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INTRODUCING THEORY
THROUGH THE CREATIVE APPROACH
INTO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

A PAPER

PRESENTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

by

Richard E. Harrison

May, 1961

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to present a plan that will enable students to learn music theory. There is no attempt in this paper to present new theories about music, but it is expected to outline procedures for the development of musicianship through an understanding of musical processes. This understanding is essential to true musicianship and is best developed through creativity in an organized study of music itself.

Only the fundamentals involved in explaining the processes of music are to be used. The little used or exceptions of musical structure or notation will not be included.

CHAPTER I

VALUES OF THE THEORY CLASS

Today, possibly more than ever before, the necessity of making as complete as possible the education of the pupils in the public schools is realized. The responsibility is great to the pupils to develop, through planned experiences, the native love and interest in music. As these pupils grow older, they will gain in the ability to use these experiences in the enjoyment of creating and listening to good music.

Music education involves the creative, emotional, spiritual, physical, and mental development of all people. Education in the arts can now, more than ever, prepare students to cope successfully with the complexities of everyday living. The specific contributions which music can make in educating for citizenship are:

1. Offering an opportunity for self-expression through a group activity;
2. Offering an opportunity to develop moral and spiritual values and to satisfy aesthetic needs;
3. Providing a medium through which they can make direct contributions

- to their community during their school days and thus acquire a consciousness of the responsibility of the individual to the community;
4. Offering a medium for understanding other people, their culture, and their problems;
 5. The student is led to a realization that the arts have been of indisputable importance throughout all history.¹

In the senior high school, the music program, to be effective, must meet three specific requirements: performance, recreation, and specialization.²

Most high schools offer students the opportunity to take part in the first two of the above-mentioned requirements; but as a whole, no provision is made for the student to explore the possibilities of continuing his music education into the college or university level with the idea of making it his career or vocation.

Music theory has a three-fold purpose; (1) to supply beginning musicians with a sound background

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1. Music in American Education, Published by MENC, 1951-1954, p. 3
 2. Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program, Bulletin No. 16, May, 1951, pp.194, 197.

of musicianship and knowledge; (2) to equip the potential recipients of degrees in all music fields with workable knowledge of the professional art in which they will teach, perform or create; and (3) give the student knowledge of the structure of music in its component parts.³

The problems connected with the initiation and organization of a theory course in the high school can be attributed to many factors, among which are lack of teacher time and interest, lack of student time and interest, and lack of adequate teacher training.

In order to attain a balanced music program that will serve all interested students, it is imperative that adequate teaching schedules be set up. There is a tendency to reduce the number of periods in the school day; because of this, it is virtually impossible for many administrators to properly schedule music classes.⁴ The lack of teacher time can be attributed to the overloading of schedules, which also results in lack of interest. The music teacher in the smaller high school is busy,

3. Op. Cit.

4. Ibid.

but it is also possible that the lack of interest in a theory class is due to the fact that teachers are in a groove of their own making, and do not wish to expand their present music programs. Perhaps it is because there has been a long passage of time since the teacher has had any formal connection with theory and is fearful of inadequacy.

Perhaps the lack of student interest would stem from the fact that students have had no intimate contact with theory of music and the making of music. The student's schedule (because of the reduction of periods) forces the student to academic courses necessary for graduation; and also the student does not have the free periods necessary for band or chorus and the theory class.

Teacher training institutions are beginning to recognize the lack of teachers that are adequately trained for teaching theory and are taking steps to improve this situation. Some of their actions are to require more theory teaching while practice teaching and to offer more training courses. These institutions are rearranging their curricula whenever possible to allow more time for theory and harmony majors to reach proficiencies in their major field. They are also encouraging teachers in the surrounding

areas to introduce theory into the curriculum. The future teacher should have a thorough knowledge of such basic fundamentals as intervals, key signatures, chords and triads, modulation and cadences, and the elementary processes of creating music.

CHAPTER II
METHODS OF TEACHING THEORY

There are two approaches to the teaching of theory—the technical and the creative. The technical approach to teaching theory emphasizes written drills. It stresses the mastery of notation and written symbols, including exercises with the figured bass and other aspects of musical structures. The technical approach does not ordinarily place sufficient emphasis on the development of aural sensitivity. Also, it separates the various aspects of theory, such as dictation, ear training, sight singing, keyboard exercises, harmony and composition into specific areas. The technical approach is rigid and often traditional.

