

4. Can you add some leaps (skip a scale note)?

Yes you can, but not too many at once as you'll start to not-make-sense.

Do try to make sense.

Listen to where each note is leading you. Do you follow or not??

Initially you should play the things that occur to you first, and the most obvious, simple things.

You can get more clever later.



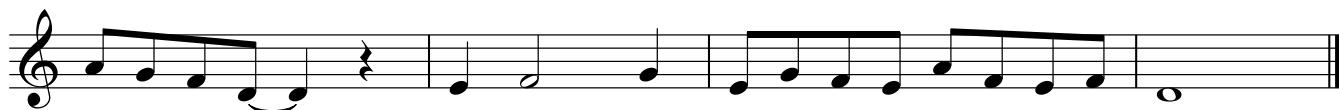
5. What you played first can give you an idea for what to play next and later in your story,

..I mean improvisation. You can repeat a phrase, either exactly or with a bit of a variation at the end.

Don't necessarily repeat every bar or two bars. Hmm...Interesting.



6. You've probably already added some quavers by mistake. Well, now you have permission. Remember to keep part of your mind focussed on staying in time while the other part of your mind is deciding what to play, remembering some of the things you've done in the earlier exercises. What were they again?



7. By now the randomness factor has probably made your music sound very confusing. Here is a 2 bar rhythm which will allow your notes to be random but the rhythm must remain the same. A good trick is to just change one note each time you repeat the rhythm. (Make up your own rhythm.)



Or two notes.



You can get pretty silly after a while, and still make sense??



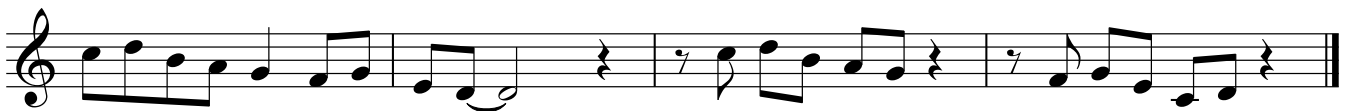
8. Rhythmic variation. Now we concentrate on rhythm and leave the note choices aside for a while. Lets take a simple rhythm and see what we can do with it, bit by little bit.



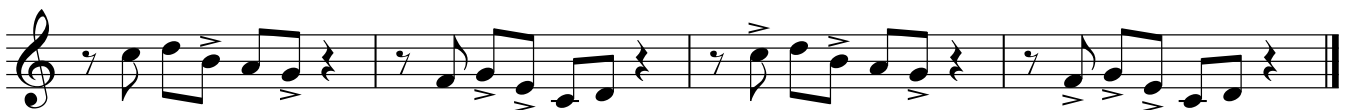
Yes. We've left some notes out now.



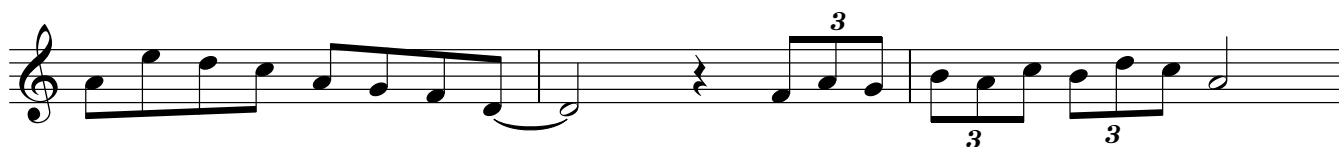
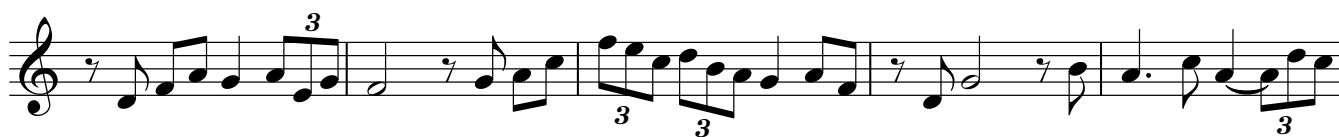
Now lets add a few extra notes plus some variation in the rhythm and notes.
I could do this forever. Things are freeing up.
Your choices get broader but look out for too much randomness.
Simplicity is strength.



