

UNIT 1: Section 1

Harmony in Two Dimensions

SK

(a) Triads - spacing, inversions, doubling

"Harmony" isn't just about chords, but about how different parts or voices work in combination with each other. The challenge in improvising and composing effective harmony is to keep the vertical dimension (what notes to have in the chord) in balance with the horizontal dimension (how to create satisfying individual parts).

When writing in four parts, you need to think about SPACING the chord. Play these examples on a keyboard (or sing them in four parts) and think about how they sound:

The image shows five measures of music on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Each measure contains a triad of notes. Measure 1: Root position triad with two notes in the treble and one in the bass. Measure 2: Root position triad with one note in the treble and two in the bass. Measure 3: First inversion triad with two notes in the treble and one in the bass. Measure 4: Second inversion triad with one note in the treble and two in the bass. Measure 5: Root position triad with a wide spacing between the bass and treble clefs.

What do these chords all have in common? How are they different from each other? Which do you prefer and why?

Now use the staves below to try out some spacings of your own:

A blank grand staff with five empty measures for writing triad spacings.

TEACHER'S COMMENTS:

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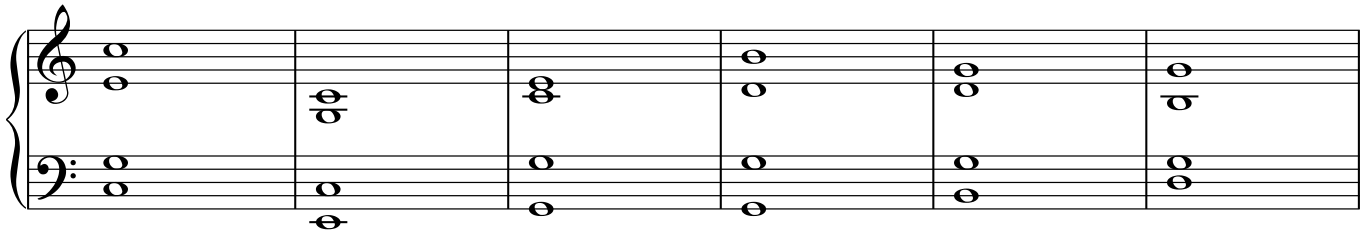
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FURTHER ATTEMPTS:

A blank grand staff with five empty measures for further attempts at writing triad spacings.

Play these examples on a keyboard. What are the differences between them? Think about which examples sound "stronger" and which sound "weaker".



There are basically three types of triad in the examples above. They can be told apart by listening to the bass note. List the types of triad, and which sounds 'stronger' or 'weaker':

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

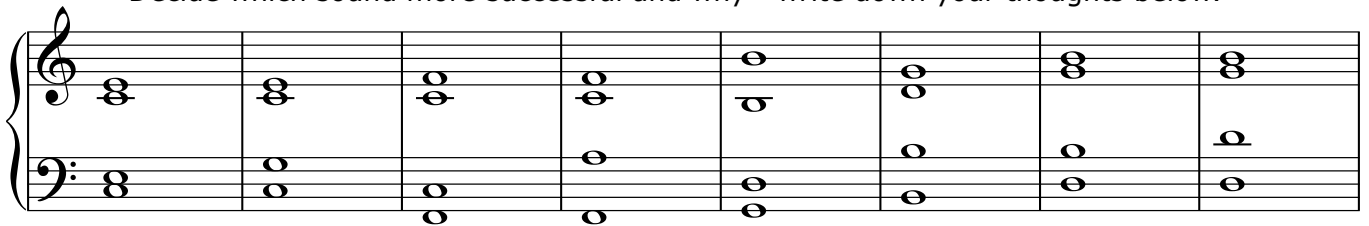
TEACHER'S COMMENTS:

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Obviously, if you are writing a chord in 4 parts, 2 of the parts will have to have the same note (though in different octaves). This is called "**doubling**". In the following examples, different notes of the chord (root, 3rd, 5th) are doubled. Decide which sound more successful and why - write down your thoughts below.



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TEACHER'S COMMENTS:

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