The creative approach is developmental, flexible and functional. It is also one of the most direct and efficient methods of learning. Almost everyone likes to do something original, and the desire to create or to invent is one of the most powerful of all motivating drives.⁵ Few subjects lend themselves well to the creative method, but music does. If the

5. Dykema and Gehrkens, The Teaching and Administration of High School Music, C. C. Birchard and Co. 1941, p. 265.

students are encouraged to write or create simple melodies or hymn tunes from the beginning, of their musical experiences, their understanding will probably be much greater than those who have merely memorized a definition or analyzed a number of examples. Whenever introduced, such instruction, to be effective, must be in terms of the musical background and the maturity of the student.⁶

Which students should take theory and what methods should be employed to determine this factor? As far as the whole student body is concerned, music theory cannot be constructed as a subject for mass consumption. It must be a "specialist's" course, taught seriously to students who have accumulated some background in music.

Students who desire to enroll in the theory course should be screened to determine if they have any aptitude for the study of music theory. Also, this course should be evaluated periodically to determine its strength and value, especially upon the initiation of a new course in the school's curriculum.

6. Murphy, Howard A., Teaching Musicianship, Coleman-Ross Company, Inc., 1950, pp. 12,13.

The type and content of a theory course will be based largely on the size of the school and the needs of the pupils. The purpose of this class is to foster the growth of musicianship and gain a better insight into the factors which make music beautiful and expressive. Theory should become an integral part of all musical experiences. The processes of music theory can and should be processes of discovery for the student when studying music and when performing in band, orchestra and chorus.

This course is designed to be an elective course in the high school curriculum and planned for those students desiring a more thorough knowledge of music techniques and skills involved in its structure. It also provides a sound basis for further study at the college level.

The students who enroll in this course should, by the end of the year, be able to recognize key signatures, major and minor scales, intervals, triads and modulations. They will be expected to be able to harmonize a given melody or bass and be able to harmonize in four parts a simple melody of their own creation.

The next point concerns the development of these understandings. In the technical approach

approach to the teaching of theory, the materials used are often "exercises" which are unrelated to the student's comprehension and consequently of no musical value. Often the technical approach isolates separate divisions of musical structure rather than combining them into a single unified course.

The student should understand in his own terms the structure of music he plays or sings, and understanding music should be a process of continuous growth from his first contact with music.

Structure of music must be introduced and explained when the needs of the student deem it necessary.

CHAPTER III

MELODY, PHRASE, CADENCE, KEY SIGNATURES AND SCALES

The preliminary fundamentals of music, called "rudiments," usually include an explanation of musical notation and the construction of scales, key signatures, intervals and chords. This technical type of approach is usually the student's first contact with formal music learning and is purely intellectual or consists of memorization without any reference to real music. The approach and method change when "music" and not "theory" is taught. The only prerequisite for harmonic study is notation, or knowing the staffs, clefs, pitches and note values, bar lines and time signatures.⁷ When the principle of "learning through need" is applied, only a few essential facts regarding notation are required to begin the study of musical structures.⁸

Factual material such as these rudiments can be taught from the singing of a familiar song, such as "The Star Spangled Banner." Singing this song and analyzing what these symbols mean in terms of

7. Ibid., p. 20

8. Ibid.

the sounds is a good beginning for the teaching of these rudiments. A procedure such as this will explain staves, clefs, note values, key signatures, whole and half steps, time signatures, slurs and ties. This song can be used as a springboard from the known to the unknown, and from the familiar melody to the unfamiliar musical structure. This approach also illustrates that factual knowledge is given only when the need arises.

For the study of melody the students can start with a melody of their own creation. A melody can be defined as a succession of tones rhythmically arranged according to a certain order or design. Rhythm is movement in music and is the first essential of melody. A melody can consist of one or more phrases, just as speech consists of one or more sentences. A phrase may be of any length. If the phrase is to be similar to a hymn tune or folk song, which are based on words, usually in poetic form, the phrase will be short and simple and comparatively symmetrical.

