
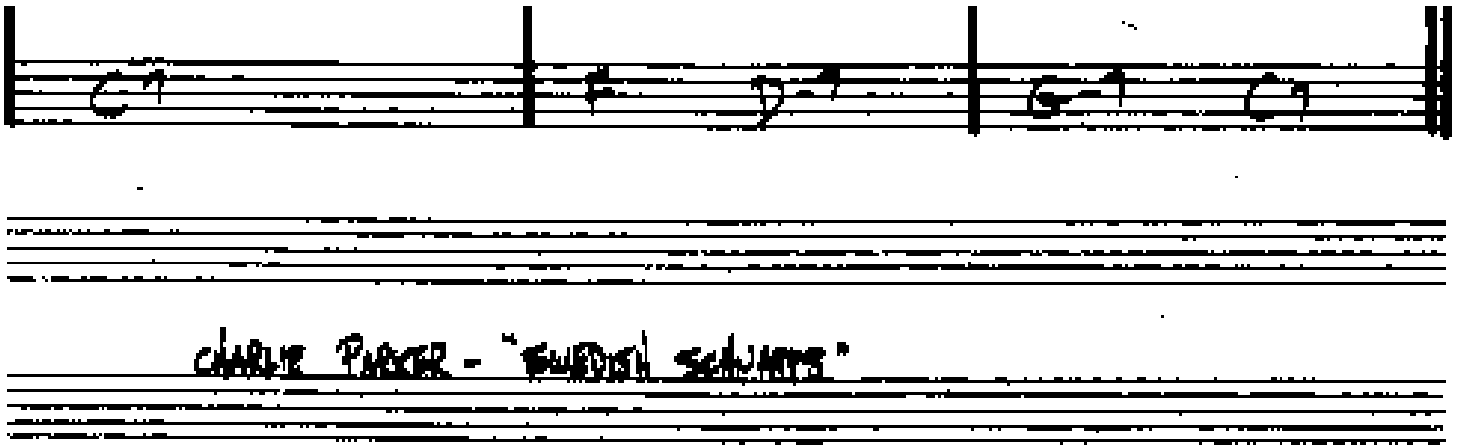


I like to start with *Blues for Alice*. It's a blues for one. It is also a bebop tune and learning lines like these is a good way to start to break down and change some bowing habits you might have, as well as challenging your idea of what an appropriate sound is. If you are a classically trained cellist like I am you've spent years with a set of expectations that need to be jostled and challenged.

## PHRASING AND TIME

Learn "Blues for Alice"  ([RealAudio Blues for Alice](#)): Try to use the bowings supplied here. If you achieve a better, more convincing sound using a different bowing, please do. If you're not sure then stick to the bowings I have indicated. It's not a bad idea to get a hold of a recording of this tune before or while you are learning the notes and the bowings. Knowing how it should sound will help you understand my bowing choices. "Swing" is an elusive concept. For now think of a dotted eighth-sixteenth note pattern or quarter-eighth in a 3/8 bar as a starting point. One teacher of mine put the words "ooh-bah" to those rhythms as a way of hearing a swung pair of eighths.



Start slowly and work up to tempo. Use NO vibrato. When approaching improvised music your "sound" is a very important consideration. If you are classically trained then you're pretty sure to be using vibrato quite freely--some teachers even demand its use on every note you play! The rich, beautiful classical sound that we are trained to have should be only one of the colors in your arsenal (for any kind of music.) In most improvised music this kind of sound will stick out and make you sound stiff. So eliminate vibrato for now. Use bow speed and contact point (near or far from the bridge) to vary the color of your sound.

Use a metronome. Start slowly and set it to click on the "2" and the "4" of the 4/4 measure. This is a good way the feel of a "jazz" walking 4/4 feel which, for the sake of a simplified learning environment, I will say doesn't stress the "1" and the "3" (nothing is a hard and fast rule. As you get better and are more at ease you can emphasize different beats to create variety. For now stick to feeling the "2" and the "4" as the stronger beats.

**LISTEN AND PLAY:** Get a recording of *Blues for Alice* (the tune is on the recently re-released "Charlie Parker Swedish Schnapps +" cd on Verve) and play along with it. Listen to the phrasing. Listen for ghosted notes (notes that are "swallowed" or not fully articulated.) Listen for how the eighth notes are phrased...are they swung eighths? If so, are all the notes swung? Or are some straight eighths? (My feeling is that an incessant swinging eighth note feel is artificial and stiff. Don't become locked into a "triplet-y" swing feel, this will sound lame. Your phrasing should be fluid, changing, varied. [As is often the case the "Real Book" has a version of the tune with some notes that are played differently by the band on the recording. Test your ears by finding the "errors" in the chart.] [RealAudio Blues for Alice](#)

Play the head even while listening to the players on the recording soloing. Always keep the form of the tune.

Click here for [Lesson II](#) and [here for Lesson III](#).

