

# Musicianship II – Unit II

## Topics and objectives

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### 0.1 Unit II (February 7–March 8)

Unit II will cover the following five topics:

- melodic performance
- strict keyboard-style voice-leading
- harmonic syntax
- melodic listening
- harmonic listening

Also included in this unit of study will be work that contributes to the semester-long *technology* topic.

Final assessment opportunities for *melodic performance* will take place in class on *Thursday, March 7*.

Final assessment opportunities for *melodic listening* and *harmonic listening* will take place with an in-class dictation test on *Friday, March 8*.

Deadlines for *strict keyboard-style voice-leading* and *harmonic syntax* will be announced at a future date, but the plan is for all Unit II work to be completed before Spring Break (begins March 9).

Work for each topic of study will be evaluated on a four-point scale: *mastery* (4), *working knowledge* (3), *incomplete understanding* (2), *poor understanding* (1), and *no significant attempt made* (0). Rubrics for each category are provided below. (For further information on how final grades are calculated, consult the course syllabus.)

### 0.2 Assessment rubrics

#### Melodic performance

The objective for melodic performance is for all students to be able to sing a melody 4–8 bars long from sight with minimal or no errors. The complexity of the melodies will fit those covered in Chapters 1–32 of Karpinski's *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing* and the accompanying *Anthology for Sight Singing*.

There will be a final performance assessment at the end of Unit II. It will consist of at least two melodies (with both major and minor mode, simple and compound meter

covered) containing the characteristics of melodies in the later chapters of the above range in the Karpinski texts. Each melody will receive two scores on a four-point scale: one for pitch content and one for rhythmic content. Those four-point scores will follow this rubric:

- 4: Perfect or nearly perfect
- 3: a couple small errors
- 2: more than a couple small errors, or one or two bigger errors
- 1: significant problems, or an inability to finish the melody
- 0: no significant attempt made

The final score for that test will be the median of all the pitch and rhythm scores earned on the melodies on the test.

### Strict keyboard-style voice-leading

The objective for strict keyboard-style voice-leading is for all students to be able to realize a thoroughbass line in major or minor in keyboard style, with a good melody, good voice-leading between the four parts, and proper realization of all the chords. Note that *realizing* a thoroughbass line involves both *composing* a proper realization and then *performing* it at the keyboard.

Work in this category is divided into *basso continuo* realizations (no melody, just chords) and *melodic keyboard-style* realizations (melody and chords), as well as work with a partner and work as an individual. The partner work for a category should be completed before moving on to individual work.

The following four categories of work will each earn the student a point when completed satisfactorily, according to the principles of voice-leading detailed on the Musicianship Resources website.

- Compose *basso continuo* realizations for two figured bass lines, one in major and one in minor, with a partner, and perform those realizations as an individual.
- Compose and perform *basso continuo* realizations for two figured bass lines, one in major and one in minor, as an individual.
- Compose *melodic keyboard-style* realizations for two figured bass lines, one in major and one in minor, with a partner, and perform those realizations as an individual.
- Compose and perform *melodic keyboard-style* realizations for two figured bass lines, one in major and one in minor, as an individual.

A student's final grade for this criterion will simply be the number of these categories passed by the end of Unit II. (Keep in mind that the last 2–3 days of class before Spring Break will be reserved for dictation and performance assessments.)

## Harmonic syntax

The objective for harmonic syntax is for all students to be able to analyze the harmonic functions and roots of chords, and the functional progressions exhibited by chords in musical phrases in major and minor, involving all diatonic chords, simple and compound cadence idioms, and common chromatic chords.

This criterion will be assessed in the harmonic analyses performed on dictation exercises, voice-leading exercises, quizzes, and model composition assignments.

Final grades for this criterion will be determined by what of the following a student demonstrates an ability to do consistently (with minimal or no errors) by the end of Unit II. The number of the following four tasks mastered will be the final grade on a four-point scale:

- Provide Roman numeral analyses of harmonic progressions represented by figured bass lines and by lead-sheet symbols.
- Provide *interpreted* functional-bass analyses of harmonic progressions represented by figured bass lines.
- Provide plausible interpreted functional-bass analyses of harmonic progressions represented by unfigured bass lines.
- Compose phrase-length harmonic progressions that follow the principles of good harmonic syntax.

## Melodic listening

The objective for melodic listening is for all students to listen to a melody approximately 10–15 seconds long, three times, and notate it with minimal or no errors in pitch or rhythm. The complexity of the melodies will fit those covered in Chapters 1–32 of Karpinski's *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing* and the accompanying *Anthology for Sight Singing*.

There will be a final dictation test at the end of Unit II, which will determine students' final grades for this criterion. That test will contain multiple melodies in major and minor, in simple and compound meter.

Each melody on that test will receive two scores on a four-point scale: one for pitch content and one for rhythmic content. Those four-point scores will follow this rubric:

- 4: Perfect or nearly perfect
- 3: a couple small errors
- 2: more than a couple small errors, or one or two bigger errors
- 1: significant problems, or an inability to finish the melody
- 0: no significant attempt made

The final score for that test will be the median of all the pitch and rhythm scores earned on the melodies on the test, with the provision that the final grade cannot be higher than the highest score for major-key pitch, minor-key pitch, simple-meter rhythm, or compound-meter rhythm. For example, if a student's median score is a 3, but her highest score for rhythm on the compound-meter melodies is a 2, the final score is a 2.

In-class and out-of-class dictation work will not contribute to the final score, but will be invaluable in preparing students for the final test, and will provide feedback on student progress in advance of the test.

### Harmonic listening

The objective for harmonic listening is for all students to listen to a phrase-long chord progression that includes the most common diatonic chords and reliably dictate the melody, bass line, and harmonic content.

A student's grade for a dictation exercise will be the number of the following four elements that the student can dictate with minimal or no errors after four hearings:

- melody
- bass line
- chords (thoroughbass figures above the bass notes)
- harmonic functions (functional bass symbols below the bass notes)

There will be a final dictation test at the end of Unit II, which will determine students' final grades for this criterion. That test will contain multiple phrase-length progressions in major and in minor. The student's grade on that test will be the median score for all the progressions dictated, with the provision that the final grade cannot be higher than the highest score for a minor- or a major-key exercise. (In other words, if a student is better at major than minor, their final score cannot be higher than the score of their best minor-key exercise.)

Throughout Unit II, we will do some in-class dictation practice, and students will do out-of-class dictation practice with a computer application I developed, called *BassGenerator*. Students are expected to practice dictation with this application. Student practice will not only aid their learning, but provide an opportunity for a "safety net" for the final grade. A student's final score will be no lower than one level below what the student masters in practice. For example, if a student has demonstrated a consistent ability to dictate all four elements reliably in advance of the test, the lowest score they can achieve on the final test (even if they do not take it) is a 3. If consistency is achieved for three of the four elements in advance, the lowest final score is a 2. Etc. If a student does no practice work, their final test grade is their final grade for this criterion.

### Technology

Students are expected to demonstrate an ability to do the following in *two* different music notation applications:

- idiomatically typeset a keyboard-style voice-leading exercise with melody, inner voices, bass line, figured bass, and functional-bass analysis.

Since this category is on-going, and will not be complete until the end of the term, no grade will be assigned at the end of Unit II. However, all of the above must be successfully assessed during Unit II in order to receive full credit for the technology criterion at the end of the semester.