9. Accents. A brainteaser is to play the same phrase but move the accents around.
Play each one two or three times so you really hear the difference it makes.



10. Add some triplets. I like them because they break the rhythm up, and give you a lot more syncopation possibilities. Don't feel too tied to the original theme. You're on an exploration.



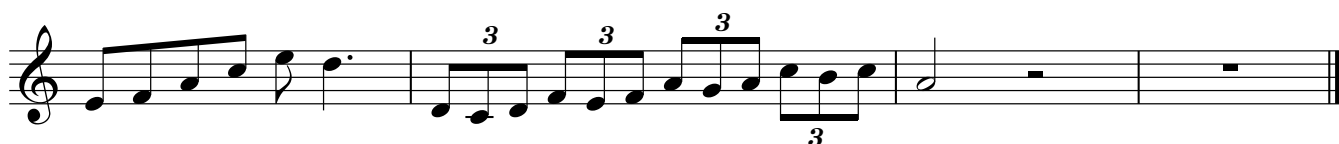
11. Now lets look at some little shapes and then transpose them. It's a way to create a sequence.

Going up three.

Going down three, with a slight change of rhythm.



Up 2, down 1.



11. A start on outlining chords. Very simply, put scale note between two chord notes every now and then. Play just chord notes the rest of the time. You can keep using some of the ideas from earlier exercises. In fact you'll get bored if you don't.

The exercise consists of five staves of music in treble clef, 4/4 time. The first staff has chords Dm⁷, G⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, and Dm⁷. The second staff has G⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, and Dm⁷. The third staff has G⁷, Dm⁷, and G⁷. The fourth staff has Dm⁷, G⁷, and Dm⁷. The fifth staff has Dm⁷ and includes the annotation "Ah! A repeated note. Good idea." above a repeated note in the second measure.

12. Playing with themes. Lets take an idea and mess with it. We'll turn it upside down, back to front, stretch it up, alter it, transpose it, displace it, but not in that order. See if you can spot the method. Of course we could do two things at a time, but maybe later.

The exercise consists of three staves of music in treble clef, 4/4 time. The first staff shows a theme of eighth notes with a repeat sign. The second staff shows the theme transposed up a whole step (F#) and then down a whole step (Bb). The third staff shows the theme transposed up a half step (C#) and then down a half step (B).

13. Fitting themes to chords.

Using the method from 11. with some slight variations, but still using mostly chord notes we can adjust a theme to fit some different chords.

Of course you would add rhythmic and thematic variations in real life.

You also need to have some idea about chords to make best use of this method.

Musical notation for exercise 13, showing two staves of music. The first staff contains four measures with chords Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, and Fmaj7 above them. The second staff contains four measures with chords Em7, Am7, Dm7, and G7 above them. Each measure features a triplet of eighth notes.

14. Slow melody ornamentation and extrapolation. Big words but it simply means that if you have long notes in mind you can wander around them with little notes. Auxiliary notes and stuff like that.

This is a very useful method if you have a tricky chord progression.

You can focus on one note per chord and add your frills.

Musical notation for exercise 14, showing three staves of music. The first staff has a long note followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff has a triplet of eighth notes followed by a long note. The third staff has a long note followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The text "Still lots of E's." is written above the third staff.

Variations on a melody.

Musical notation for exercise 14, showing four staves of music. The first staff shows a simple melody. The second staff shows a variation with chromaticism. The third staff shows a variation with a sharp sign. The fourth staff shows a variation with a flat sign.

15. To avoid getting too boring it's good to be able to start phrases at different points in the bar.

The musical score consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes, a half note, and a quarter rest. The second staff starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes, a quarter note, and a quarter rest. The third staff begins with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes, a quarter note, and a quarter rest. The fourth staff starts with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes, a quarter note, and a quarter rest. The fifth staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes, a quarter note, and a quarter rest. The sixth staff starts with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes, a quarter note, and a quarter rest. The seventh staff begins with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes, a quarter note, and a quarter rest. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and triplet markings.

Now is the time for you to break free and use the ideas from this small sample of possibilities to proceed on your search for musical stuff you like to play and would like to explore further. Don't be too tempted by complexity or cleverness. You and your audience will lose the plot. Take your time and enjoy the journey.

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