The writing of melodies presents many problems to the student. It will be suggested to them that they start on middle C on the piano and use only the white keys for the writing of their first few

is missing. The class should sing and play melodies to observe the feeling of rest at the cadences and also to observe the structure of melodies and phrases.

The student can now be given a new starting tone on which to base the melodies. He will find that some alterations are to take place on certain scale tones to make the melody feel "at home" in this new key. For example, if the melody is to be based on F, the student will find that the fourth degree of the scale will have to be lowered one half step in order to conform to the major scale pattern.

If, for example, the starting tone is G, the student will find that the seventh degree of the scale will have to be raised in order to conform to the major scale pattern. From the problems encountered by the students in trying to write melodies on a different starting tone, the need is now present for the class to discuss scales and key signatures.

All compositions have what is called a key signature appearing on the staff immediately to the right of the clef sign. These signatures come into use when scales differing in pitch from C require the use of sharps and flats to make the whole and

half steps conform to the scale patterns. When compositions are written in keys which contain sharps and flats, in order to avoid continuous writing of accidentals, the sharps and flats are grouped to the left of each staff into a key signature. For example, the key of D contains two sharps, F# and C#, so the sharps are placed on the line or space represented in the treble and bass clefs. This means that every time an F or C is played, it is F# and C#, unless a natural sign (\natural) is placed in front of it. The sharp key signatures are listed below:

Name of Key	Sharps	Names of Sharps
C	-	-
G	1	F
D	2	F C
A	3	F C G
E	4	F C G D
B	5	F C G D A
F#	6	F C G D A E
C#	7	F C G D A E B

Listed below is the flat key signature:

Name of Key	Flats	Names of Flats
C	-	-
F	1	B
B \flat	2	B E
E \flat	3	B E A
A \flat	4	B E A D
D \flat	5	B E A D G
G \flat	6	B E A D G C
C \flat	7	B E A D G C F

The indicated pitch of any note may be altered by putting before it an accidental, which is a sharp, flat, double sharp, double flat, or natural. The effect of this accidental is good throughout the one measure it is in, but in the following measures its effect is canceled, unless the accidental is added again.

A scale is a series of consecutive tones arranged in a fixed order. The two principal kinds of scales are diatonic and chromatic. The diatonic scale is one that progresses from degree to degree without skip or repetition. A degree is a line or space. The diatonic scale contains whole steps and half steps. An example of a whole step is from C to D, and a half step is from B to C. Both the major and minor scales are diatonic.

The major scale is a series of tones ascending and descending diatonically with half steps between the third and fourth and seventh and eighth degrees.

Major Scale Pattern

whole	whole	half	whole	whole	whole	half
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 8

Any note on the great staff may be used for the first step, then by adding the next seven degrees and

following the major scale pattern, a major scale on that note will be formed. A major scale started on C is the only scale that the half steps appear between the third and fourth and seventh and eighth degree naturally or without any alterations, so it is called the natural scale. The remaining major scales need either sharps or flats to fit the major scale pattern. A sharp raises a tone one half step and a flat lowers a tone one half step. The theoretical names of the scale tones are:

1st degree	Tonic
2d degree	Supertonic
3d degree	Mediant
4th degree	Subdominant
5th degree	Dominant
6th degree	Submediant
7th degree	Leading Tone
8th degree	Tonic (1-8 degree the same)

The minor scale is a diatonic scale, since it also is composed of steps and half steps, but the pattern is different from the major scale in that the half steps do not come between the same degrees. There are three forms of minor scales: the natural minor, harmonic minor, and the melodic minor.

The natural minor scale has exactly the same notes as its relative major but begins on the sixth degree of its major and both have the same key signature.

