

LESSON PLAN: Keyboard Solo on Black Keys

Objective:

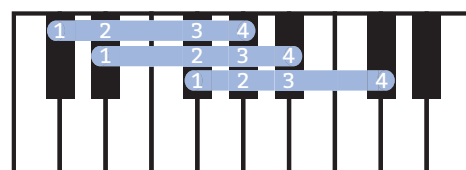
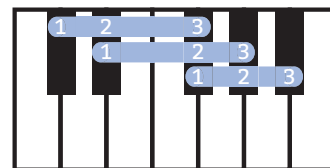
Students will be able to use the black keys on the keyboard to improvise melodies and a keyboard solo in different rhythmic styles.

Resources:

Only a keyboard!

Procedures:

- 1 Make sure students are consciously aware of the visual pattern made out of the black keys. If this is their first keyboard lesson, initiate a conversation asking them if they see any patterns on the keyboard. Guide them through playing the notes in the group of two black keys and the group of 3 black keys using an awareness of low, middle and high. "Play the highest group of 3 black keys...now play the lowest", etc.
- 2 Demonstrate that the black keys can be played going up the keyboard or going down the keyboard playing one note at a time. Ask students to practice this concept.
- 3 Demonstrate that a pattern can be made out of any group of 2, 3, or 4 notes. Demonstrate playing 3 note patterns using the three black keys in a row, then three note patterns using three black keys that aren't next to each other. Demonstrate a 4 note pattern where the notes go down and back up. Demonstrate patterns that involve a repeated note, etc.
- 4 Use the metaphor of a picture of a house to explain where things are expected to be seen. Ask the students "What would we see in the lower portion of the picture? Yes! The ground, the driveway, rocks, etc. What would we see in the middle area of the picture? The house itself, the doors and windows, the trunk of a tree, etc. What would we see up high? The sun, birds, clouds, the roof of the house, etc." The point of this exercise is to point out that we expect to see certain things in certain places. Explain that the same is true in music; we expect to hear bass notes down low, notes of chords in the middle, and the notes of a solo or melody up high.
- 5 Play a groove behind the students to improvise over using the black keys. "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder is a really fun groove to use; the original recording is in Eb minor so the black keys sound great soloing on it. You can also play a blues progression in Eb to get the same effect. To have these notes sound like a solo in a major key use the "Axis of Awesome" progression in Gb. (See handout "Great Sounding Grooves For Black Key Solos")



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: General Music MU:CR1.1.2 a. Improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns and musical ideas for a specific purpose. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Cr1.1.H.1a (HS Proficient) Generate melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas for improvisations, compositions (forms such as theme and variation or 12-bar blues), and three-or-more-chord accompaniments in a variety of patterns (such as arpeggio, country and gallop strumming, finger picking patterns). Common Core Correlation: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.OA.C.5 Generate a number or shape pattern that follows a given rule. Identify apparent features of the pattern that were not explicit in the rule itself.

