

### Project #3: Harmony Textbook Review

All of the harmony textbooks below are on reserve in the music library. Like sight-singing textbooks, harmony textbooks are almost always intended to serve a multi-year (typically a two-year) core curriculum for music majors. Since our course focuses especially on the freshman year, you are only responsible for detailed information regarding the portions intended for the first year of study.

Aldwell/Schachter/Cadwallader, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition

Benward/Saker, *Music in Theory and Practice*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition

Burstein/Straus, *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

Clendinning/Marvin, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

Kostka/Payne/Almén, *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition

Laitz, *The Complete Musician*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition

Roig-Francolí, *Harmony in Context*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Turek/McCarthy, *Theory for Today's Musician*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

**Part 1 (due Monday, November 3)** — Prepare a brief virtual handout (approximately 2-3 pages, to be posted on Canvas for the rest of the class) addressing your model teaching topic and evaluating all of these textbooks through the lens of that topic.

- A. Look up your particular topic for the second model teaching assignment in each of the harmony textbooks on reserve.
- B. In an outline that is geared toward a teacher (not a student), organize the information you find. The goal is to create a document that will help you and/or your colleagues prepare to teach this topic in the future. With this in mind, it would also be helpful to include a brief list of points that should be highlighted in class. If you find disagreements among authors, feel free to consult me.
- C. Annotate the outline to indicate which books include (or exclude) particular points within the information you have presented. You may use whatever system seems most efficient for your topic (e.g., only indicating when a book excludes some detail if most of the others address it, or only indicating when a book includes some detail if most of the other skip it, or a global statement that book X didn't even address the topic, book Y included absolutely everything in the outline, and all other books are represented by author initials). Abbreviations and coded numbers are fine as long as they're clear.
- D. Complete the suggested homework exercises associated with your topic. (These exercises may appear within the chapter, in a separate workbook, or perhaps both.) On your virtual handout, briefly assess the homework associated with each textbook, considering its quality, quantity, variety, difficulty, clarity, musicality, etc.
- E. If there is anything else remarkable about a book's presentation of your topic (e.g., it comes extremely early or extremely late), please mention it.

*See page 3 for a fictional illustration of an annotated topic outline.*

**Part 2 (due Monday, November 24)** — Peruse all of these harmony textbooks more broadly, weighing their strengths and weaknesses. It would also be wise to read the virtual handouts that your colleagues have provided (the group projects from October 31 and the individual topic summaries from November 3). As usual, the project you turn in will have two components.

A. Provide a summary of each textbook (alphabetized, please). You must include the following items (although you are welcome to add your own categories as well):

- The label used for the cadential  $\frac{6}{4}$
- An ordered list of the earliest chords used in part-writing homework (the first half dozen or so). If chords would likely be included for the first time in a single assignment, I will consider this simultaneous.
- An assessment of the musical examples drawn from pre-existing music (their quantity, appropriateness for the topic illustrated, variety of genres/composers, etc.)
- Your appraisal of the prose writing (e.g., too little or too much, too formal or too informal, too difficult or too simplistic) and whether it's easy to find information. You might also want to consider layout, indices, chapter summaries, highlighting techniques, etc.
- Topics included beyond harmony and voice-leading (e.g., species counterpoint, phrase structure, form, post-tonal theory, aural skills, keyboard harmony, or history)
- The book's 1-3 most distinctive feature(s)
- A paragraph expressing your opinion about the book (which will obviously reflect your own preferences and need not be considered objective)

When appropriate, support your statements with specific examples to illustrate your points. If your comment involves the order of topics and this is obvious from the table of contents, there's no need for an illustration. However, if you say, "Book contradicts itself," you should definitely provide an example or two. Although you are welcome to address visual aesthetic issues if they are important to you, comments of this nature will not be considered substantial.

