

ACTIVITY FIVE *More Practice with Voice-Leading*

Using the same examples from Activity Four, sing through all the lines using solfege to internalize the sound of the progression. Hearing all the lines together provides the greatest benefit, so try the following suggestions for more practice.

1. Play the progression on a keyboard, noticing how voice-leading makes it easy to play.
2. Record yourself singing or playing each line, overdubbing the parts.
3. Sing all four lines as a "chorale" with your classmates.
4. You can also sing these voice-led lines as melodic arpeggios, singing up one chord structure, then down the next.

BONUS

Choose your own song and create voice-led lines for background vocal harmony parts. Perform your arrangement with classmates or band members. Guaranteed, the singers will love you because you've given them parts they can easily read, hear and thus give you a solid performance. Everyone's happy!

Here is an example of something I came up with as background vocal parts to Paul Simon's "Me and Julio." For now, I've chosen solfege for the lyrics. Try singing these lines along with the recording for some fun.

A

2/4	:	I		/:		/:		IV		/:	
		sol mi do						la fa do			
	Root motion	DO						FA			
		V		/:		/:		I		/:	
		sol re ti						sol mi do			
		SOL						DO			

B

1.	V		/:		I		/:		V		/:		I		/:	
	sol re ti				sol mi do				sol re ti				sol mi do			
	SOL				DO				SOL				DO			

C

2.	IV		/:		I		/:		IV		/:		I	II	
	la fa do				sol mi do				la fa do				sol mi do	()	
	FA				DO				FA				DO	RE	
	V		IV		/:		I		/:		etc.				
	sol re ti		la fa do				sol mi do								
	SOL		FA				DO								

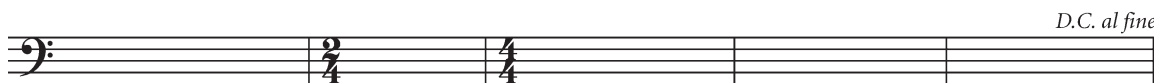
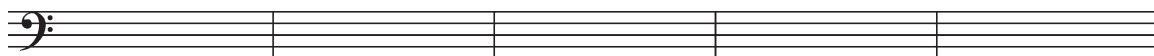
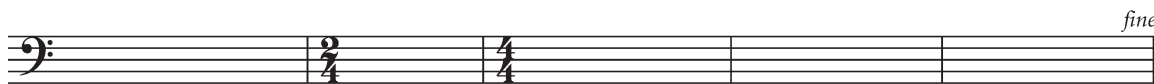
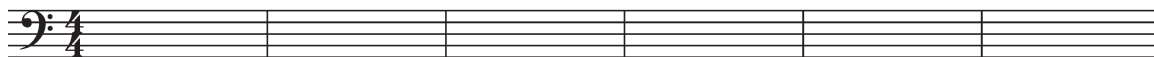
EXTRA BONUS Often, background vocal parts are made up on the spot, “by ear.” There are no written charts to refer to. Try your ear at this with the simple I, IV, V, I pattern we studied in Chapter Two. If your line starts on Sol, where will it lead? And how about the Mi or the Do line? Don’t write the lines down, do this by ear. Then treat yourself to singing these lines along with recordings of “La Bamba,” “Old Time Rock and Roll,” or “Stir It Up.” You’ll be jammin’!

In the next chapter, we’ll put the vertical and horizontal approaches together for a complete workout with hearing the changes and lots of dictation work. In combination, these two approaches can work wonders!

ACTIVITY SIX *Rewind... Using the Vertical Approach*



Figure out the chords to the following progression (another mystery tune!) using the vertical approach. First determine the root motion, then determine the quality of the interval between the root and third of each chord: is it major or minor? Use the template below to fill in your answers. Here’s a clue: there are two places where there’s a non-diatonic chord, and it’s the same chord. Upon completing your work, do you recognize the name of this song by its chord progression? Check with the answer key for the correct solution, and the name of this classic Beatles song, (Appendix: p. 126, Activity Six, CD1, track 39).



For additional practice, analyze the resulting chord progression two ways: first label the Roman numerals, and then determine if the chord’s function is tonic, subdominant or dominant. Do you recognize some recurring patterns here?

