

TEACHING METHODOLOGY WITH BASIC ELEMENTS OF HARMONY

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is primarily to present the circumstances of basis of Harmony from the aspect of the study and the use of chords that were born and developed as one's need to be expressed through music, as widely and deeply as possible, to give one clearer thoughts and feelings. We will also clarify that Harmony is what determines the role of vocal or instrumental complexity accompanied by the melody of other musical instruments.

Harmony is the study of chords, thus harmony represents simultaneous combination of certain and combined notes, which then accompany the melody of a musical piece and sound simultaneously with it. That is the basis on which a whole musical piece is relied and created.

Harmony is also the relationship of simultaneously sounding notes and the relationship of the sounding between them. So, this is a scientific discipline of chords which studies their sonic composition, functions, reciprocal and mutual relationships, as well as their role of the direction of the musical work.

Keywords: Teaching Methodology, harmony, chords

The chord

A chord represents the simultaneous sounding of at least three different notes that are arranged on different heights and have different names and are organized in the verticality of the notes. Chords, in their basis form, between them have a distance of a tertian's interval. Key elements of chords are:

1. The triad (fifth chord);
2. The seventh (seventh chord);
3. The ninth (ninth chord).

The chords mentioned above are created from the root while the terms derive from the interval between the root and the highest note, such as:

1. The triad derives from the three tones/ fifth chord;
2. The seventh derives from the width of the seventh chord and the triad;
3. The ninth chord derives from the width of the ninth chord.

Generally, these terms remain unchanged, regardless of the internal order of the notes, especially at the triad and the seventh.

The triad (fifth chord) represents the simultaneous sounding of three notes. It contains the root, the tertian and the fifth. The elementary form of the chord is the triad or the fifth chord that is also the basis of classical Harmony. It is formed from two thirds arranged one above another. The types of triad depend on the interval of the fifth and the third, always counting from the root. In the diatonic system, we differentiate four basic triads:

1. Major triad, consisting of the root, the major third and the perfect fifth (C-E-G);
2. Minor triad, consisting of the root, the minor third and the perfect fifth (C-es-G);
3. Diminished triad, consisting of the root, the minor third and the diminished fifth (C-es-ges);
4. Augmented triad, consisting of the root, the major third and the augmented fifth (C-E-Gis).

Dissonant chords are diminished, whereas augmented chords have dissonant intervals such as the diminished fifth and augmented fifth. These four types of triad chords (major, minor, diminished and augmented) are chords of diatonic type that form the harmonic core of the diatonic system. Therefore, from melodic aspect, the scale is organized into a series of eight notes and from harmonic aspect, into a series of seventh notes, thus diatonic notes. Triads consist also from 7 degrees of diatonic scale that form the diatonic scale. These chords are classified as the main and secondary chords.

1. Main (primary) triads are the first, fourth and fifth chord and are also known as harmonic triads. Main chords also define the tonality.
2. Secondary triads are the second, third, sixth and seventh chord. These chords interact with main chords, but don't have any significant function (known as the dissonant chords).

Choir formation (four-part formation)

In Harmony the most used is the four-part formation combining a soprano, alto (female voices) and tenor and bass (male voices). In Harmony, two systems (pentagrams) are used for this four-part formation. These are firstly associated by a vertical line where on the first pentagram stays the treble clef and the notes of the female voices (soprano and alto) are written and on the second pentagram stays the bass clef and the notes of the male voices (tenor and bass). There must be set a range of voices in order to give the direction of the vocal movement, from the lowest note to the highest note, such as:

- Soprano's vocal range lays from C1 of the first octave until A2 of the second octave;
- Alto's vocal range lays from lower F of the small octave until D2 of the second octave;
- Tenor's vocal range lays from C of the lower octave until A1 of the first octave;
- Bass' vocal range lies from F of the great octave until D1 of the first octave.

