

DEVELOPING A MOTIF pt. 2

Way back in Lesson 3 we talked about tweaking a phrase by replacing one or two notes. This time instead of replacing a note, we're going to change the note order. You could call this **melodic displacement**.

Here's a 4 note motif based on the A minor pentatonic scale.



E G A C

With any pattern that contains 4 non repeating notes - there are 24 possible permutations i.e. 24 ways of playing the same 4 note grouping.

The pattern shown above is a straight ahead no frills ascending scale pattern using the notes (from lowest to highest) E G A C.

Original motif

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Pretty intensive right ? A quicker way of getting something without having to turn into a mad scientist is to simply change the note order. Using the original ascending 4 note motif you can have anyone of the notes as the starting point. Meaning just 4 possibilities.

Original motif

E G A C ascending

Variant #1 = G A C E

Variant #2 = A C E G

Variant #3 = C E G A

Musical notation showing the original motif and three variants. The original motif is E-G-A-C ascending. Variant #1 is G-A-C-E, Variant #2 is A-C-E-G, and Variant #3 is C-E-G-A. The notation includes a treble clef staff and a guitar staff with fret numbers 5 and 8.

Let's try this concept over a cliched, hackneyed, done to death minor pentatonic lick. We're using a triplet lick i.e. 3 notes therefore 3 possibilities. Note the string bend from fret 7 fo fret 9 (indicated as full). This in fact gives you the same note as fret 5 on the B string only articulated in a different way. The original lick is straight out of the Chuck Berry school of rock 'n roll.

Original motif

Musical notation showing the original motif over a minor pentatonic lick. The notation includes a treble clef staff and a guitar staff with fret numbers 7 and 5. The original motif is E-G-A-C ascending. The lick is a triplet lick on the B string with a full string bend from fret 7 to fret 9.

Thinking this way can give give you some new angles on some old and perhaps stale ideas. So happy exploring.