

THE LOST CHORD

HARMONISATION
ON
KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

III

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.*

*It link'd all perplexed meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence,
As if it were loth to cease.*

*I have sought, but I seek it vainly,
That one lost chord divine,
Which came from the soul of the organ,
And enter'd into mine.*

*It may be that death's bright angel
Will speak in that chord again;
It may be that only in heav'n
I shall hear that grand Amen.*

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

PART III

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Instructions for use

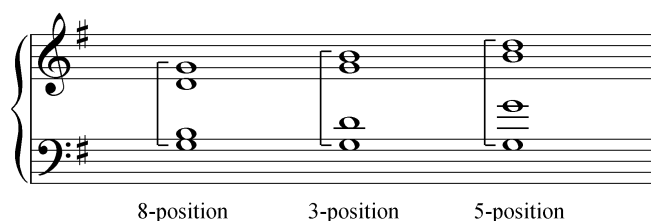
Readers are advised to consult the Preface to *The Lost Chord* elsewhere on this site.

In this third and final volume of *The Lost Chord*, the chord of the six-four (or 2nd inversion) and the chord of the seventh and its inversions are explored, as well as further modulation, passing and auxiliary notes, and elementary improvisation. A continuing and important subject is the figured bass.

As in the preceding volumes, I have attempted to explain each new topic not only from a theoretical but also from a musical point of view. It is for this reason that the sequence of topics is somewhat different to other harmonisation tutors. Inversions of chords, for example, are not simply discussed one after the other, but according to their practical usability.

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 are played in three positions, named after the interval between the soprano and the bass:



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. As explained in Parts I and II, all exercises in *The Lost Chord* are to be played in closed and mixed spacing, with the upper three parts in the right hand (r.h.) and the bass in the left hand (l.h.). The reason why open spacing is hardly employed is explained in ch.13 of the present volume.

The 1st inversion of the triad is referred to as the 6-chord in view of the interval of a 6th, distinguishing it from the triad in root position. Thus also 7-chord etc. A note belonging to a particular chord is a chord note; a note strange to a chord is a non-chordal note.

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.

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.

As stated in the previous volumes, all hymns and chorales are named after the actual melody rather than after the first line of the text, and dates of composition or publication are given as far as possible. An index of hymns and chorales used as exercise material in *The Lost Chord* is provided in a separate document.

Those who have worked their way through Parts I and II will have discovered that the study of practical harmonisation (and improvisation) is no less challenging and time-consuming than learning to play pieces of music. Only through years of practise, preferably under the supervision of a teacher, can the player develop sufficient technique, experience and taste to harmonise melodies and (figured) basses proficiently and to thus lay the basis for improvisation.

I sincerely hope that this tutor will provide support to the reader who pursues the long path - to use the words of the poet of *The Lost Chord* - from *all perplexed meanings* to *one perfect peace*.