[Questions: erikf@erikfriedlander.com](mailto:erikf@erikfriedlander.com)

# Cello Lesson II

## Learning the harmony of the tune.

### Assignment #1

Play two octave arpeggios of each chord change. Create exercises using each chord. Practice the arpeggios using different rhythms and bowings. I've given two examples for each of the first three chords of the tune. Continue in a similar manner through the tune. The next chord would be D-7, then G7, etc. It's important to be creative as possible in your practicing, make it interesting for yourself. Find bowings and patterns that challenge, or if these examples seem over your head, create simpler exercises. The idea is to learn the sound of the chords and to be able to execute all the primary chord tones of each chord within at least two octaves.

[See Examples for Assignment #1](#)

Note: For those of you who are unsure of what notes constitute a Major Seventh or a Minor Seventh consult one of the many jazz harmony books out there. The Jamey Aebersold "Play-a-longs" are good, check out the early volumes.

### Assignment #2

Play the scales associated with each chord change. There are many ways to approach scales and harmony. I'm using just one basic approach. If you go to a good music book store you will find many different jazz scale books which you can use to keep things interesting when you practice. Practice these scales much as you would any other scales. Be creative, use as many different bowings and I would suggest not playing open strings as you will develop greater facility playing in different keys. I've given examples here for the first three bars of the tune. You should apply these scales to each chord appropriately. For instance, the next chord is C minor. Use the same scale intervals that are found in the D minor scale, transpose it down a whole step. This scale is called the Dorian and you can always remember the intervals by thinking of a scale from "D" to "D" in the key of C major. So Dorian is essentially a major scale starting on the second degree and ending on the second degree. For C minor you would use a Bb major scale and play from 'c' to 'c' (C, D, Eb, F, G, A, Bb, C). For a dominant 7th chord (without a b9) use what is called a Mixolydian scale which is a major scale starting and ending on the 5 degree. The next chord in the progression after C minor is F dominant. F is the 5th degree of Bb so the scale would be a Bb scale starting and ending on 'f' (F, G, A, Bb, C, D, Eb, F)

[See Examples for Assignment #2](#)

The scale for A7b9 chord is called the "diminished whole tone scale." It is a particularly "altered" sounding scale which hits on many of the notes which can make a dominant chord sound even more...dominant! For those of you who know jazz harmony you can see that this scale has both the b9 (Bb) and the #9 (C natural), the #11 (D#, this could also be thought of as the b5), the #5 (F or E#) and of course the 7 (G). If this means nothing to you, don't worry. At this point it's better to just learn the scale and get it in your ear.

## Assignment #3

Sing bass notes (here, in this case, the roots of each chord.) Learn the whole tune, start by concentrating on each interval. Spend some time and get it in your ear then as you did with the head of the tune work it up slowly until you can sing the bass notes in time (metronome on 2 and 4. This is very important. If you can hear the basic structure of the tune in your head then you will be able to solo more freely, more convincingly. Unlike horn players we cellists can sing and play and the same time, we'll take advantage of this later.....

[See Examples for Assignment #3](#)

Question: What is it that sax/trumpet players do that you as a cellist don't have to do in order to play?

To [Lesson III](#).

# Lesson 2

Assignment I: examples

The image displays six lines of bass clef musical notation for Assignment I: examples. Each line represents a different exercise:

- Line 1:** Labeled **Fmaj7**. It shows two variations of a melodic line starting from the F chord. Variation 1 is a simple eighth-note scale. Variation 2 is a more complex line with slurs and ties.
- Line 2:** Labeled **E-7b5**. It shows two variations. Variation 1 is a melodic line with a flat sign. Variation 2 consists of a series of triplets.
- Line 3:** Labeled **A7b9**. It shows two variations of a melodic line with various accidentals (sharps and flats).
- Line 4:** Labeled **Fmaj7**. It shows a single melodic line with a flat sign, consisting of eighth notes.

PS

Assignment #2: examples:

F-7b5



A7b9



D-7



G7



Assignment #3





# Cello Lesson III

## HARMONY (cont.)

### Assignment 1:

**Bass Line:** Still using *Blues for Alice* play a pizz bass line in time. For now, always play the root on beat 1 of each bar and in the case of bars where there are two chord changes per bar, play the root on beats 1 and 3. Mix scale and arpeggio motion (bow down, don't peck at the string, pull a full sound, use the meat of your index and middle fingers. Watch a jazz bass player to get a sense of what this is about.) This is an example but you should create your own. Play along with a recording ([RealAudio Blues for Alice](#)) and alternate playing your bass line and then listening to what the bass player does. [Click here for one example.](#)

### Assignment 2:

**Play and Sing:** Play the roots of the chords and sing the third. Start out of time. Go slowly and stay calm (don't learn tension), move smoothly from one change to the next. As you get better, use a slow tempo and finally, play and sing up to tempo. For the future you can try and sing the 5 (or the b5 depending on the chord) and the 7th as well. Only move on after you have a very comfortable feeling with the third. [Click here for the music.](#)

### Practice Technique

If you find yourself getting frustrated and anxious, not happy with your progress or making the same mistakes SLOW DOWN. You will learn well what you practice. If you practice anxious tension you'll bring that to performing. Practice slow enough to keep the frustration level down--at a manageable level (Challenge yourself but monitor how anxious or frustrated you become.) I use the metronome to restore some order to a frustrating practice session. A slow tempo and deep breathing are a good combination.

