

# Introduction to rhythms and tunes

Credo Theory of Music training programme

GRADE 3

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I.R.3



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In order to write a successful melody (tune) or rhythm, a very sound knowledge of basic concepts such as chordal basis, non-chord notes, phrases, cadences, etc. is required. This module will help you gain the necessary information.

In the next module you will learn how to **write** rhythms, melodies (tunes) and bass lines.

## 1. CHORDAL BASIS.

A chordal basis consists of suitable chords that will **support** the melody line and provide material for an accompaniment (e.g. a guitar accompaniment for a singer).

It is of the utmost importance that you always keep a suitable chordal basis in mind when writing a melody or a bass line. A good melody implies a good chordal basis.

### What is a good chordal basis?

A sound chordal basis will always serve to **firmly establish the key**: The three primary triads I(i), IV(iv), V will be heard regularly and the piece will start and end with the tonic chord I(i) as its basis.

## 1.1 CHORDAL BASIS AT THE BEGINNING OF A MELODY.

### 1.1.1 ÓN THE FIRST BEAT.

The first strong beat of a piece should imply the **tonic chord I(i)**. The tonic triad establishes the key firmly. The first note of the melody thus comes from the tonic chord, and may be the root (1<sup>st</sup>), third (3<sup>rd</sup>), or fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) of the chord.

EXAMPLES in C major:

(i)  $C:I$  (1<sup>st</sup>)

(ii)  $C:I$  (3<sup>rd</sup>)

(iii)  $C:I$  (5<sup>th</sup>)

Should the first note be the third or the fifth, another note from the tonic chord should be used to strengthen the tonic chord. The best note to follow the third or fifth is always the root. See examples (ii) and (iii) above.

### 1.1.2 ANACRUSIS (UP-BEAT).

It is always good to use the dominant chord (V) on the anacrusis, i.e. on a weak beat before the first strong beat of the melody. The dominant chord is then followed by the tonic chord which appears on the first strong beat. The simplest melody in such a case would be 5 – 1, although 5 – 5, 5 – 3, 7 – 8 and 2 – 1 are also possible.

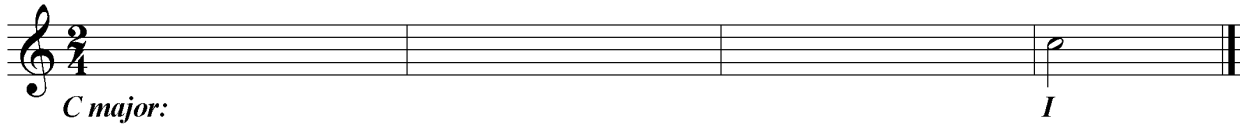
EXAMPLE:

$C: V$  (5)  $I$  (1)

## 1.2 CHORDAL BASIS AT THE END OF A MELODY.

The melody should end with the **tonic note** preferable on a **strong beat**, bearing the tonic chord in mind.

EXAMPLE:



The penultimate chord (on the weak beat) should be the **dominant chord**. It contains much tension and needs to resolve onto the tonic chord. It follows that the penultimate note of the melody will thus be a note taken from the dominant chord, i.e. the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> degree.

Three musical staves in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature, each showing a dominant chord (V) on a weak beat resolving to a tonic chord (I) on a strong beat. The first staff shows a G4 note (5th degree) above the V chord. The second staff shows a B4 note (7th degree) above the V chord. The third staff shows a D4 note (2nd degree) above the V chord. Above each V chord is its degree (5, 7, or 2) and above each I chord is the letter 'I'. Below each V chord is the letter 'V' and below each I chord is the letter 'I'.

Now you know how to start and end your melody.

### REMEMBER

- Start:** - On the first strong beat: I(i) (melody = 1 , 3 or 5)  
Anacrusis: V / I (melody 5 – 1 , 5 – 5 , 5 – 3 , 7 – 8 , 2 – 1)
- End:** - On the tonic on a strong beat, with V – I(i) as chordal basis.  
(melody = 5 – 1 , 7 – 1 or 2 – 1)

## 1.3 CHORDAL BASIS IN THE COURSE OF A MELODY.

A variety of chords may be used between the beginning and the end of a melody. Remember that the order or way in which one chord progresses to another is called **chord progression**. To start with, use the simplest or most **basic chord progression**.

