

## DB BASS SCALE PRACTICE BOOKLET

The traditional way to learn scales on the double bass is to open a method or scale book, read the notes and follow the suggested fingering. You learn the sound of the whole and half steps in each scale and eventually are able to predict the next note as you go up and down the scale. This is an excellent way to train your ear. However, as an electric bass player I had first learned scales as visual patterns on the fingerboard. The aural training came after the visual. Eventually, after much practice, I could both “hear” and “see” the various scales on my instrument.

When I decided to study the double bass, I discovered many books that provided an almost infinite number of fingerings for scales. After constantly changing my fingerings every time I bought a new book or read a new article suggesting the “best” way to learn scales, I found myself totally confused. I decided to apply an electric bass concept to the double bass! (Please don’t shoot me!) My idea was to come up with a system of learning scales that would simplify the process for a beginner (me). The intent was not to replace the existing methods, but to supplement them.

After much research, I concluded that by memorizing three basic patterns of major scales, one could construct all scales by simply combining the patterns in different ways, or even use the same pattern for all keys. This allows an individual to learn the 12 common keys in a fraction of the time it would take to learn 12 different fingerings. You simply take the patterns and move them up, down and across the strings. A slight alteration of the basic major patterns allows you to construct minor patterns. I guess you could call this the “LEGO” system of scales.

For this system to work, the patterns must be moveable, i.e.: no open strings other than the tonic of the scale. Other criteria I chose were: no 4-4 shift ascending, no 1-1 shift descending, and, play at least 2 pitches before shifting (although not always possible).

I refer to the patterns as “forms”, and I provide a suggesting fingering for them. This is not a rigid system, so one can certainly make alterations to suit one’s preferences. Also, the examples provided are only a sampling of what can be done. There are obviously many more possibilities and you are encouraged to experiment. You may also find that some forms are not well suited for certain scales, but there are included nonetheless for sake of consistency.

The booklet begins with a side-by-side comparison of the *major* forms and then proceeds with a series of examples in 12 keys. Following this is a side-by-side comparison of *minor* forms and some examples. I would recommend that you say out loud the names of the notes as you play through the exercises. This project is still a works-in-progress and there is more coming. Any suggestions or corrections are welcome.

## CONTENTS

1. Basic Major forms (Ionian).
2. Examples of the forms across strings,
3. Combining of Major forms for two octaves in 12 keys.
4. Basic Minor forms (Melodic, Natural [Aeolian], Harmonic, Dorian)
5. Examples of the forms across strings.
6. Combining of Melodic Minor form ascending and Natural descending for two octaves in 12 keys.
7. Alternate Major forms (Lydian, Mixolydian, Pentatonic)
8. Alternate Minor forms (Pentatonic, Blues, Phrygian, Locrian)

## LEGEND

(4) = descending fingering

Symbol O = open string

Op = open

Cl = closed

Green note = tonic

Orange note = altered note

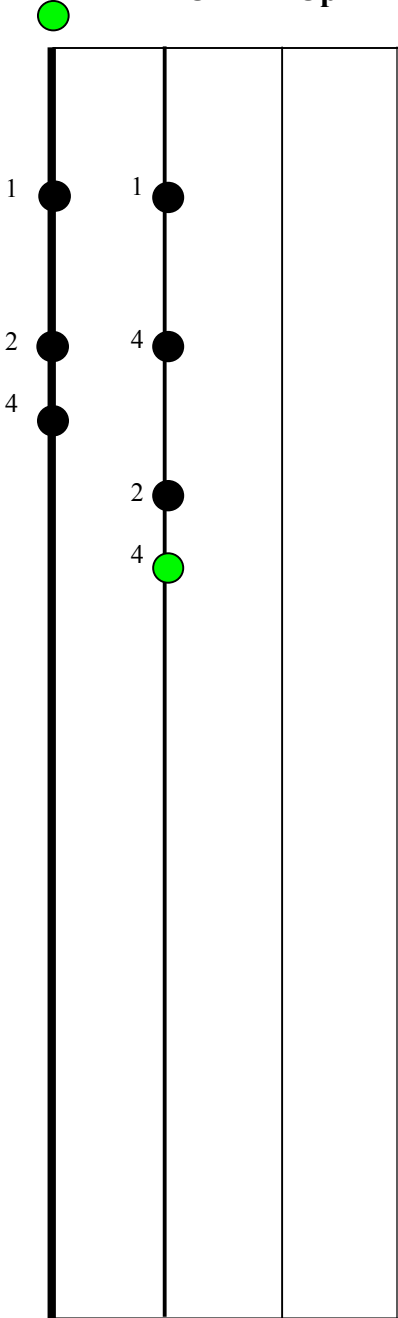
Red note = second octave

1,2 fingering = 1<sup>st</sup> finger preferred, 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate

BASIC MAJOR FORMS

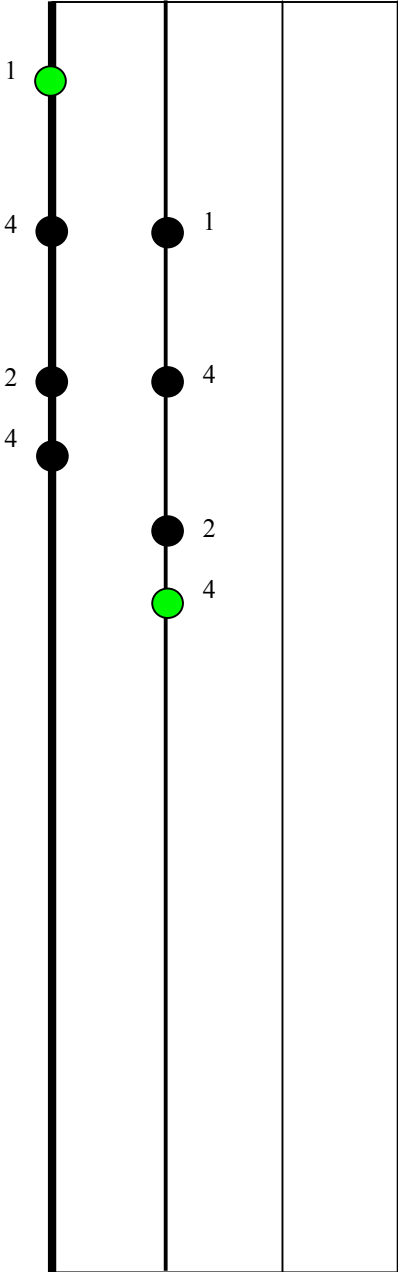
**E**

**FORM 1 Op**



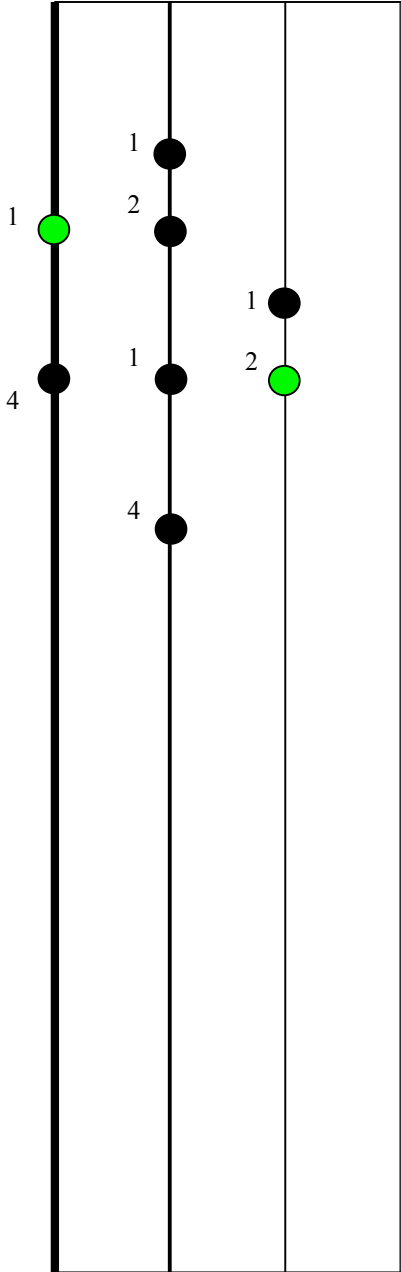
**F**

**FORM 1 Cl**



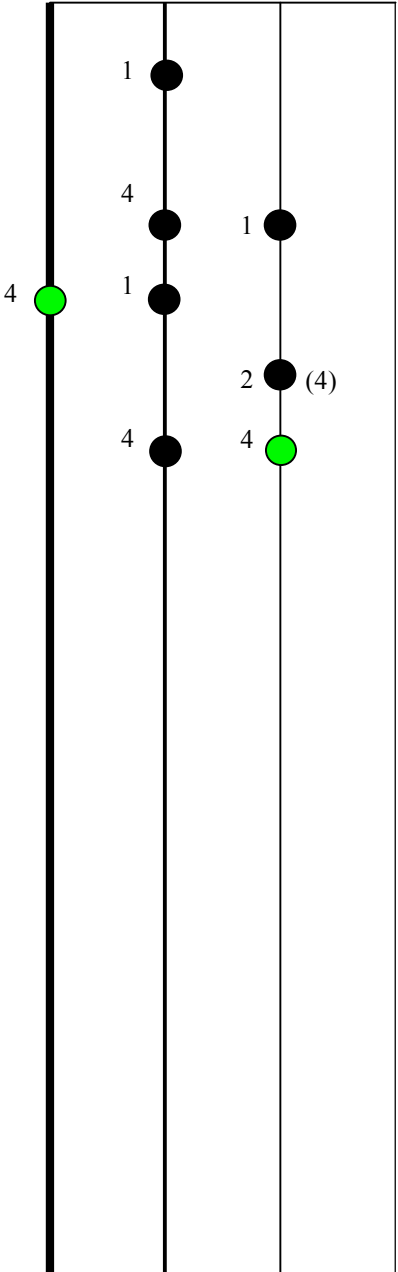
**G**

**FORM 2**

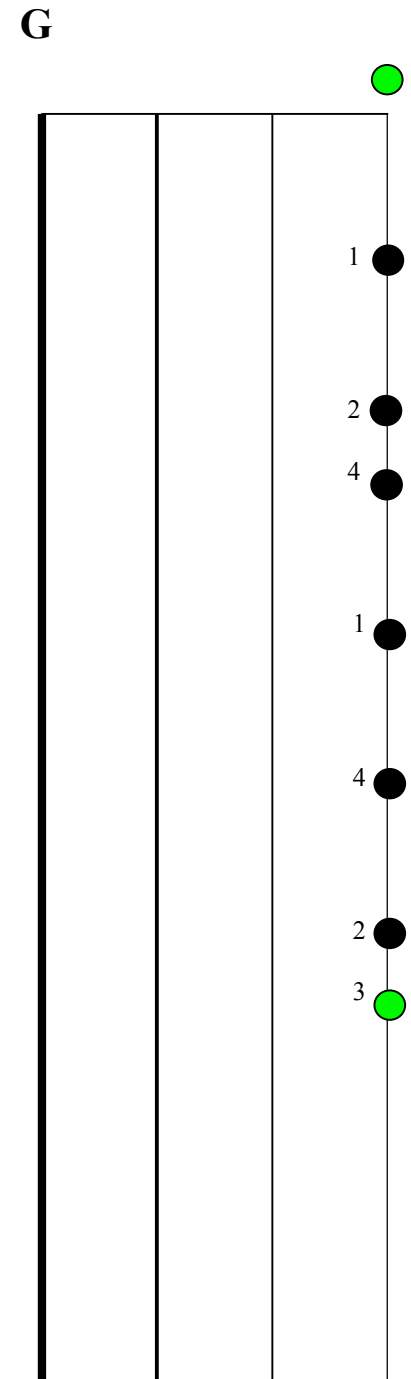
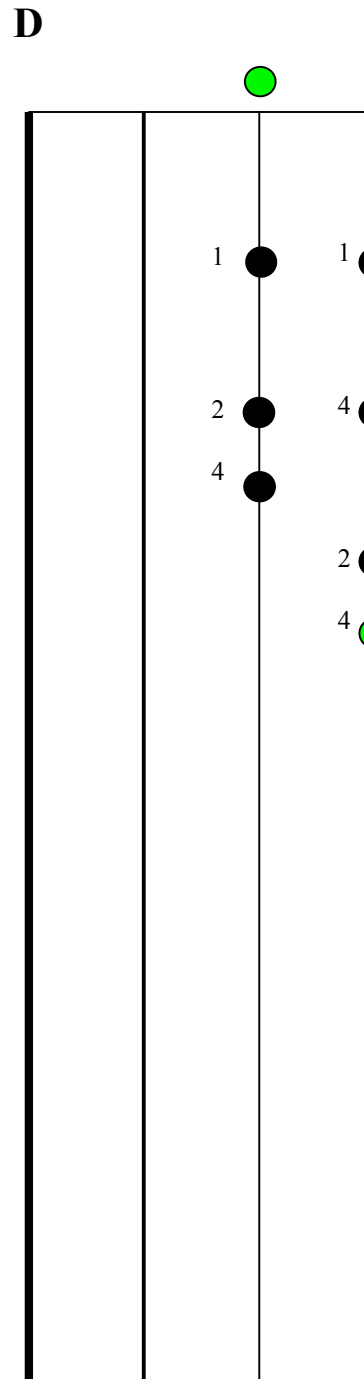
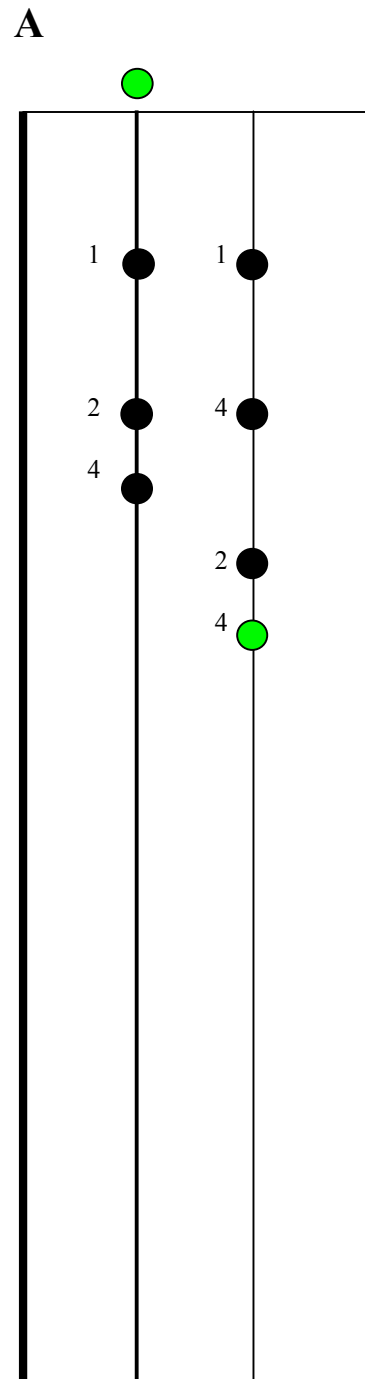
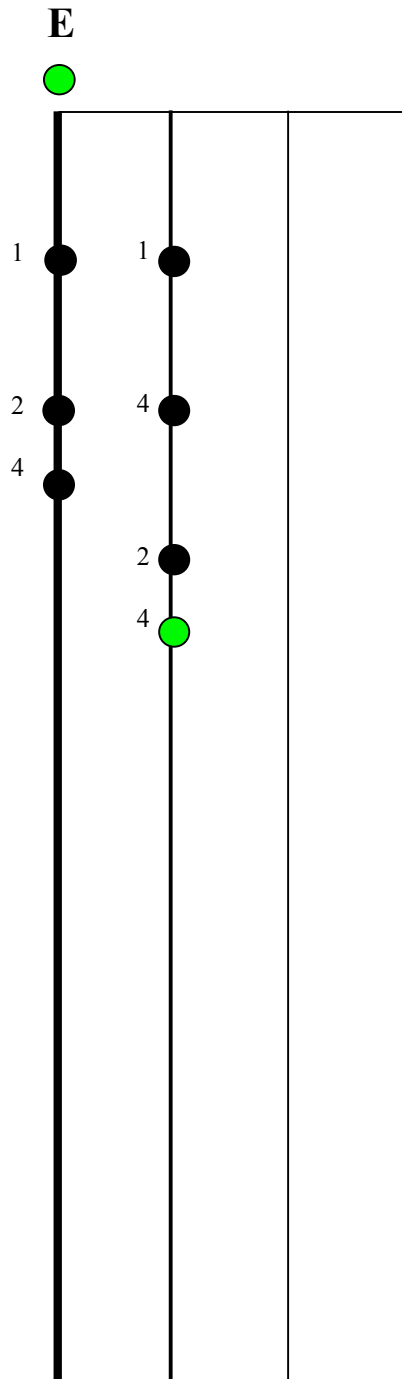


