THE
LOST
CHORD

HARMONISATION
ON
KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

II

STEPHEN TAYLOR

The Lost Chord

Seated one day at the organ,
I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wander'd idly
Over the noisy keys;

I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then,
But I struck one chord of music,
Like the sound of a great Amen.

It flooded the crimson twilight,
Like the close of an Angel's Psalm,
And it lay on my fever'd spirit
With a touch of infinite calm.

It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife,
It seem'd the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.

(Poem by Adelaide Proctor, set to music in 1877 by Arthur Sullivan)

PART II

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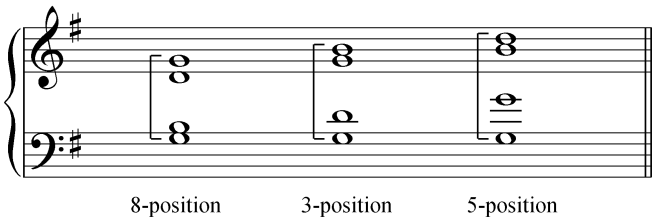
Instructions for use

Readers are advised to consult the Preface to *The Lost Chord* elsewhere on this site.

Part II of *The Lost Chord* introduces the harmonisation of both melodies and basses, the chord of the sixth (or 1st inversion) and the improvisation of eight-bar phrases.

The degrees of the scale are indicated by the Roman numerals I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII.

Triads with the root in the bass can be played in three positions, named after the interval between the soprano and the bass:



Despite its usefulness, I have found no current English terminology for the three positions of the triad with the root in the bass. In his *Practical Harmony* (Further Revised Edition 1907), Stewart Macpherson indicated these by placing a number 8, 5 or 3 above the soprano.

The above chords are in closed spacing: the distance between the soprano and tenor is less than an octave; between the three upper parts there is no space to add a note belonging to the chord in question. The Lost Chord is also based on closed spacing, with the upper three parts in the right hand (r.h.) and the bass in the left hand (l.h.). See further Part I ch.12 and Part II p.45. (The reason why open spacing is hardly employed is explained in Part III. ch.13.)

The 1st inversion of the triad is referred to as the 6-chord in view of the interval of a sixth, distinguishing it from the triad in root position. It is not to be confused with the Roman number VI, indicating the sixth degree of the scale. From ch.8 the 6-chord is also played in mixed spacing - see p.45.

Where four-part harmonisation is required from one or two given parts, the player should generally avoid writing out the additional parts, though it may occasionally be of use in order to examine progressions and part-writing more closely. Where necessary, the layout provides sufficient space to add parts and figured bass.

In Part II much attention is devoted to the interval of the sixth, whose expressive force we should not underestimate; it has become known as the 1st inversion of the triad. A number of new techniques are also discussed. Readers wishing to learn how to harmonise a given melody will also benefit from harmonising a given bass - in the end, all aspects of practical harmonisation come down to the same skills. From ch.5, two-part improvisations from a given bass are included. From ch.6, figured basses are harmonised in four parts. Transposition is also an important aspect of what is known in the Anglo-Saxon world as *keyboard skills*.

Many hymn tunes, and particularly those composed before the 19th century, have rich written and oral histories. This accounts for the fact that they are often transmitted in different versions, in variant keys and even with divergent titles. Many date from a period when barlines were employed irregularly; indeed, many tunes were not written in regular time at all but have a charmingly irregular rhythmic structure. Frequent alternation of duple and

triple time, for example, was still widespread in the 17th century. In such cases, the addition of bar lines and time signatures often only muddles the score. Where clarification is desirable, vertical lines have been added between the staves.

For practical reasons, all hymns and chorales are named after the melody rather than the first line of the text (though in German chorales this is usually one and the same thing). In order to encourage historical awareness, I have mentioned the dates of melodies and settings in as far as they are known, though a certain caution is required, since these are often dates of publication rather than composition. An index of hymns and chorales used as exercise material in *The Lost Chord* is provided in a separate document.

The main anxiety of the author of a tutor is that the reader will be even more methodical than he has tried to be himself. It takes most of us years to learn to harmonise, and there can never be enough practise material. There is a danger, however, that some readers will become discouraged by the quantity or difficulty of the exercises, while others may feel curbed by the methodical inclinations of the author. In ch.5, for example, the player whose aural ability and playing technique are at an early stage of development may have to think hard about each triad, while the more advanced student may do more with these two-part exercises (by adding passing and auxiliary notes, for example, which are not discussed until Part III) than envisaged. In both cases, the guidance of an experienced teacher will achieve more than the written words of the author. If additional material is required, the dedicated teacher will know what is best for the individual pupil.