In this choir formation main triads focus on three main functions, which are:

1. Tonic (T);
2. Subdominant (S);
3. Dominant (D).

The chords of classical Harmony lay on the tonalities of natural majors' scale (D major), harmonic major, minor scale, natural minor scale, harmonic minor scale and melodic minor scale.

Chords' connections generally result in the change of harmony and its basis, also in the connection of different triads. This can take place in two forms:

1. Strong (harmonic) connection;
2. Free (melodic) connection.

In four-part formations of fifth chord, or triad, the tonal degree is determined according to the voice, whereas by setting the major and minor chord doubles the base note.

Strong (harmonic) progression of two same triads

Such a progression takes place when firstly the common voice is held on a high note and bass moves a fourth up or a fifth down. Two other voices have a movement for a single second, either upwards or downwards, to the nearest notes of the succeeding chord. At this kind of progression, the placement of the chord doesn't change, does not become neither narrower nor wider.

Free (melodic) progression of two same chords

There are several forms of this kind of progression:

1. At the T-S Progression, regardless of the appearance of the common voice, it is not maintained but is moved in the contrary direction of the bass. A melodic move is being made, the bass moves a fifth up, other two voices move a tertian down and the fourth voice moves down for a second.
2. At the T-D Progression, the common voice is not maintained but is being moved melodically whereas bass moves a fourth down and the other voices move in the contrary direction of the bass: two voices move a tertian up and the fourth moves up for a second. In the classical harmony, the progression of two close functions in direction of D-S is not allowed because the appearance of S after D, the softness of the tension, does not have any significant effect.

The change of the same fifth, which is also called a chord shift, reveals another melodic positioning which results from the change of the position within the fifth chord- between the chord and the bass. This shift occurs between the bass and the soprano voices, at which the position of the fifth chord may lay in the octave, the fifth, the tertian etc. The transfer of a note changes also the position of the melody and the placement of the chord (narrow and wide). This happens as a result of the connection the female and male voices, the soprano, alto, tenor. This shift can occur in three forms:

1. Bass is maintained at the same voice, whereas soprano, alto and tenor move along in the same direction, either upwards or downwards;
2. Alto is maintained at the same voice, whereas soprano and tenor move in the contrary direction. This feature is also known as the antiparallel octave;
3. Tenor is maintained at the same voice, whereas the soprano and alto move in the same direction by switching their chord notes. In this case, they just don't shift the position but also shift the placement of the chord from wide to narrow and vice versa.

In the D-T function tertian of the D is a sensitive note that appears in the inner voices and it can skip a third below. Such a skip is allowed since the tonic is being represented fully. This model is also known as a free movement of the sensitive sound and can occur at soprano or tenor. In this way it skips a perfect fourth above in the fifth tonic. This movement is allowed but results in the change of the position of the chord, from wide to narrow, and vice versa.

Inversion of triads

Inversion of any base chord occurs the base note is being transferred an octave higher so it is placed contrary to the bass. In general, at chord inversions, such as of the third, the seventh or the ninth chord, base note lays in one of the higher tonalities. Chords in continuo should be marked above the harmonic degree with Arabic numbers.

At triads, apart from the bass inversion, two other kind of inversion occur also, whose chord composition and type do not change:

1. First inversion of a fifth chord, also called as a sixth chord, begins with a third in the bass and in continuo is indicated with the number -6-;
2. Second inversion of a fifth chord, whose bass begins with a fifth of triad and in continuo is indicated with the number – 6/4-;

Likewise, as triad, its inversions can appear also in different positions and shifts. They are firstly identified in the XVI century/

First inversion

First inversion occurs when the root is shifted an octave higher while the bass remains at the third of the triad. This new form of the chord contains the bass, the third and the sixth, the interval distance between the root and the bass is the sixth that in continuo is written as -6, 6/3, 8/6/3-.

There are four types of first inversion:

1. Major sixth chord – bass, minor third and minor sixth (e-g-c);
2. Minor sixth chord – bass, major third and major sixth (es-g-c);
3. Diminished chord – bass, minor third and major sixth (es-ges-c);
4. Augmented chord – bass, major third and minor sixth (es-gis-c).