**Ab**

**FORM 3**

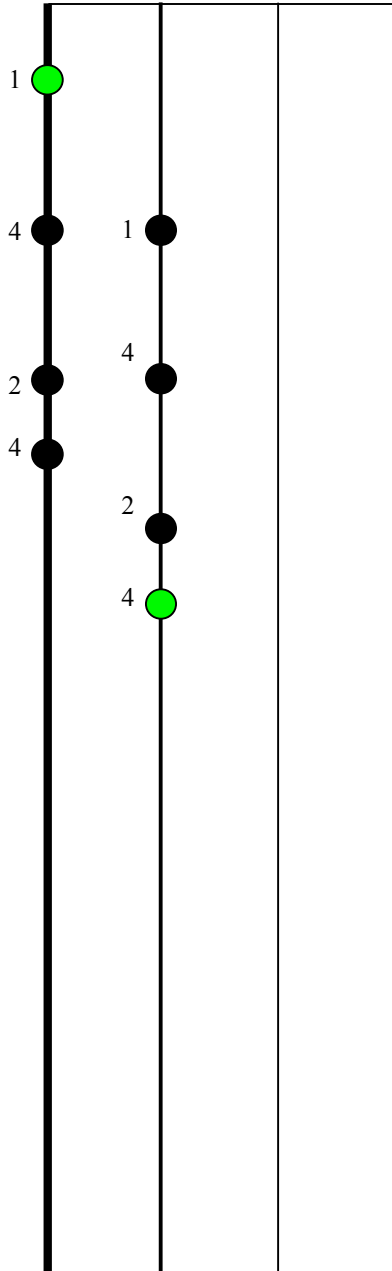


EXAMPLES of FORM 10p MAJOR ACROSS STRINGS

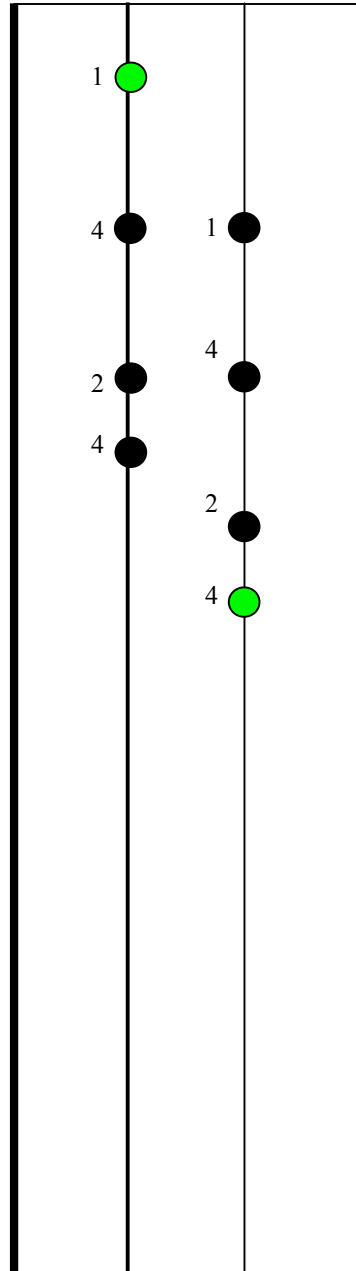


EXAMPLES of FORM 1C1 MAJOR ACROSS STRINGS

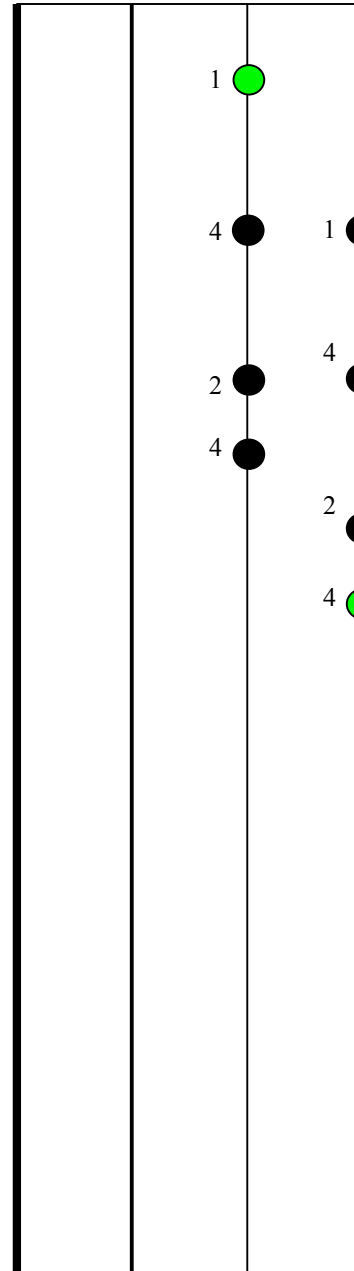
**F**



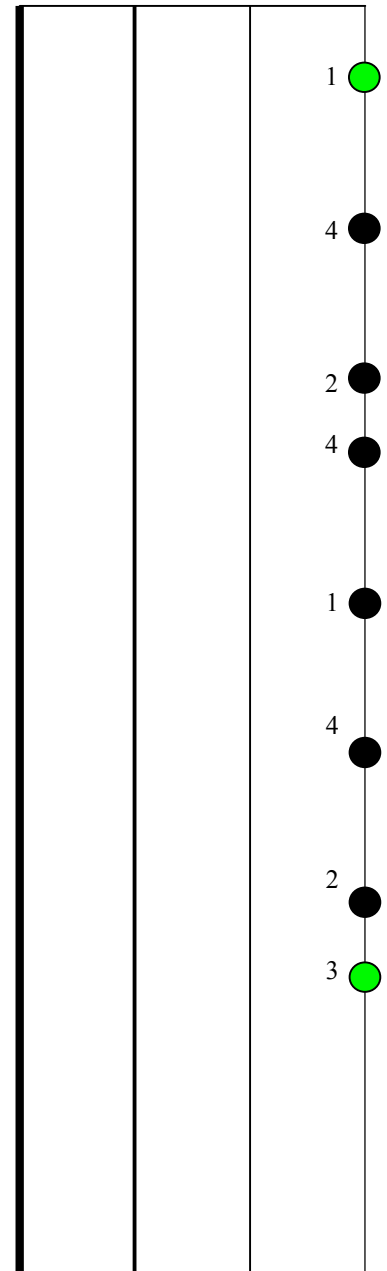
**Bb**



**Eb**

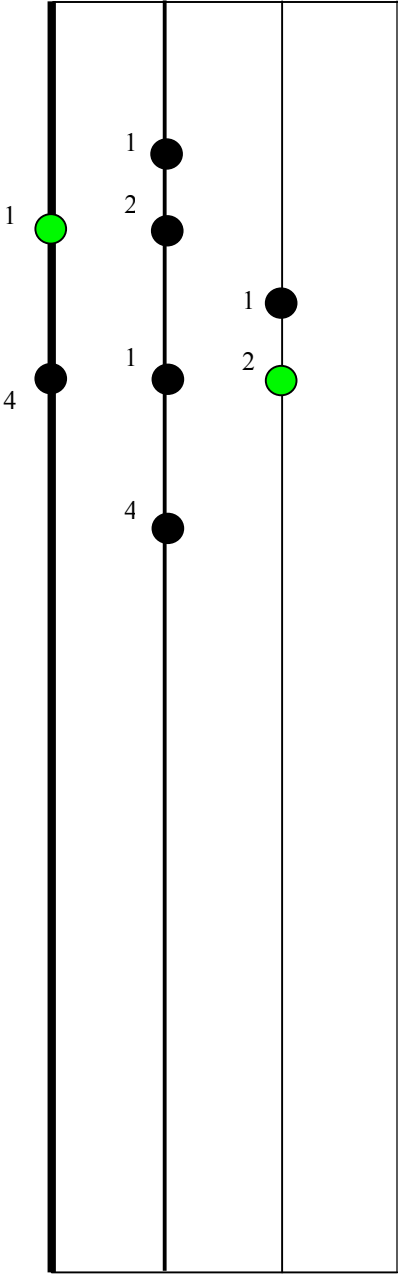


**Ab**

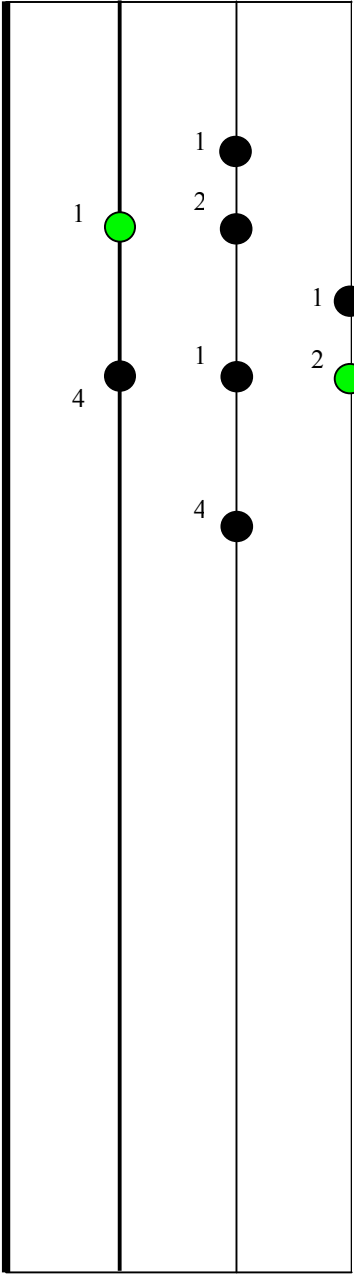


EXAMPLES of FORM 2 MAJOR ACROSS STRINGS

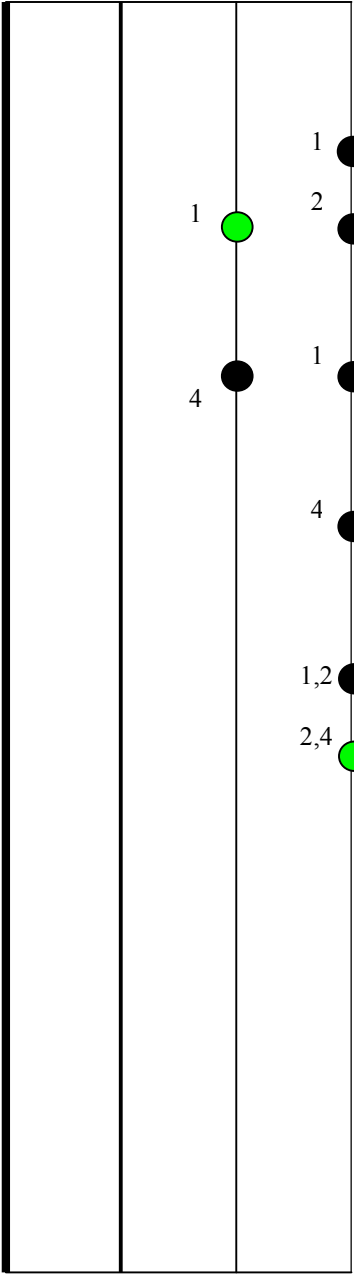
G



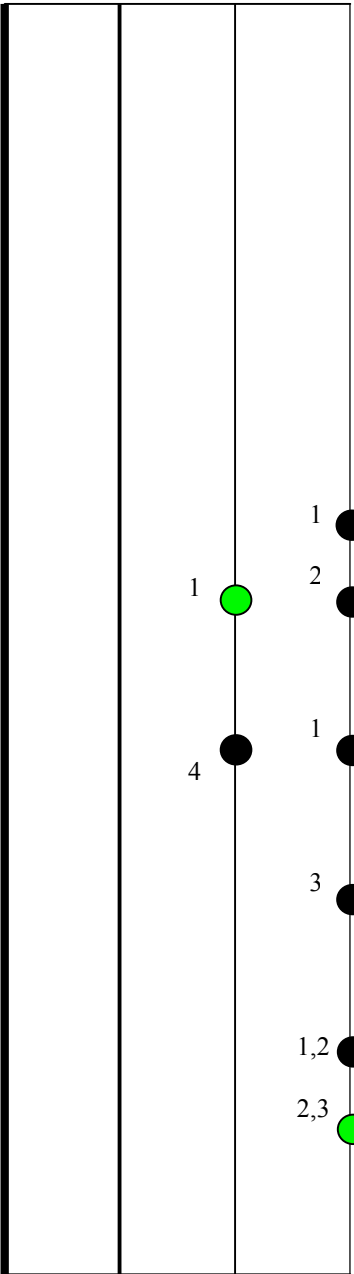
C



F

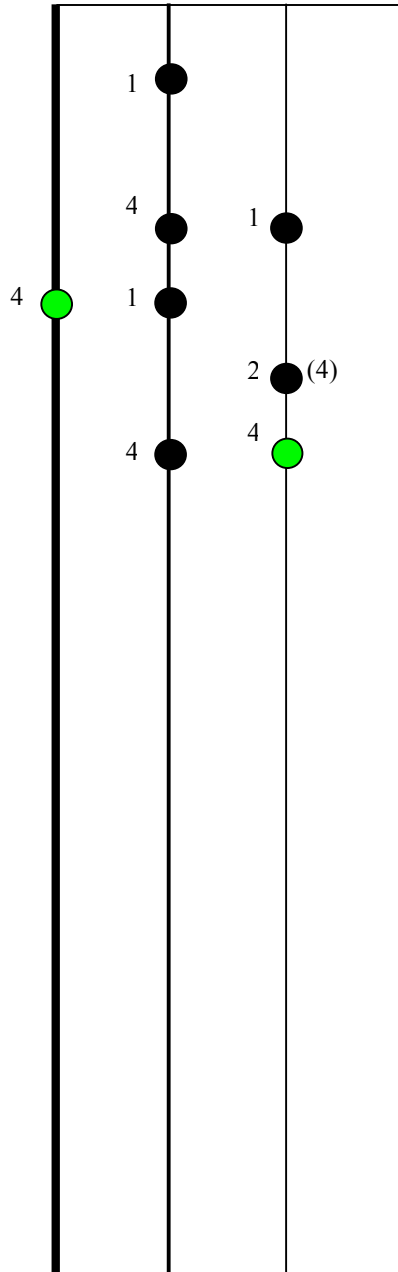


Bb

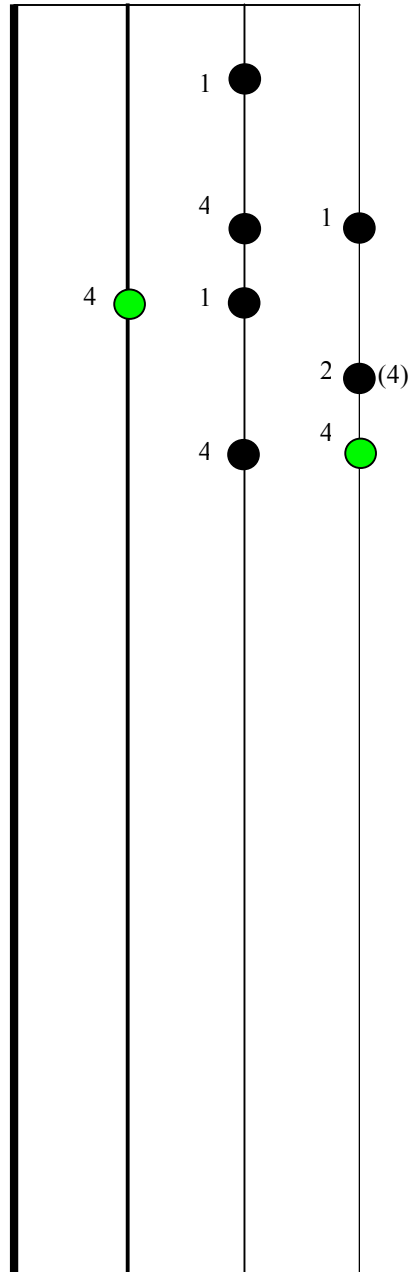


EXAMPLES of FORM 3 MAJOR ACROSS STRINGS

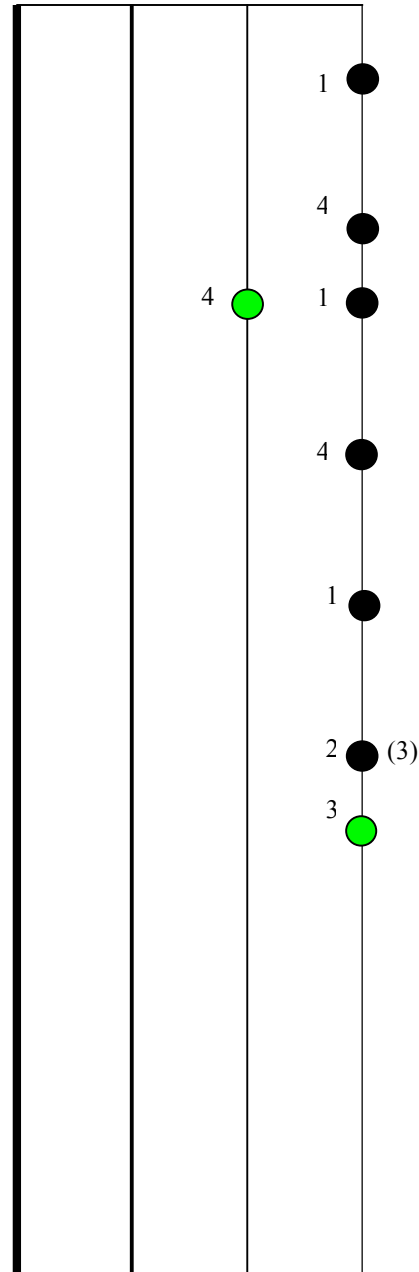
**Ab**



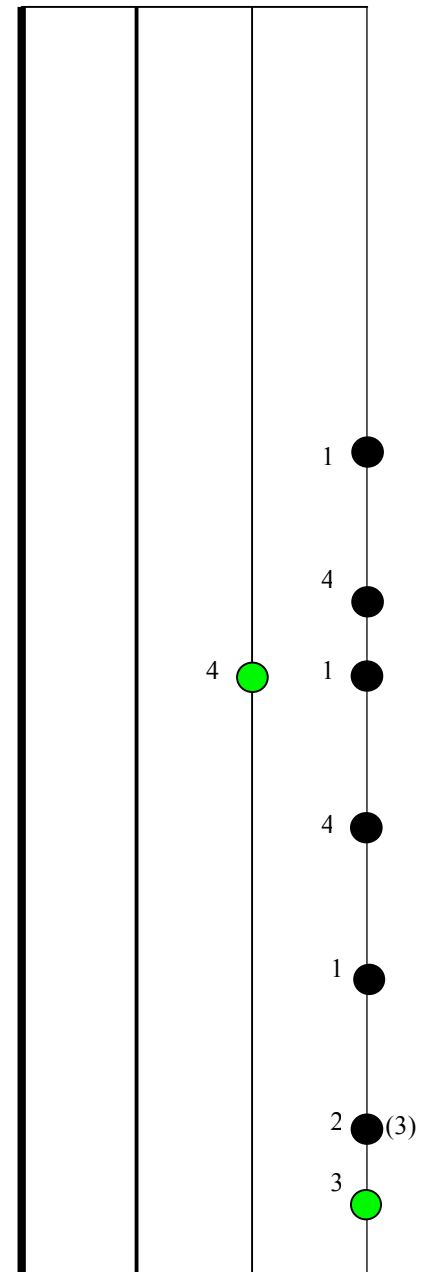
**Db**



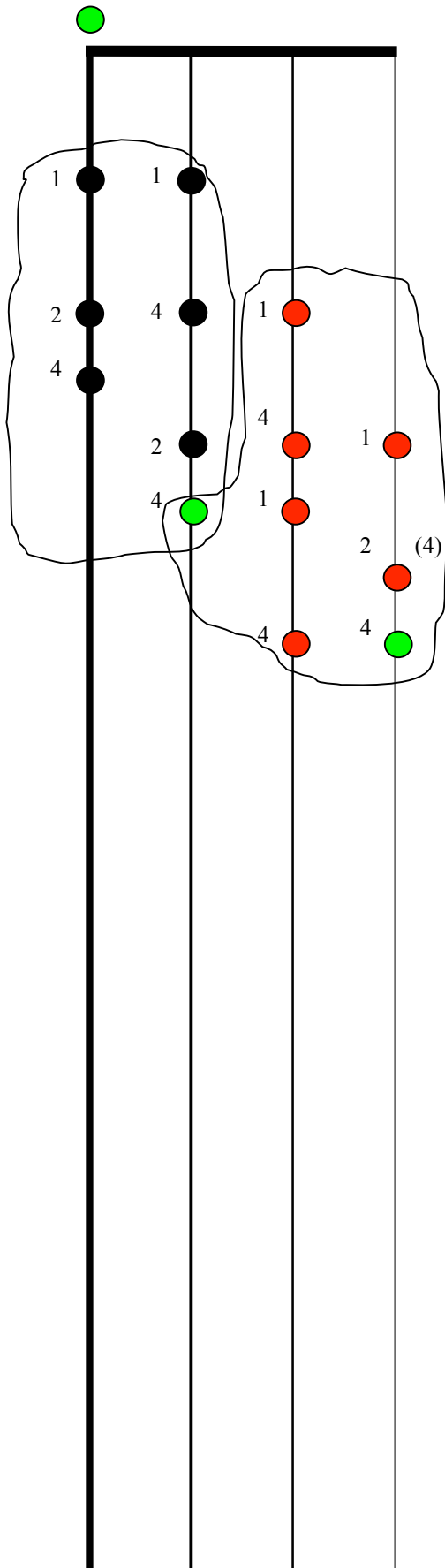
**Gb**



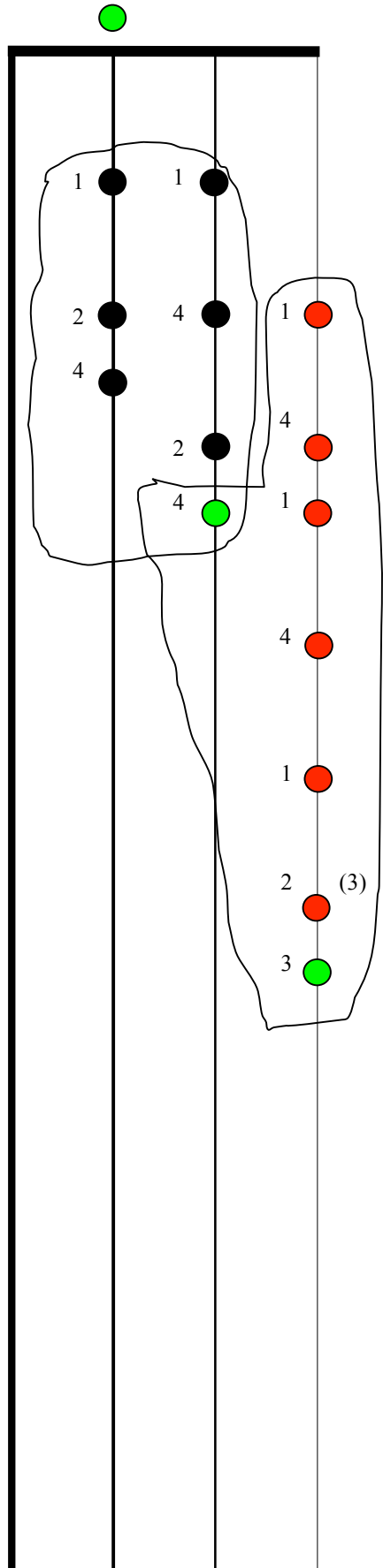
**B**



Form 1 Op + 3 E Major

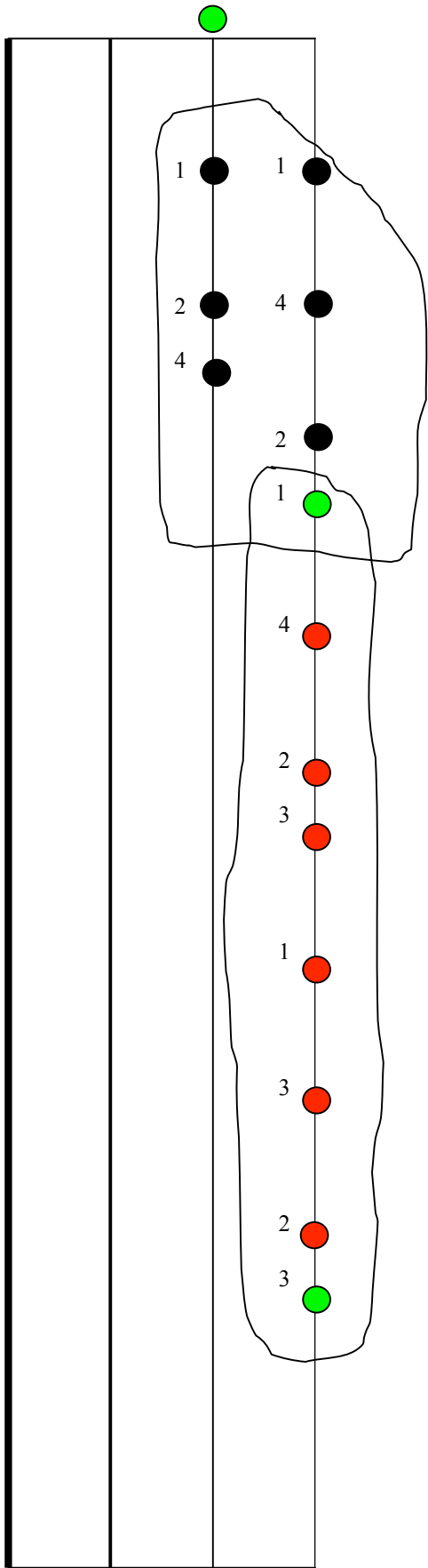


Form 1 Op + 3 A Major

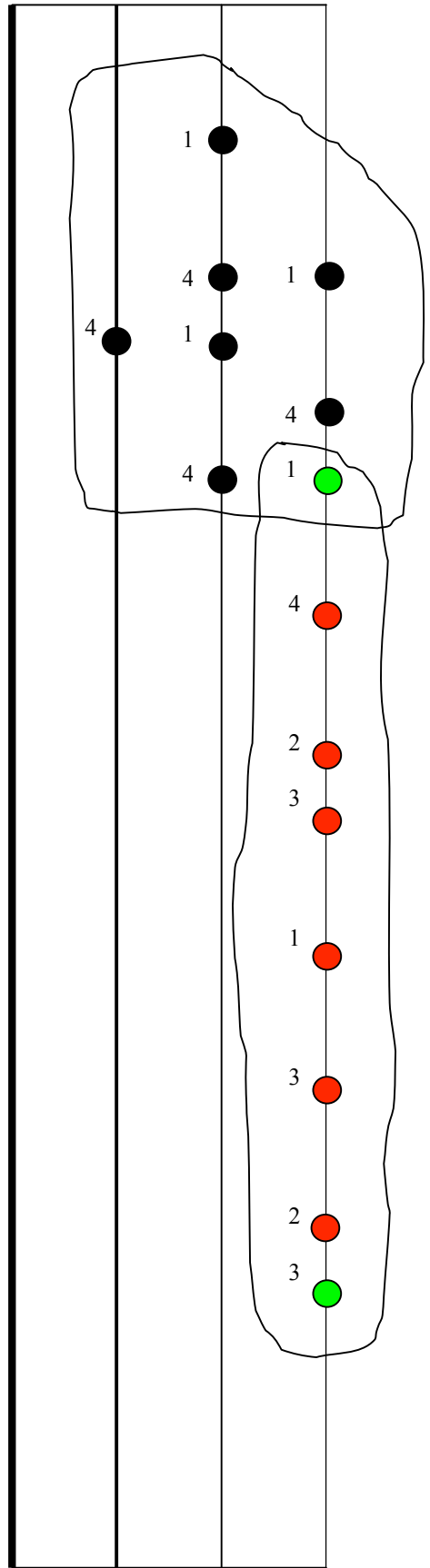




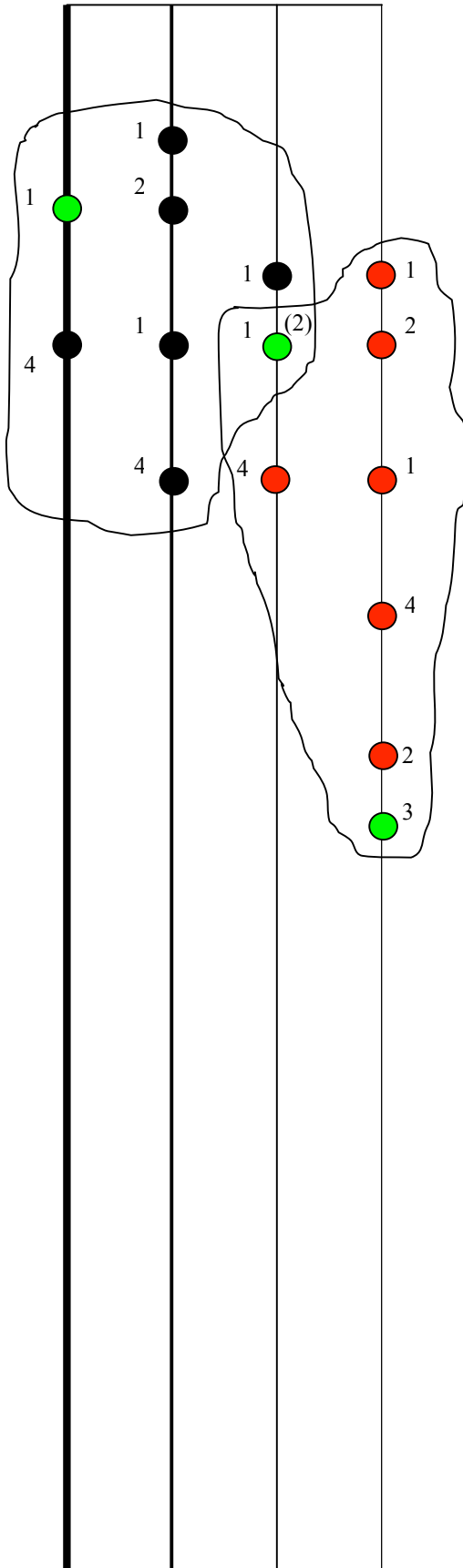
Form 1 Op + 1 Cl D Major  
Ascending



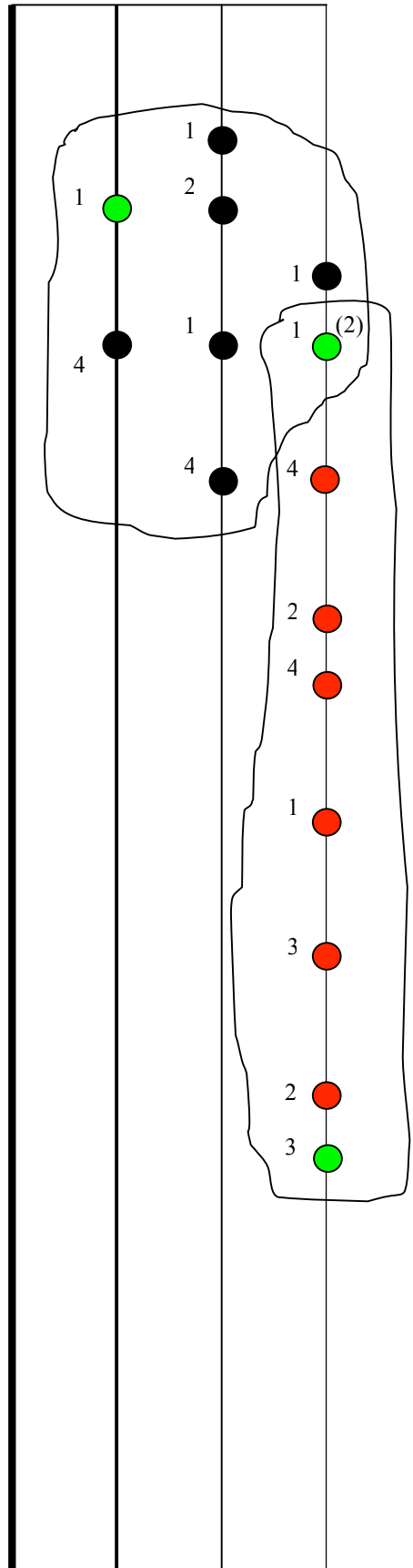
Form 1 Cl + 3 D Major  
Descending



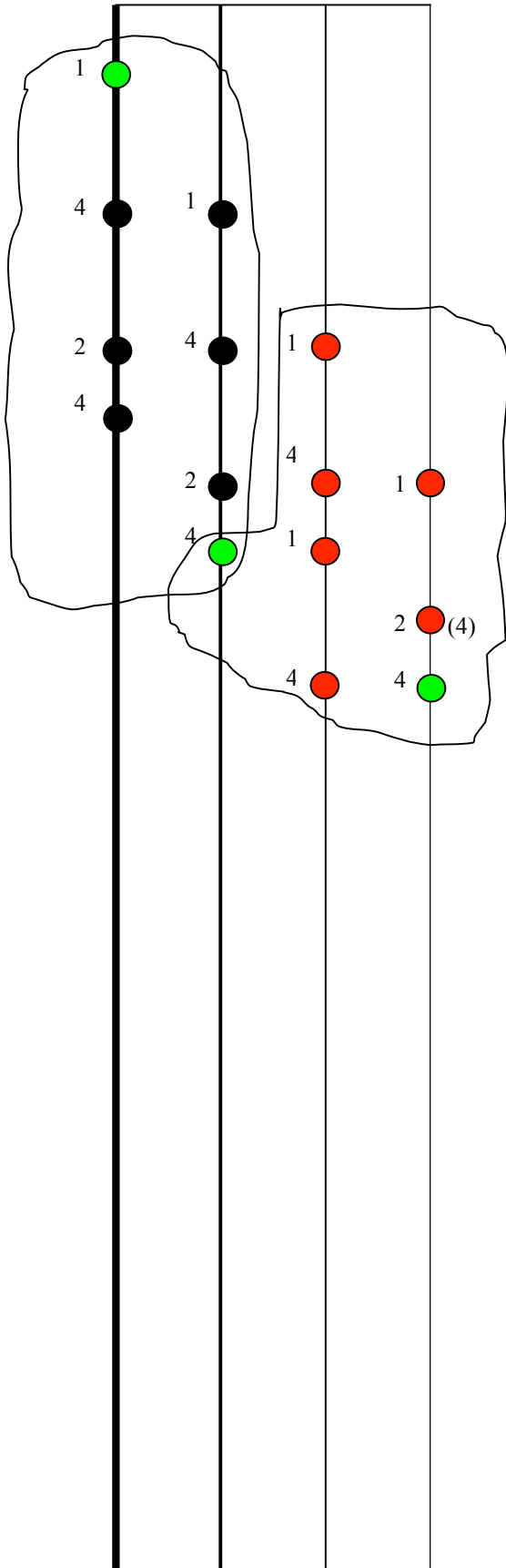
Form 2 + 2 **G** Major



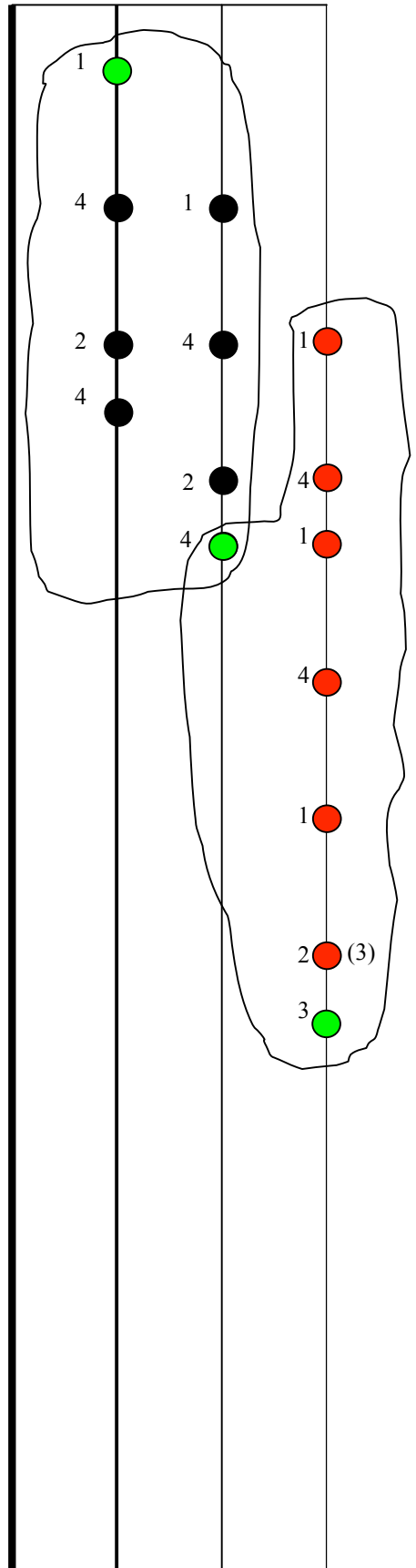
Form 2 + 1 **C** Major



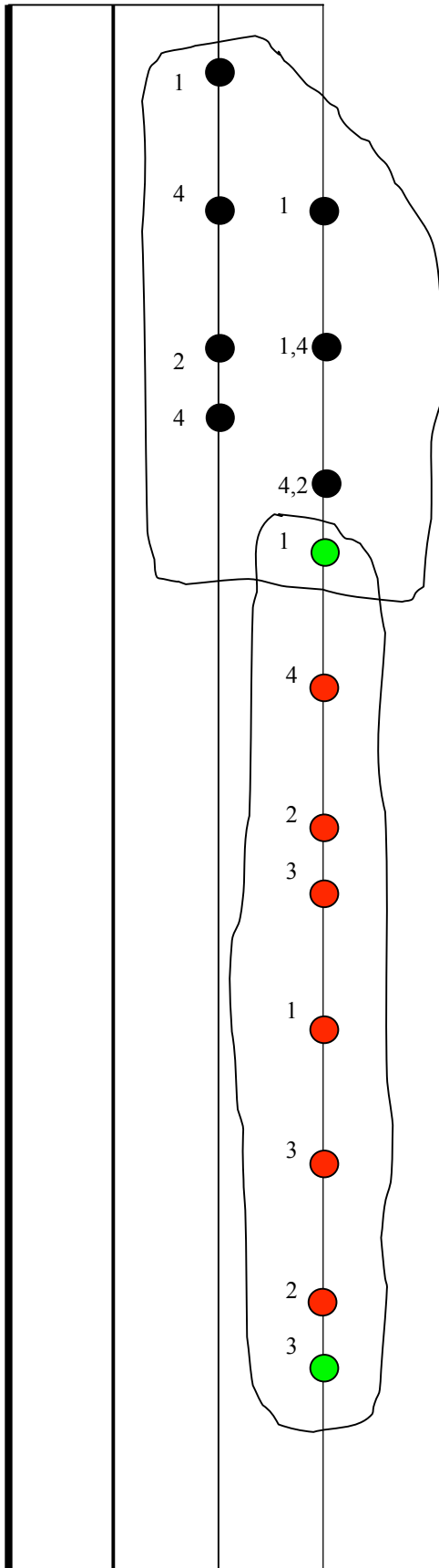
