



Lance Russell Theory

Music Training for Every Level

Two Ear-Training Exercises

Thanks for Reading!

On the last page of this document, you will find two sample resources that I have found to be invaluable for developing musical fluency and a strong musical ear. By developing the skills that these exercises are meant to train, you should be able to read music with greater ease, increase dexterity and accuracy on your instrument, and learn to hear the harmonies behind what you are playing. That last point is particularly important for your ability to stay in tune, and for learning to improvise.

Before Getting Started...

Before beginning these exercises, it is important to first establish a sense of musical “key.” The best way to do this is to first perform a “tonicization pattern,” which is designed to touch all of the notes of a musical scale while highlighting the two most important musical harmonies, the “tonic” and “dominant.”

Major Scale Pattern

Minor Scale Pattern



It is important to sing these drills using solfege syllables, or to otherwise practice them with the solfege in mind for two reasons: 1) to aid with musical tuning by always relating each music note back to the “tonic” note “do,” and 2) to reinforce a sense of which notes are a part of which musical harmony, which is critical for accelerating one’s ability to learn new music and improvise impressive musical melodies.

Tonal Indexing

This exercise is designed to develop fluency while playing through a melodic line. To practice this exercise, first do a tonicization pattern in your chosen key (you can start with the given key, “C-major”). Once you have a good sense of where the “tonic” is, begin singing/playing through each note in the pattern.

Increase your speed as you get more comfortable. Your goal should be to complete both lines in 30 seconds. Once you have reached that goal, repeat the exercise in new keys.

Singers should use solfege throughout the exercise (so in the given C-major key, mi-fa-mi-re-do...etc.).

Harmonic-Pattern Drill

In this exercise, you will be singing/playing “arpeggiations,” which are melodic patterns that touch each note of a particular harmony. It is meant to train your ability to hear the harmonies behind the melody that you sing/play, which is essential for tuning and accuracy as well as improvisation.

To practice this exercise, first do another tonicization pattern for your chosen key (in the given key, “G-major”). Then, begin singing/playing through the harmonic pattern on **the lower musical staff**. The “chords” on the upper musical staff are there to show you each note of the musical harmonies. While you practice, see if you can begin to pick out the top musical notes of the line (mi... re... do..., etc.). Then, try to pick out the notes in bottom line.

This pattern should be memorized. When the solfege pattern is memorized, you can begin practicing it in other keys. Increase your speed as you get more comfortable. Your goal should be to complete the pattern in under 30 seconds.

Once more, singers should use solfege throughout the exercise for maximum effectiveness.

Happy Practicing!



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Interested in taking lessons? Visit lancerusselltheory.com and book online today!



Tonal Indexing



Harmonic-Pattern Drill

G/D D G/B Em/B C

I V I vi IV

6 Am/C A/C# G/D D7 G/D

ii V/V I V7 I