### Answer to Question #1 from Lesson II:

Like a singer, horn players use their breath and their mouth to shape the sound of their playing. Our tools for this lie mainly in the bow arm--a far inferior tool, but all we have. The ability to vary the sound with the demands of the music is necessary. Experiment with the *Blues for Alice* head. Use different contact points, volumes, bow speeds to generate different emotions.

## Developing material from the melody:

When you approach a tune or piece it's helpful to really know the tune. One way to do this is to learn parts of the melody (or the whole thing!) you like in different keys. The process of doing this will develop your ears and your ability to translate what you hear in your head to the cello. You might want to print out the [examples sheet](#) and have it as a reference while you read the following exercises. The numbers in boxes refer to the numbers below.

1. Look at the first bar of *Blues for Alice*. Label the scale degrees of each note as it relates to F major. Check your answer here. Now you know how each of the notes of this first bar relates to the key of 'F'. An improviser needs to be flexible and have the ability to move from different key areas with ease. One way to develop this is to practice phrases or 'licks' in all the keys. This is a simple little phrase, let's start with this.
2. Learn this opening bar in all twelve keys. e.g.
3. Using a metronome test your knowledge of the phrase. Try following the cycle of fifths from 'F'. The first few moves through the cycle are listed here and each note is labelled (these are not fingerings.)
4. Try a chromatic progression from F (F-Gb-G-Ab-A-etc.)
5. Try major thirds from F (F-A-Db-E-Ab-C-Eb-G-B-etc..) Notice how you have to jump a minor third every three chords to allow for a complete journey through the keys.
6. Now vary the rhythm of this little opening phrase and continue to move through the different keys.

Assignment: Find one phrase from *Blues for Alice* you particularly like and put it through 12 keys as above. The phrase could be one bar or could be longer...

RESOURCES: Real Book, get some kind of Fake Book. Jamey Aebersold: some people find these to be very helpful. The ii V7 volume is dry but helpful. The "Bird" volume is performed by a great rhythm section. David Baker: I think volume 3 of the

"Learning to Play Bebop" series is good. Some great ideas on how to memorize tunes, changes and ways of practicing tunes (ideas I've used here).

TRANSCRIPTION: Translating music you love to listen to, to the cello is a great exercise, whatever the music. Take phrases, "licks" or entire solos from artists you love listening to and learn them on the cello. Then try to learn the phrase in other keys--even all 12 keys. This will develop your ears and your facility.

**If you would like to be kept updated on any new lessons or new aids for the lessons drop me an [note](#).**

## Lesson 3

## Assignment #1

F E-7b5 A7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7



Eb7 Bbm7 Eb7 Am7 D7 Abm7 Db7



Gm7 C7 F Dm7 Gm7 C7

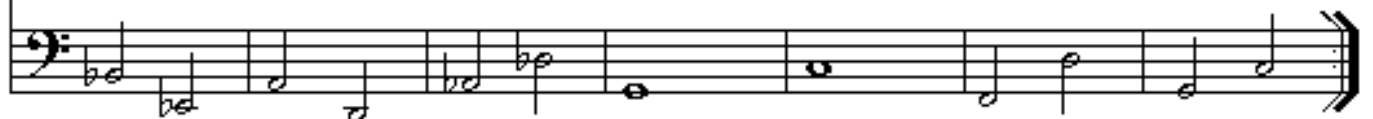
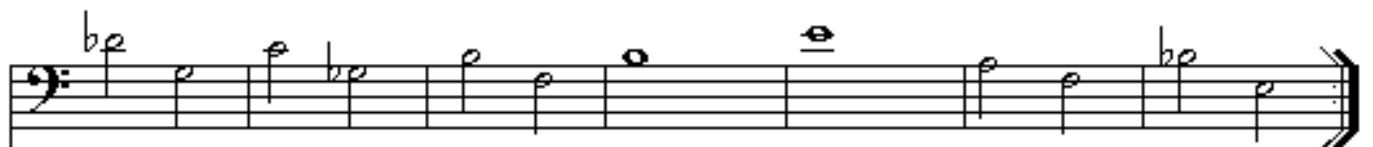
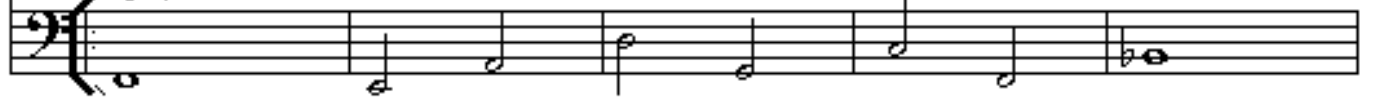


## Assignment #2

sing



play



Developing Material from the Melody

1.



2.



3.



5.



6.