Form 1 + 3 **F** Major



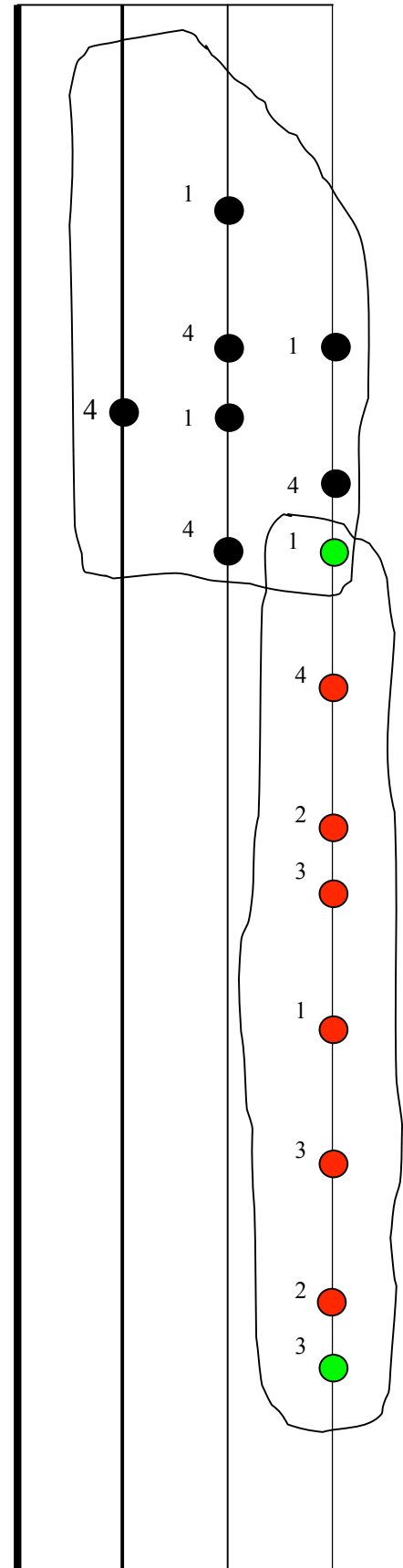
Form 1 + 3 **Bb** Major



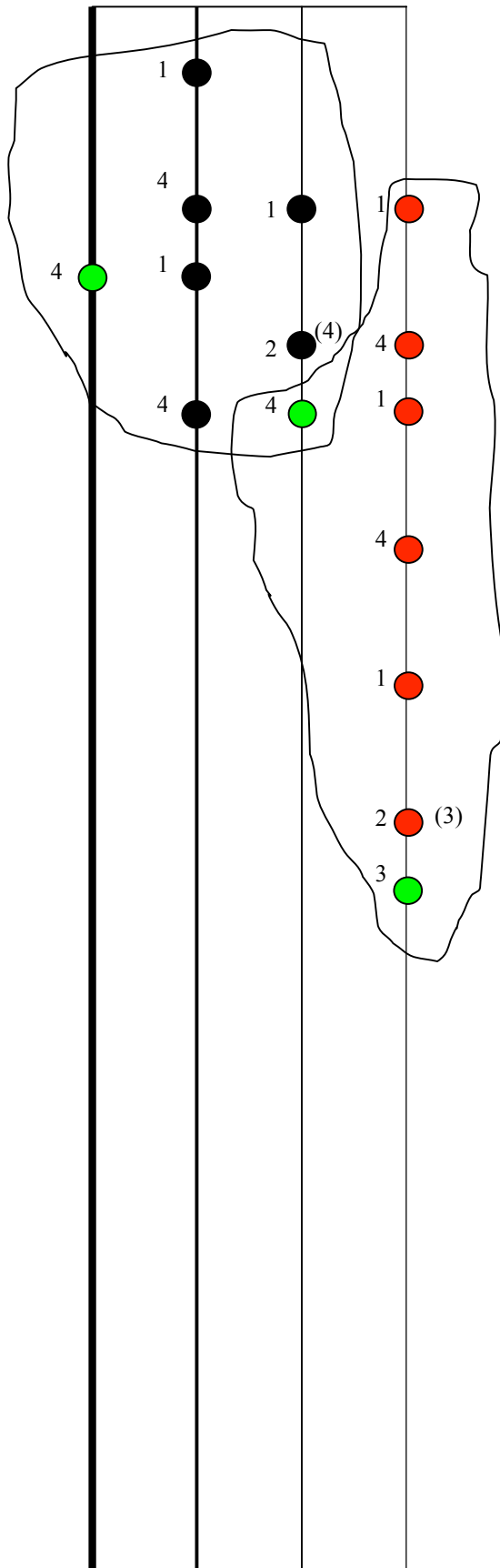
Form1 + 1 Major **Eb** Ascending



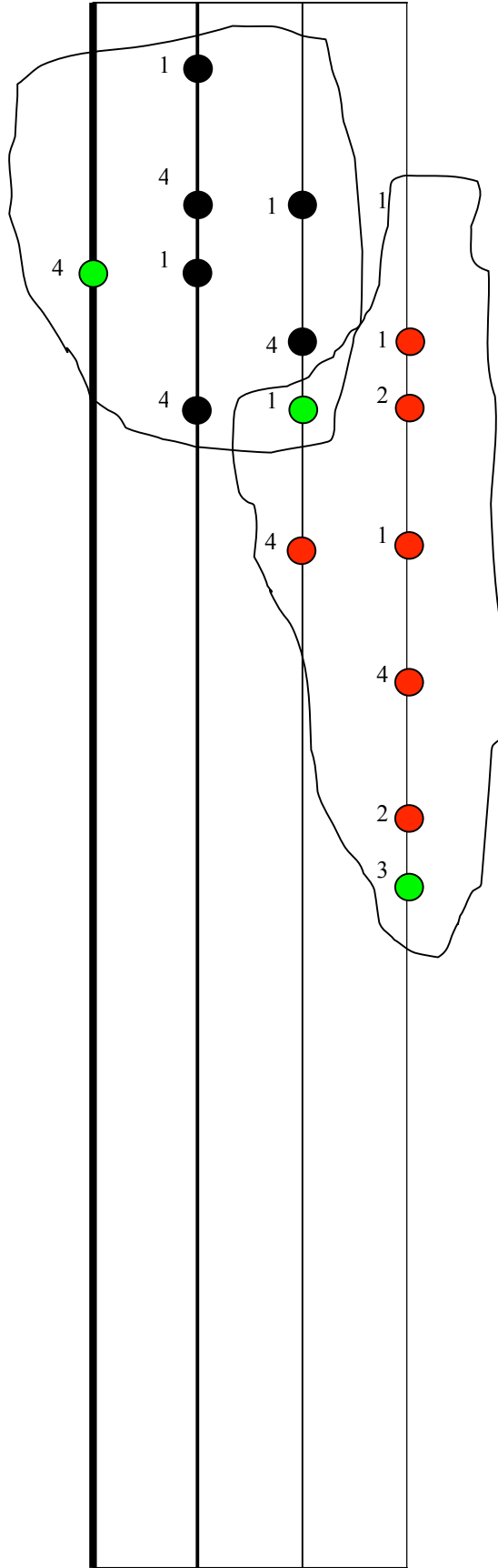
Form 1 + 3 Major **Eb** Descending



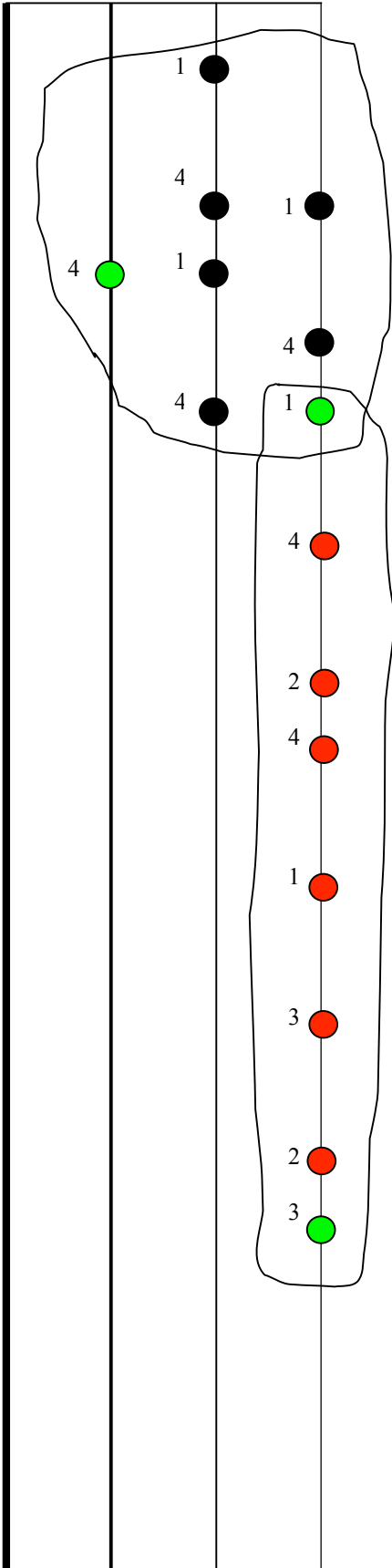
Form 3 + 3 **Ab** Major



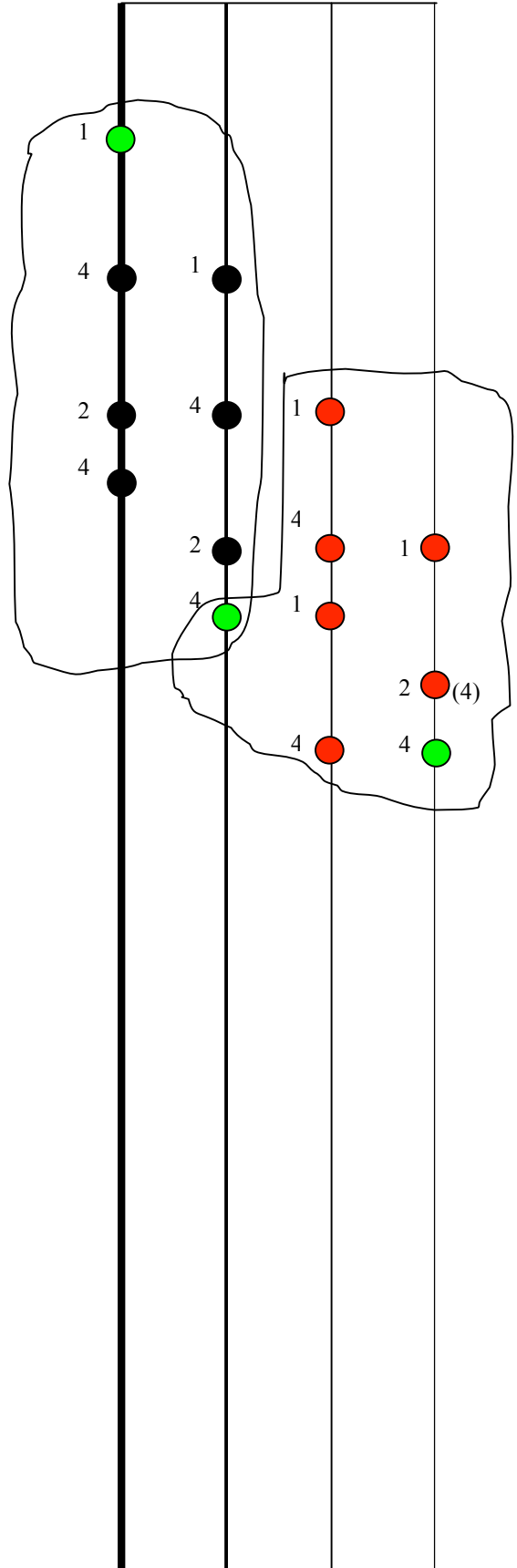
Form 3 + 2 **Ab** Major



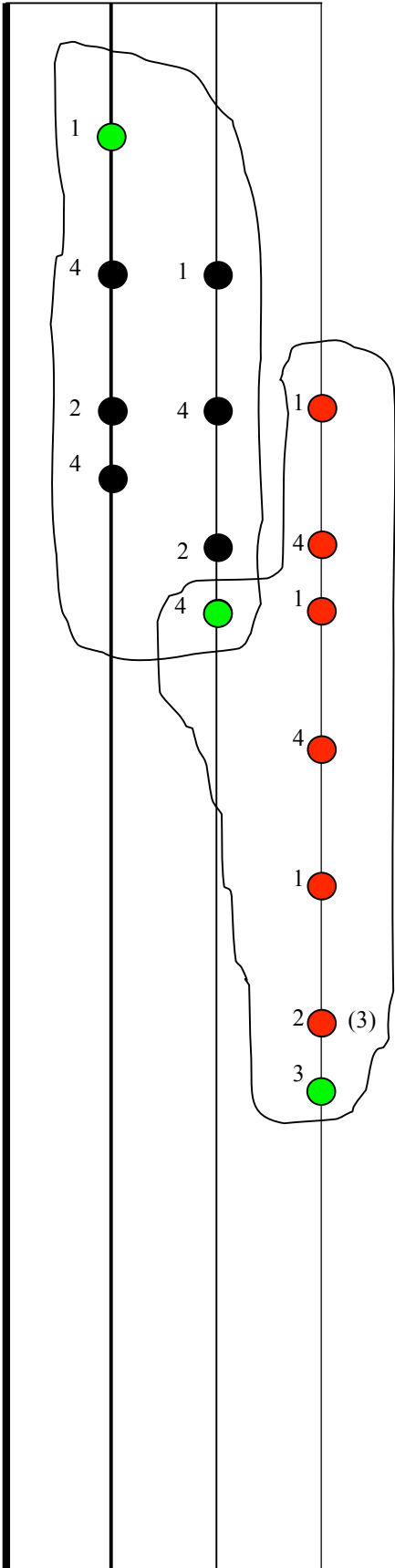
Form 3 +1 **Db** Major



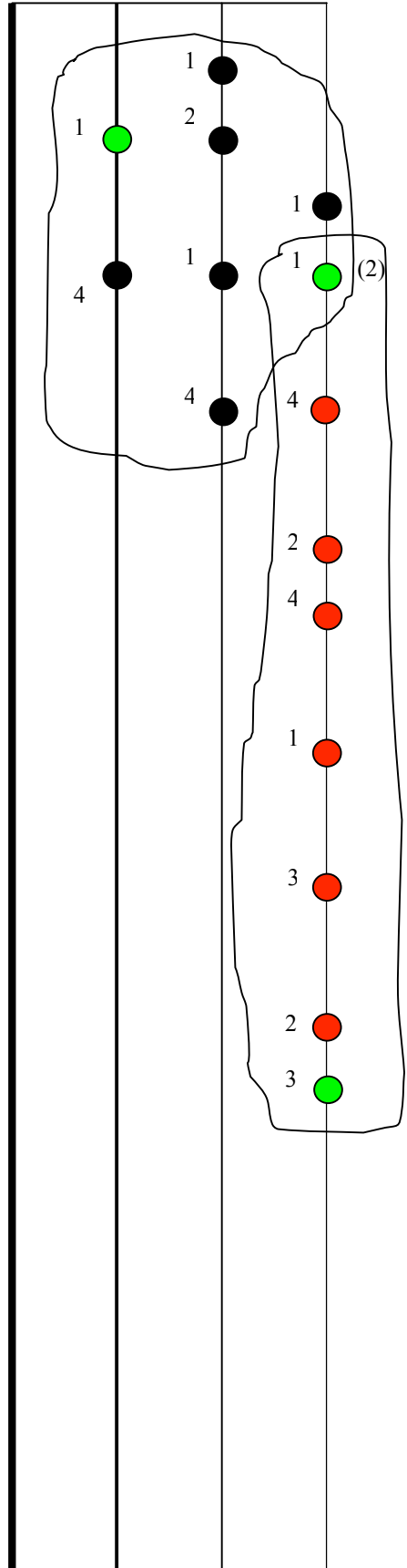
Form 1 +3 **Gb** Major



Form 1 + 3 **B** Major



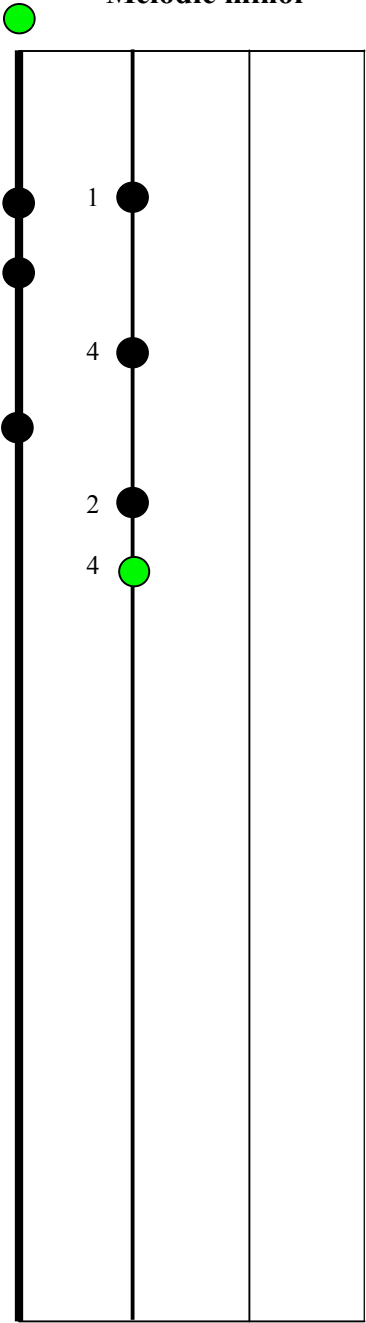
Form 2 + 1 **B** Major



BASIC MINOR FORM 1 Op

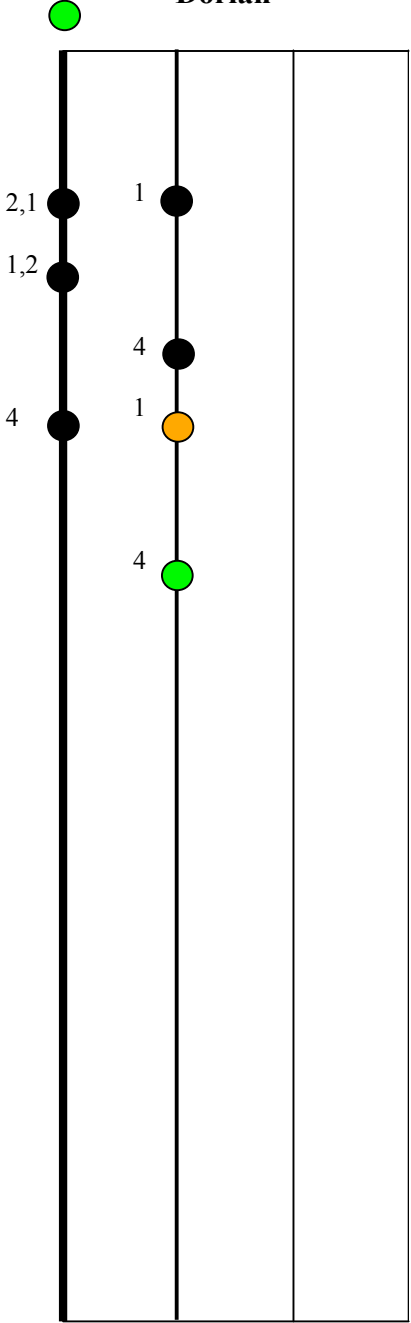
**E**

**Melodic minor**



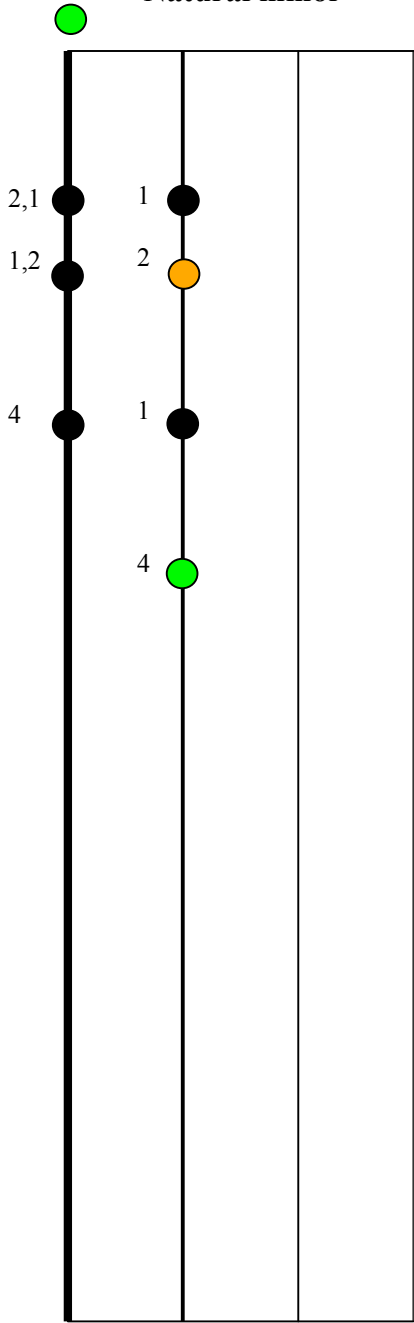
**E**

**Dorian**



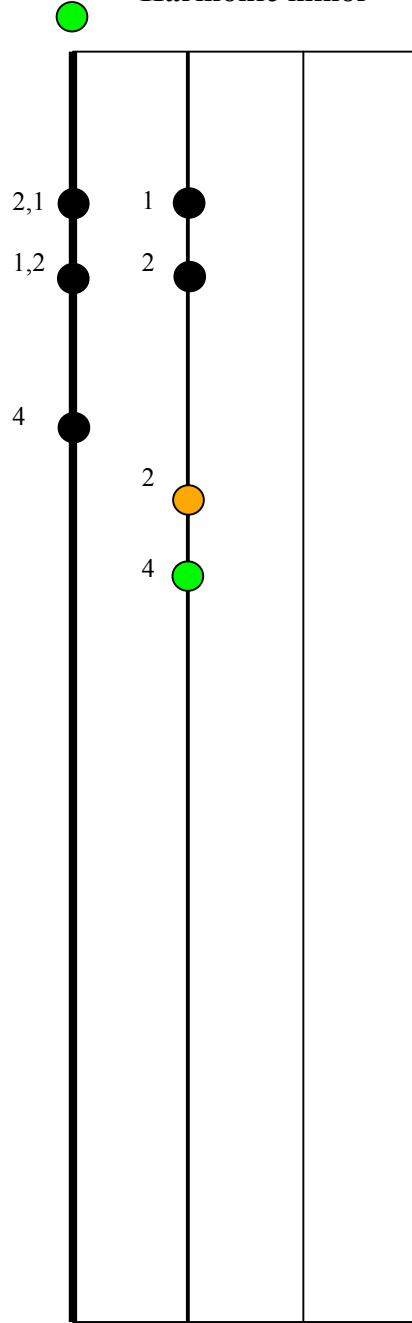
**E**

**Natural minor**



**E**

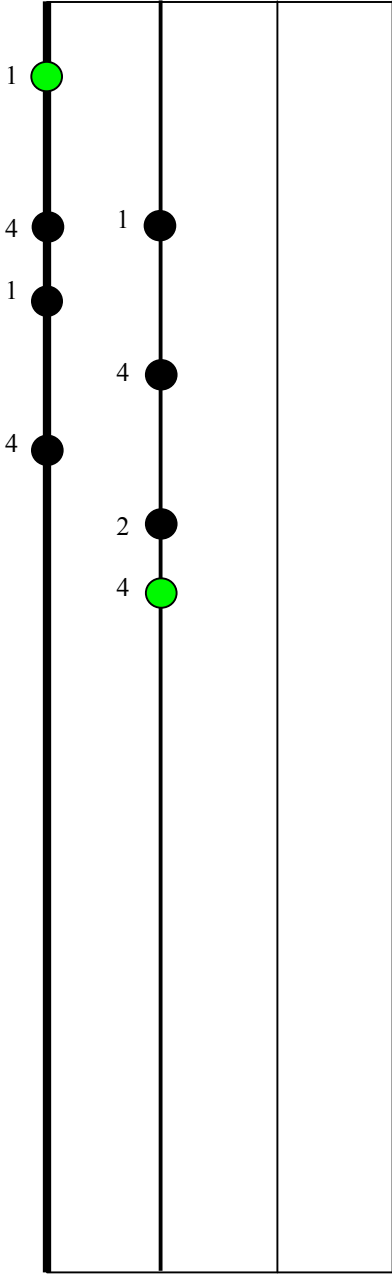
**Harmonic minor**



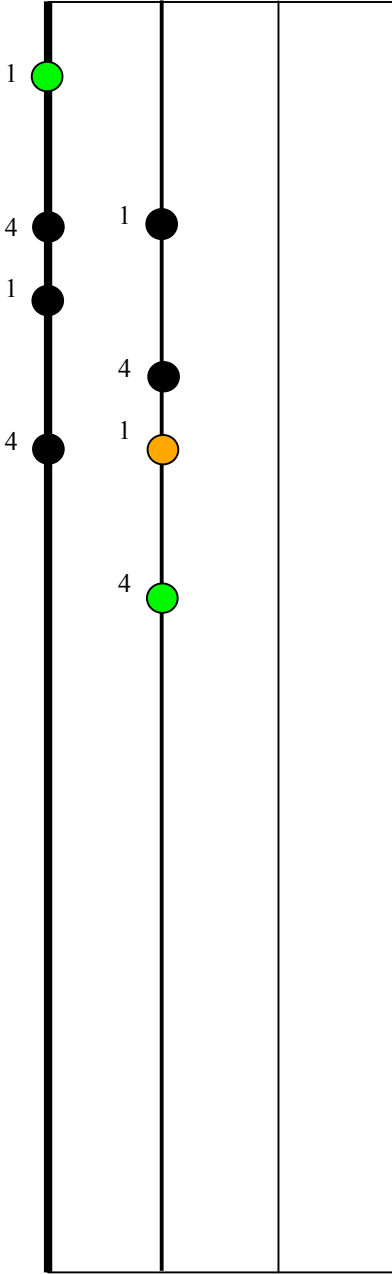


BASIC MINOR FORM 1 CI

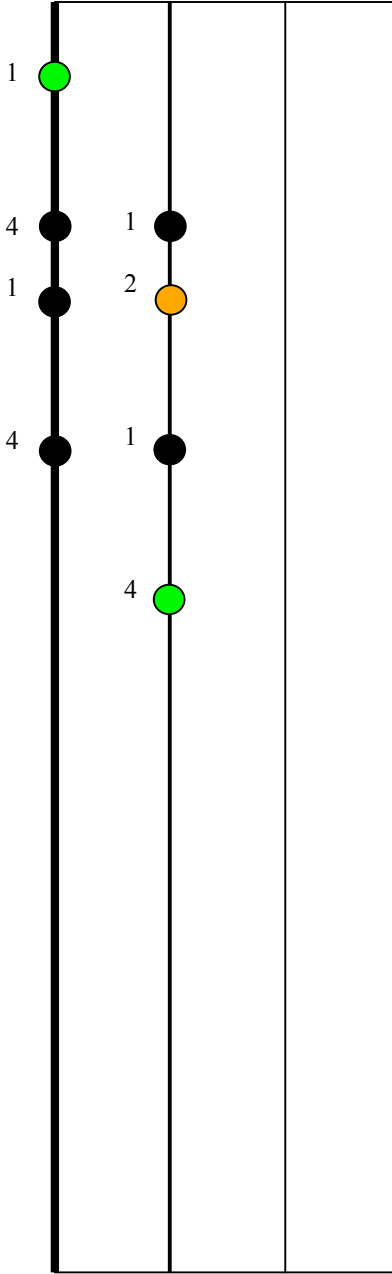
**F** Melodic minor



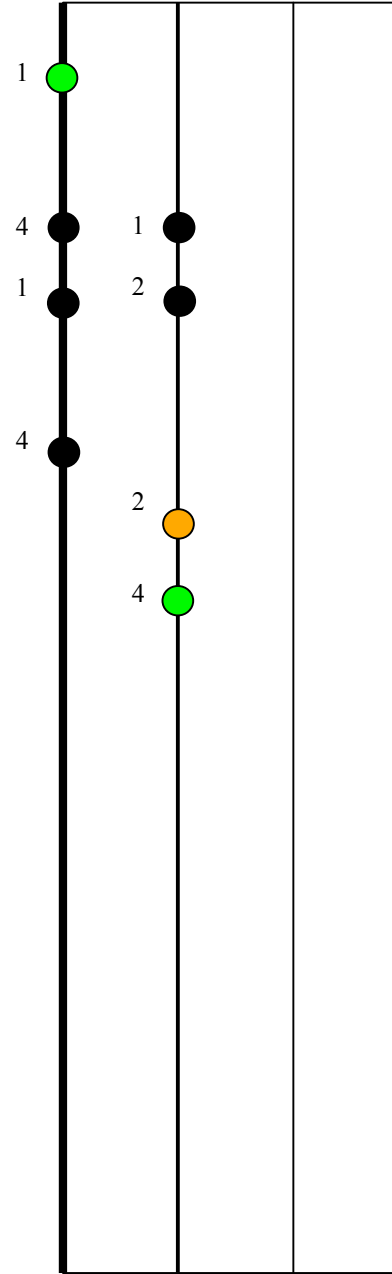
**F** Dorian



**F** Natural minor

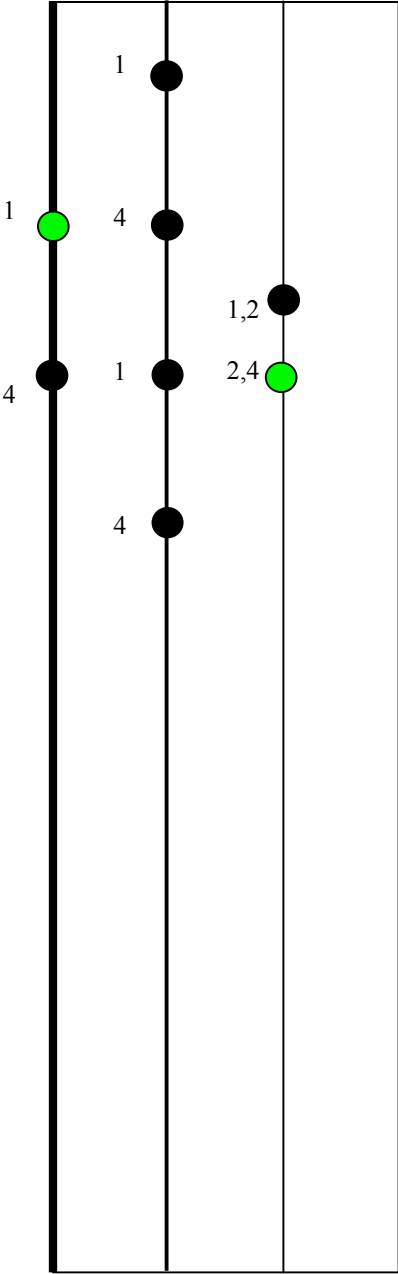


**F** Harmonic minor

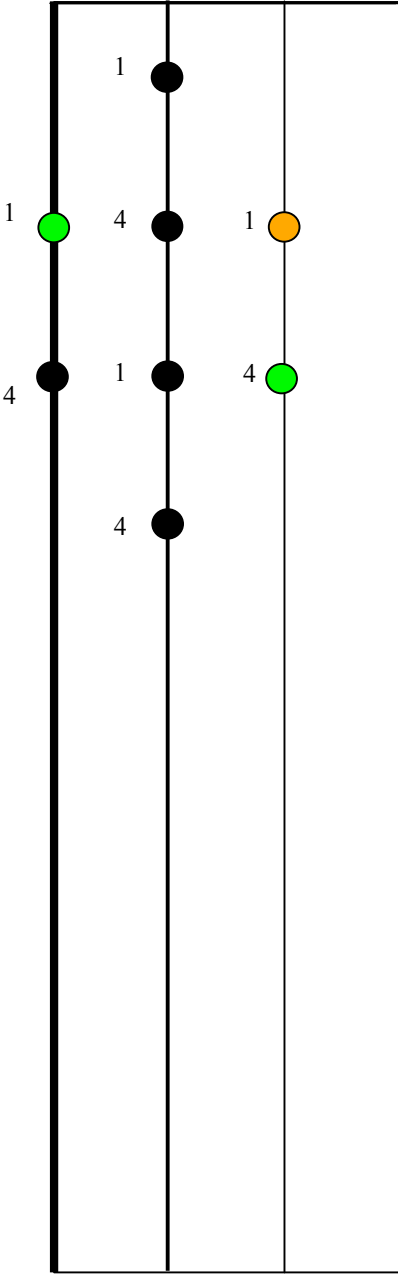


BASIC MINOR FORM 2

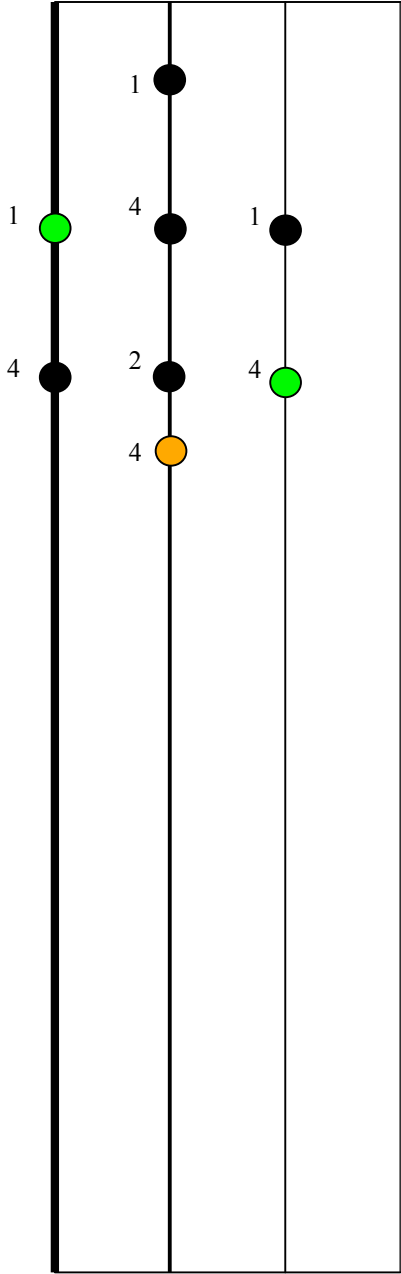
**G** Melodic minor



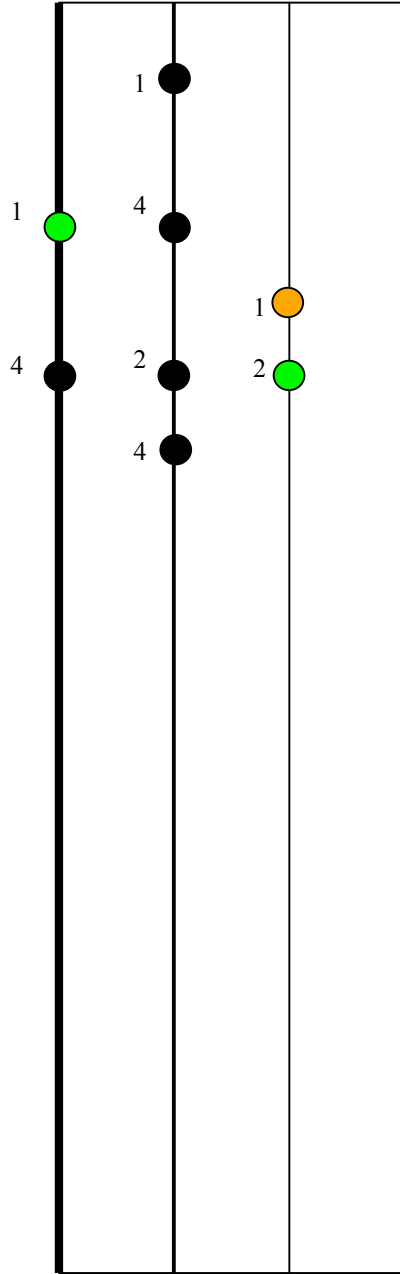
