

Minor Key Roundup

for student string ensembles

by

Herbert S. Gardner

Advanced Violin

Violin

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

Piano (optional)

This compendium of easy studies in 5 minor keys (E, G, D, B, A) gives students and teachers an opportunity to explore together the minor modes. Each study is an independent stand-alone work so that students and teachers can focus on the special playing challenges presented by each key.

Major teaching points*

1. New tonalities and their pitch relationships
2. Shifting for some instruments
3. "Slide" fingerings
4. Fluid left hand adjustments for key changes
5. More fourth finger usage instead of open strings (violin, viola)

Each of the numbered sections of this collection can be used as a separate lesson. The teaching points for each are listed.

Keep the principal goals in mind:

"FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE FINGERS OF THE LEFT HAND"

"ONE NOTE, ONE FINGER!"

"THROUGH THE EAR, NOT THE EYE!"

"NO MECHANICAL AIDS (TAPES) ON THE FINGERBOARDS"

Section #

Teaching Points

1. Adv. violin: III position. Cello: extended fingering - 1, x2, x4
2. Melodic form. All: D#, reached either by a "slide shift" of the first finger, or for basses, an actual shift to and from 1/2 position. Violins & violas: 4th finger E to 3rd finger D#. Violins: similar slide shift to low G#.
3. All: C# to D# to E. Violins & violas: 4th finger for E. Cellos: slide shift to high E and back. Basses: 1/2 position (meas.71-72). **"The notes are different coming down!"**
4. Cellos: extended fingering - 1, x2, x4 (meas. 79). Whole step slide shift (meas. 81).
5. Cellos: shift to II position (meas. 87-88). Basses: 1/2pos. shift to I pos. across two strings (meas. 89). Excerpt from "Marche Slav."
6. A well-known melody in the minor mode!
7. The left hand will "settle" into this new Key. Cellos: a new use for extended position (meas. 168-169).
8. "Go Down Moses," with a special piano accompaniment!
9. D minor. Make sure that the Bb is really low!
10. B minor with new slide shift tones for violins and violas (meas. 237-238). New tone row for violins, cellos, basses (meas. 249-250).
11. A minor. Fourth finger a must for violins and violas. Cellos: new finger slide (meas. 270).

Minor Key Roundup

Studies for string ensemble in the Minor Modes

Herbert S. Gardner

① E Minor in The Natural Mode

The score is for a study in E minor, natural mode, in 4/4 time. It features five staves: Advanced Violin, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass, plus a Piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the mode is natural (no flats). The piece consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 1-8) is a rhythmic exercise with quarter notes. The second system (measures 9-16) features arpeggiated patterns. Fingerings and bowings are indicated throughout. The piano part provides harmonic support with chords and arpeggios.

Advanced Violin

Violin

Viola

Cello

Double Bass

Piano

9 *arpeggios*

Adv. Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

Minor Key Roundup

2

Adv. Vln. *mf* Melody in E minor

Vln. *mf* Melody in E minor

Vla. *mf* Melody in E minor

Vc. *mf* Melody in E minor

D.B. *mf* Melody in E minor

Pno. *mf*

17

1

4

slide!

Adv. Vln. *p*

Vln. *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p*

D.B. *p*

Pno. *p*

25

1

Adv. Vln. *f*

Vln. *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

D.B. *f*

Pno. *f*

33

1

2

Minor Key Roundup

41

Adv. Vln. *mf*

Vln. *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

D.B. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

49

Adv. Vln. *p* *ff*

Vln. *p* *ff*

Vla. *p* *ff*

Vc. *p* *ff*

D.B. *p* *ff*

Pno. *p* *ff*

② E minor scale in the melodic mode (without signature)

slide! shift!

1 pos 1/2 pos 1 pos

57

Adv. Vln. III pos

Vln. 1 pos

Vla.

Vc. shift!

D.B.

Pno.

Minor Key Roundup

89

Adv. Vln. *V* What's this?

Vln. *V* What's this?

Vla. *V*

Vc. *V*

D.B. *V*

Pno.

97

Adv. Vln. *4* *mf*

Vln. *4* *mf*

Vla. *4* *mf*

Vc. *4* *mf*

D.B. *4* *mf*

Pno. *mf*

6 E minor with signature

105

Adv. Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

Minor Key Roundup

6

113

Adv. Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

Annotations: slide!, shift!, 1, 4

121

Adv. Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

Annotations: 4, x4, x2, 1, 2, 4, shift!

7 G minor with signature

129

Adv. Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

Annotations: What's this? (Listen), Optional obbligato! (Or, play violin part), WHAT'S THIS?, mf, 2, 4, pizz., 1/2 pos, shift!

Minor Key Roundup

137

Adv. Vln. 

Vln. 

Vla. 

Vc. 

D.B. 

137

Pno. 

145

Adv. Vln. 

Vln. 

Vla. 

Vc. 

D.B. 

145

Pno. 

153

Adv. Vln. 

Vln. 

Vla. 

Vc. 

D.B. 

153

Pno. 

Minor Key Roundup

161

Adv. Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

I pos

extended position (1-2-4)

half position (H.P.)

169

Adv. Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

x4

177

Adv. Vln.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D.B.

Pno.

first position (1 pos)

Minor Key Roundup

Allegro
Twice as fast!

10
209

Adv. Vln. Vln. Vla. Vc. D.B.

209

Pno.

217

Adv. Vln. Vln. Vla. Vc. D.B.

217

Pno.

225

Adv. Vln. Vln. Vla. Vc. D.B.

WHAT'S THIS?

225

Pno.

Minor Key Roundup
⑩ B Minor without signature

233

Adv. Vln. *What's this? slide!*

Vln. *What's this? slide!*

Vla. *What's this? slide!*

Vc. *pp* *What's this?*

D.B. SHIFT! SHIFT SHIFT 1 pos

Pno.

241

Adv. Vln. 3 4

Vln.

Vla.

Vc. 2 2 4 2 4
Extended position!

D.B.

Pno. 241

249

Adv. Vln.

Vln. 1 4

Vla. 1 3 4 4

Vc. 2 4 1 slide! 1 4 2 1 3 1

D.B. shift 1 shift 2 4 1
H.P. 1 pos

Pno. 249
shift 1 shift 2 4 1
H.P. 1 pos

Minor Key Roundup

11

Adv. Vln. (test notes) A Minor without signature
Vln. (test notes) A Minor without signature
Vla. (test notes) A Minor without signature
Vc. (test notes) x2 x4 A Minor without signature
D.B. (test notes) A Minor without signature

What's this? slide!
What's this? slide!
What's this?

pp

Adv. Vln. 267 4
Vln.
Vla. 4
Vc. x2 x4
D.B. shift 1 2 1/2 pos shift! 2 1 pos
Pno. 267 1 slide! 1

Adv. Vln. 275 pizz.
Vln. pizz.
Vla. pizz.
Vc. pizz.
D.B. pizz.
Pno. 275