Natural Minor Scale Pattern

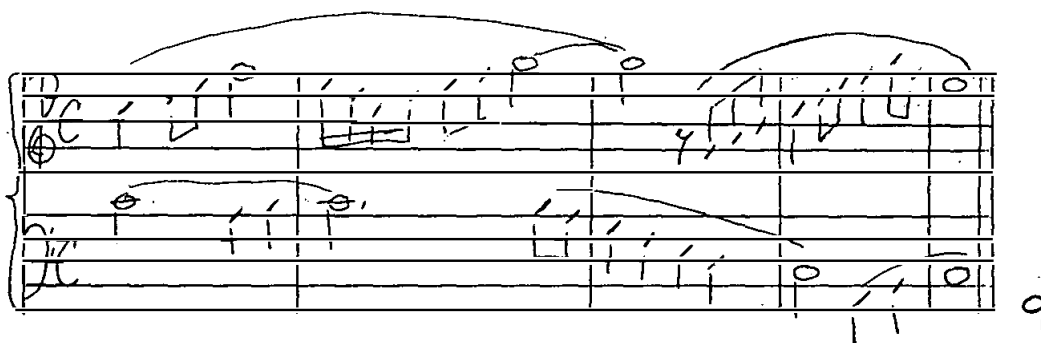
whole	half	whole	whole	half	whole	whole	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

The harmonic minor scale differs from the natural minor scale only in that the seventh degree is raised a half step.

CHAPTER IV

TWO PART WRITING AND INTERVALS

When the writing of a melody has been practiced, the next logical step is to write for two parts. These two parts should stress a melody of their own, and the thinking of the two parts should be more linear than vertical; every effort should be made to keep these parts independent of each other.

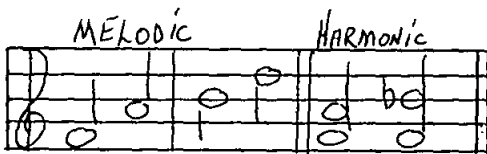


In analyzing this example, the students will discover certain principles for two part writing. It will be discovered that the lower voice begins and ends on the tonic to help establish the key, and the upper voice begins and ends on one of the rest tones in the key. It will be discovered that both voices are not tied over the bar lines at the same time, but one voice is moving over the bar line to keep the metrical flow alive.

9. Kohs, Ellis B., Music Theory, Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, New York, 1961, p. 33.

Additional investigation concerning the problem of two part writing can be discovered by the student by analyzing rounds, fugues and canons. The student may at this point be encouraged to write simple melodies for various like or unlike instruments; through this writing they will discover some of the problems connected with the writing for instruments, which would include range, tone color and transposition.

The students can now concern themselves with distance between tones to systematize their knowledge of two part harmony. This distance is called an interval. If intervals are sounded separately, they are called melodic; if they are sounded simultaneously, they are harmonic intervals.



There are five common qualities of intervals. An interval may be major, minor, perfect, diminished or augmented. Perfect intervals may be made smaller (diminished) by a chromatic alteration of one of the tones, or it can be made larger (augmented) by

similar means. A major interval may be made smaller (minor), and a minor interval made still smaller (diminished). If a major interval is made larger, it is augmented.

Intervals are usually measured from the lower tone up, rather than down from the upper tone. Intervals larger than an octave are usually reduced to simpler terms by thinking of the upper tone as an octave lower.

CHAPTER V

THREE PART WRITING, TRIADS, INVERSION OF TRIADS

When writing for three parts, the third part (or the alto line) will be added as an inner voice. With the addition of this third part, the harmonic background is considered, and the vertical concept takes precedence over the horizontal.

There are problems which confront the student when the third part is added, one example being the building of triads. If we take any tone as a basis and add a third and a fifth above it, it is called a triad. The lowest tone of a triad is called the root, which may be any step of the diatonic scale. A chord receives its name from the scale step occupied by its root. Triads are divided into two classes, which are:

Primary Triads

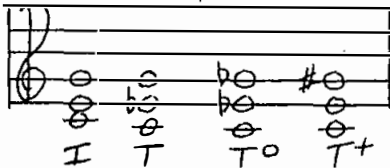
1. Tonic
2. Subdominant
3. Dominant

Secondary Triads

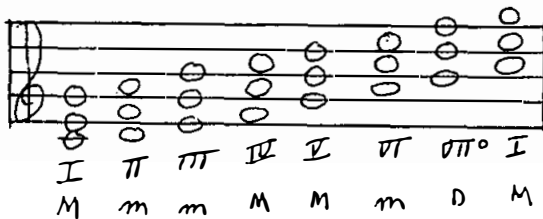
1. Supertonic
2. Mediant
3. Submediant

There are four kinds of triads, major, minor, diminished and augmented. A major triad is composed of a root, major third and a perfect fifth. A minor triad is composed of a root, minor third and a perfect fifth. A diminished triad is composed of a