**G** Dorian



**G** Natural minor

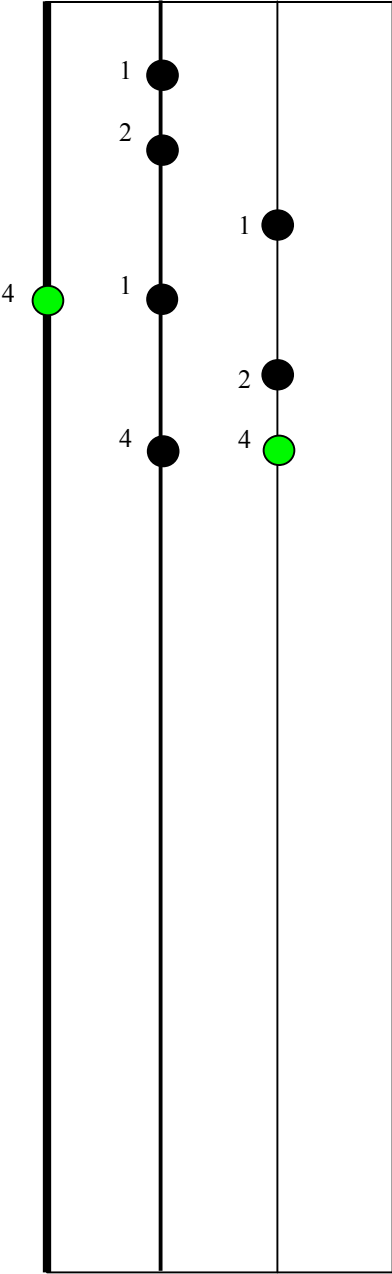


**G** Harmonic minor

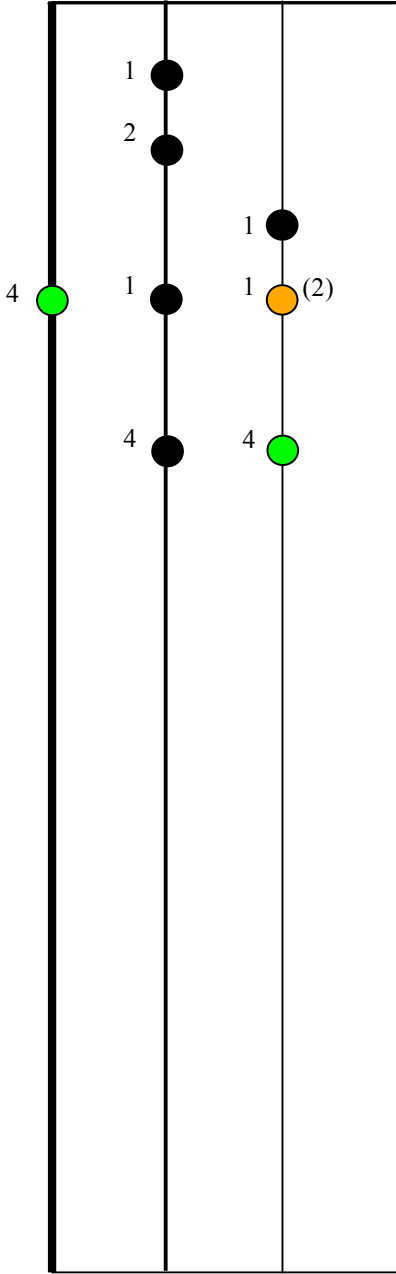


BASIC MINOR FORM 3

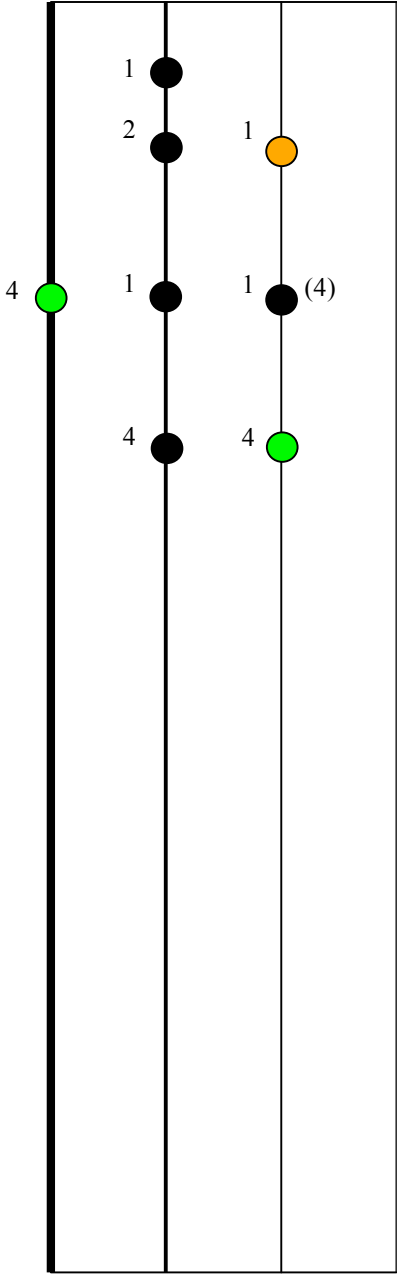
**Ab** Melodic minor



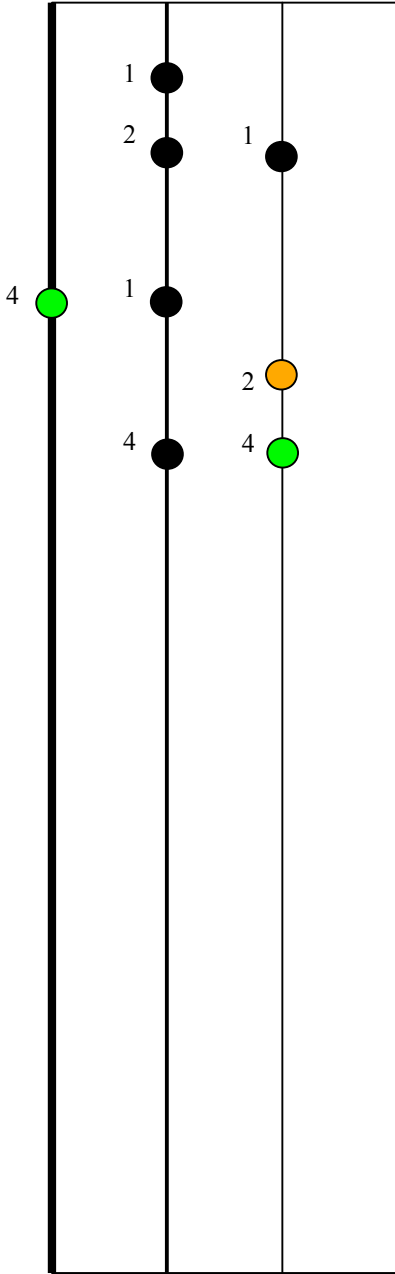
**Ab** Dorian



**Ab** Natural minor

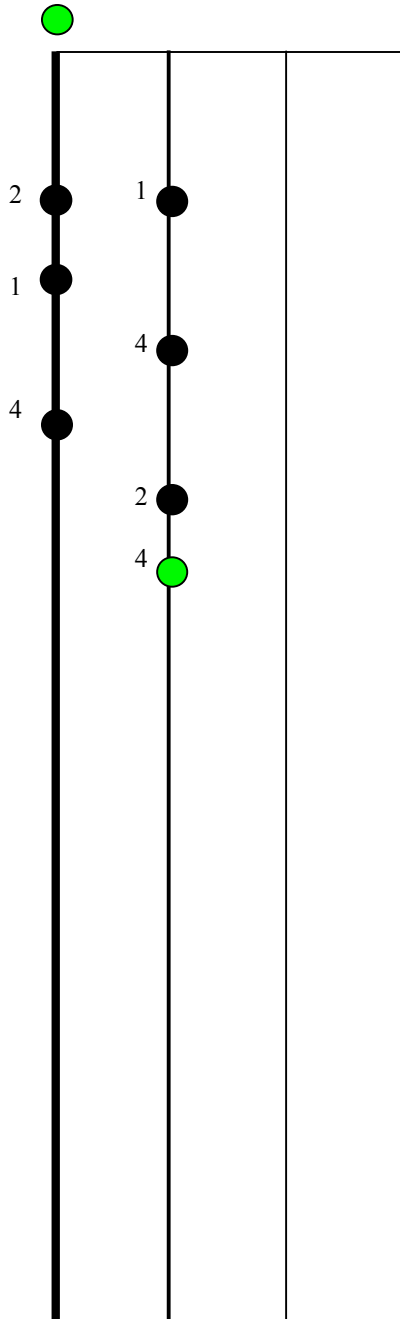


**Ab** Harmonic minor

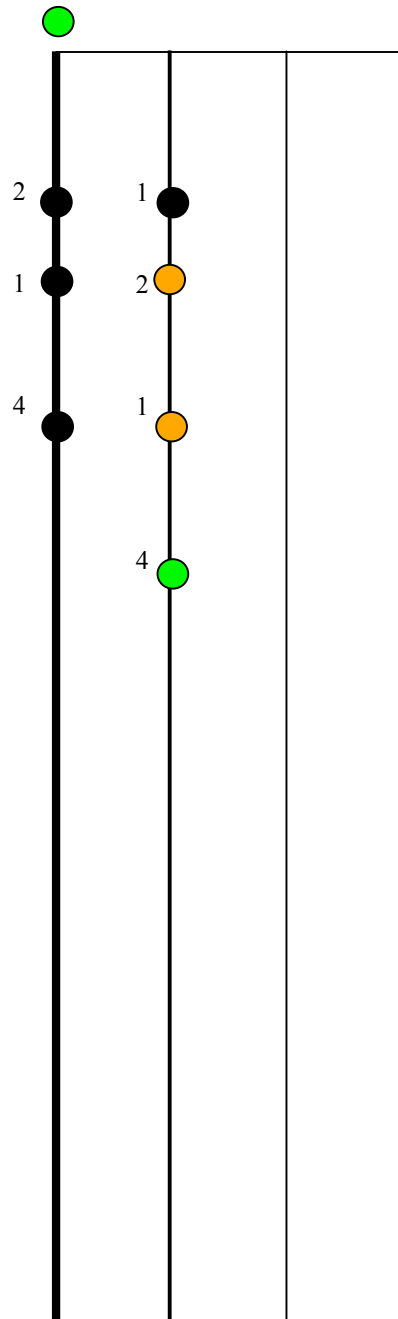


EXAMPLES of FORM 10p MINOR ACROSS STRINGS

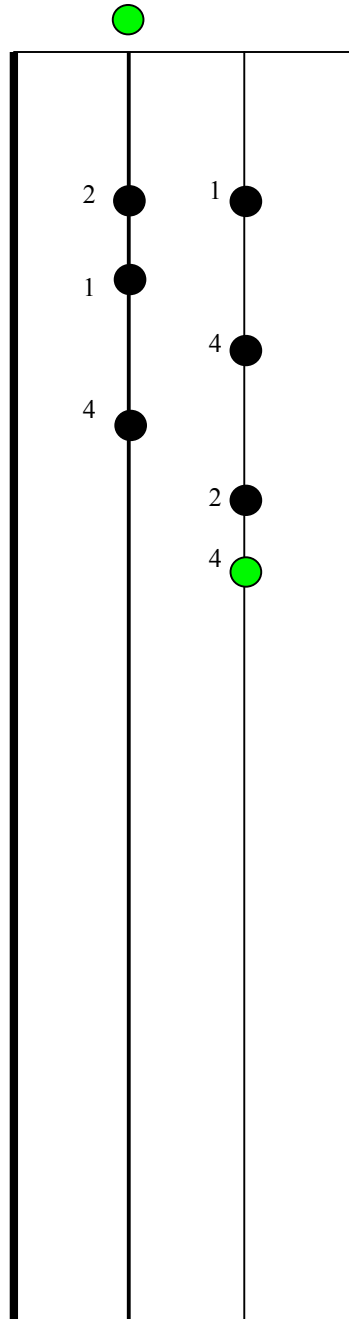
**E** Melodic minor ascending



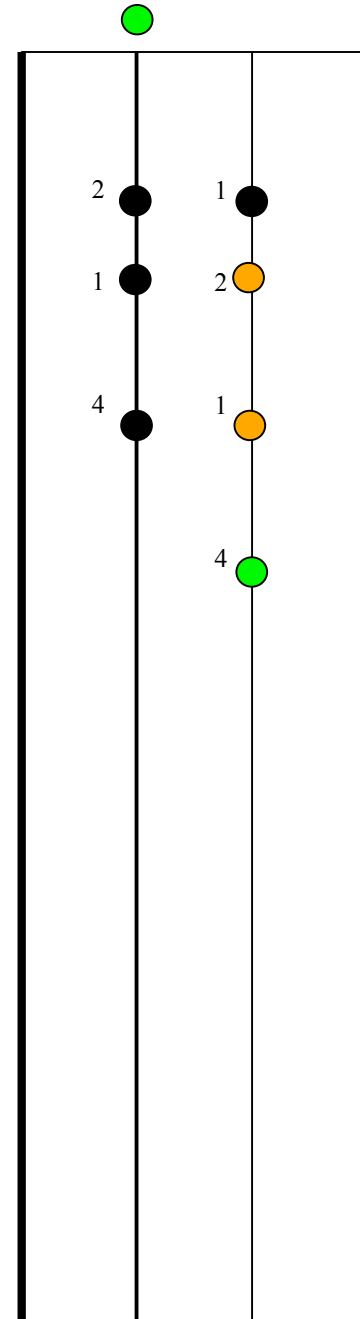
**E** Natural minor descending



**A** Melodic minor ascending

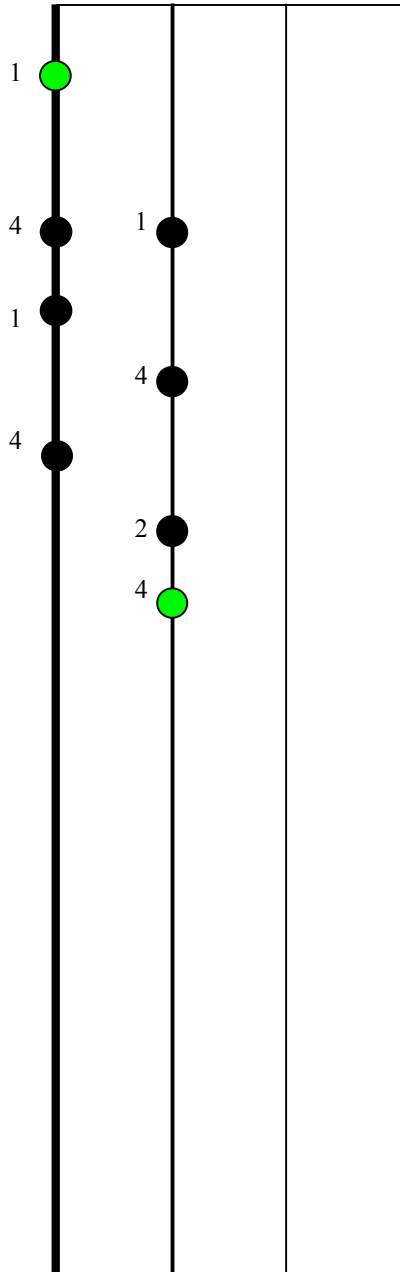


**A** Natural minor descending

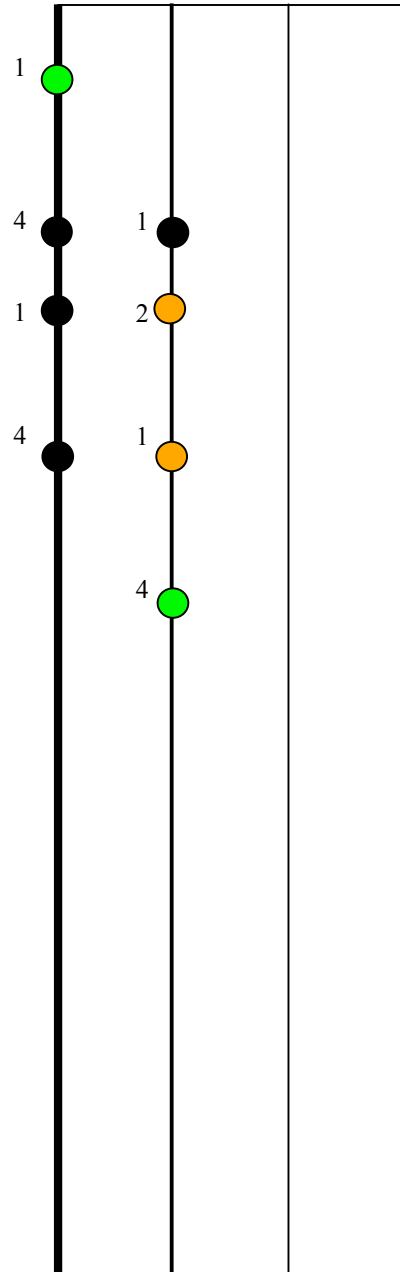


EXAMPLES of FORM 1CI MINOR ACROSS STRINGS

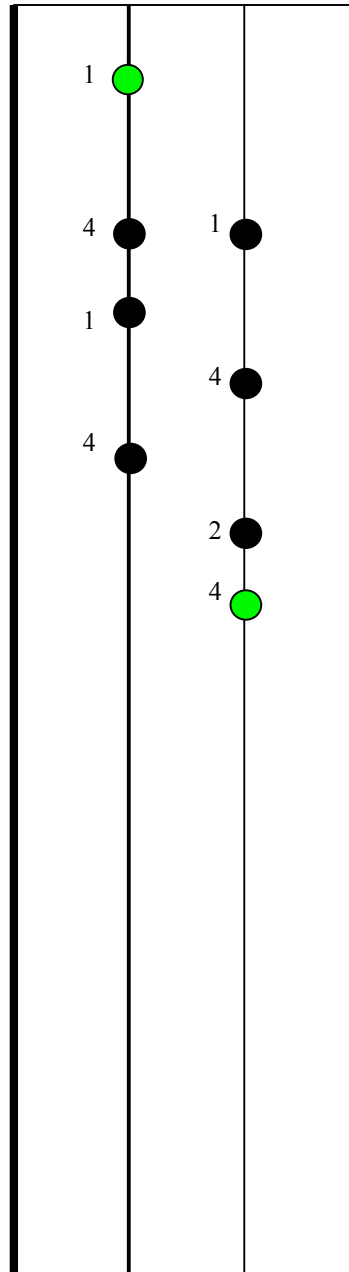
**F** Melodic minor ascending



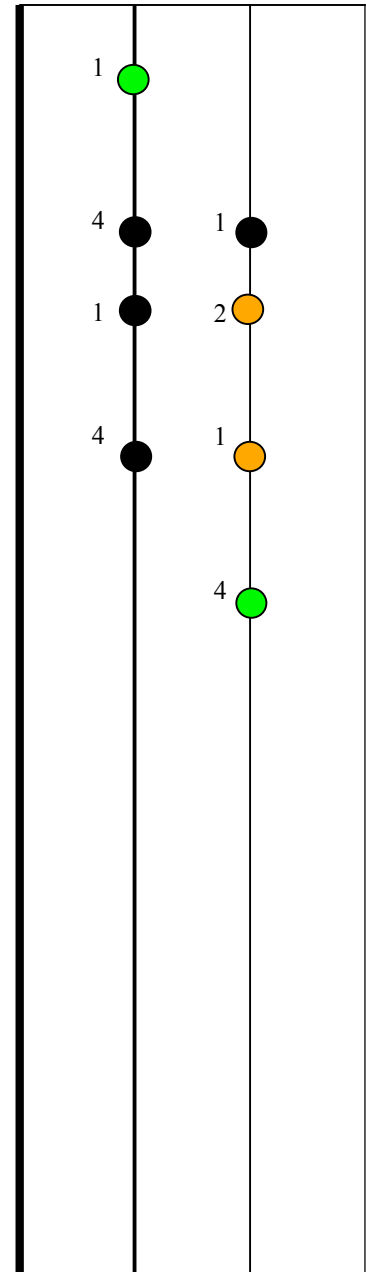
**F** Natural minor descending



**Bb** Melodic minor ascending

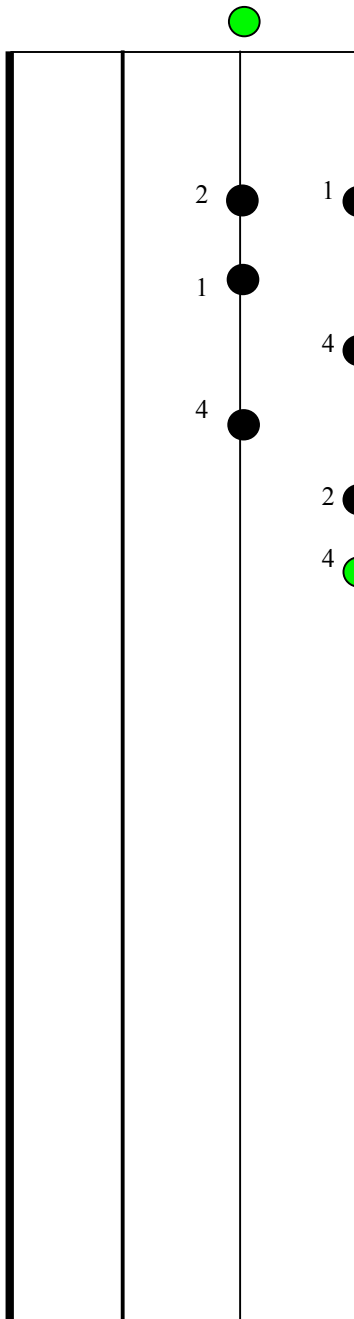


**Bb** Natural minor descending

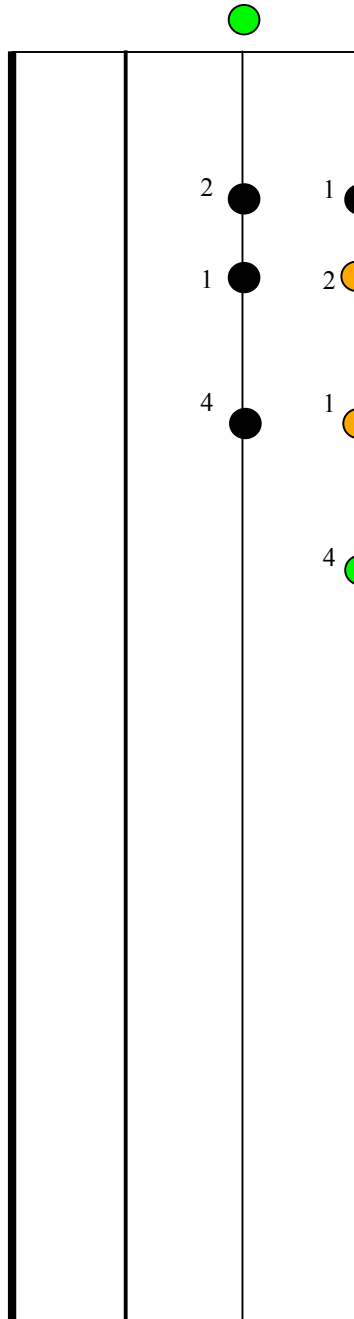


EXAMPLES of FORM 1 MINOR ACROSS STRINGS

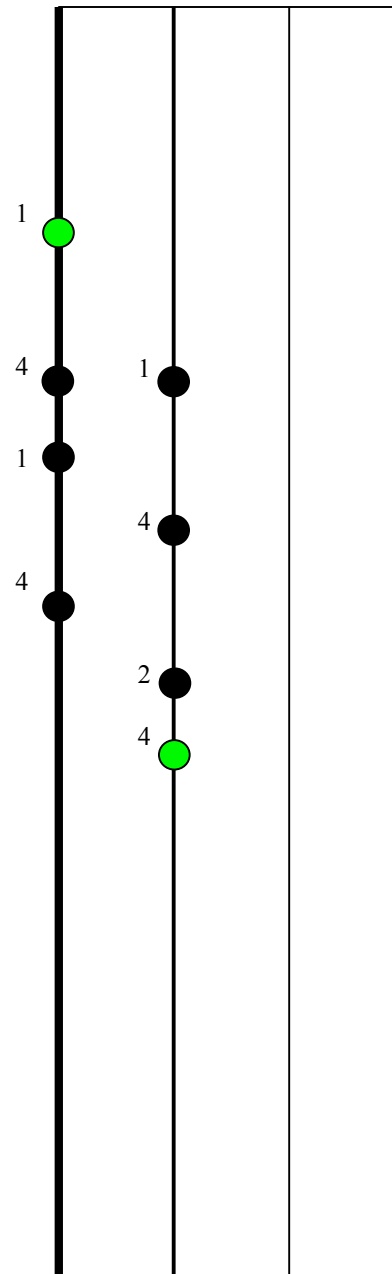
**D Melodic minor ascending**



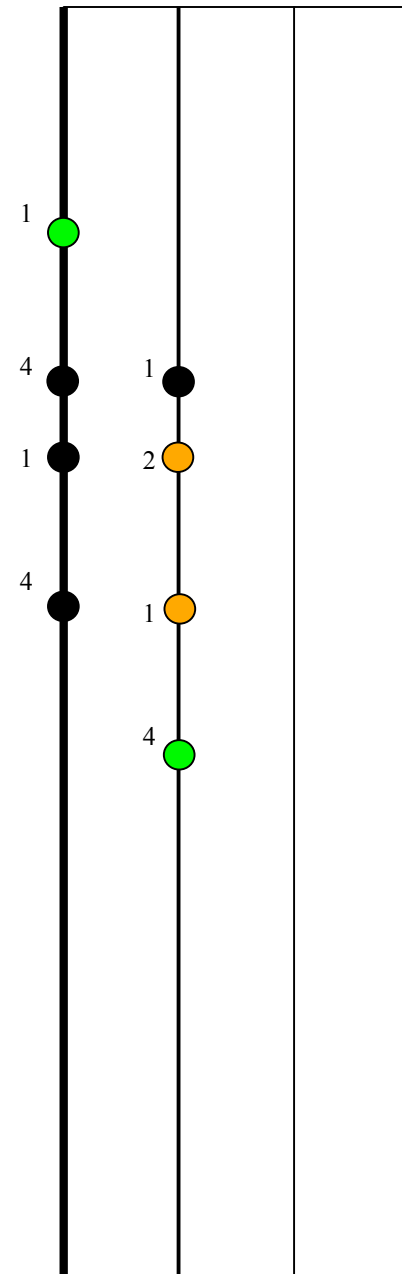
**D Natural minor descending**



**G Melodic minor ascending**

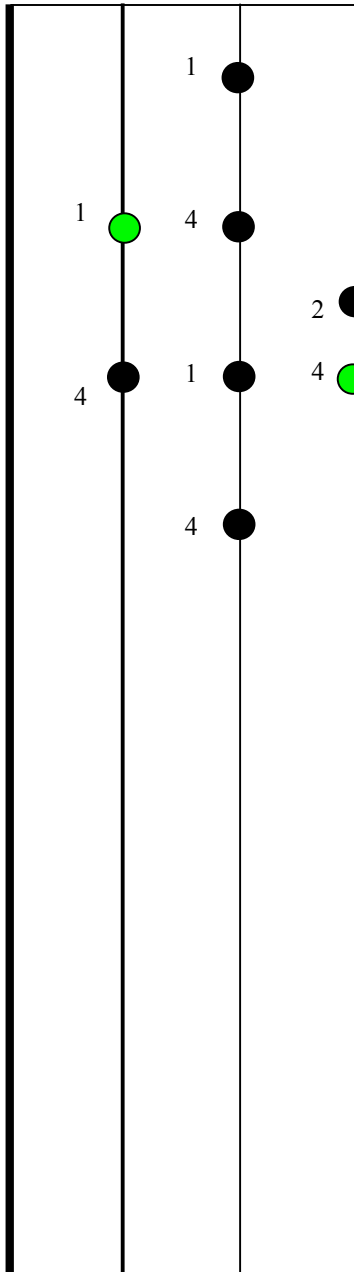