**The basic chord progression is:**

*I(i)*       -       *IV(iv)*       -       *V*       -       *I(i)*  
*tonic*                      *subdominant*                      *dominant*                      *tonic*  
*chord*                      *chord*                      *chord*                      *chord*

Example in C major:

The musical notation shows a four-bar progression in C major, 2/4 time. The bass line consists of four chords: I (C-E-G), IV (F-A-C), V (G-B-D), and I (C-E-G). The treble line contains a melody: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Notes C, D, E, and G are circled, indicating they are chordal notes. Notes F and A are not circled, indicating they are non-chordal notes.

- Notes:**
- Moving from V to IV is not a good progression, but IV to V is good.
  - Encircled notes do **not** belong to the chordal basis. They are **non-chord notes**. We shall discuss them later on in this module. All other notes, however, form part of the chordal basis.

Let us analyse the above example:

- |       |   |                |                            |
|-------|---|----------------|----------------------------|
| Bar 1 | - | Chordal basis: | I in C major (C-E-G)       |
|       |   | Melody notes:  | C, D (non-chord note) E, G |
| Bar 2 | - | Chordal basis: | IV in C major (F-A-C)      |
|       |   | Melody notes:  | F, F                       |
| Bar 3 | - | Chordal basis: | V in C major (G-B-D)       |
|       |   | Melody notes:  | G, A (non-chord note) B, D |
| Bar 4 | - | Chordal basis: | I in C major (C-E-G)       |
|       |   | Melody note:   | C                          |

In the previous example, chordal changes occurred at the beginning of a new bar in every instance. This is good. Always try to imply chordal changes at the beginning of a bar, i.e. **on the strong beat**.

Remember that the first beat of the bar is not the only strong beat. In  $\frac{4}{4}$  time the first and third beats are accentuated. In  $\frac{6}{8}$  time the first and fourth quavers are strong, etc. It is therefore good to **imply chordal changes on these strong beats**.



EXAMPLES:

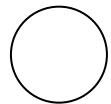
C: I IV V I IV I V I

C: I IV I V I IV V I

As you already know, this is not the only chord progression. There are many possible combinations.

**Ex. 228/1**

**ANSWER / COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:**



- 1 A melody that starts on the first beat, should use the \_\_\_\_\_ (tonic-, subdominant- or dominant chord) as chordal basis.
- 2 A melody that starts with an anacrusis should use the chordal basis \_\_\_\_\_ V - I(i) or I(i) - V.
- 3 When a melody starts with an anacrusis, the best melody notes are \_\_\_\_\_ (4 - 1 or 5 - 1).
- 4 A good melody implies a good \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 A melody ends on the \_\_\_\_\_ (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> degree) on a \_\_\_\_\_ (weak or strong) beat.
- 6 The penultimate chord of a melody is the dominant chord. Name three possible scale degrees that may be used as the penultimate melody note: \_\_\_\_\_



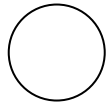
The melody could be brought to a halt at the E, G or C with good effect, as these are chordal notes. It will however not be successful on D, F, A or B, because the scale wants to **pass through** to a chordal note, hence the name **passing notes**.

Passing notes therefore **join** chordal notes, and thus have a **joining function**.


**Ex. 230/1**

**ADD PASSING NOTES TO THE FOLLOWING HARMONY NOTES TO FORM A SCALE PASSAGE:**

- Notes:**
- In a question like this you may change the given note values.
  - You may use triplets.
  - Group notes correctly according to the time signature.



1



*F major: I*

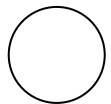
2



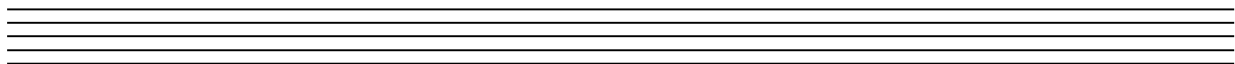
*G major: I*

**Ex. 230/2**

**REWRITE THE FOLLOWING MELODY ON THE LOWER STAVE. ADD PASSING NOTES TO HELP THE MELODY APPEAR MORE FLOWING. ALWAYS GROUP NOTES CORRECTLY:**



*C:I IV V vi IV I V I*



## 2.2 AUXILIARY NOTES (neighbouring notes).

### 2.2.1 UPPER AUXILIARY NOTE.

When a chordal note **moves up by step and then back to the chordal note**, it is called an *upper auxiliary note*.

