

## Composing: Start With An Image Using The Minor Pentatonic Scale

The activities used in this Lesson Strategy will engage students in creating music through visual-auditory associations. Students will choose an image, video, or poem (<u>located on the downloadable PDF</u>), and create a simple pentatonic composition that will represent their interpretation of their chosen media. While the jumping off point for this lesson strategy is this excerpt from *BANDED*, the available time in your curriculum will determine how much you incorporate from the following suggested activities and resources.

The clip below reflects this month's featured lesson, where Boston-based band Ghost Box Orchestra discusses an idea for a new work based on an image using a simple E minor pentatonic riff. Listen to the <u>full recording</u> to hear how they developed this simple riff into an extended composition called "Desert Lights".

#### Outcomes:

• Students will gain an understanding of the relationship between musical and visual expression by creating a minor pentatonic composition for a chosen piece of media.

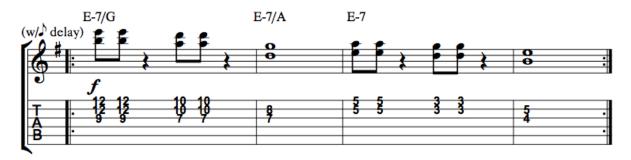
#### Materials:

- BANDED film clip
- PULSE pentatonic scale material
- Silent film clip
- Image: Creative Commons Image
- Text: Shel Silverstein Where the Sidewalk Ends, p.70-71

### INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

- 1. This lesson strategy will focus on the minor pentatonic scale. The pentatonic scale is widely used in many styles of popular music, and can provide students with a simple entry into improvisation and composition. For a review of the pentatonic scale, students can check out this short clip from the *PULSE video library* and can <u>download</u> PDF material from the *PULSE Study Room*.
- 2. After watching the BANDED film clip of the Ghost Box Orchestra, students will:
  - Analyze the minor pentatonic riff used in *Desert Lights* as it relates to the E minor pentatonic scale and describe the various ways the ensemble collaborated to develop their composition based on that riff. *Listen to and view the E minor pentatonic scale and guitar riff below:*





- Choose one of the provided media files (image, movie, or text), or a media file provided by the teacher, and describe their musical impression of the visual media (tempo, texture, instrumentation, form, dynamics, etc.). We have provided a sample movie clip and image, located below on the PULSE lesson page.
- 3. If you'd like to extend this lesson, here are a couple of ideas:
  - Students can compose several 4-8 bar minor pentatonic patterns using a variety of rhythms for their composition

OR

- Students will compose a piece of music that represents their chosen media. The composition will have a minimum of four parts and will combine their minor pentatonic melodic patterns using additive layering.
  - If possible, students will perform their composition.

# Lesson Closing

For further study of composition on PULSE, check out these materials on the PULSE website:

- Composition <u>Level 1</u>, <u>Level 2</u>, and <u>Level 3</u> with Berklee Composition Faculty member Marti Epstein
- Introduction to Melody Videos <u>Level 1</u>, <u>Level 2</u>, and <u>Level 3</u>