**G Natural minor descending**

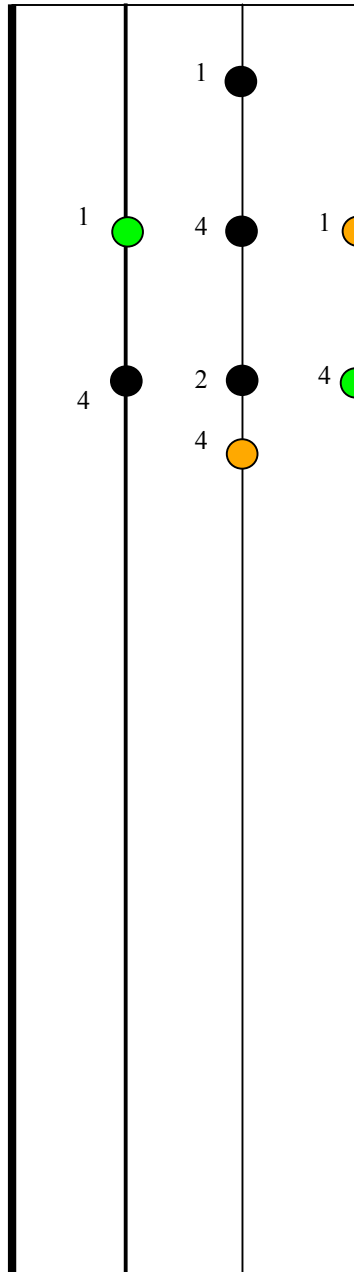


EXAMPLES of FORM 2 MINOR ACROSS STRINGS

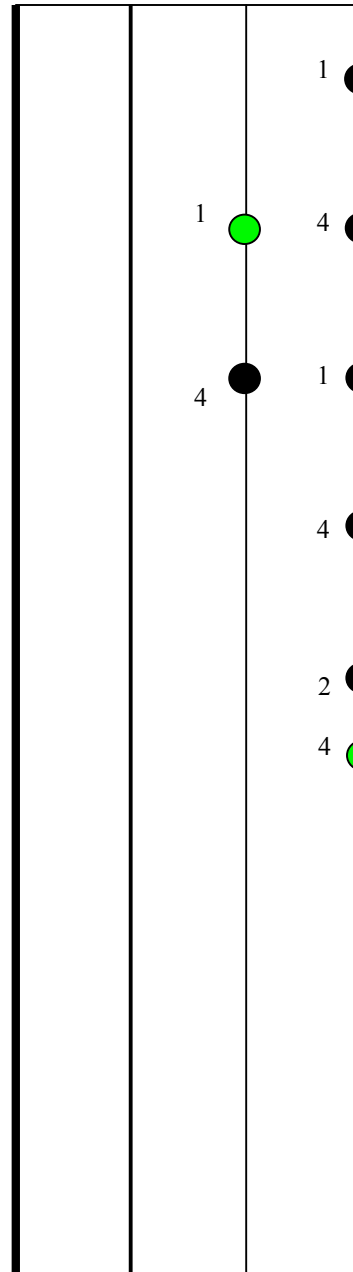
**C** Melodic minor ascending



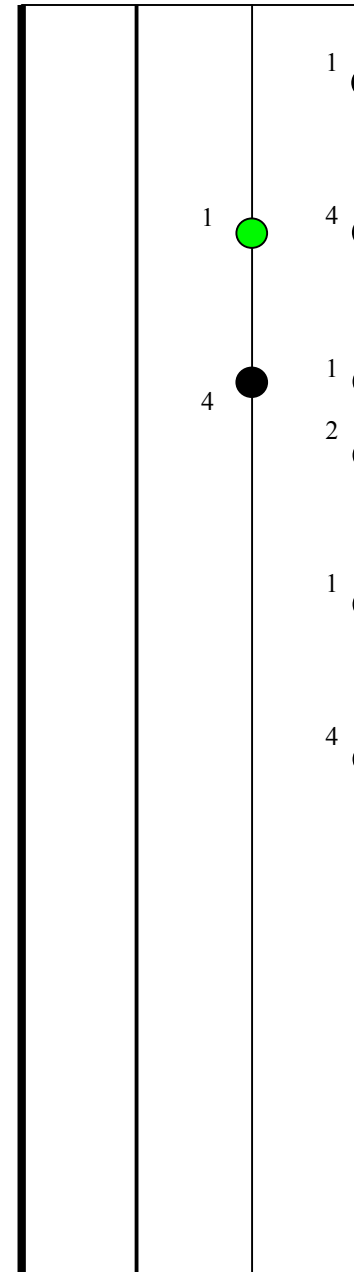
**C** Natural minor descending



**F** Melodic minor ascending



**F** Natural minor descending



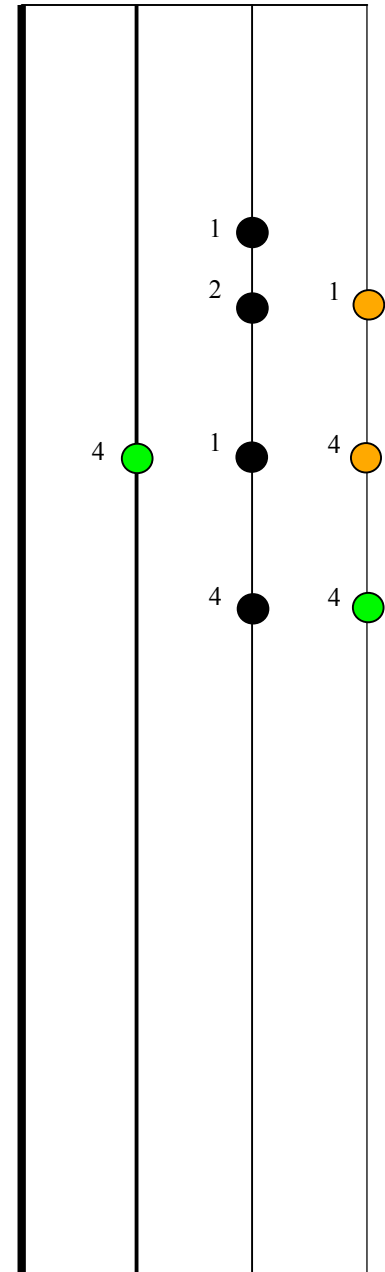
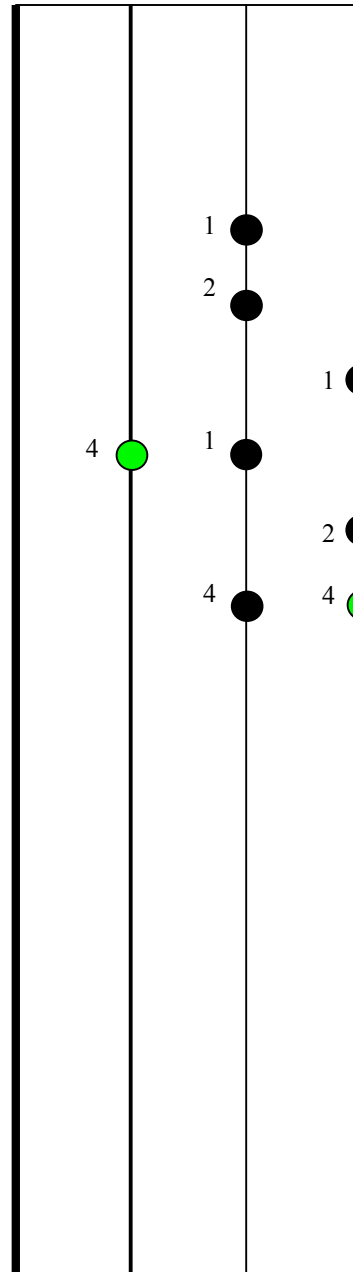
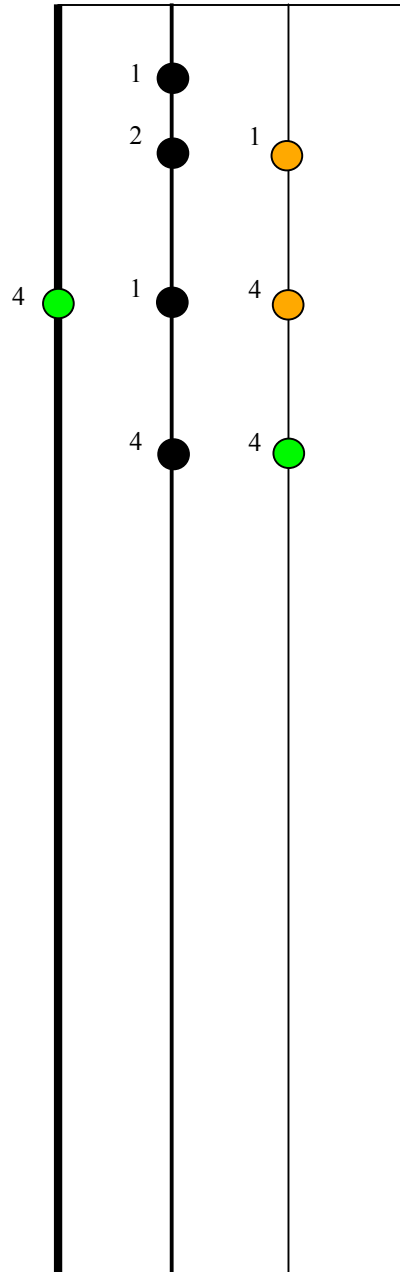
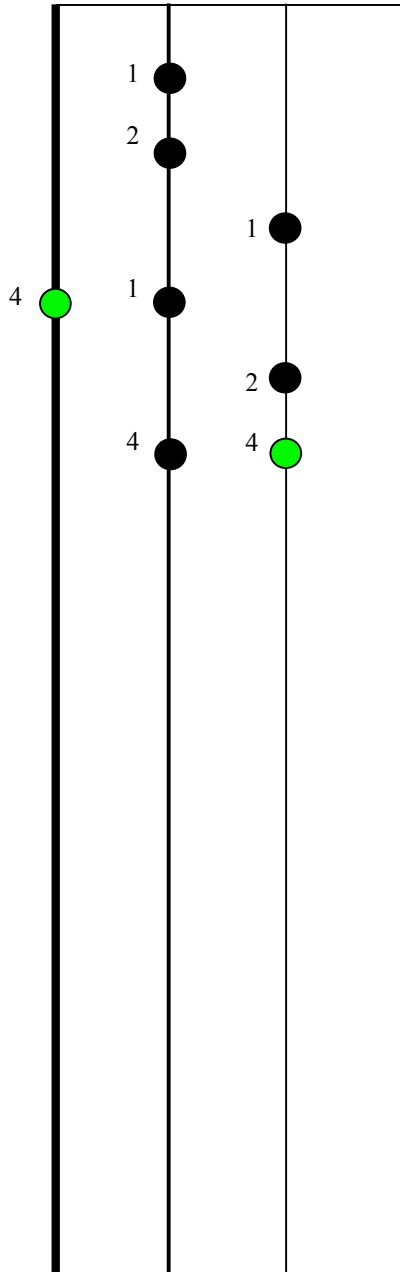
EXAMPLES of FORM 3 MINOR ACROSS STRINGS

**Ab** Melodic minor ascending

**Ab** Natural minor descending

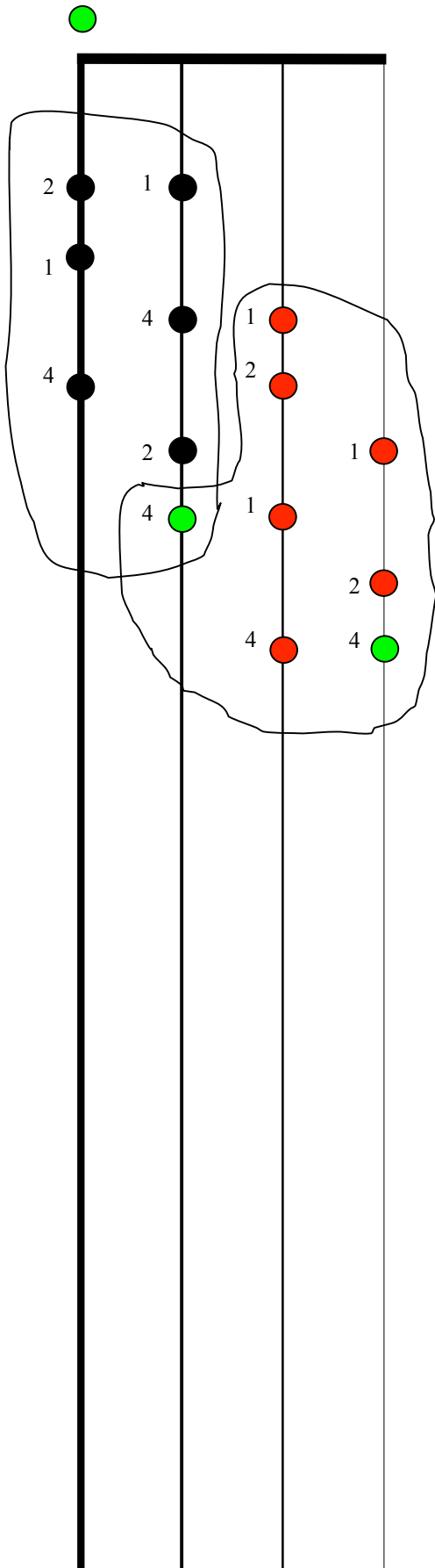
**Eb** Melodic minor ascending

**Eb** Natural minor descending

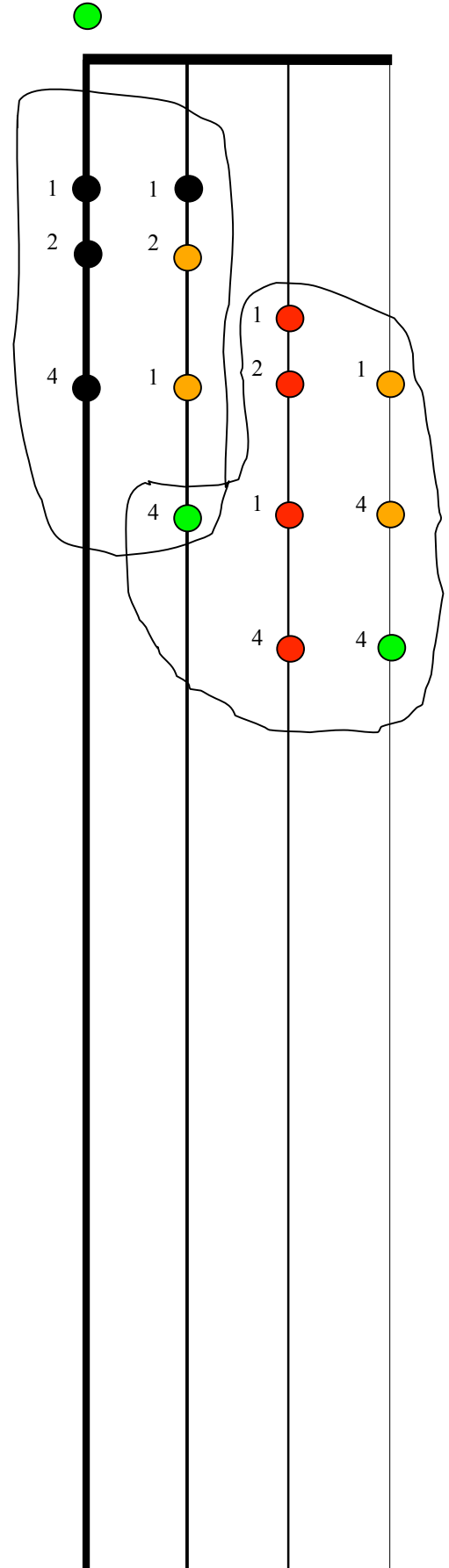




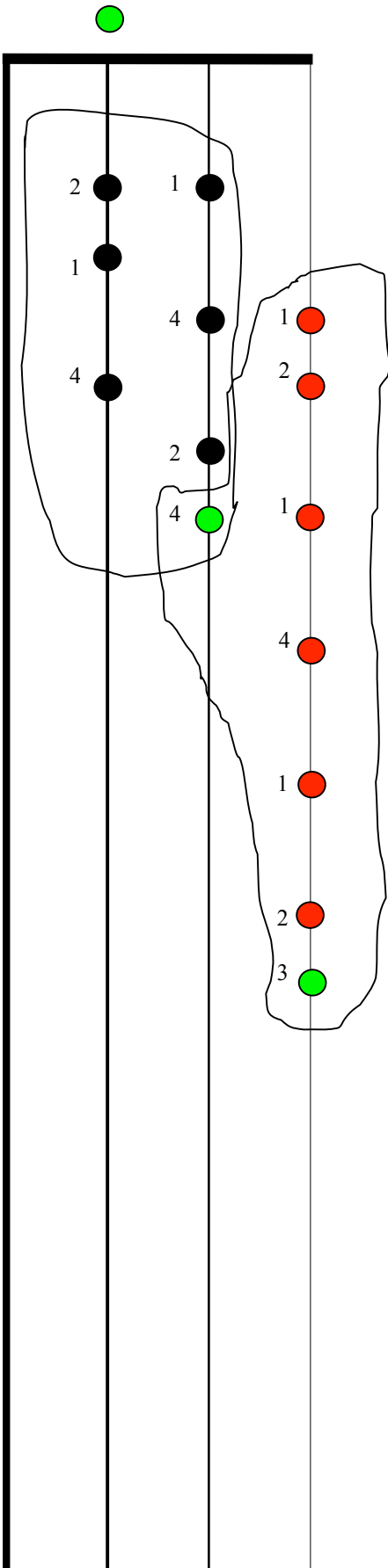
Form 1 Op + 3 E Melodic Minor ascending



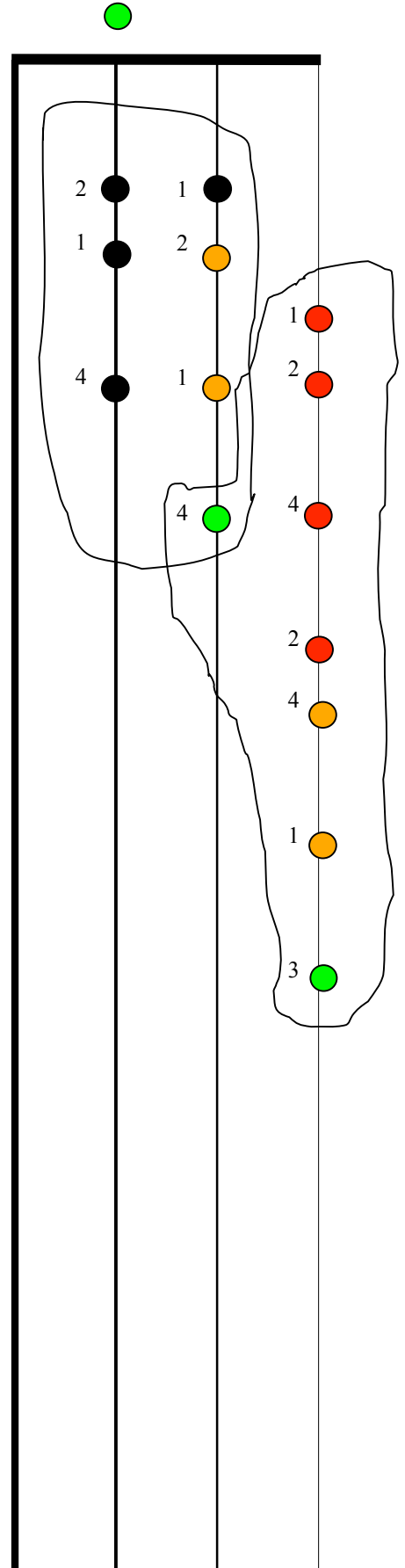
Form 1 Op + 3 E Natural Minor descending



Form 1 Op + 3 **A** Melodic Minor ascending

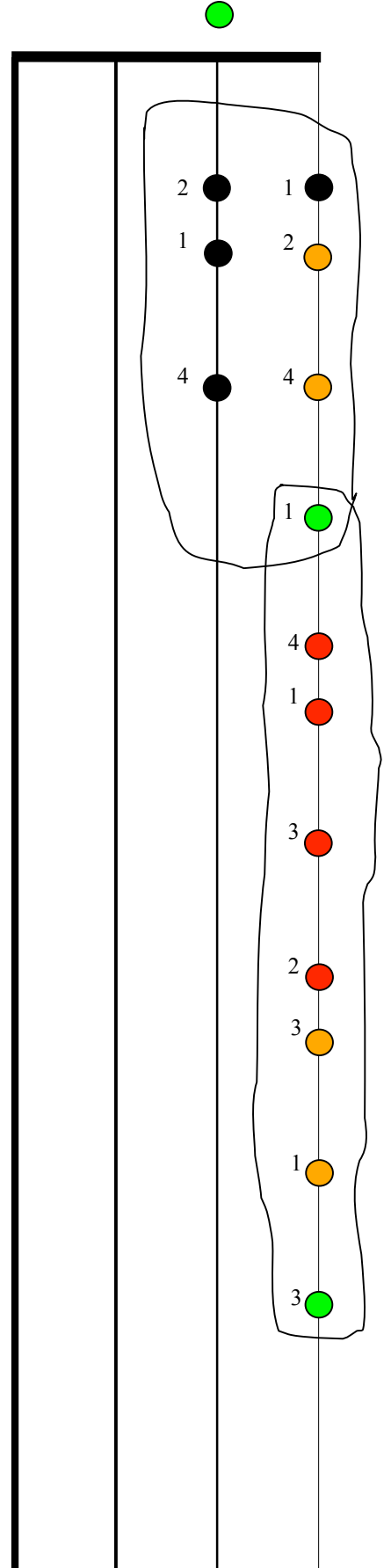
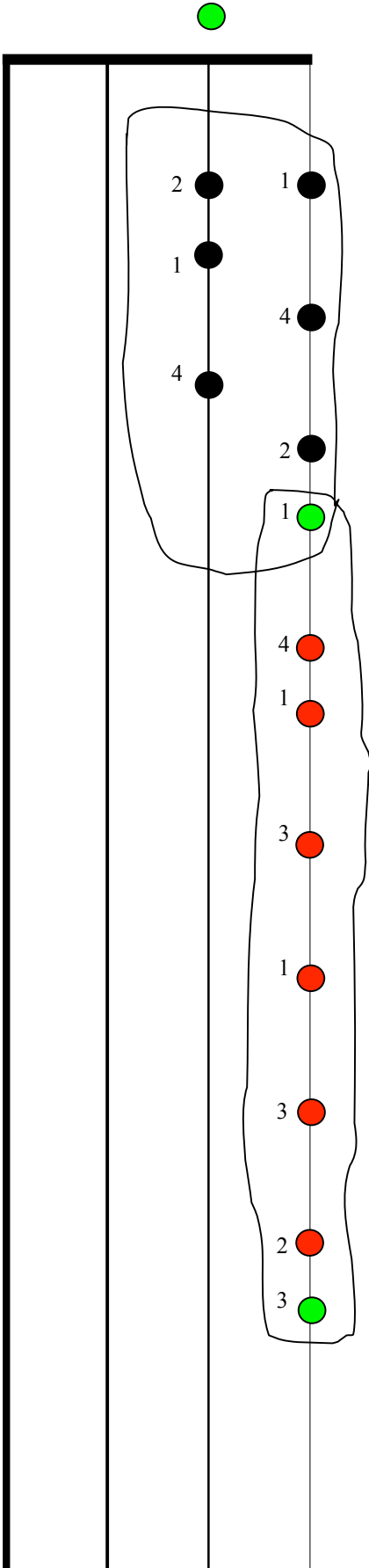


Form 1 Op + 3 **A** Natural Minor descending

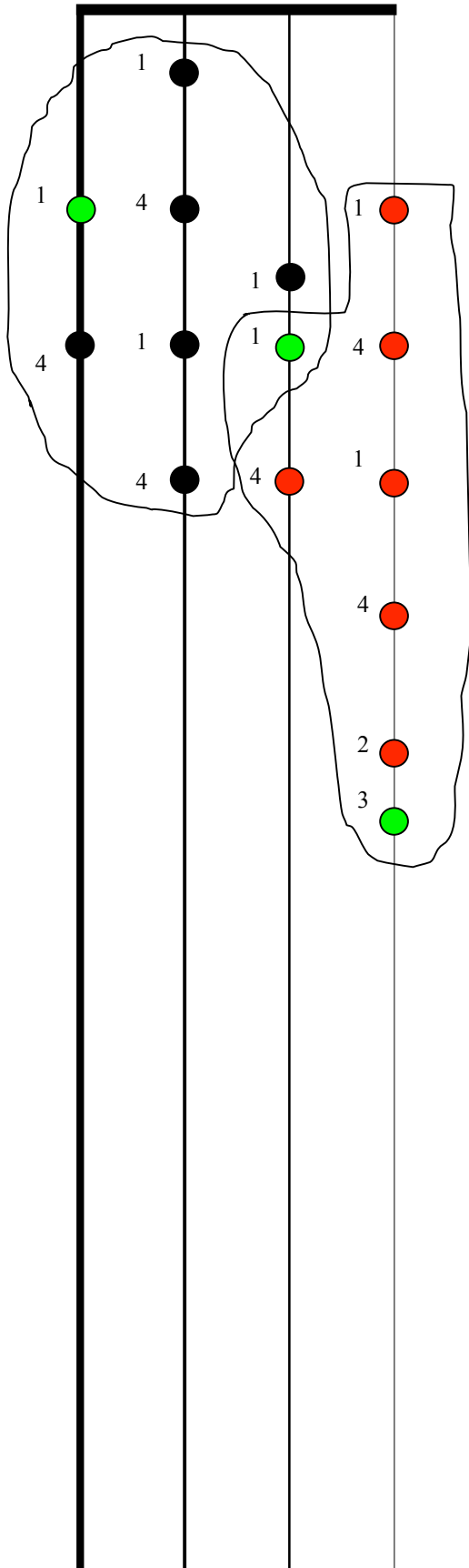


Form 1 Op + 1Cl **D** Melodic Minor ascending

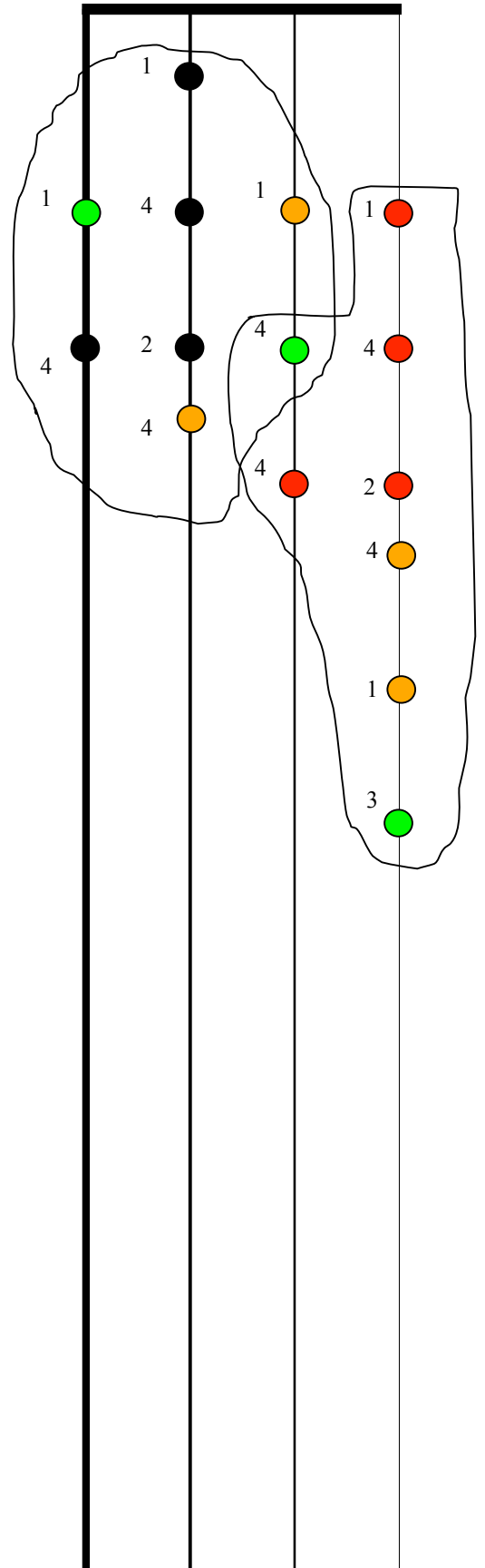
Form 1 Op + 1Cl **D** Natural Minor descending