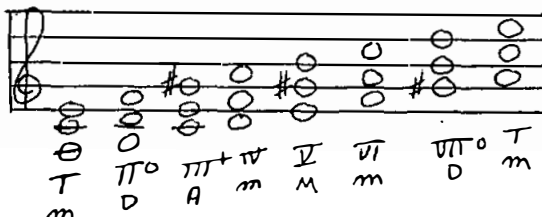
root, minor third and a diminished fifth. An augmented triad is composed of a root, major third and an augmented fifth. In analyzing chords in both major and minor keys, Roman Numerals are placed under the chords. Roman numeral one (I) denotes a major chord, and the symbol "T" denotes a minor chord. A plus (+) is used for augmented chords, and a circle (O) is used for diminished chords; both are placed beside the Roman numerals.



Triads analyzed in the C major scale:

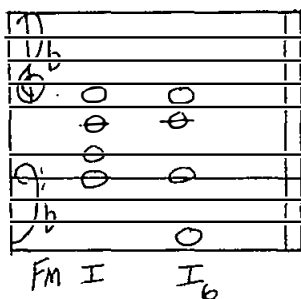


Triads analyzed in the harmonic minor scale:

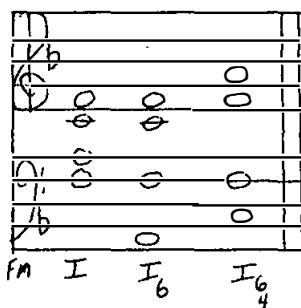


In the natural minor scale, the T , IV and V are minor, the III, VI and VII are major, and the II° is diminished.

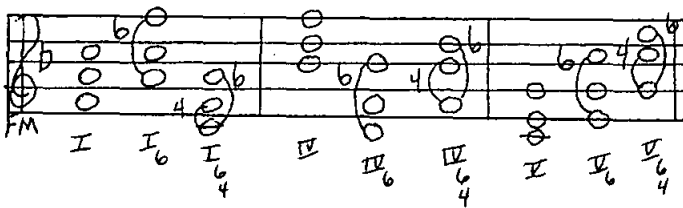
If chords are placed in their fundamental positions for any length of time, the result will tend to become dull and uninteresting. Therefore, the inversion of chords becomes a necessity. Every chord has three possible positions; the first is the fundamental position with the root of the chord as its lowest tone. The first inversion becomes possible by placing the third of the chord lower than the root.



The second inversion is made by placing the fifth of the chord lower than the root.



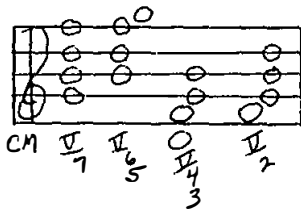
The fundamental position is notated by a plain Roman numeral, but when the chord is placed in an inversion an Arabic number is added to show that the chord is in an inversion.



The Arabic number 6 denotes that there is an interval of a sixth between the bass and the root. The number 6₄ denotes second inversion and means there is an interval of a sixth between the fifth and the third and an interval of a fourth between the fifth and the root. Any chord may be inverted as many times as there are tones in the chord other than the root.

An interval of a seventh may be added to any triad thereby forming a seventh chord; therefore, any tone with an interval of a third, fifth and seventh above it is a seventh chord. Any chord consisting of four different tones that has been made up of thirds is a seventh chord. If a seventh is added to the dominant chord, a dominant seventh

chord is formed. By the addition of this seventh interval, a dissonance is formed which is not satisfactory to the ear standing alone. It gives the feeling that something is to follow. A dissonant interval needs resolution, or needs to progress to a feeling of rest, which is resolution to a consonant interval. Since there are four different tones forming a dominant seventh chord, there are three different inversions.



The Arabic numbers placed under the Roman numerals again designate the distance of the upper parts from the bass.

For the purpose of this class, there are regular resolutions of the V₇ chord which are in a set pattern. The root may go up five tones or down four; the third goes up one, and the fifth and seventh descend one degree. This chord regularly resolves to the tonic.

CM $V_{6/5}$ I $V_{6/5}$ I $V_{6/5}$ I

The regular resolution of the $V_{6/5}$ chord with the third in the bass resolves again to the tonic. In this case, the root, since it is an inside voice, is tied or carried over into the next chord and the other three members of the chord resolve as above.