EXAMPLE:

C major: I V I

### 2.2.2 LOWER AUXILIARY NOTE.

When a chordal note **moves one step down and then back to its original pitch**, it is called a *lower auxiliary note*.

EXAMPLE:

C major: I V I

An auxiliary note serves as decoration for a repeated note, because it **changes** the repeated note. It is a **changing note**. Its function is thus a **decorative** one. It may occur **off** the beat as in the example at 2.2.1, or **on** the beat as in the example at 2.2.2.

### Ex. 231/1

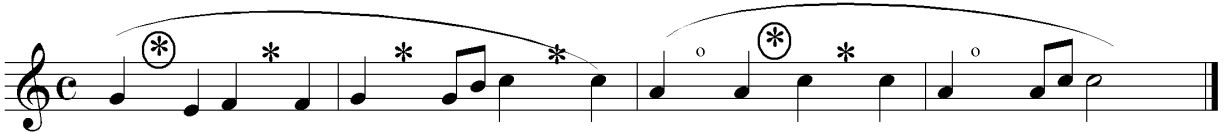
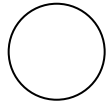
DECORATE THE FOLLOWING MELODY BY ADDING UPPER AUXILIARY NOTES AT \* AND PASSING NOTES AT ⊛:



**Ex. 232/1**

**DECORATE THE FOLLOWING MELODY BY ADDING UPPER AUXILIARY NOTES AT \*, LOWER AUXILIARY NOTES AT °, AND PASSING NOTES AT ⊛:**

**Note:** Group notes correctly.



**3. PHRASE STRUCTURE:**

A melody consists of sentences and sentences consist of phrases. A phrase in its musical sense is a **short group of notes felt to form a unit**. Musical phrases often coincide with the lines of verses which are set to music. Look at the following example:

**Twinkle twinkle little star** (Traditional)

*sentence*

Bar 1 – 4 and 5 – 8 may be seen as **two phrases**, a fore-phrase (antecedent) and an after-phrase (consequent). The second phrase is an **answer** to the first phrase. They have unity as well as variety. Bar 1 – 8 may be seen as a **sentence**.

The phrases in a melody are usually of the **same length**, usually two or four bars. They usually start with the **same rhythm** or nearly the same rhythm.

In grade 3 you are going to work with **four-bar** melodies or rhythms. A four-bar melody may have 2 two-bar phrases. A bow over or under notes may be called a **slur** (phrase mark) if all the notes are to be played *legato*.

EXAMPLE:



When a phrase mark is not used, the signs ' or // are sometimes used to show the end of a phrase

#### 4. CADENCES.

Usually there is a **cadential point** at the end of a phrase, which ends with longer note values.

You already know that the final cadence is called a **perfect cadence** (full close, authentic cadence). It means that the **after-phrase** ends V – I(i). Chord I sounds **final, completed**.

The fore-phrase may end I(i) – V, which is called the **imperfect cadence** (half cadence, half close) and it sounds **non-final**.

The melody note should be taken from the triad concerned.

*Imperfect cadence: I - V*                      *Perfect cadence V - I*

#### SUMMARY – LEARN:

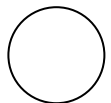
*Fore-phrase = antecedent (2 bars)*                      *After-phrase = consequent (2 bars)*

*Chordal basis*                      *Imperfect cadence*                      *Perfect cadence*

*Melody note:*                      *1, 3 or 5*                      *5, 7 or 2*                      *5, 7 or 2*                      *1*

#### Ex. 233/1

#### COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:



- 1 A resting point in music is called a \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Usually a \_\_\_\_\_ (longer / shorter) note value is used at a cadence.
- 3 A musical phrase may be indicated by means of a \_\_\_\_\_ (slur / tie) if all the notes within are to be played **legato**.