Form 2 + 2 **G** Melodic Minor ascending

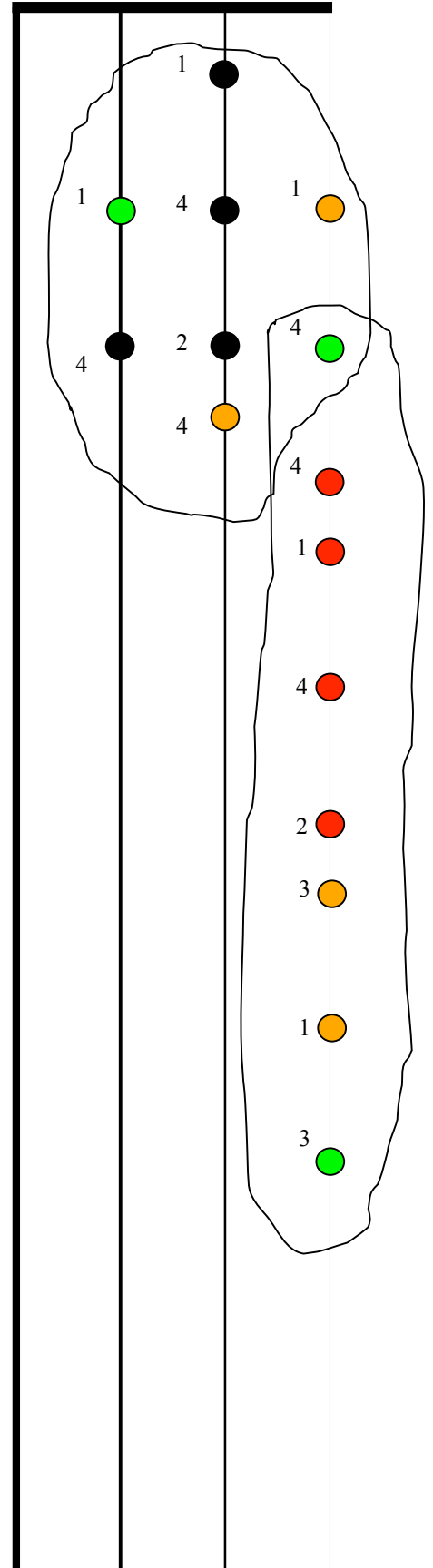
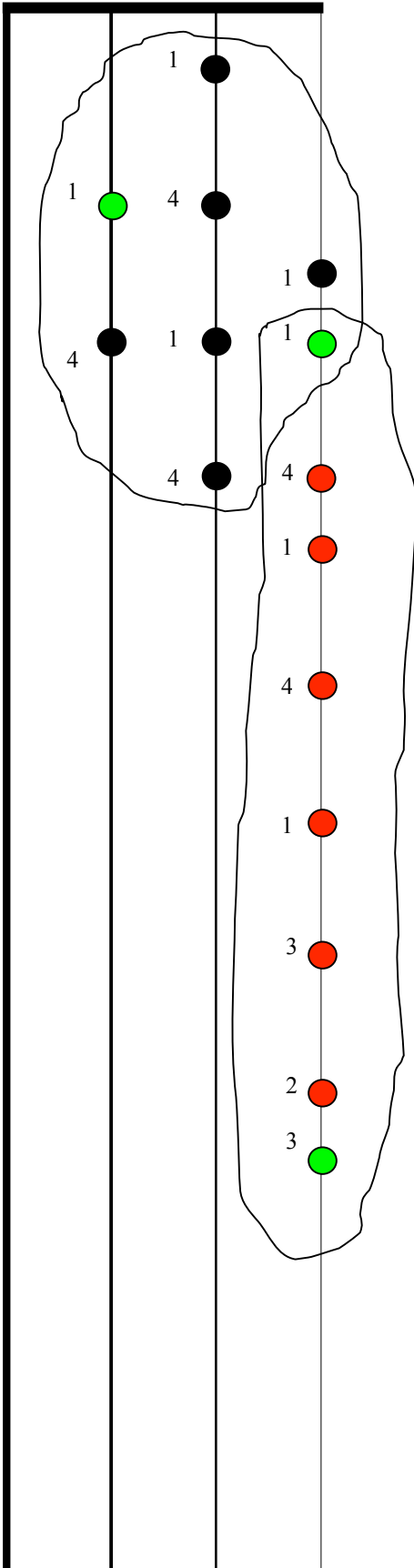


Form 2 + 2 **G** Natural Minor descending

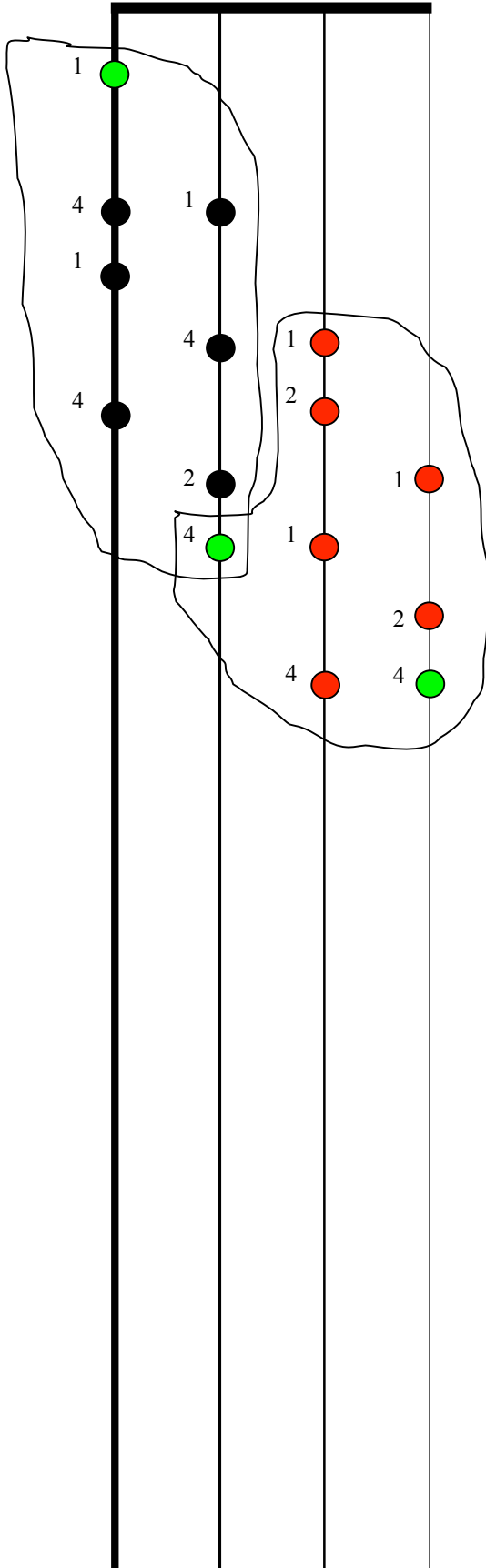


Form 2 + 1 C Melodic Minor ascending

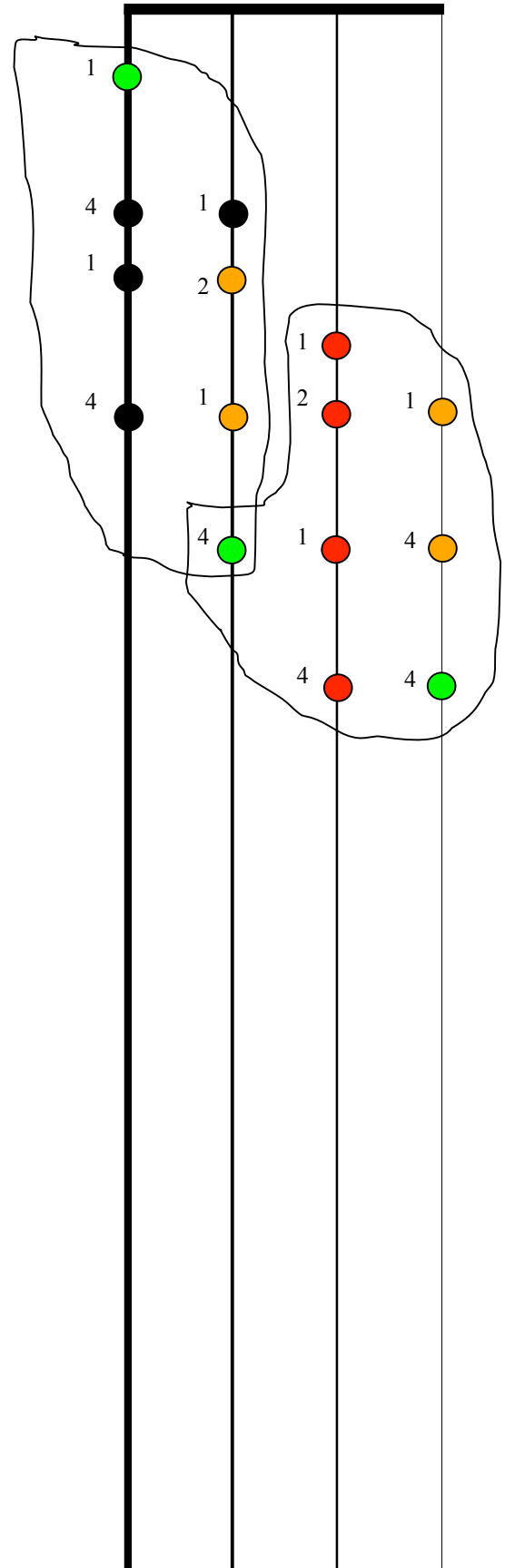
Form 2 + 1 C Natural Minor descending



Form 1 + 3 **F** Melodic Minor ascending

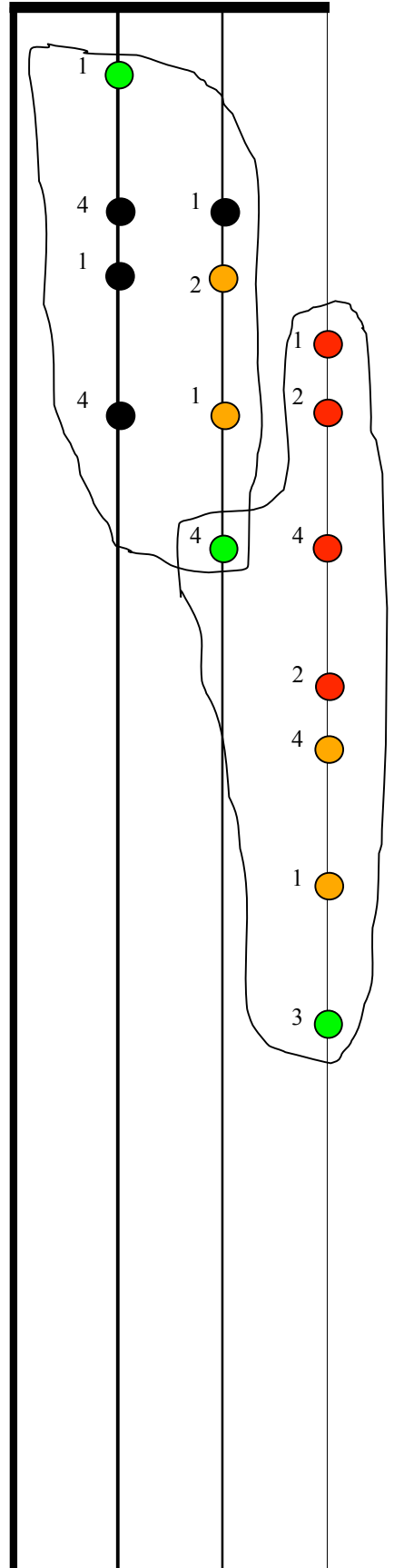
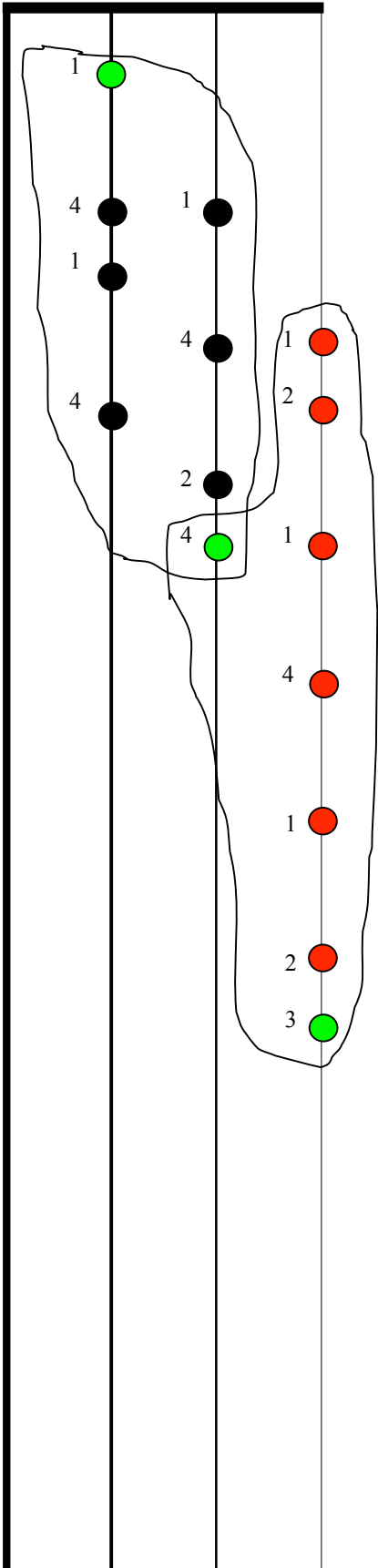


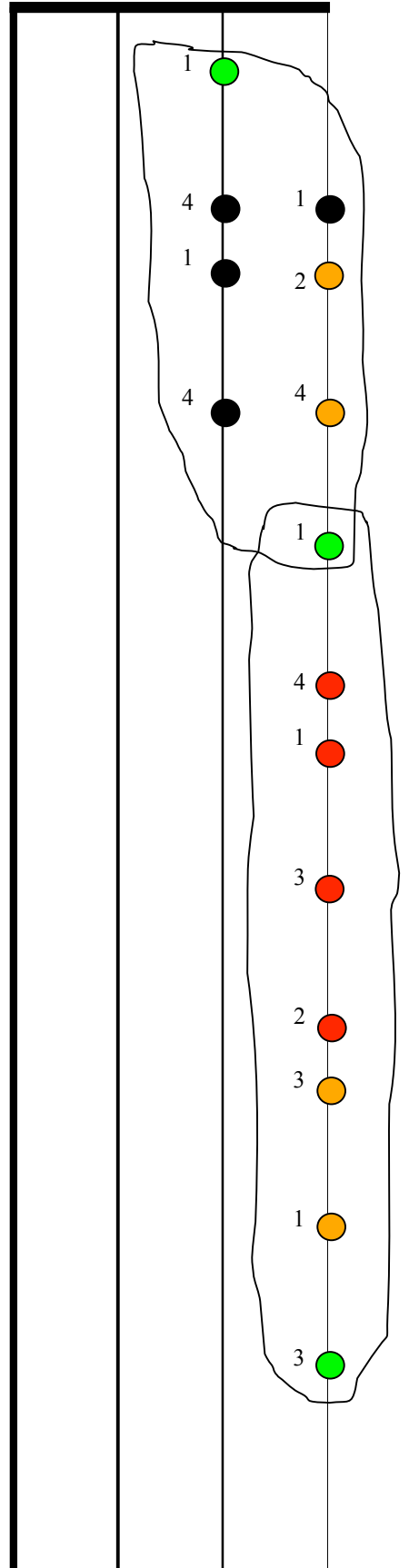
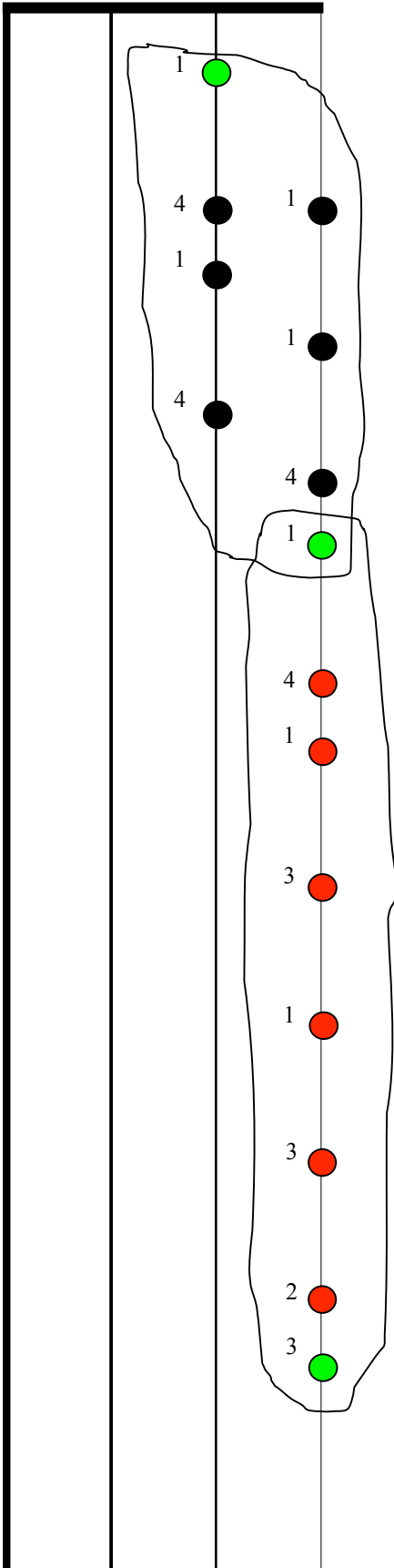
Form 1 + 3 **F** Natural Minor descending



Form 1 + 3 **Bb** Melodic Minor ascending

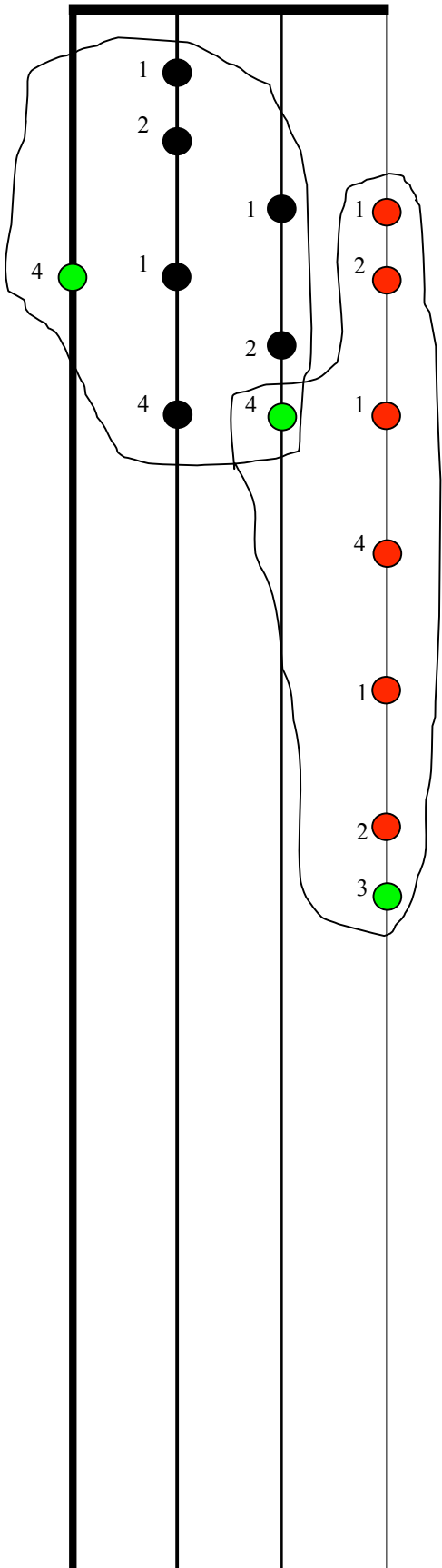
Form 1 + 3 **Bb** Natural Minor descending



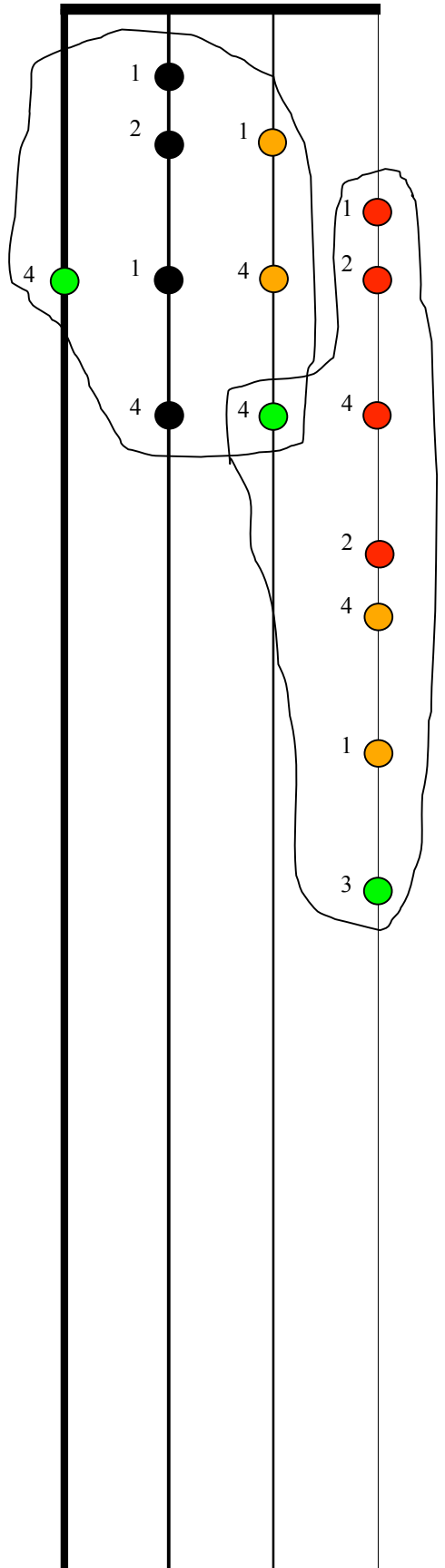




Form 3 + 3 **Ab** Melodic Minor ascending

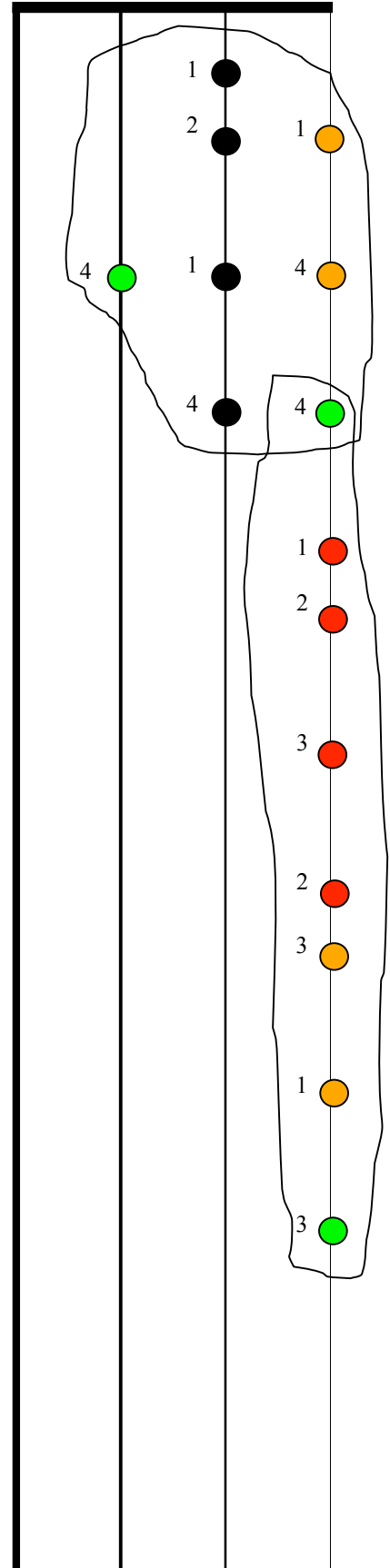
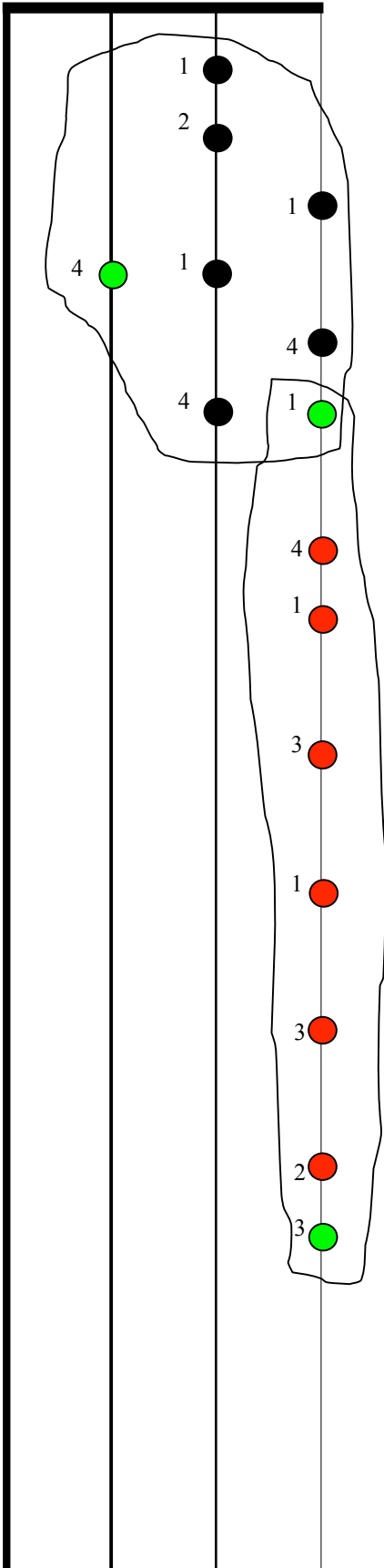


Form 3 + 3 **Ab** Natural Minor descending

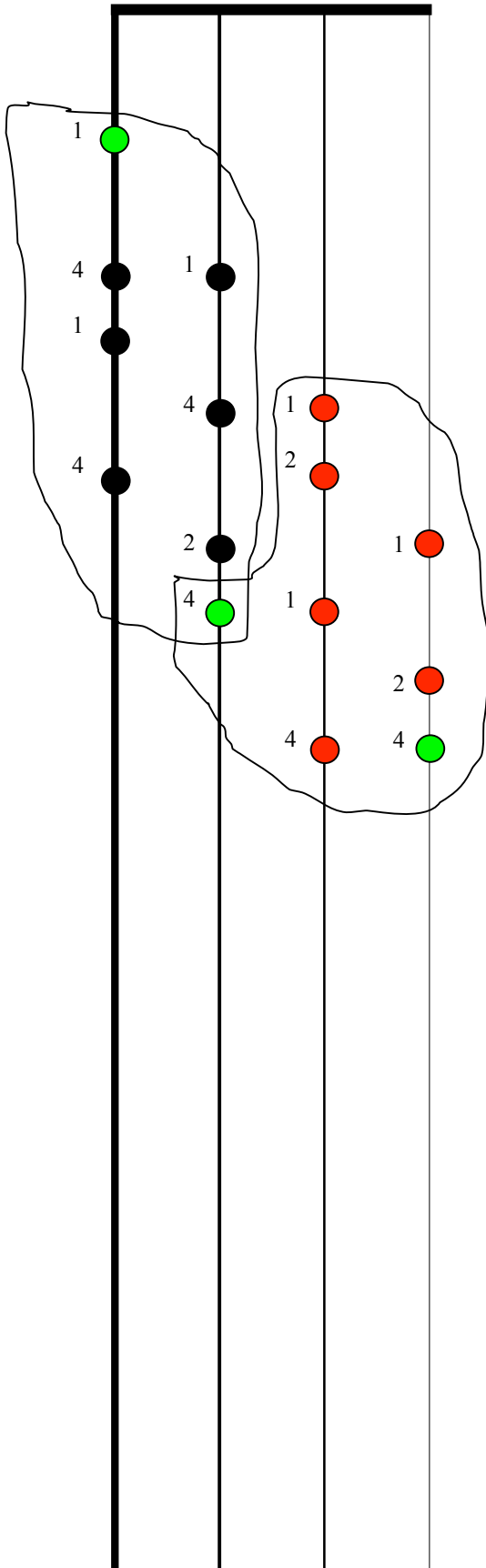


Form 3 + 1 **Db** Melodic Minor ascending

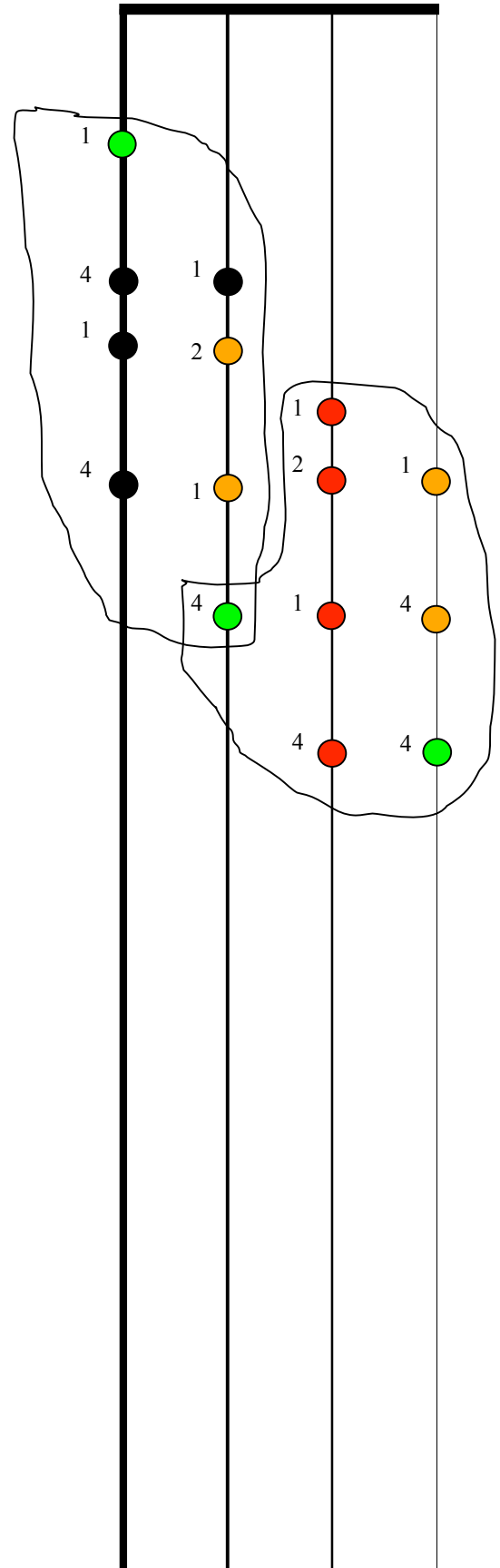
Form 3 + 1 **Db** Natural Minor descending

