

## Composing Within a Music Literacy Program

### Part 2 – Adding Tonic and Dominant Harmony to an Original Mi-Re-Do Melody

Lesson developed by Betsy Greene based on Conversational Solfege by John Feierabend

#### **Intent**

Students will add tonic and dominant harmony (using only the tonic note of the I and the V chords) to original mi-re-do compositions. The students will have learned to sing, hear, read, and write the tonic and dominant harmony, in this case through the Conversational Solfege method or learning sequence. The tonic and dominant harmony is taught by rote, then is brought through the Conversational Solfege 12 Steps to the last step: Write-Create. See “Create a Melody: Use These Words” for more information about the music literacy method Conversational Solfege.

See additional information about Conversational Solfege on Part 1

#### **Tip: Work Conservation**

My experience has been that it is important to build on past work. Using past work from students allows them to begin immediately on their process of adding tonic and dominant harmony to their own work. It saves time.

**Example (s) of Student Work:** (posted at <http://www.vtmidi.org/AtoC.html>)

See “King’s Last Dance” and “Dragon Slayer” for examples. The original work with a single melody line is available along with a revised version which includes additional material as outlined in the extensions section of this document.

#### **Standards Addressed:**

National Standards for Arts Education (1994) *all below paraphrased from grade 4 and 8*

Standard #4, Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines

- a. compose short pieces within specified guidelines,
- b. demonstrate how the elements of music are used to achieve unity and variety, tension and release, and balance

Standard # 5: Reading and notating music

- a. use standard symbols to indicate pitch, rhythm, dynamics and tempo appropriate to grade level curriculum

Standard #6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

Standard #7: Evaluating music compositions

Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities (2000)






1.16 and 5.23 Reflection and critique

Students critique their own and others' works in progress, both individually and in groups, to improve upon intent.

**Prior Experiences and Knowledge:**

Students will have had to have experience in singing, hearing, reading, and writing tonic and dominant harmony to three note melodies or they will have had learned tonic and dominant harmony through Conversational Solfege: Step 11. Students will also have had to have experience creating complementary rhythmic ostinati.

**Procedure:**

-  Using the mi-re-do melody compositions (Create a Melody: Use These Words), students add another staff line below their existing melodic line.
-  Students identify in their melody the tonic and dominant harmonic changes by singing the tonic to each chord (the I and V) while the computer plays their melody.
-  Students choose a complementary 2 or 4 beat rhythmic ostinato (general rule – no more than two beats of the ostinato are identical to the rhythm of the melodic line).
-  Students write the tonic and dominant changes with the ostinato rhythmic pattern in the new staff.
-  Students ask for feedback regarding their harmonic accompaniment – are the tonic and dominant changes correct and aligned with the rhythm of their ostinato?

**Assessment:**

For assessment of the student's song performance of his composition, Conversational Solfege TM p. 325 for rubrics developed by T. Clark Saunders or p.354.

For assessment of student's rhythmic decoding and writing, see Conversational Solfege TM p.333 for rubrics developed by T. Clark Saunders or p. 356.

Feierabend, John Conversational Solfege TM - Level I 2001:  
G.I.A. Publications, Inc., Chicago.  
www.giamusic.com  
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**Rubric for Assessment of Tonic and Dominant Harmony Compositions**

Betsy Greene©

Vermont MIDI Project

Standard	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level5
<b>Standard 4 and 5</b>	Student attempts to create a 2 beat or 4 beat rhythmic ostinato to complement the melodic line of his composition	Student creates a 2 or 4 rhythmic ostinato which complements the melodic line and writes it in the second staff with no regard to tonic and dominant harmonic changes of the melody	Student creates a 2 or 4 rhythmic ostinato which complements the melodic line, writes it in the second staff with correct tonic and dominant harmonic changes, and uses the same ostinato for both A and B sections	Student creates a 2 or 4 rhythmic ostinato which complements the melodic line, writes it in the second staff with correct tonic and dominant harmonic changes, and uses a new ostinato for the B section to create more contrast	Student creates a 2 or 4 rhythmic ostinato which complements the melodic line, writes it in the second staff with correct tonic and dominant harmonic changes, uses a new ostinato for the B section to create more contrast, and alters ostinato to align better with harmonic movement of melody in both sections.