CM $V_{6/5}$ I $V_{6/5}$ I $V_{6/5}$ I

The inversion with the fifth in the bass is used chiefly as a passing chord. The bass can move either up or down and the other voices follow their natural tendencies. When the bass resolves down, a fundamental position chord comes about; but when

the bass resolves up, a first inversion tonic chord is formed and the seventh moves up also along with the bass.

Handwritten musical notation showing a voice leading exercise in C major. The notation is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first measure shows a C major triad in first inversion (I_{4/3}) with notes G, E, and C. The second measure shows a C major triad in first inversion (I₆) with notes C, E, and G. Arrows indicate the movement of each voice part from the first measure to the second.

The inversion with the seventh in the bass is called a V_2 chord. In this inversion, since the seventh is the lowest note, it has a strong tendency to descend one degree and the other voices move as before, except sometimes the soprano part will move up a fourth and thereby double the fifth in a tonic first inversion chord.

Handwritten musical notation showing a voice leading exercise in C major. The notation is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first measure shows a C major triad in second inversion (I₂) with notes E, G, and C. The second measure shows a C major triad in first inversion (I₆) with notes C, E, and G. Arrows indicate the movement of each voice part from the first measure to the second.

CHAPTER VI

HARMONIZING A GIVEN MELODY AND BASS

As has been mentioned, the principal elements of music are melody, rhythm and harmony. A melody is a succession of tones rhythmically arranged in a certain order or design. Rhythm is movement in music and is the first essential of melody. It has been said that "rhythm is the heartbeat of music."¹⁰ Harmony is the science of combining tones; tones sounded together are identified as chords.

Harmonization of melodies is good practice for the student before he starts writing simple four part tunes of his own creation. It is advisable for the student to play and sing these melodies before attempting to harmonize them. The following are some discoveries the student will find in harmonizing a given melody:

1. Begin and end on the tonic chord to establish tonality.
2. If there is a repeated tone in the melody, change the harmony.
3. The bass may alternate from one octave to another to avoid monotony.

10. Howell, Clay Draughton, Elementary Theory of Music for High Schools, Banks Upshaw and Co., Dallas, 1938, p. 73.

4. When there are no tones in common between chords, move the outer voices in contrary motion.

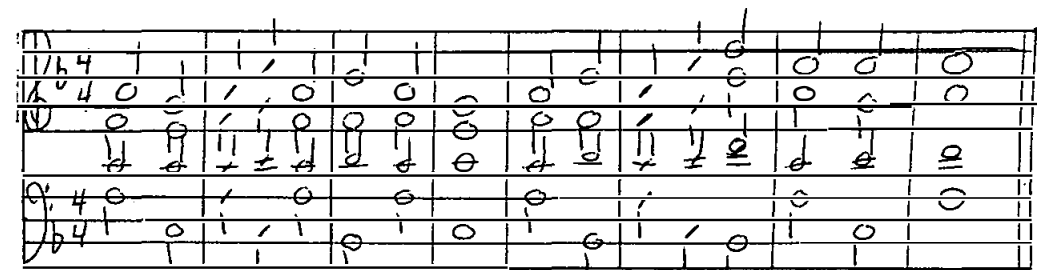
5. The melody is the soprano part; never write above the melody.¹¹

A simple melody is a short tune usually consisting of eight measures. When writing four part harmony, the top part is the soprano, the alto is written just under the soprano, and the tenor part is written just under the alto. The bass part is always on the bottom. In the example, only the tonic, subdominant and dominant will be used and will be used only in root position. This is the given melody.



Fm

The same melody, correctly harmonized.



Fm I V I IV I V I IV I V IV I V I

11. Op. Cit., p. 42.

In harmonizing a given bass, only the roots of the chords are to be used. As in harmonizing a melody, the opening and closing chords must be the tonic, and unless otherwise indicated, the root of the first chord should also appear in the soprano. The following is an example of a given bass.

The same bass correctly harmonized.