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION Discuss with classmates some of the benefits of using solfege syllables rather than numbers when describing and recognizing chord tones.

MAKING IT YOUR OWN Practice singing the various arpeggio patterns and voice-led lines through the chord progressions to familiar songs. The more tunes you practice with, the easier the solfege will begin to roll off your tongue.

Sometimes the chord progression itself is a combination of these two minor scales. Check out “Song For My Father,” Horace Silver; “Django,” John Lewis; and “Hotel California,” The Eagles, for examples of natural and harmonic minor influences in the changes.

MINOR LINE CLICHÉS

“Minor line clichés” demonstrate the various minor scales working together to produce a linear, rather than a harmonic effect. In most cases, these lines are used to develop the otherwise stationary sound of the I– chord, and are often played in the bass line, demonstrating another effective use of chord inversions. The most popular of these line clichés is the descending chromatic theme, Do, Ti, Te, La, while the I– chord sustains above. For example, in the key of C minor: C–, C–/B, C–/Bb, C–/A; or you might see it notated as: C–, C–maj7, C–7, C–6.

The following songs are good examples of this particular line cliché: “My Funny Valentine,” Rogers & Hart; “Golden Lady,” Stevie Wonder; “What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life,” Michel Legrand; “God Bless the Child,” Billie Holiday; and “Time in a Bottle,” Jim Croce. Play through some of these songs to get the sound of the line cliché in your ear.

HOOKING UP WITH THE REAL EASY BOOK There are several minor key tunes in this book. Check out the following songs and determine which minor scales are at play in their makeup: “Big Bertha,” “Contemplation,” “Edward Lee,” “Equinox,” “Mr. P.C.,” “One For Daddy-O,” “Revelation,” “Road Song,” “Song For My Father,” “St. James Infirmary” and “Work Song.” You will see a variety of possibilities: some songs stay exclusively within one scale; some use natural minor for the melody and harmonic minor for the changes; some use a combination of minor scales for the changes, and some songs modulate to the relative major key. As you play through these songs, be aware of all these subtle features. It will give you some insights as to how to interpret the songs, particularly when soloing.

VOICE-LEADING GUIDE TONE LINES IN THE MINOR KEY

Let’s continue our work with voicing leading the guide tones, the 3rds and 7ths, this time using minor key harmony. But what happens when the chord progression is a mix of both triads and seventh chords? In the case of the triads, we will continue to use the 3rd, but will have a choice, mainly determined by voice-leading, between using the root or the 5th as the second guide tone. Let’s see this demonstrated in revisiting the song, “Hotel California.” Notice that the top guide tone line is actually the chromatic line cliché we talked about earlier. Sing these voice-led guide tone lines along with CD2, track 19, or better yet, with the actual Eagles’ recording.



The musical notation shows two staves of music in 4/4 time, key of C minor. The first staff contains four measures with chords B–, F#7, A, and E7. The notes are: do-me, ti-fa, te-re, la-me. The second staff contains five measures with chords G, D, E–7, F#7, and B–. The notes are: le-do, sol-me, le-me, ti-fa, do-me.

ACTIVITY EIGHT *Dictating the Voice-Led Guide Tone Lines*

Listen to the following excerpt from Roland Kirk's "Serenade to a Cuckoo" on CD2, track 20. At the beginning of the chapter you sight-read through the bass line to this song; now it's time to notate the voice-led guide tone lines and discover what the resulting changes are. Notice in the A section another popular minor line cliché being used, the descending Do, Te, Le, Sol pattern. Use the template below to fill in your answers, then check with the answer key (Appendix: p.144, CD2, track 20) for the results.

A

B

ACTIVITY NINE *Rewind... Harmonize the Bass Line*

Harmonize the following bass line with your own set of changes. You can explore major or minor key harmonies, or perhaps a little bit of both. Then write out the voice-led guide tone lines to your progression (remember, these can be the simple beginnings of tasty horn or vocal background lines). If you want to really get creative, compose a melody as well. Perform the arrangement of your composition with classmates or band members, getting feedback. Did others come up with a similar set of changes to yours, or perhaps something quite different? By the way, I borrowed this bass line from John Lewis' "Django." Check out this wonderful tune when you get a chance!