- 4 A musical resting point occurs at the \_\_\_\_\_ (beginning / end) of a phrase.
- 5 A non-final cadence occurs \_\_\_\_\_ (during the course of a melody / at the end of a melody).
- 6 What chordal basis would you use at the end of the fore-phrase? \_\_\_\_\_

**Ex. 234/1**

**DIVIDE THE FOLLOWING FOUR-BAR MELODY INTO TWO PHRASES BY USING SLURS AND ALSO ADD PASSING NOTES AT  $\circledast$ , UPPER AUXILIARY NOTES AT \*, AND A LOWER AUXILIARY NOTE AT  $^{\circ}$ :**



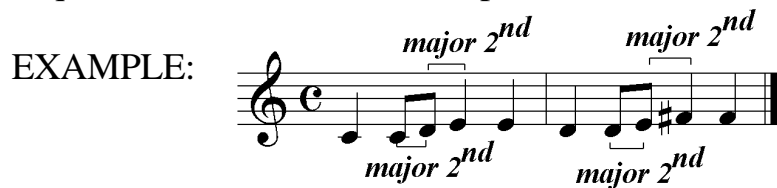
**5. REAL AND TONAL SEQUENCES.**

You already know that a **sequence** is the repetition of a melodic pattern at **different pitches**, often a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> above or below the previous one.

A sequence can be **real** or **tonal**. There may be a mixture of real and tonal sequences.

**5.1 REAL SEQUENCES.**

In a real sequence, the **quality values** of the **intervals** within the sequences are the **same** in each pattern.



"Think" in keys for each pattern: bar 1 is in C: and bar 2 is in D:

**5.2 TONAL SEQUENCES.**

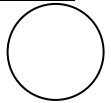
In a tonal sequence, the **shape** of the melodic pattern is the same, but the **quality values** of the **intervals** within the sequences are **different**.

EXAMPLE:

A musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Brackets are placed above and below the notes to indicate intervals: a major 2nd between C4 and D4, a minor 2nd between E4 and F4, a major 2nd between G4 and A4, and a major 2nd between B4 and C5.

**Ex. 235/1**

**WRITE A BRACKET ( — OR — ) TO INDICATE THE SEQUENCES AND LABEL THEM *REAL* OR *TONAL*:**



EXAMPLE:

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains a sequence of notes: Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, Bb5. Brackets are placed above the notes to indicate intervals: a 'real' interval between Bb4 and C5, and a 'tonal' interval between D5 and E5.

1

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a sequence of notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5.

2

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb) and a 3/8 time signature. It contains a sequence of notes: Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5, G5, Ab5, Bb5.

3

A musical staff in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F#, C#) and a 6/8 time signature. It contains a sequence of notes: F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4.

4

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb) and a 3/8 time signature. It contains a sequence of notes: Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5, G5, Ab5, Bb5.

5

A musical staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). It contains a sequence of notes: Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5, G5, Ab5, Bb5.

6

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a sequence of notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5.

## 6. SIMILAR AND CONTRARY MOTION.

### 6.1 SIMILAR MOTION (same direction).

When two or more parts move in the **same direction** (parallel), they are said to be in **similar motion**.

EXAMPLE:

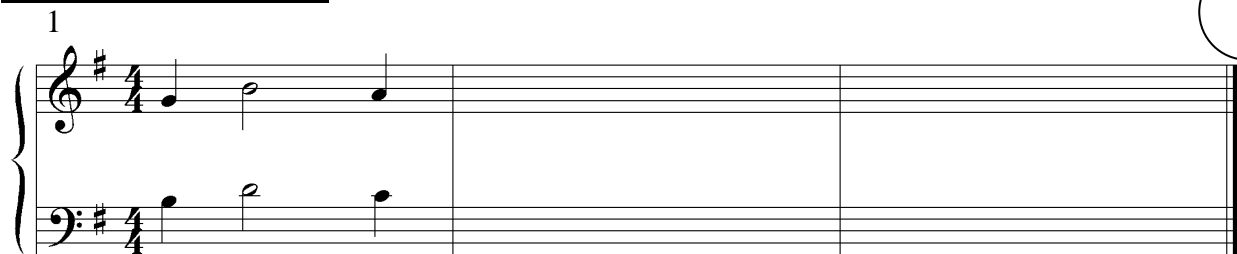


- Note:**
- In this example the parts move in octaves (parts moving a 3<sup>rd</sup> or a 6<sup>th</sup> apart sound very pleasant).
  - The parts will never meet; the interval between them will be the same throughout.
  - The top and bottom notes must line up vertically so that it is easy to read.
  - Keyboard players often play scales in similar motion.