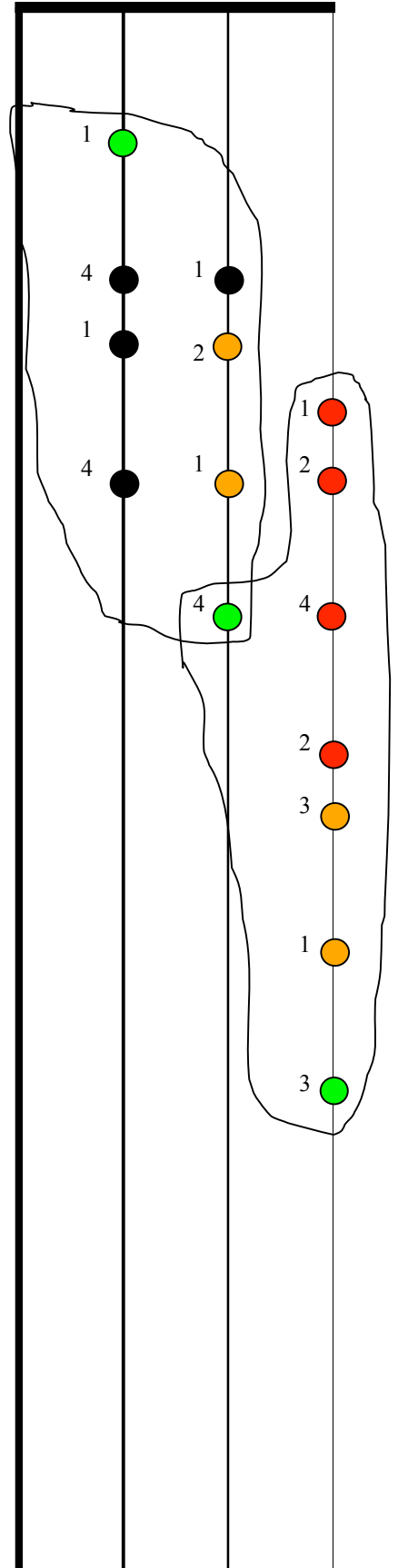
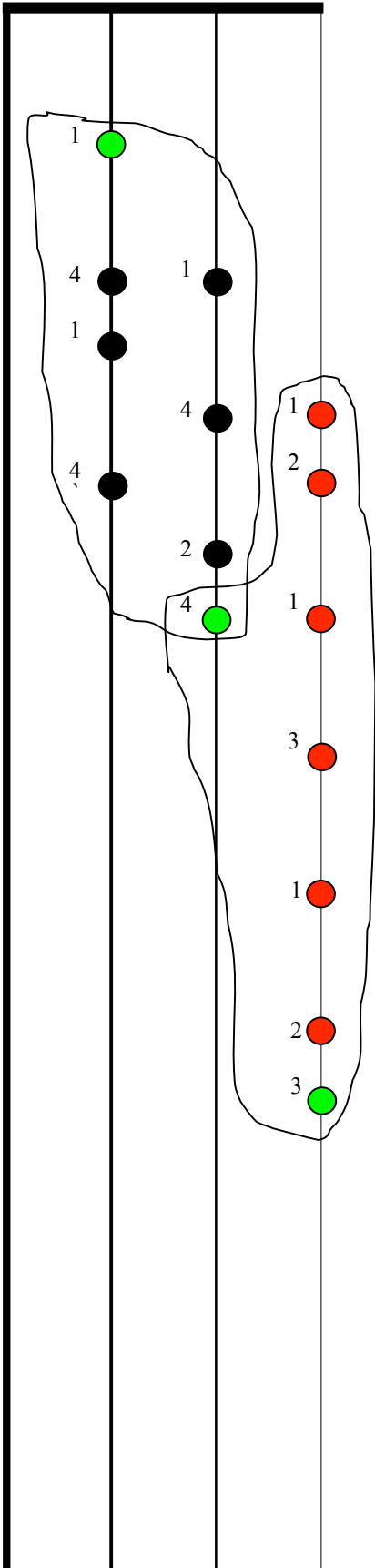


Form 1 + 3 **Gb** Melodic Minor ascending

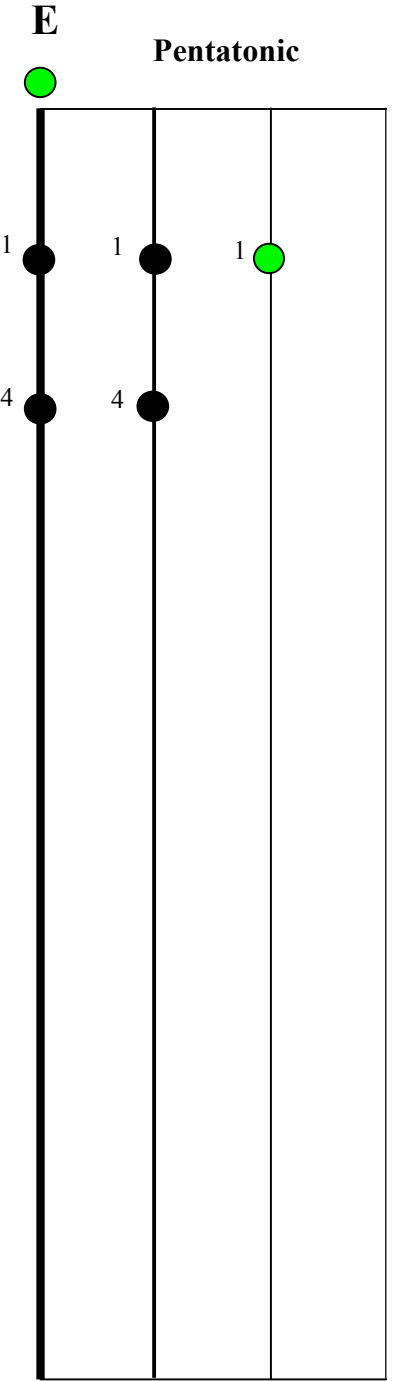
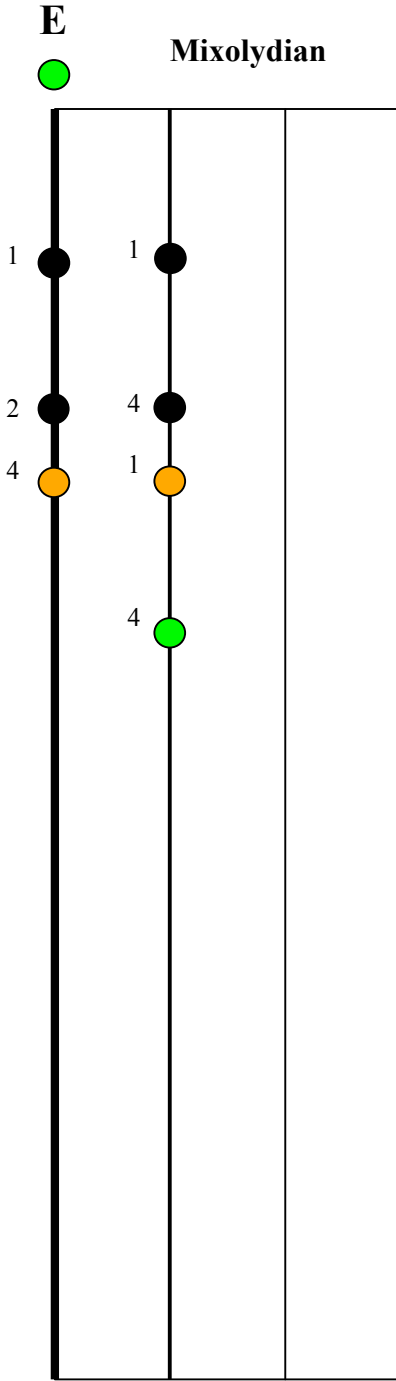
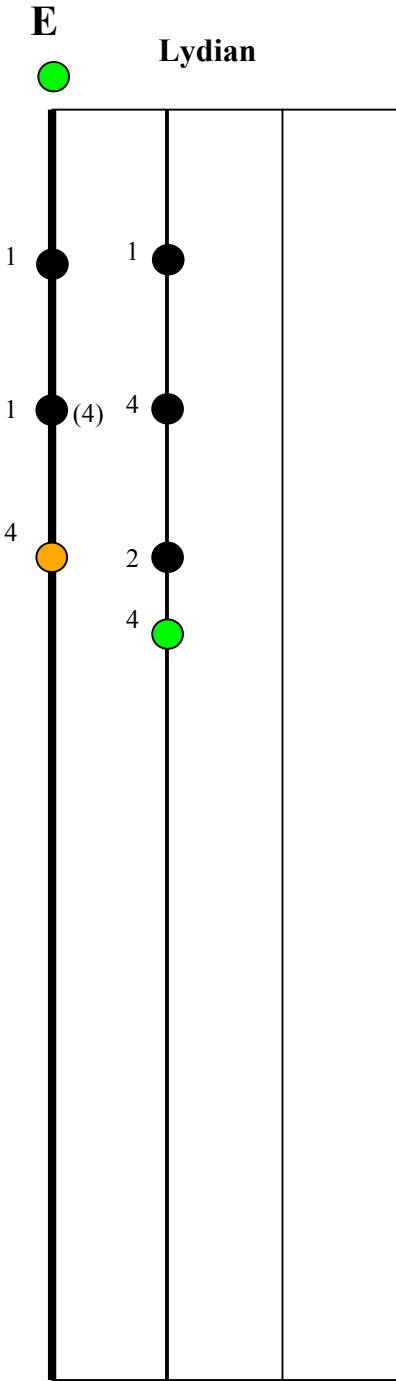
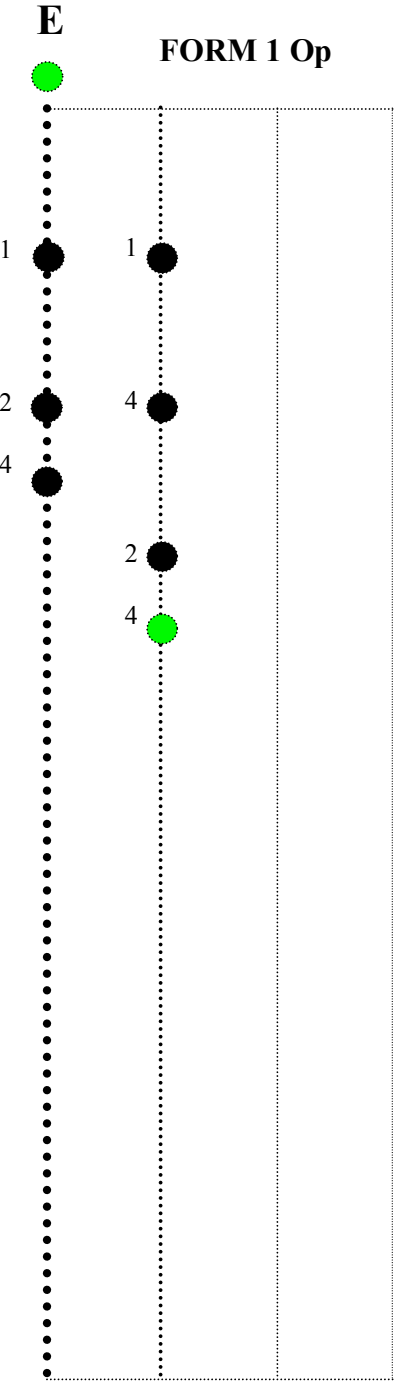


Form 1 + 3 **Gb** Natural Minor descending



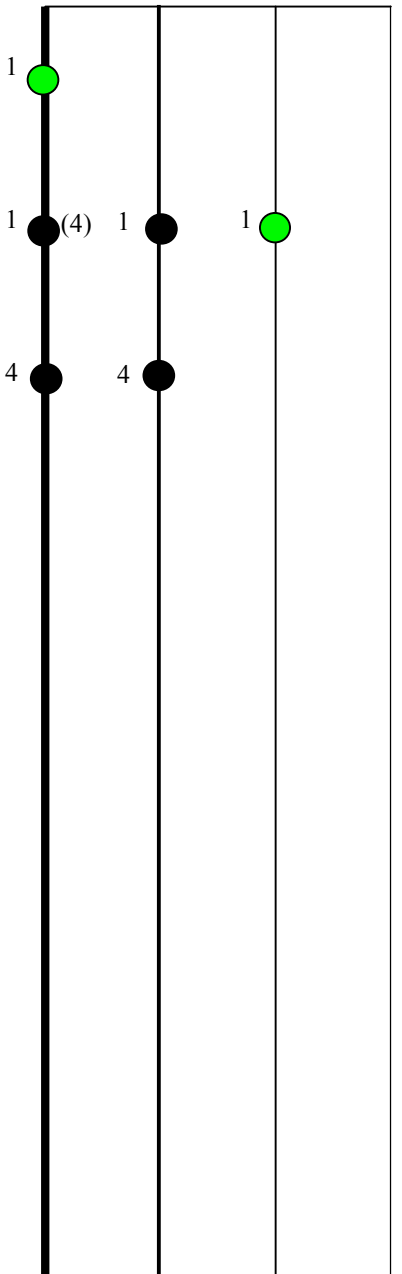
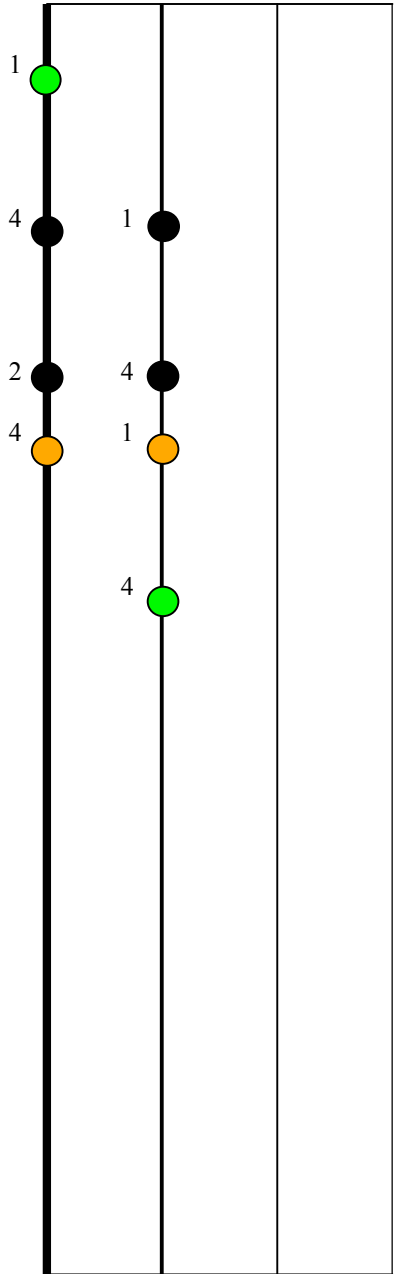
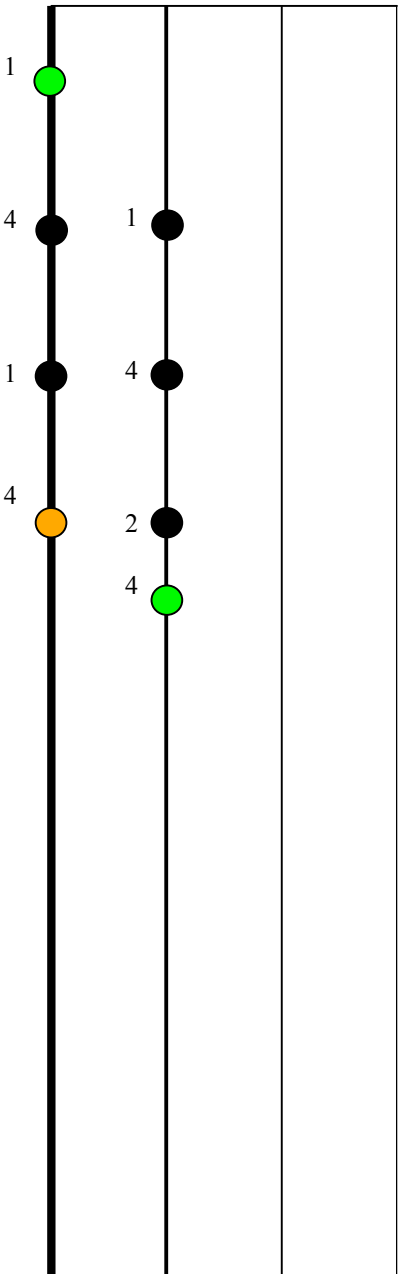
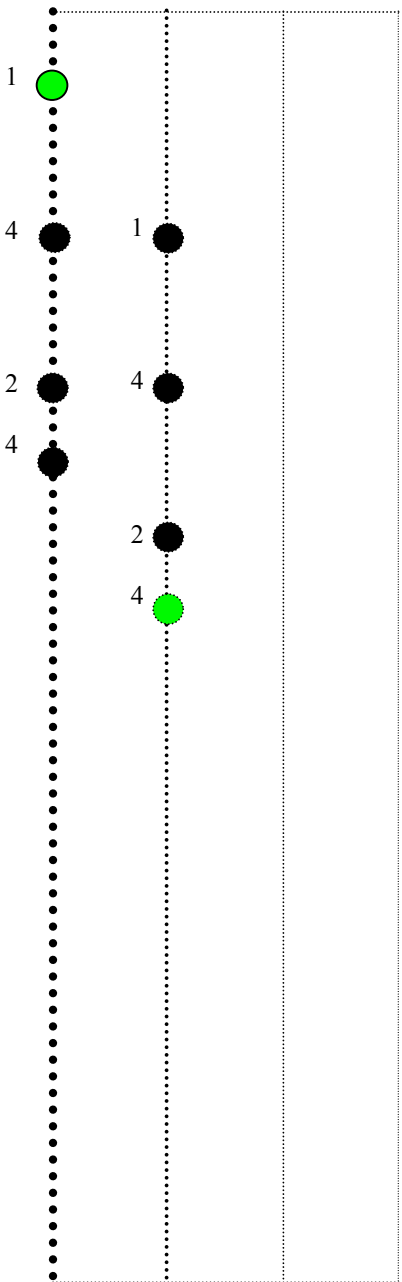


