

Etude 30

Minor Pentatonic Moving to Diatonic Triad Pairs



Here's another way to construct more "angular" sounding lines, this time by inverting some common tonal devices. In the first measure of the example above, I construct a minor pentatonic scale formed from the third degree of the ii chord (F minor pentatonic in the example). I organize the notes of this pentatonic scale (F, Ab, Bb, C, Eb) in such a way as to make a few larger interval movements, in conjunction with seconds and thirds.

The scale pattern in the first measure moves into the second measure, where I use the notes of the diminished scale relative to the dominant 7th chord (G7 in the example), but organized into two diatonic triad pairs (E minor and Bb minor in the example). These connect to each other via half-step voice leading. This triad pair moves into the tonic chord of the third measure (C-Maj7 in the example) also voice leading with a half-step to resolve on the major 7th of the chord (B natural in the example).

The third measure continues with another triad pair (G major and Ab major) extracted from the notes of the harmonic minor scale of the tonic (C harmonic minor in the example). The line makes a slight departure from the pattern in the fourth measure as it "slightly implies" both of the triads in the previous measure by reorganizing in an even more angular way, ending on the tension of the major 7th (B natural in the example).

You can explore this idea further by simply discovering some other interesting inversions of the minor pentatonic scale over the ii chord, as well as connecting it with the other diatonic triad pairs found within the diminished scale (Bb major, E major, Db minor, G major, etc., in the example) relative to the dominant 7th chord. And of course there are more variations in diatonic triad pairs to be found over the tonic chord, forming triads from both harmonic minor and melodic minor. Use your ear and aim for half-step voice leading movement.