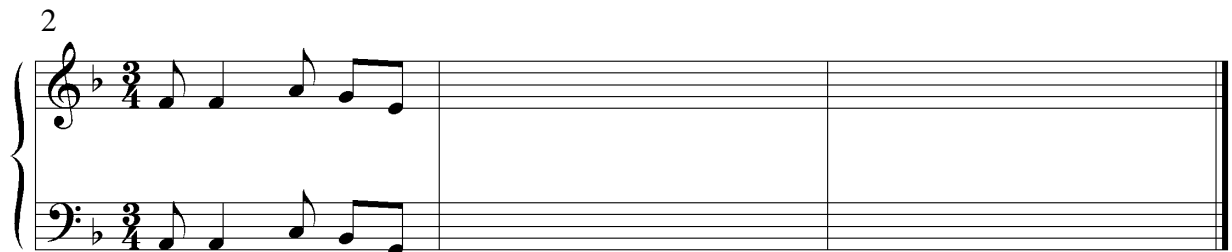
### Ex. 236/1

**WRITE TWO MORE REPEATS OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SYNCOPATED RHYTHMS TO MAKE OSTINATI THAT MOVE IN SIMILAR MOTION:**

1



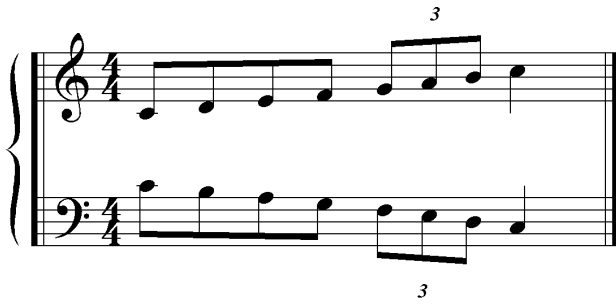
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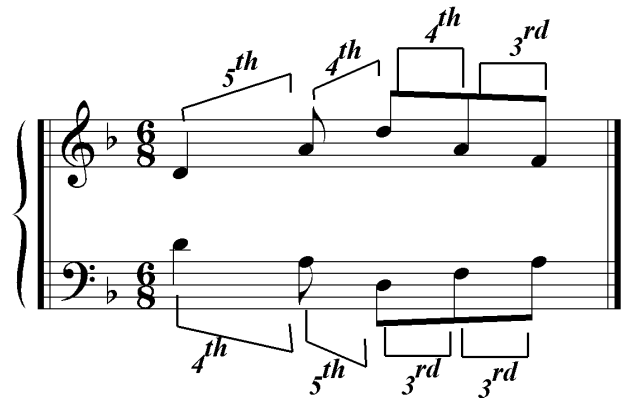
## 6.2 CONTRARY MOTION (opposite direction).

When two parts move **away** from each other or **towards** each other, they are said to be in **contrary motion**.

EXAMPLE 1:



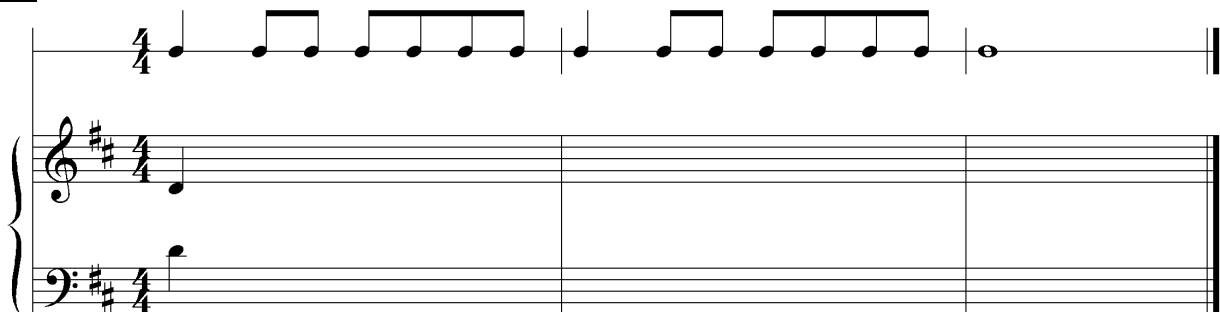
EXAMPLE 2:



- Note:**
- In example 1, the scale of C major is moving in contrary motion. Keyboard players often play scales in contrary motion.
  - The parts may meet as on middle C in example 1.
  - Even if the parts move at **different note values** it is still movement in contrary motion.
  - The **intervals** between notes in one part need not be exactly the same as the intervals in the other part. The **contrary direction** in which the two parts move, is of importance (example 2).