ALTERNATE MAJOR FORM 1Op



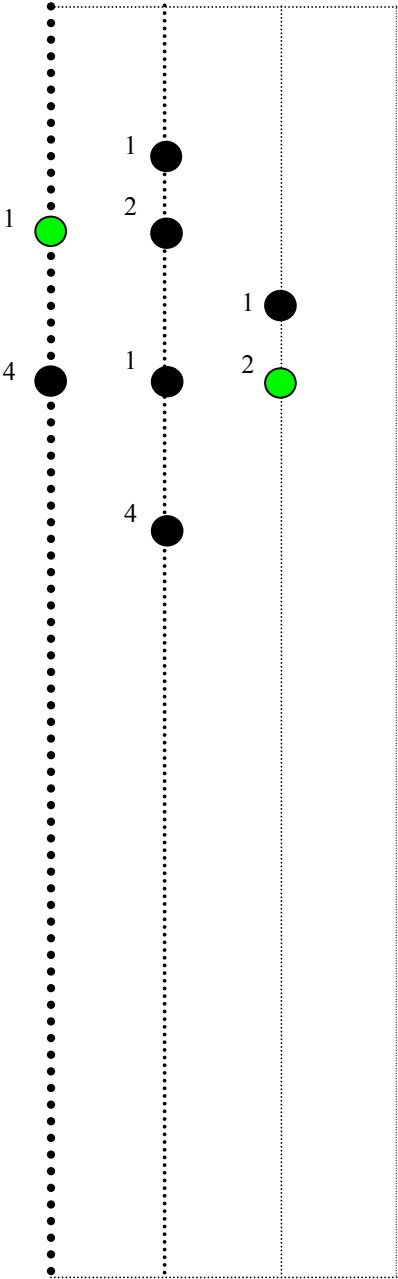
ALTERNATE MAJOR FORM 1CI

**F**      **FORM 1 CI**      **F**      **Lydian**      **F**      **Mixolydian**      **F**      **Pentatonic**

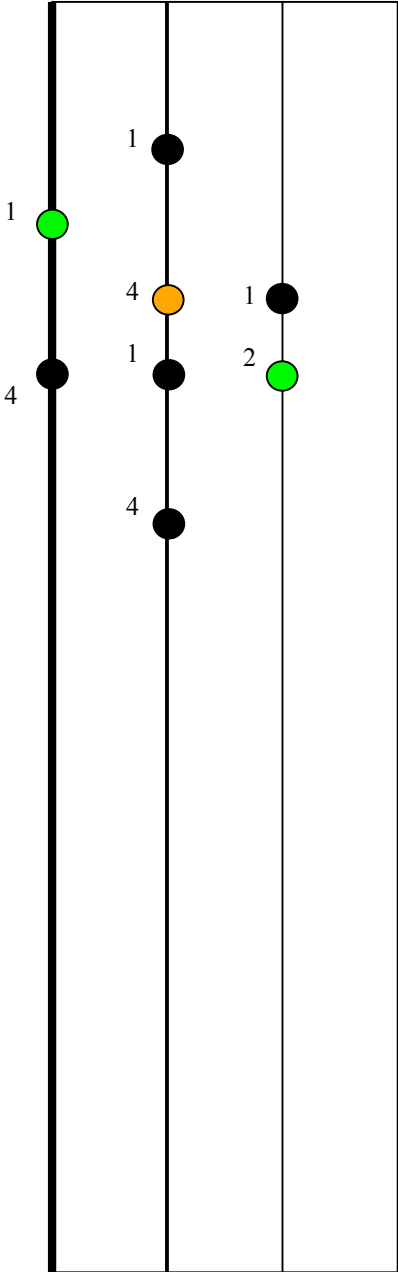


ALTERNATE MAJOR FORM 2

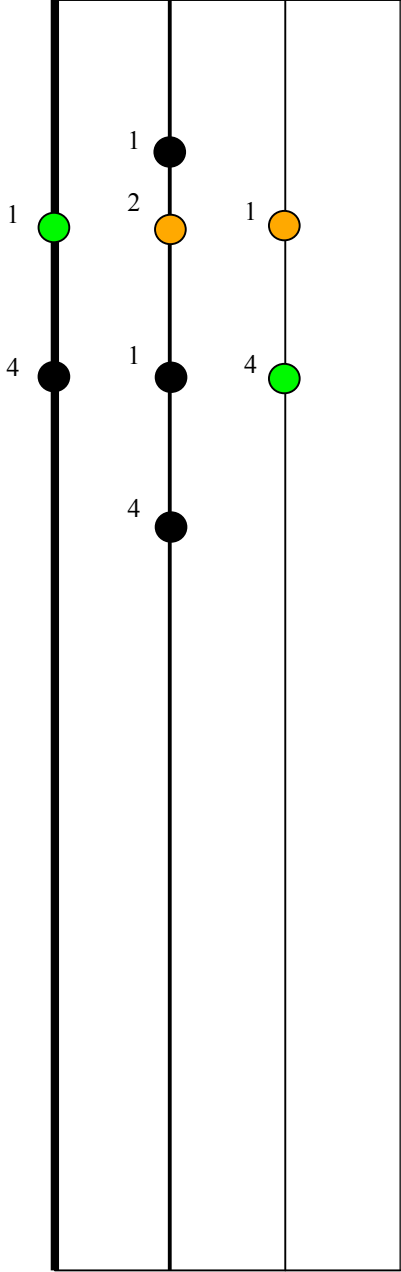
**G** FORM 2



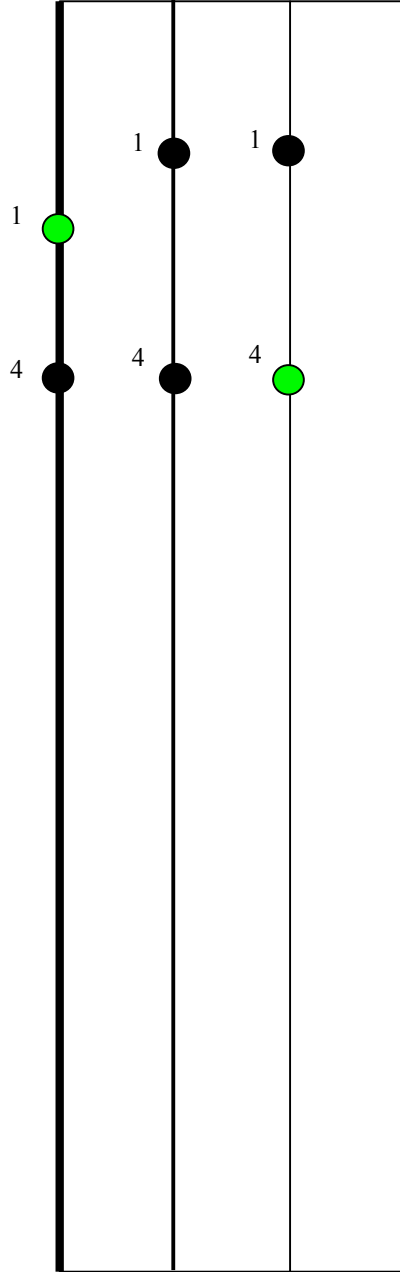
**G** Lydian



**G** Mixolydian

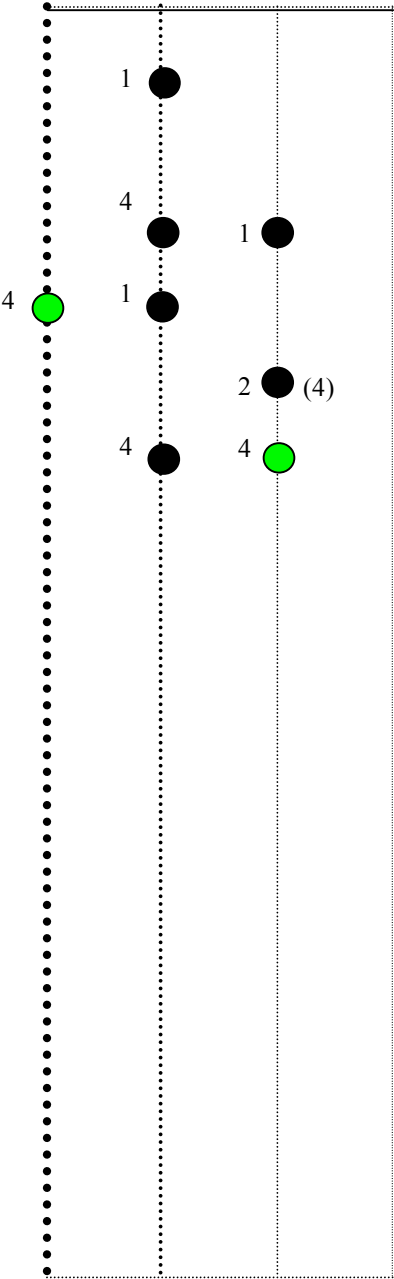


**G** Pentatonic

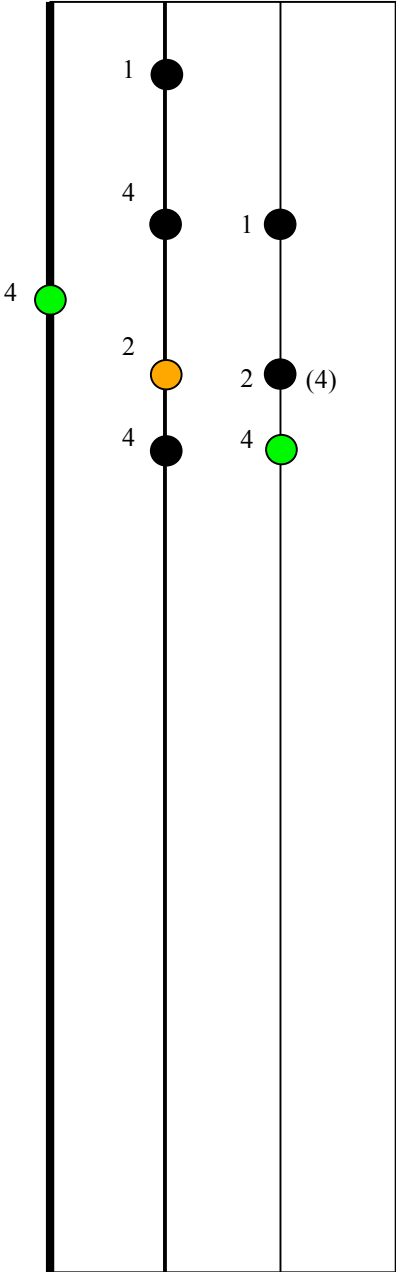


ALTERNATE MAJOR FORM 3

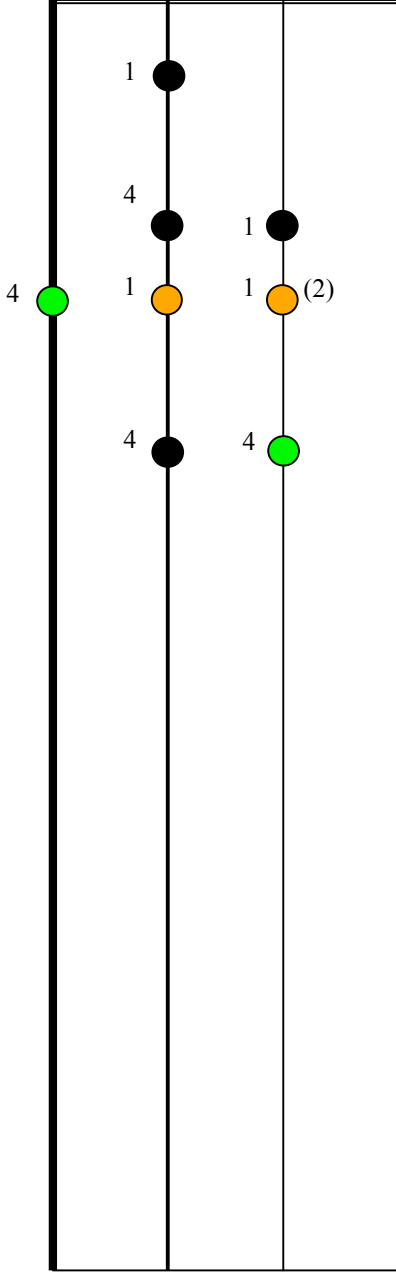
**Ab FORM 3**



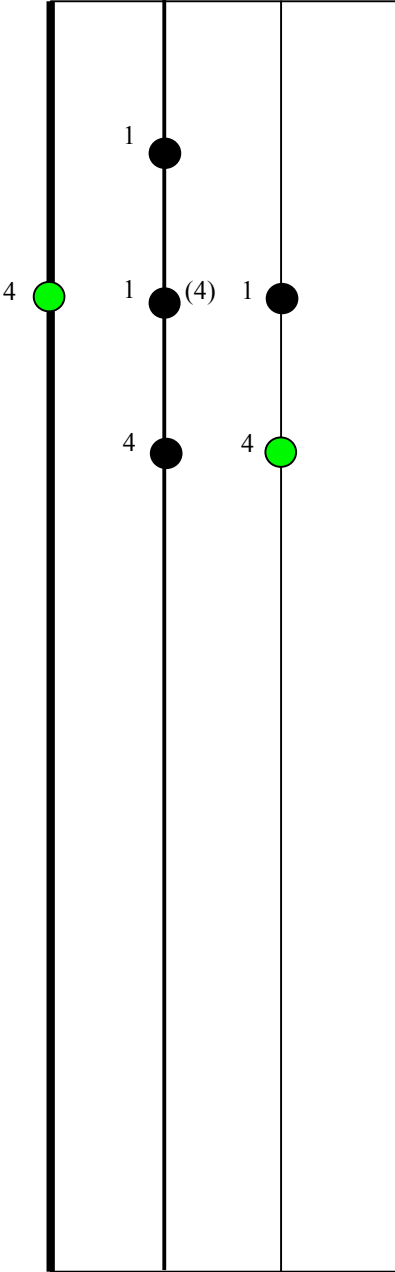
**Ab Lydian**



**Ab Mixolydian**



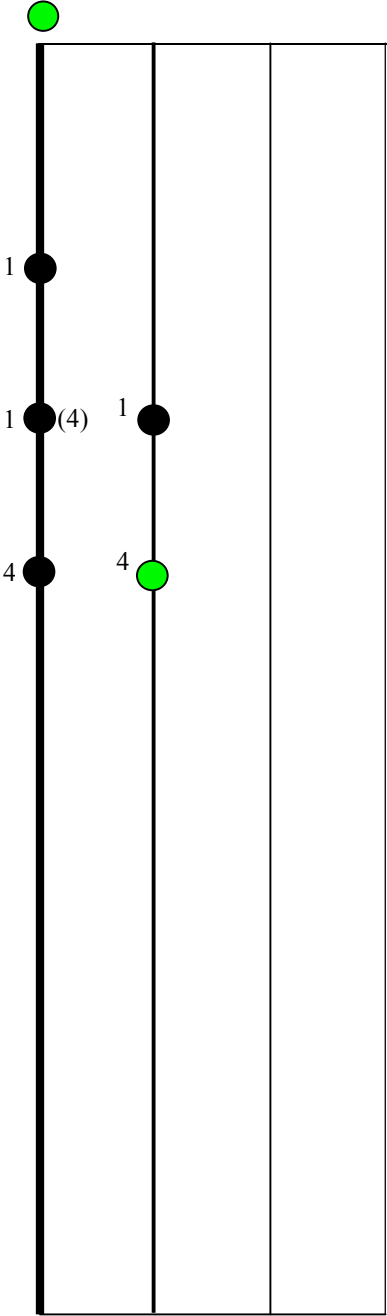
**Ab Pentatonic**



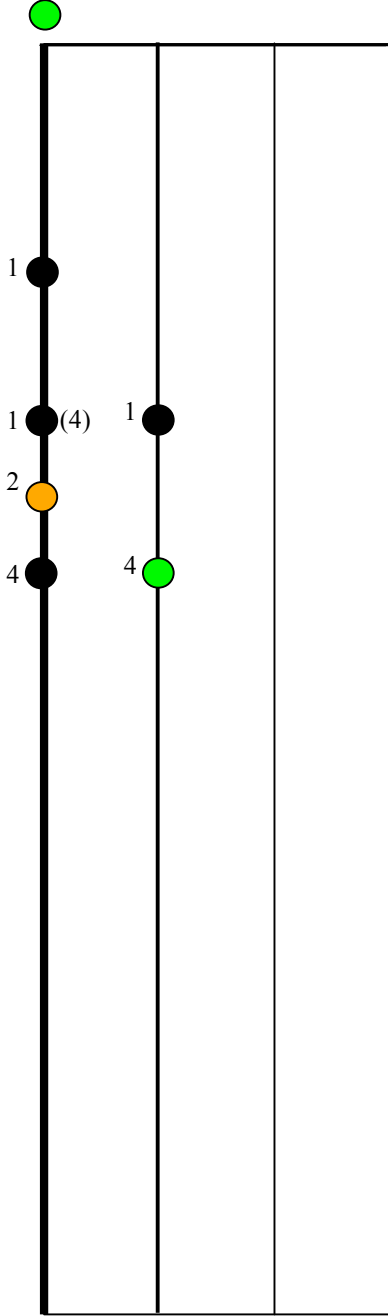


ALTERNATE MINOR FORM 1 Op

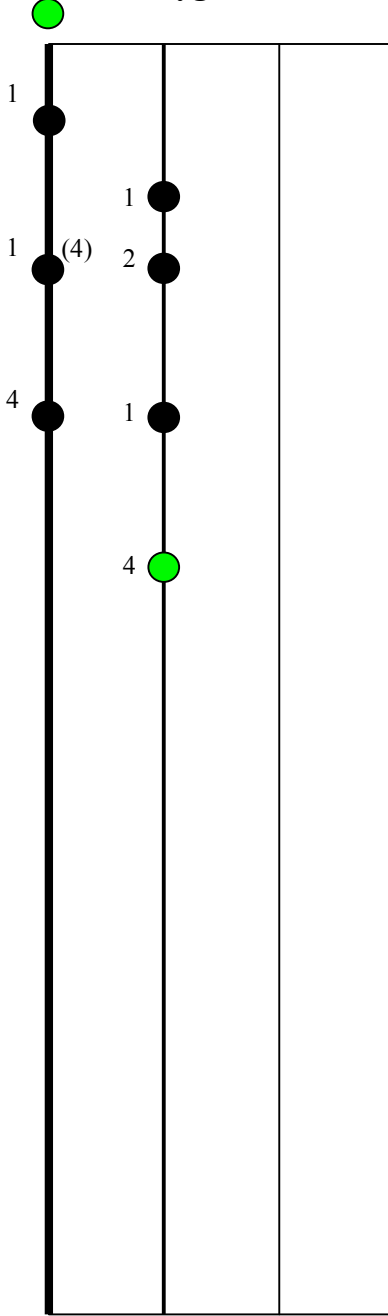
**E** Pentatonic



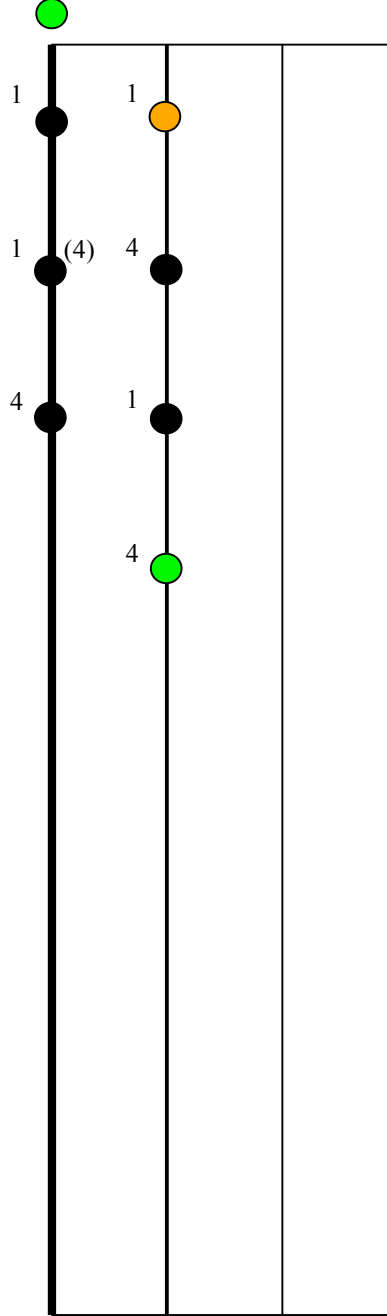
**E** Blues



**E** Phrygian

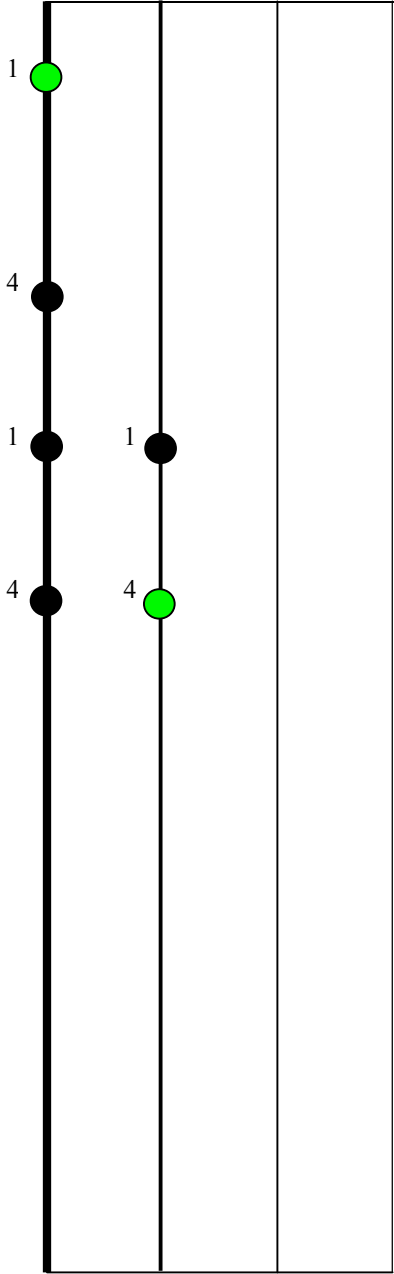


**E** Locrian

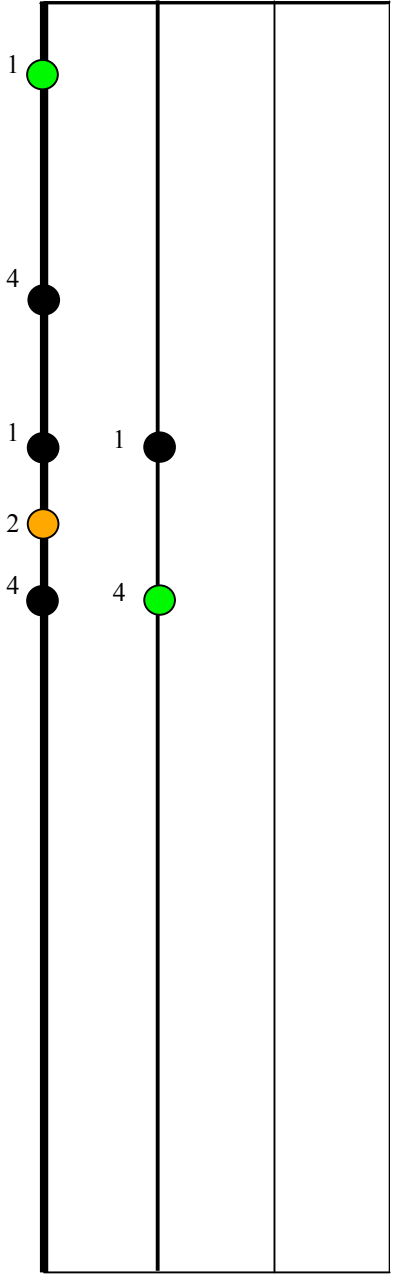


ALTERNATE MINOR FORM 1 C1

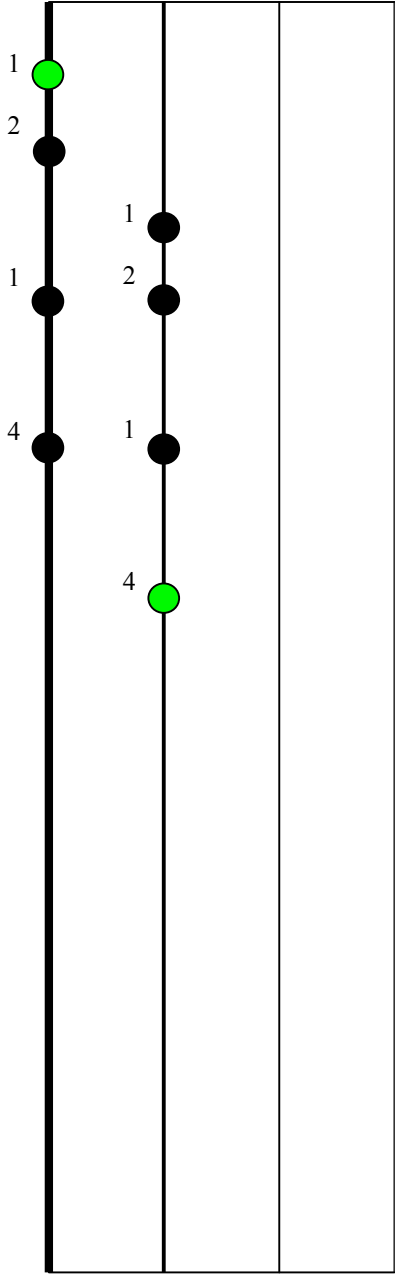
**F**  
**Pentatonic**



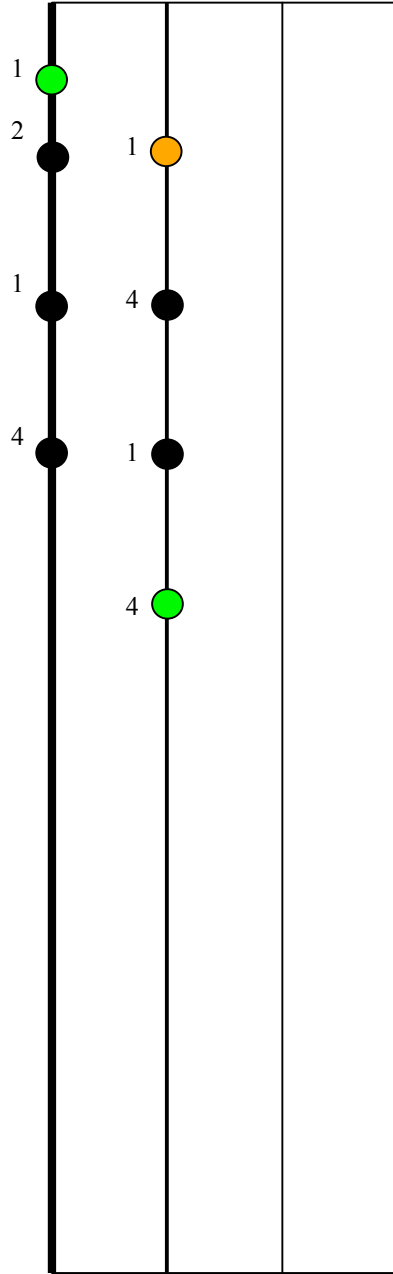
**F**  
**Blues**



**F**  
**Phrygian**

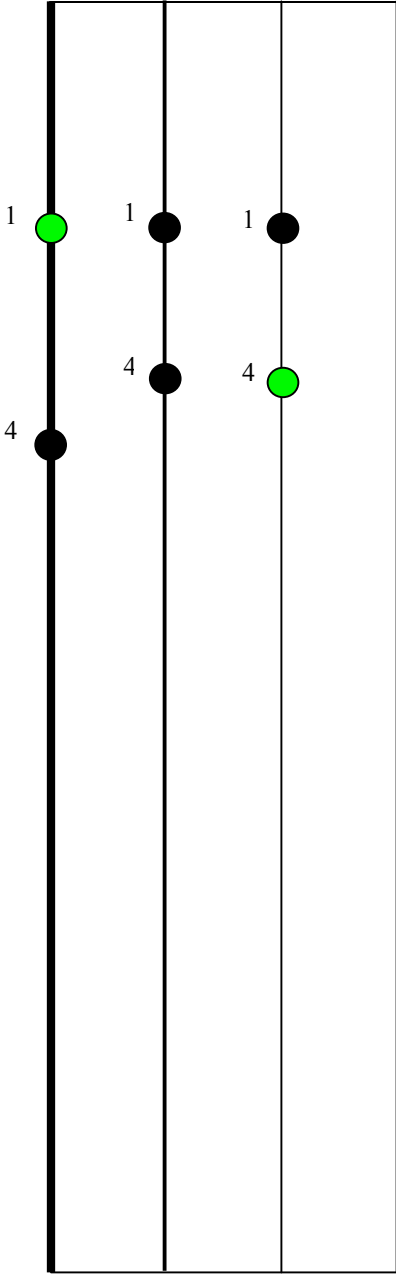


**F**  
**Locrian**

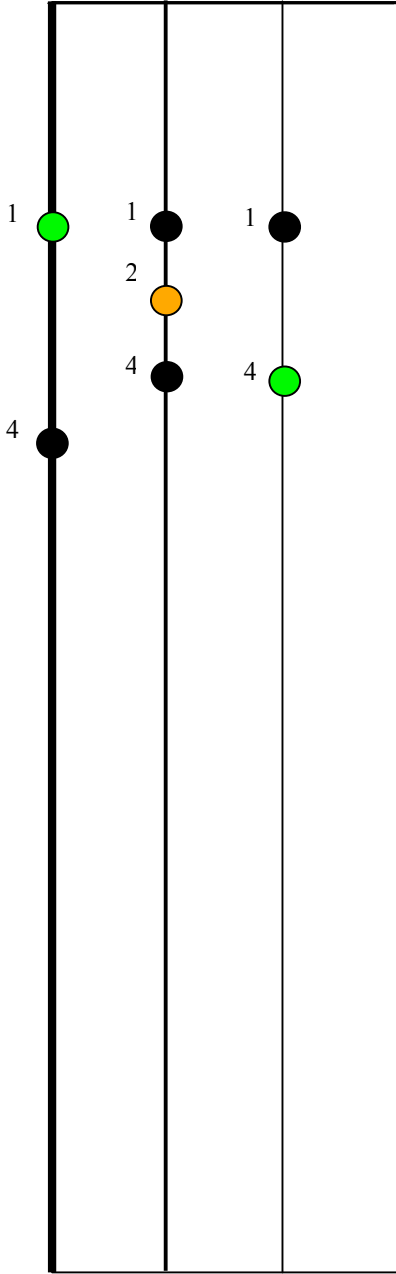


ALTERNATE MINOR FORM 2

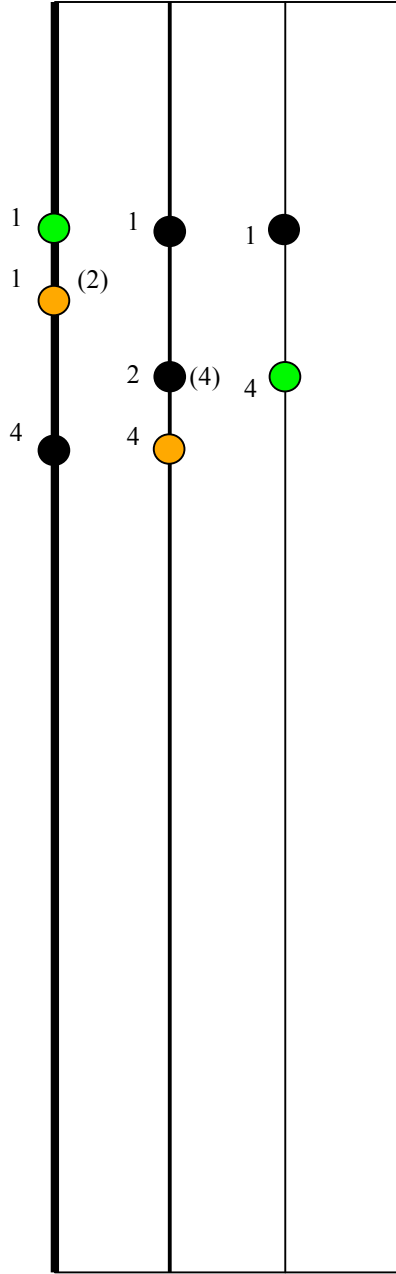
**G** Pentatonic



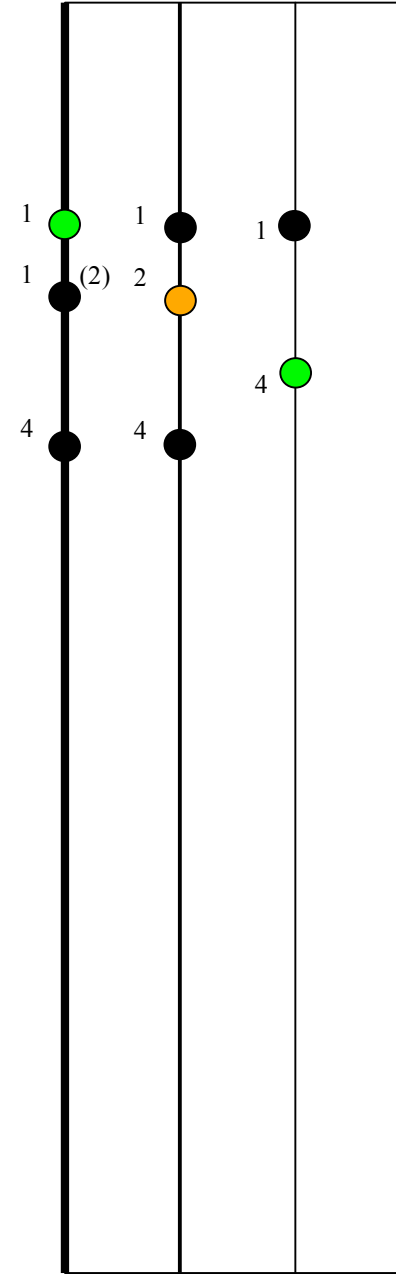
**G** Blues



**G** Phrygian

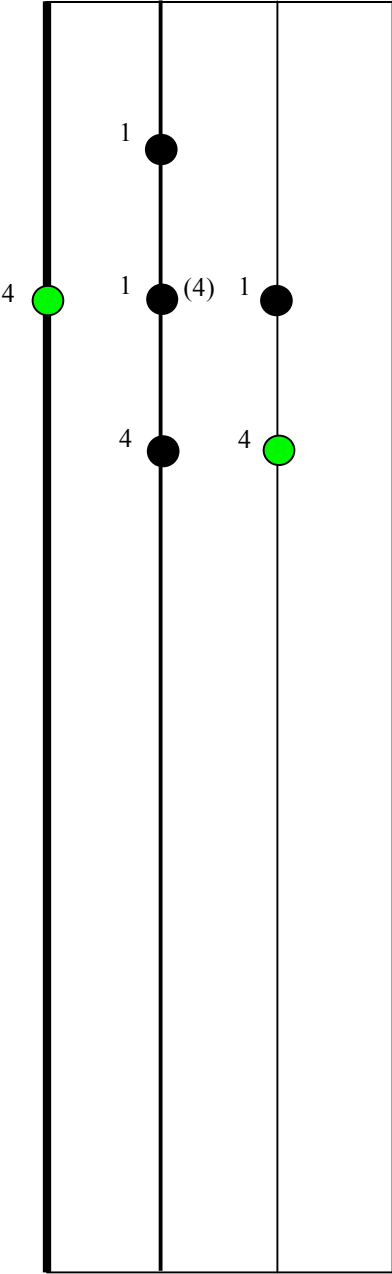


**G** Locrian

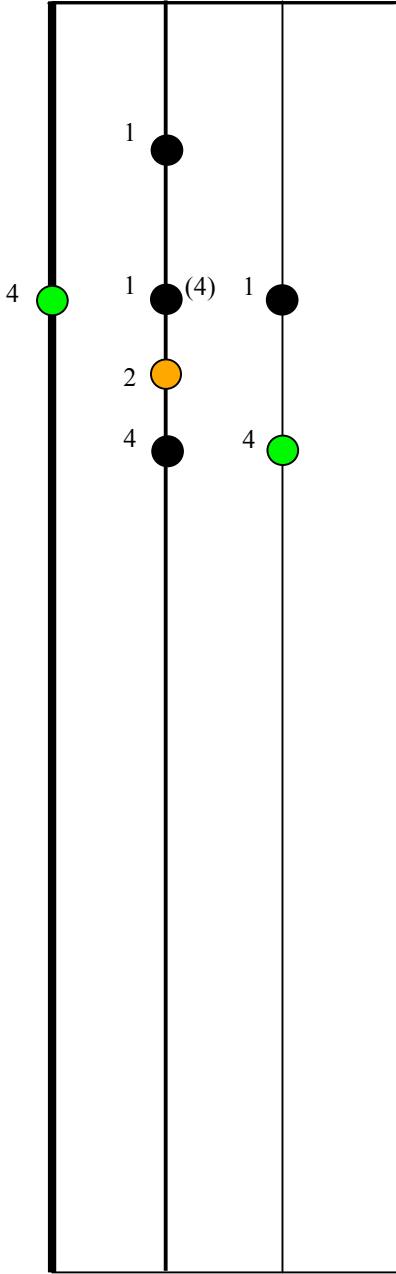


ALTERNATE MINOR FORM 3

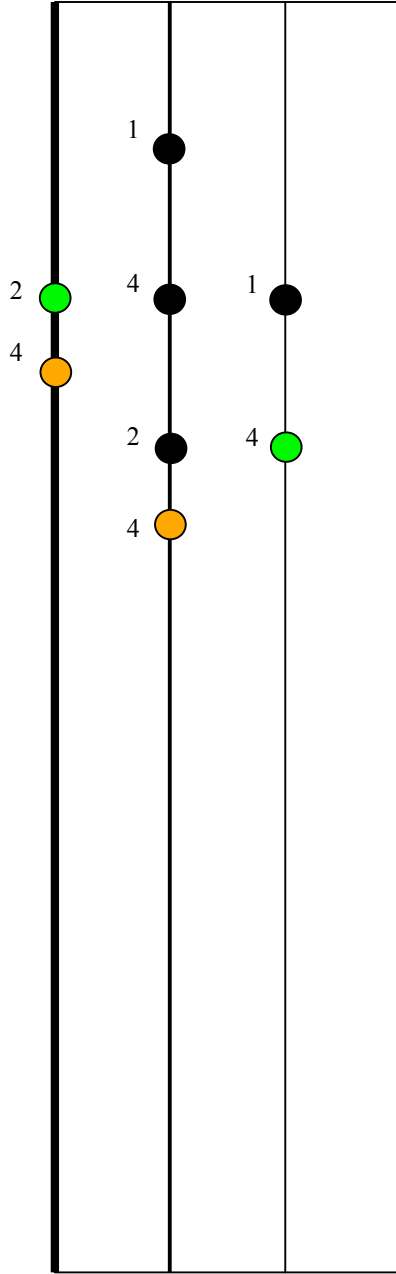
**Ab Pentatonic**



**Ab Blues**



**Ab Phrygian**



**Ab Locrian**