In four-part formations the sixth can be placed in three different positions: in the octave, the tertian and the sixth. The placement is variable, but the mixed placement is more preferred. The degree of the first inversion is always determined by the sixth. In four-part formations comes to duplication of the first inversion, of the third of the sixth chord, of the bass of the tonic or the subdominant, but not of the bass of the D because this note is sensitive in major and minor harmonic tonalities.

At models of successive first inversions in four-part formations, alternative duplication of notes should be used, therefore, if at the first chord is being doubled the sixth, then at the second chord is doubled the third and at the third chord is doubled the bass, if the last is not sensitive or vice versa.

Second inversion

The second inversion is acquired by the shift of bass and the third of the fifth chord¹ an octave higher, while as bass remains the fifth of the fifth chord; the interval distance between the bass and the root is the fourth and the interval distance between the bass and the highest note is the sixth.

¹ J.S. Bach: Vierstimmige Choralgesange; Fran Llotka; Harmonia, Zagreb, 1961

In four-part formations this inversion is completely placed. By the duplication of the bass may come to the duplication of the fourth and, even rarely, of the sixth of the first inversion. The degree of the second inversion is determined by the fourth of the same inversion. This inversion may be placed in three melodic positions: in the octave, the sixth and the fourth position.

There are four kinds of inversion:

1. Major second inversion – bass, perfect fourth and major sixth (g-c-e);
2. Minor second inversion – bass, perfect fourth and minor sixth (g-c-es);
3. Diminished second inversion – bass, augmented fourth and major sixth (g-cis-e);
4. Augmented second inversion – bass, diminished fourth and minor sixth (g-ces-es).

The second inversion is also divided into four main figurative chords: passing bass, static bass (pedal), arpeggio and cadence.

1. The passing bass acts as a passing note in the bass by shifting it upwards or downwards a note. When the passing bass has an upwards direction, it lays between the fifth and the sixth. At this chord doubles the bass, this has a determining role for the degree of the chord.
2. The auxiliary (pedal) inversion appears from the switch of two notes at the same second; therefore, the fifth chord rises to the sixth for a second and returns to the fifth, also the third of the fifth rises to the fourth for a second and returns to the third. At this chord also doubles the bass which determines the degree of the chord. The auxiliary chord results from the simultaneously switching of notes, whereas the minor notes are written as -5-6-5-.
3. The cadential inversion refers to the position of the sixth before the fifth interval and to the fourth before the third interval, which is in continuo presented as -6/4, 5/3-. At four-part formations, in the cadential progression comes to the duplication of the bass. It may occur in three forms:
 - 3.1 Finished/authentic cadence – sixth and fourth notes lay in the same tonality. Such a relationship appears as a result of the reciprocity between two chords and the fifth above of the fourth below.
 - 3.2 Half cadence –the precedent chord is only half completed – weak (the fourth of the second inversion) and finally connects to a third.
 - 3.3 Delayed cadence – a free type of cadence, not formerly prepared from the sixth and the fourth and its direction is moving gradually downwards.
4. Bass arpeggiation – bass is directed downwards while other tonalities are held at the same tone, they do not show any movement, neither the soprano nor the alto or tenor.

Seventh chord

The seventh chord represents the simultaneous sounding of four different notes: bass, third, fifth and seventh, which are set one above another. The term derives from the seventh chord (sept) and the width of the fifth chord.

This chord is classified into two groups:

1. Tertian chords (Monteverdi's) – minor seventh, diminished seventh and minor diminished seventh are unstable that call for a continuance from consonant chords. From the aspect of their functionality, they share the same characteristics as the tonalities of the classical harmony.
2. Non-tertian chords – lay at the first, third, fourth and sixth degree. These chords are stable and have less effect and importance than tertian chords (lay at second, fifth and seventh degree), therefore we can declare that non-tertian chords have a symbolic use in the practice of Harmony. They are also represented as melodic sequences of delayed chords.

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