### Ex. 237/1

**COMPLETE THE SCALE OF D MAJOR ASCENDING AND DESCENDING IN THE TREBLE CLEF ACCORDING TO THE GIVEN NOTE VALUES. THEN WRITE THE SAME SCALE IN CONTRARY MOTION IN THE BASS CLEF:**



**Ex. 238 /1**

**WRITE TWO MORE REPEATS OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING RHYTHMS TO MAKE OSTINATI THAT MOVE IN CONTRARY MOTION:**


1

2

**Ex. 238/2**

**STUDY THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:**

- 1 In which **key** is this passage? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 How many notes higher or lower are the **sequences** in bars 3 and 4 repeated (treble part)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Are the sequences in bars 3 and 4 **real** sequences? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Do the two parts move in **similar or contrary** motion in bars:
  - 1<sup>1</sup> (bar 1, 1<sup>st</sup> beat) - \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2<sup>1</sup> (bar 2, 1<sup>st</sup> beat) - \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Name the **interval** between the two notes marked in bar 1: \_\_\_\_\_

- 6 Write a name for the two **signs** on 1<sup>1</sup> and 2<sup>1</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 On which **tone degree** does the melody in the treble start and end? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 In which bar should the player slow down a little? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 What does *Andantino* mean? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Describe the performance of this piece according to the **dynamic indications**: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 11 Which chords are implied on the first beat and on the last beat?  
First beat: \_\_\_\_\_ Last beat: \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 Write a **chord symbol** above the last beat to show which chord accompanies the tune here.
- 13 The dominant chord is implied on the first beat of the last bar. Write a **chord symbol** above the notes of this beat.
- 14 Name the **cadence** at the end of this piece: \_\_\_\_\_
- 15 Does this cadence sound **final or non-final**? \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 Does this piece start on an **upbeat** or a **downbeat**? \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 How many **semiquavers** could fit in with the last note in the bass part? \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 Except for the **sequences** in bars 3 and 4, there is another sequence. Write a bracket  to indicate the sequence and label it as **real or tonal**.
- 19 What is the **leading note** of this piece? \_\_\_\_\_
- 20 Is this piece in **simple or compound** time? \_\_\_\_\_
- 21 What note is "*soh*" in this piece? \_\_\_\_\_
- 22 Look at all the notes on the first beat of bar 3. What do you notice about the pitches of the two parts? \_\_\_\_\_



You have now completed the module on **introduction to rhythms and tunes**. Learn the **summary** on the next page. Cut it out and place it in your "**Summary File**" for safekeeping. Also learn the summary on **musical terms** once again, as you may have a question on this module in **every** following test. When you are ready, ask your teacher for the **module test** on **introduction to rhythms and tunes**.



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## SUMMARY

# *Introduction to rhythms and tunes*

**Credo Theory of Music training programme  
GRADE 3**

By S. J. Cloete

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**CHORDAL BASIS:** A good melody (tune) implies a good chordal basis.

- **CHORDAL BASIS AT THE *BEGINNING* OF THE MELODY.**

**Melody starts on the first beat:**

Imply chord I(i) and use the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> degree in the melody. Should the first melody note be the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>, follow it up by using another note from chord I, preferably the 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Melody starts with an anacrusis:**

Imply chords V – I(i) and use 5-1 in the melody (5-5, 5-3, 7-8, and 2-1 are also possible).

- **CHORDAL BASIS AT THE *END* OF THE MELODY.**

The melody ends with a **perfect cadence** V – I(i), with I(i) being on the strong beat. Melody notes are 5-1, 7-1 or 2-1. End on the tonic on a strong beat.

- **CHORDAL BASIS IN THE *MIDDLE* OF THE MELODY.**

The basic chord progression: **I(i) - IV(iv) - V - I(i)**


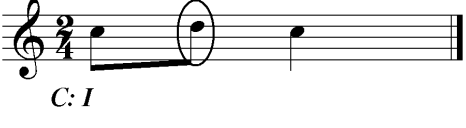

Use the **imperfect cadence** at the end of the first phrase.

Imply a change of chord on a **strong beat**.



