

Viennese Bass Method

Lesson 3. Scales: A Major, Two Octaves

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In this lesson we will cover the A major scale fingering options over the two octave ambitus. Since the Viennese tuning setup contains two A strings (the low and the high), this lesson will cover the entire usable range between them and up to the octave harmonic on the high A string.

The two octave ambitus is common to the most orchestra, chamber and early solo repertoire. Many of the fingering patterns introduced in this lesson will also be recognized later in the period compositions, and are actually designed to facilitate the study of the same. The thorough study of these scales and arpeggios is a necessary step in building the solid foundation for the further technical development, in spite the fact that the repetitiveness of material may not be so attractive.

The more interesting part is the section with the real musical examples, which also offers the opportunity for the bassists to explore and apply their own fingerings. I believe that a development of a personal fingering system is important in Viennese technique and should be fostered very early. The ability to plan and execute typical Viennese melodic patterns on your own is a prerequisite to being able to perform on the Viennese bass equally as good as on the modern one. The thorough study and effort invested in this stage will indeed pay heftier later, when one reaches the level required of the solo literature.

This is also the last lesson where we will cover all three clefs simultaneously, given that the tenor clef is not used much beyond the octave harmonic range.

Exercise 16. Two octave A major scale - Bass Clef

This exercise offers the various A major scale fingering patterns over the two octave range. You will notice that the fingering patterns of the ascending and descending passages differ, and that was done intentionally to enable easier execution in faster tempos.

The exercise consists of two staves of music in bass clef, A major (two sharps). The first staff shows the ascending scale with fingerings: 1 4 1 2 2 1 1 4 1 1 4 1 1 2 1. The second staff shows the descending scale with fingerings: 1 1 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 2 1 4 4 1 1 1 4. Below each staff are fingering diagrams for each note, represented by Roman numerals I-IV and lines indicating finger placement.

III — II — I — II — III — II — I —

I — II — III — II — I — II — III —

III — II — I — II — III — II — I —

I — II — III — II — I — II — III —

III — II — I — II — III — II — I —

I — II — III — II — I — II — III —

IV III — II — I — II — III — IV — III — II — I —

I — II — III — IV — III — II — III IV III IV

Exercise 17. Two octave arpeggios - Bass Clef

Exercise 18. Two octave A major scale - Tenor Clef

○ 1 4 ○ 1 4 1 2 2 1 ○ 1 ○ 4 1 ○ 1 4 ○ 1 ○ 1 2 1
 IV III II III IV III II I

1 ○ 1 ○ 1 ○ 4 1 4 ○ 1 4 1 2 1 4 4 1 ○ 1 ○ 1 ○ 4
 I II III IV III II I II III IV

○ 1 ○ 1 1 4 2 4 4 2 4 1 1 ○ 1 ○ 1 4 1 2 1 4 1 4
 III II I II III II I

4 1 4 1 4 2 4 1 ○ 1 1 4 2 4 1 4 4 1 2 1 4 1 4 1
 I II III II I II III

2 4 1 4 1 4 1 3 3 1 4 1 4 1 4 2 1 4 1 2 1 4 2 3
 III II I II III II I

3 2 4 1 2 1 4 1 1 1 4 1 2 1 1 3 3 1 4 1 4 1 4 2
 I II III II I II III

1 4 1 4 1 2 1 4 4 1 2 1 4 1 4 1 1 4 2 4 1 4 1 4
 III II I II III II I

4 1 4 1 4 2 4 1 ○ 1 ○ 1 1 4 2 4 4 2 4 1 1 ○ 1 ○
 I II III II I II III

4 1 4 1 2 1 4 4 1 1 1 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 2 1

IV III II I II III IV III II I

1 1 1 4 1 1 4 1 4 1 2 2 1 4 1

I II III IV III II III IV III IV

Exercise 19. Two octave arpeggios - Tenor Clef

4 1 4 1 2 1 2 4 2 4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 4 2 1

IV III IV III II III II I II I II I II I II III

2 1 4 1 4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 4 2 1

II III IV III IV III II III II III II III II III II I II I II

4 2 1 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

I II III II III II III II III IV III II III II I II I

1 1 4 4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 4 1 4 1 2

II I II I II III II III IV III IV III II

1 2 4 2 4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 4 2 1 2 1 4 1 4 1 2

III II I II I II I II III II III IV III IV

IV III II I II III IV III II III II I

I II III II III IV III II I II III IV

IV III II I II III IV

Exercise 20. Two octave A major scale - Treble Clef

IV III II III IV III II I

I II III IV III II I II III IV

III II I II III II I

I II III II I II III

Exercise 21. Two octave arpeggios - Treble Clef

IV III IV III II III II I II I II I II I II I II III

II III IV III IV III II III II III II III II I II I II

I II III II III II III II III IV III II III II I II I

II I II I II I II III II III IV III IV III II

III II I II I II I II I II III II III IV III IV

IV III II I II III IV III II III II I

I II III II III IV III II I II III IV

IV III II I II III IV

