Beyond the Scale
BECOME AN ARPEGGIO AFICIONADO

■ The literal translation of the Italian word *arpeggio* is "played like on a harp," but practicing these note patterns will greatly improve your musical agility nmatter what instrument you play. Arpeggios are notes of a chord played in sequence rather than together—in other words, broken chords.

To play a basic major arpeggio, first choose a major key (e.g., C major, G major, D major, etc.) and familiarize yourself with the scale for that key. Then, play the fi rst, third, and fi fth notes of the scale in succession. For example, in G major, the notes would be G, B, D. Top off the arpeggio with the note one octave above the one you started on, and then go back down in the reverse order, ending with the first note.

A minor arpeggio uses the first, third, and fifth notes of the minor scale. In short, this means that the diff erence between a major and minor arpeggio is that, in the latter, the second note of the arpeggio (or third of the scale) is lowered by a half-step. The G minor arpeggio, for example, includes the notes G, B

Another common pattern is the dominant seventh arpeggio, which adds an extra note to the major arpeggio pattern: the seventh note of the scale lowered by a half-step. The notes in a G dominant seventh arpeggio are G, B, D, F.

Remember, any chord that you know can be transformed into an arpeggio simply by playing the notes separately.

Since chords are the building blocks of music, arpeggios make a great warm-up exercise. They help to solidify fingerings in your muscle memory and increase your fi nger agility if you work them up to a fast speed. Plus, knowing their patterns gives you a good base for improvisation. To increase the dif-fi culty, add more octaves so that the arpeggios cover the full range of your instrument.

A sequence of arpeggios starting on the note G (G minor, G major, and G dominant seventh) is shown below. As a warm-up to your practice sessions, play through the pattern after playing a G major scale.

Next, try to come up with arpeggios starting on different notes on your own!