale.” Feel free to formulate your own questions to guide the students or, to use the suggested queries below:

“What is a ‘Leading Tone’?”

- A tone $\frac{1}{2}$ step below the tonic.

“In Major Harmony what is the ‘Leading Tone’ in the Dominant 7 Chord?”

- The third tone of the Dominant 7 (V7) chord is the leading tone to the tonic because the third tone of any V7 in Major Harmony is always $\frac{1}{2}$ step below the tonic.

“What is the difference between the seventh tone of Aeolian Mode (or the “Natural Minor” Scale and the seventh (7th) tone of the Harmonic Minor Scale?”

- The seventh (7th) tone of the Harmonic Minor Scale is raised $\frac{1}{2}$ step.

“Why is the seventh (7th) tone of the Harmonic Minor Scale raised $\frac{1}{2}$ step?”

- In Minor Keys the Dominant 7 Chord (V7) is changed from Minor to Major.

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- The third tone of the Dominant 7 (V7) chord is raised $\frac{1}{2}$ step to change the function from a iii Chord in Major Harmony to a V7 in Minor Harmony.
- The third tone of the Dominant 7 chord becomes the leading tone to the tonic.
- The third tone of the Dominant 7 (V7) is the 7th tone of the Harmonic Minor scale.

Students are to complete **Activity 4.1**, "Minor Harmony."

In the left column, using the clefs and range of their individual instruments, students should construct a one octave ascending major scale.

In the right column, students should construct the Harmonic Minor scale that is relative to each major key.

Allow students to begin work in class so that the instructor may be on hand to insure that students are capable of determining the relative minor and remember to raise the seventh degree $\frac{1}{2}$ step.

V. Procedure

Review

Basic Rhythm Sheets I through IV to insure students are able to develop and maintain rhythmic skills.

Introduce

Structure and Function of the Harmonic Minor Scale.

Guided Questions related to the purpose of the Harmonic Minor scale.

Activity 4.1 "Minor Harmony"

Closure

"What did we cover in Applied Jazz Theory" today?

- Interpretation and performance of basic rhythmic patterns through review of the Basic Rhythmic Foundations (Rhythmic Breakdown Sheets I through IV).
- Explanation of the function of the "Leading Tone" in the harmonic relationship between two chords.
- Explanation of the purpose of the raised 7th degree of the Harmonic Minor scale (in terms of V7 to i).
- Construction of Major and relative harmonic minor scales.

Homework

Students should complete **Activity 4.1** "Minor Harmony"

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Students should obtain a recording of a jazz artists for the purposes of transcribing a 24 to 32 measure solo.

Teachers may also want to participate in this exercises and transcribe a jazz solo of their choosing along with the students.

Materials

Applied Jazz Theory Textbook

Student obtained recording of the solo of a legitimate and professional jazz artist.

Blank staff/manuscript paper for jazz solo transcription exercises.

Activities:

Rhythmic Breakdown Sheets (I through IV)

Activity 4.1 "Minor Harmony"

Jazz IAP Student Handbook Pages: 70 through 77

Jazz IAP Accompaniment CD Track: 47

Jazz IAP Instructor Manual Pages: 26 & 27

Lesson 2 : Diminished Harmony

I. Objectives, Skills Attained & Motivation:

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify and define diminished chords and scales.
- Explain why it may be argued that there are only 3 actual fully diminished scales.
- Explain how a diminished chord may be used as a substitute for a Dominant 7 chord in Minor Harmony.
- Construct Minor, Dominant and Diminished chords to corresponding chord symbols.
- Aurally identify and transcribe minor harmonies through aural dictation exercises.

II. Starter Activities

Review **Activity 4.1 "Minor Harmony"** to insure students understand the structure and function of Harmonic Minor Scales.

III. Directions

Assign students the reading on Full Diminished Chords and the Structure of a Diminished Scale.