



## A Minor Pentatonic Licks

By Jason Kokoszka

For our first issue, we are featuring some short phrases based on that old favorite: the A Minor Pentatonic scale. Try these ideas out with your friends; complimentary parts for guitar, keyboard, bass and drums are included below. Any of these phrases (even a single bar) will work well over an A Minor chord.

Dig in, and enjoy!

### Guitar

Here are some single notes, slides, double-stops and even an A Minor barre chord (all important stuff for any guitarist's bag of tricks!). There are a variety of note values in this example, so take it slow to iron out any trouble spots. Have fun!

Guitar tablature for the A Minor Pentatonic Licks. The piece is in 4/4 time. The top staff shows the melody in treble clef. The bottom staff shows the guitar fretboard with fret numbers and techniques like slides (SL) and double-stops. The tablature includes a barre chord at the end.

### Keyboard

Here is a chance for you to practice playing a melody in one hand while playing intervals in the other. Be sure to give the right hand emphasis in bar 3, and watch the fingering as you head into bar 4.

Keyboard score for the A Minor Pentatonic Licks. The piece is in 4/4 time. The top staff shows the melody in treble clef. The bottom staff shows the bass line in bass clef. Fingering numbers are provided for both hands.

## Bass

Here is a solid groove that works great under an A Minor chord. Dig that fill in bar 3 and pay attention to the fingering. Also, be sure to hold all the tied notes for the correct durations. Doing so will give this bassline a cool, syncopated feeling.

The image shows a bass line in 4/4 time for an A Minor chord. The notation is written on a single staff with a bass clef. The first two bars consist of eighth-note patterns: the first bar has two groups of eighth notes (G2-A2, B2-C3) with a slur over the second group, and the second bar has two groups of eighth notes (D3-E3, F3-G3) with a slur over the second group. The third bar features a more complex pattern with eighth notes (G2-A2, B2-C3, D3-E3, F3-G3) and a slur over the last two notes. The fourth bar has eighth notes (G2-A2, B2-C3, D3-E3, F3-G3) with a slur over the last two notes. Fingering numbers are provided below the notes: 1 1 3 3 1 3 for the first bar, 1 1 1 4 2 1 3 1 3 1 for the second bar, and SL 9-7-5 for the third bar. A double bar line is at the end of the fourth bar. Below the staff, the guitar fretboard is shown with fret numbers for the index (I) and bass (B) hands. The I hand frets are 5-7-(7)-7-5-7 for the first bar, 5-7-(7)-7-5-7 for the second bar, 5-7-(7)-9-7-5 for the third bar, and 7-5-7-5-(5) for the fourth bar. The B hand frets are 5-5 for the first bar, 5-5 for the second bar, 5-5 for the third bar, and 5-5 for the fourth bar.

## Drums

Looking for a sweet groove when your buddies are kicking around this A Minor Pentatonic stuff? First, we have two bars of a solid beat great for any drummer's arsenal, followed by a fill beginning on beat 3 of the third bar and a simple finish for the last bar.

The image shows a drum line in 4/4 time. The notation is written on a single staff with a drum clef. The first two bars consist of a solid beat pattern: a quarter note on the snare, a quarter note on the bass drum, and a quarter note on the snare. The third bar features a fill pattern: a quarter note on the snare, a quarter note on the bass drum, a quarter note on the snare, a quarter note on the bass drum, a quarter note on the snare, a quarter note on the bass drum, a quarter note on the snare, and a quarter note on the bass drum. The fourth bar features a simple finish pattern: a quarter note on the snare, a quarter note on the bass drum, a quarter note on the snare, and a quarter note on the bass drum. The notation is marked with '+' signs above the snare notes in the first two bars and the word 'simile' above the snare notes in the third bar. A double bar line is at the end of the fourth bar.

For a more in-depth discussion of this scale, be sure to see our Theory Corner column in this issue, and check out some of the beginning guitar lessons in blues (taught by Dennis McCumber, Jeff Bihlman, Scott A. Smith and Reggie Chavez), jazz (taught by Tom Dempsey and Amanda Monaco) and rock (taught by Tim Quick, Alex Nolan, Tobias Hurwitz, Ralph Agresta, Geoff Hartwell and Paul Howard) if you are unfamiliar with this scale.

This topic is a staple for guitar players, so it is easy to find lessons of all skill levels in all styles if you want to learn more.

Not a guitar player? Don't fret! (pun intended). Pianists will want to check out Andrea Amos and Leo Marchildon's Adult Refresher lesson "In Other Modes." Bassists will enjoy lessons on the minor pentatonic scale taught by Dave Overthrow and Sharon Ray.