B. Select four books that you think represent especially diverse approaches. One should be the book you most prefer for a typical first-year written theory class for music majors; two others should be books that differ significantly from your preferred text (and also differ markedly from one another). Choose the remaining book depending on your own interests; it might be your second choice for a textbook, your least preferred textbook, a book that struck you as unique, something geared toward students or instructors at a different level of expertise, etc. Write an essay (5 pages, double-spaced — optional; 20% penalty if omitted) that includes:

- A description the textbook's role in your harmony course. (For instance, do students read from the book to learn material before coming to class? Do they use it primarily as a reference book? Should they bring it to class every day?) Also explain what practical advantages you see in your approach (and perhaps refute disadvantages).
- An in-depth examination of the important differences among your four chosen books. Please focus on comparisons; your reviews already discussed books individually.
- A brief discussion of the remaining four books, mentioning ways in which they resemble (or contrast with) your four focal books and perhaps with one another. Again, focus on comparing the books.
- Optional: Compared to your preferred book, is *Open Music Theory* (2<sup>nd</sup> version, by Gotham, Gullings, Hamm, Hughes, Jarvis, Lavengood, and Peterson) worth considering as the sole resource for your students?

You are welcome (indeed, encouraged) to discuss these textbooks and your reactions to them with your classmates. However, you are not permitted to divide the workload with anyone (for example, you can't look at half of the books while a friend looks at the other half). Additionally, the written work you turn in must be strictly your own.

## Sample Outline for Part 1

***Warning: this is completely fictional and is only intended as an illustration!***

### Realizing individual chords in four parts

- I. Chord completion
  - A. Expect complete chords most of the time.
  - B. It's okay to omit the fifth in root-position chords. However, A/S/C and Bu/St point out that the fifth is rarely omitted in diminished and half-diminished chords. (Peculiar: K/P/A highlight examples of omitted thirds in musical examples.)
  - C. Inverted chords should be complete. (Even books that show exceptions agree that incomplete inverted chords are unusual.)
- II. Doubling
  - A. Double the bass in  $\frac{5}{3}$  chords and  $\frac{6}{4}$  chords (all). No consensus for doubling in  $\frac{6}{3}$  chords.
    1. Be/Sa say double root except for vii<sup>o</sup>
    2. C/M say double soprano unless this is leading tone
    3. R-F says generally double bass
    4. Other books don't provide specific guidance beyond "don't double the leading tone"
  - B. If a seventh chord is incomplete, double the root (not mentioned in T).
  - C. If a triad is incomplete, a tripled root is common. (K/P/A also show doubled root plus doubled third.)
- III. Vocal style
  - A. Voice ranges generally shown as C<sub>4</sub>-G<sub>4</sub> for soprano, F<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>5</sub> for alto, C<sub>3</sub>-G<sub>4</sub> for tenor, and F<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> for bass. (C/M and Be/Sa have wider range for bass.)
  - B. Don't exceed an octave between adjacent upper voices. (All but Be/Sa allow for more than an octave between the tenor and bass.)
  - C. In general, it's better to use spacing where larger intervals are lower in the chord and smaller intervals and higher (Be/Sa, Bu/St, C/M, R-F, and T).
- IV. Keyboard style — this is completely omitted in Be/Sa, K/P/A, and T.
  - A. One note in the left hand, three notes in the right hand.
  - B. Don't exceed an octave in the right hand.
  - C. Notation styles vary: A/S/C show melody stemmed up and inner voices stemmed down, C/M and L show several different approaches. (R-F doesn't explicitly discuss notation; examples shown are inconsistent.)

### **Why am I asking for this outline?**

*Short-term answer:* if I see misinformation or apparent confusion about your model teaching topic in your outline, I can warn you and try to clarify the issue before you teach. If your outline is vague (e.g., "books discuss proper doubling"), I won't be able to help you privately before your model teaching.

*Slightly longer-term answer:* when you write your textbook reviews, it will be useful to see from other people's handouts which books are especially thorough, unclear, quirky, etc.

*Long-term answer:* won't it be nice when you teach these topics on your own to have an organized and succinct presentation of important information from a variety of authors? Also, if you find yourself teaching out of a book that omits some topic, you'll know where to go for supplementation.

Please keep these basic goals in mind, because they may help you create an outline that is maximally beneficial to you and your colleagues.