CHAPTER VII

FOUR PART WRITING, MODULATION AND CADENCES

It is possible to write short, simple compositions using the I, IV and V chords and their inversions. To allow some melodic freedom in the melody, bass, or in inner voices, we shall be allowed to use non-harmonic tones occasionally. It is advisable for the students to sing and play the melodies. It is recommended that the student listen closely and carefully for smoothness of voice leading, for logical and clear chord progression, and for musical interest.

Fm I IV₆ V IV V I V I IV₆ I II₂ I IV₆ V₆ I IV₆ I IV₆ I IV₆ V₇ I

To remain in one key throughout a piece of any length is monotonous to the listener. The process of modulation, which means to go from one tonality to another, is most important for variety in music. A change of key means a change of tonal center, or

the adoption of a different tone to which all the other tones are to be related.

In dealing with modulation there are three separate aspects to be considered. The first aspect is the initial key, or the key in which the composer starts the composition. For our purpose now it is required that the composer establish the tonality of the first key before modulation takes place.

The second aspect is the pivot chord, or a chord common to both keys. Take the C major chord for an example. It is the I in C, V of F, IV of G, III in a minor, VI in e minor.

The third aspect is the establishment of the new key or new tonal center. The establishment of a new key is accomplished by means of a cadence which ends the phrase in the new key.

The diagram illustrates a modulation from F major to C major. It is divided into three sections: A, B, and C.

- Section A (F major):** Contains chords I, II, and IV.
- Section B (Pivot):** Contains the chord C, which is the IV chord in F major and the I chord in C major.
- Section C (C major):** Contains chords I, II, and IV.

The key signature changes from one flat (F major) to no flats (C major) at the beginning of section C. Roman numerals are written below the staff to identify the chords in their respective keys.

ITALIEN CONCERTO - J.S. BACH
 III MOVEMENT - LAST TWO MEASURES

Handwritten musical notation for the last two measures of the Italian Concerto by J.S. Bach. The score is in G major, 4/4 time. The first measure contains a subdominant chord (IV) and the second measure contains a tonic chord (I). Handwritten chord symbols below the staff are: Cm, IV, I, IV, I.

The subdominant chord (IV) followed by the Tonic (I) chord at the close of a musical thought is called a plagal cadence. This is also sometimes called the "Amen" cadence.

	PERFECT	imPERFECT	imPERFECT
1)			
V	o o	o o	
IV	o o		o o
III	o o	o o	o o
II	o o	o o	o o
I	o o	o o	o o
	Cm IV I	IV I	IV I

Handwritten musical notation for the last two measures of Chopin's Etude Op. 25, No. 8. The score is in B-flat major, 4/4 time. The first measure contains a subdominant chord (IV) and the second measure contains a tonic chord (I). Handwritten chord symbols below the staff are: Cm, I, IV, I, IV, I.

A cadence ending with the dominant is called a half cadence. They are usually found in the middle of a musical sentence and represent only a temporary pause or close. It also indicates that there is something else to follow.

PERFECT	IMPERFECT	IMPERFECT
CM I II	I II	I II

NUN, LAST UNS GOTT, DEM HERREN
J.S. BACH, #257 - m. 7-8-9

B^bm II V E^b D⁷ F⁷ IV II

When a certain degree of skill has been attained by the students in writing simple four part music, additional projects may be suggested by the teacher. It would be advisable for the students to transpose these original compositions for a woodwind quartet

or for a brass ensemble. It would be advisable for the student to write a simple folk song with words that the class can sing in all four parts. Someone might ask for the privilege of making an arrangement for band or ensemble that has already been written. All of these projects will have to be supervised closely by the teacher, but the experience in original writing will be highly educational.

SUMMARY

This paper has attempted to present in a logical manner an approach to the teaching of a music theory course on the high school level. The purpose of the course is to enable the student to develop musicianship through an understanding of musical processes. The basis for all music instruction in the high school is founded upon the fundamentals of musicianship and the appreciation of the processes in the making of music.

The theory course will integrate exceedingly well into the existing music program as well as into the entire school curriculum. We must build a solid musical foundation for our students in order to insure a continuing program, and a study of theory gives the individual student a chance to explore the possibilities of music as a vocation.

With the development of a theory course, the levels of achievement of the band, orchestra and chorus are likely to be raised. It is up to the music educators to insure that the music curriculum continues to develop to meet the needs and interests of the students it serves.

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