

PART II: CHAPTER 16B

The Moveable C Clefs

Improvisation Activities

See Appendix D for details

Harmonic Improvisation—Root Chord Melody

• **Process:**

- Divide the class into groups of 4-8 students. Student A sings a simple melody or an exercise from *Progressive Sight Singing* on a neutral vowel. Focus on the linear harmonic progression of the tonal phrases. On the repeat of the melody, sing the bass line or roots of the chord progression on solfège. This is frequently referred to as a *root chord melody*. See example below. Exchange voice parts and determine the locate and type of cadences.
- Variation I: The root chord group sings the same pitches but changes one rhythmic element (dotted half note = two dotted quarter notes, etc.). See Root Chord, Rhythm Variation, below. Exchange voice parts
- Root chord group sings same pitches but improvises the rhythm integrating known rhythm patterns, a rhythmic motive found in the melody and/or the motive in retrograde (reverse). Exchange voice parts.

Example A: *I's The B'y*

Progressive Cadence

Melody

Root Chord

Root Chord Rhythm Variation I

Root Chord Rhythm Variation II

Broken Chords

Tonic I Dominant V Tonic I Dominant V

Harmonic Improvisation—Broken Chord Melody

• **Process:**

- Divide the class into two groups. Group A sings the melody while Group B sings the chord progression using broken chords. The broken chords can be presented in the same order [low, middle, high] for each chord or in a variety of orders [bottom, top, middle; middle, bottom, top; top, middle, bottom; middle, top, bottom;]. See broken chord line above. Exchange voice parts.
- Group B of the class sings the melody while Group B sings the chord progression using an Alberti bass figure [notes of each chord is presented in the order: lowest, highest, middle, highest) or an arpeggio figure [root, third, fifth, octave]. Exchange voice parts.
- Group A sings the melody while Group B sing the chord progression improvising his/her own broken chord figures. Exchange voice parts.
- Divide the class equally between the five voice parts. Exchange voice parts.

Harmonic Improvisation—Ostinato

An *ostinato* is a continually repeated melodic, rhythmic or chordal phrase that occurs in a section of a work or throughout the entire composition. It provides a unifying element and can be found in music ranging from classical to jazz to popular music.

- **Process:**
 - The instructor or a student sings a simple melody or an exercise from *Progressive Sight Singing* on a neutral vowel. Focus on the rhythmic motives in the phrases. On the repeat of the melody improvise a simple rhythm ostinato. See Example B.
 - The instructor or a student repeats the above melody or sings another simple melody or exercise on a neutral vowel. Focus on the linear harmonic progression of the tonal phrases. On the repeat of the melody improvise a simple melodic ostinato.

Harmonic Improvisation—Descant

A descant is a countermelody line that follows the same harmony progression as the main melody and may or may not be independent in rhythm and tonal contour. Often the descant sits above the melody and is subordinate to the fixed melody.

- **Process:**
 - The instructor or a student sings a simple melody or an exercise from *Progressive Sight Singing* on a neutral vowel. Focus on the linear harmonic progression of the tonal phrases. On the repeat of the melody improvise a simple, subordinate *countermelody* or *descant* above the melody. See example below. This melody may be performed as a four-part canon. See Example B.

Example B: *Come and Sing*

The musical notation for Example B: *Come and Sing* consists of three staves in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The Melody staff is marked with circled numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The Descant staff is a line of notes above the melody. The Ostinato staff is a line of notes below the melody.

This block shows a second set of musical notation for Example B: *Come and Sing*, identical to the one above, showing the Descant, Melody, and Ostinato parts.

Harmonic Improvisation—Counter melody

A counter melody is a second melody that is sung or played simultaneously with the primary melody and typically performs a subordinate role. It is meant to ‘counter’ the primary melody. Counter melodies follow the same harmony progression as the main melody and may contrast or resemble the first melody. Generally, a counter melody uses a different rhythm and tonal contour than the primary melody so that its texture stands out. Above all, a counter melody is an independent melody that can stand on its own.

- **Process:**
 - The instructor or a student sings a simple melody or exercise on a neutral vowel. Focus on the linear harmonic progression of the tonal phrases. On the repeat of the melody, improvise a simple counter melody. Keep in mind that it needs structure and should be a melody that can stand on its own. Above all, use your ears and past musical experiences.

Example C: *The Ash Grove*

The musical notation for Example C: *The Ash Grove* is presented in two systems. The first system shows the 'Counter Melody' in the treble clef and the 'Melody' in the bass clef. Both are in G major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. The counter melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by eighth and quarter notes. The melody begins with a quarter note. The second system shows the continuation of both melodies, ending with a 'Terminal Cadence'.

Additional Improvisation Activities

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call and Response
<i>Tonal and/or Melodic</i>
See Chapters 1-7 for instructions • Add a Pitch
See Chapters 1-7 for instructions • Twisted Theme
<i>Tonal</i>
See Chapter 16A for instructions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same or Different
<i>Tonal and/or Melodic</i>
See Chapters 1-7 for instructions • Ostinato Groove
<i>Tonal</i>
See Chapter 8 for instructions
<i>Melodic</i>
See Chapter 9 for instructions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass the Pattern
<i>Tonal and/or Melodic</i>
See Chapters 1-7 for instructions • Question & Answer
<i>Tonal and/or Melodic</i>
See Chapter 13 for instructions • Harmonic Improvisation
See Chapter 16B for instructions |
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