

# Shape Exercise



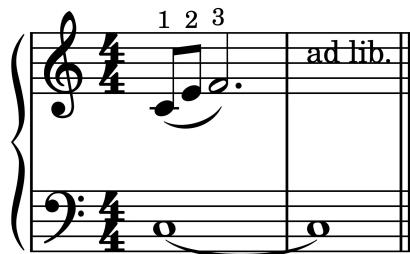
## The Idea

Improvisation relies on mindful listening and reacting. This exercise strips away the distractions of technique and visuals to allow you to focus all your attention on the sound.

*Scan for video example*

## Basic Method

1. Choose a drone note for your left hand (the bass) to repeat from time to time. You can use whatever finger you want.
2. Form a fixed shape with your right hand (the melody). For example, using fingers 1, 2, and 3 on C, E, and F.
3. **Close your eyes!**
4. Now, establish the drone with your left hand. When you're ready, play the shape broken as a melody (in 1-2-3 order). A 'short-short-long' rhythm works well.
5. Move the shape around by keeping your fingers in the same shape, but moving your arm so that your thumb starts on a different white key. Then play the shape broken as a melody again.



Focus on the sound. Be intrigued by how different starting notes create different effects against the same drone note.

## Extensions

- For more **expressive variety**, experiment with qualities like dynamics and articulation.
- For more **rhythmic variety**, try changing the rhythm in the right hand from 'short-short-long' to a different combination. Incorporate spacing/silence more.
- For more **harmonic variety**, try using a different drone note.
- For more **melodic variety**, try a different shape in the right hand (e.g., C, D, G). This may require a different finger (e.g., for C, D, G, use 1-2-5, not 1-2-3). Use what feels comfortable.

## Reflection Questions

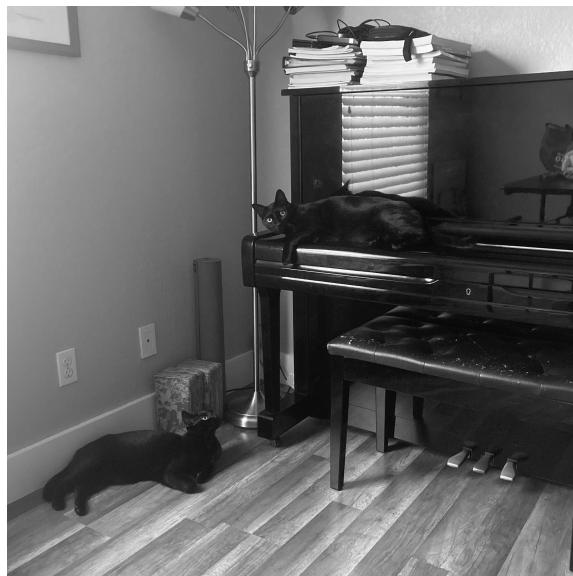
*Did closing your eyes make you uncomfortable? Did some moments feel ‘wrong?’* Try to release your judgment of the sound. Your goal is to accept the sound as it is and simply move it forward to the next sound.

## Musical Influences

This kind of playing loosely resembles the Indian classical tradition of a *raga*, where musicians introduce specific shapes and gestures against a steady drone.

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## Studio Demby



Have an idea for a collaboration, or just want to jam?

Contact me at [aaron.demby.jones@gmail.com](mailto:aaron.demby.jones@gmail.com).

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