# 10(2)

## NON-CHORD NOTES:

<p><b><u>Passing note.</u></b> Joins two chordal notes by means of stepwise movement in the same direction. It has a <b>joining function</b>.</p>	
<p><b><u>Upper Auxiliary note.</u></b> The note moves <b>up</b> by step and then back. They have a <b>decorative function</b>.</p>	
<p><b><u>Lower auxiliary note.</u></b> The note moves <b>down</b> by step and then back. They have a <b>decorative function</b>.</p>	

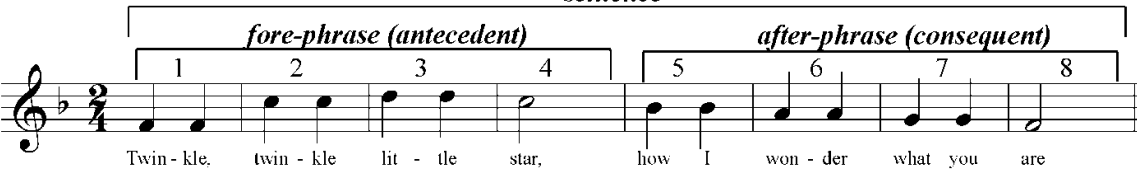
## PHRASES:

A phrase is a short group of notes felt to form a unit.

EXAMPLE:

**Twinkle twinkle little star** (Traditional)

*sentence*



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Twin - kle, twin - kle lit - tle star, how I won - der what you are

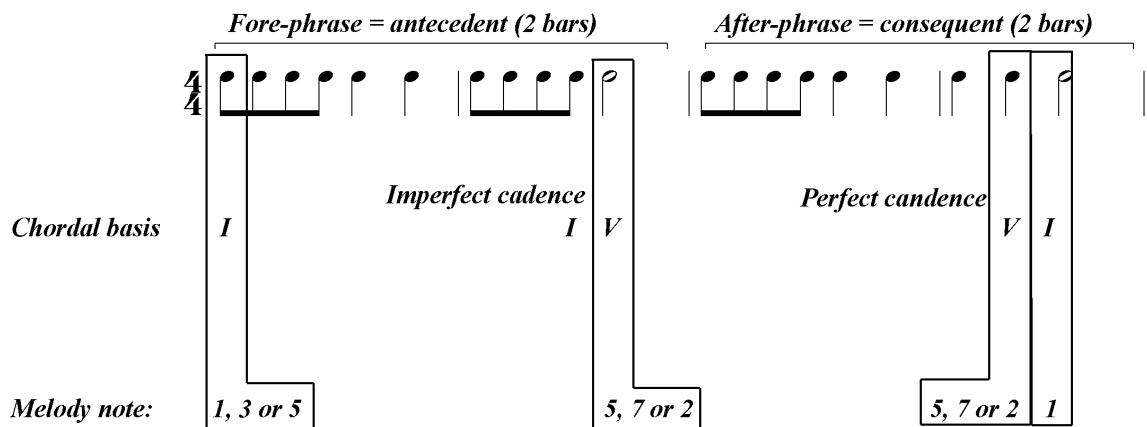
- The second phrase is an **answer** to the first one.
- Phrases are often of the **same length**.
- A **phrase mark** may be used if all the notes are to be played *legato*.
- The **signs** ' or // are sometimes used to show the end of a phrase.
- The end of a phrase usually has a **cadence**.
- The phrases often start with the **same rhythm** or nearly the same rhythm.



# 10(3)

## CADENCES:

The **imperfect cadence** sounds non-final and the **perfect cadence** sounds final.



## REAL AND TONAL SEQUENCES:

A sequence is the repetition of a melodic pattern at **different** pitches. Real and tonal sequences may be mixed in one phrase.

- **Real sequence.**  
The **quality values** of the **intervals** within the sequences are the **same** in each pattern.
- **Tonal sequence.**  
The **shape** of the melodic pattern is the same, but the **quality values** of the **intervals** within the sequences are **different**.

## SIMILAR AND CONTRARY MOTION:

Always **line up** the top and bottom notes of the two parts.

- **Similar motion** (same direction).  
It is when two or more parts move in the **same (parallel) direction**.
- **Contrary motion** (opposite direction).  
It is when two parts move **away** from each other, or **towards** each other.

\* \* \*