

Composing worksheet 3: HARMONY

Anitra's Dance from Peer Gynt Suite by Edvard Greig

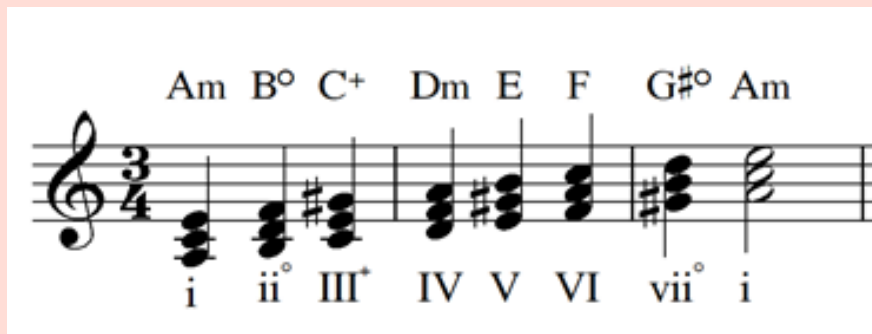
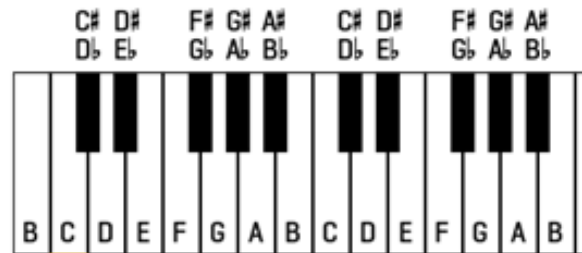
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'Anitra's Dance' by Grieg is in the key of **A minor**.

Here is the scale of A minor (harmonic)
with the chords.

Sharp and flat note names



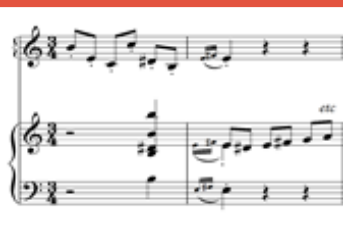
NOTE: ° means 'diminished' + means 'augmented'

This minor scale offers lots of different types of chords: minor, major, augmented and diminished. Some of these may even alter if accidentals are used (from the melodic minor scale).

Here are some **cadences** used in the music



Bars 9-10
Perfect Cadence
A minor [V7-i]
[* No 3rd of the chord in V7]



Bars 18-19
Perfect Cadence
E minor

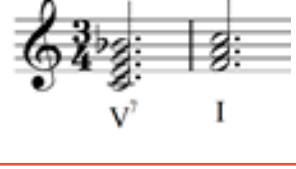
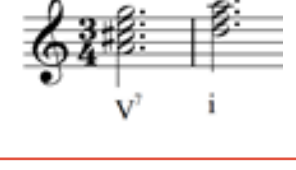


Bars 42-43
Perfect Cadence
D major

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Rearrange some of these perfect cadences in different ways. The first is in A minor, and the keys are all keys relative to A minor.

What about some different cadences? For example, imperfect (?-V) or plagal (IV-I).

Here are some cadences in D major. Try planning some in other keys as well.

 Imperfect in C major	
 Plagal in C major	
 Interrupted in C major	

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How to 'set' a chord

Once you have decided on the harmonic progression for a phrase of music you can plan the melody above the chords.

For example, Grieg's first two ideas in 'Anitra's Dance' would look like this, with the melodies placed against the supporting harmonies.

1st idea (Section A)

The musical notation for the first idea of 'Anitra's Dance' is shown in two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, 3/4 time, and contains a melody starting on a whole note, followed by eighth notes, and then a series of eighth notes with trills (tr) on the final two notes. The bottom staff is in treble clef, 3/4 time, and contains a harmonic progression of chords: V, i, V⁷, i, V⁷, i, V⁷, i, i. The chords are labeled with Roman numerals and a superscript 7 for the dominant seventh. The melody is written above the chords.

Grieg creates his theme above the tonic and dominant chords of A minor.

Note that the 3rd of V is missing at times, but he adds the 7th (b. 1 + 3) and also the 9th* (b.2).

2nd idea (Section B)

The musical notation for the second idea of 'Anitra's Dance' is shown in two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, 3/4 time, and contains a melody starting on a whole note, followed by eighth notes, and then a series of eighth notes with trills (tr) on the final two notes. The bottom staff is in treble clef, 3/4 time, and contains a harmonic progression of chords: V, i, V⁷, i, V⁷, i, V⁷, i, i. The chords are labeled with Roman numerals and a superscript 7 for the dominant seventh. The melody is written above the chords.

Grieg creates this theme entirely above the tonic chord of the dominant key, i.e. E major (with the added 7th and 9th).

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Now try some ideas of your own.

In your work, you will need to present your harmonic ideas in an interesting way, thinking about contrast and development.

Some examples have been given below, using the chord of A minor and in 4/4 time. Choose a variety of chords from A minor (or other keys) and write down your own ideas, following a similar pattern as the example, or creating something new. Then think about adding variety and contrast, using different time signatures and key signatures. These ideas will be useful when composing your piece.

Examples	Selected chord	Selected chord
		
		
		
		
		
		
		

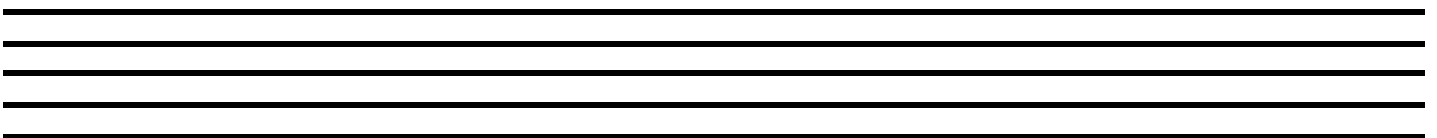
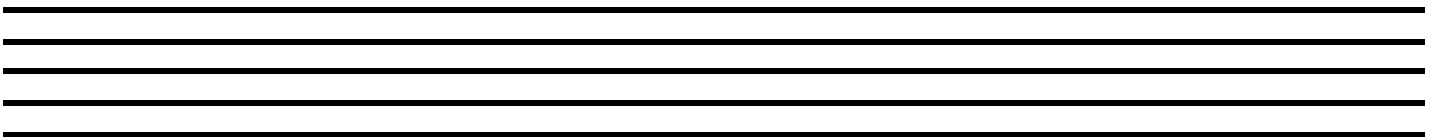
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Examples	Selected chord	Selected chord
		
		
		

Writing a 'chord progression'

It's always a good idea to think about working above a convincing and strong harmonic progression in your composing. A 'harmonic progression' is a series or progression of chords which works well. Choose a variety of different keys and select some chords which work well together. Don't forget about cadences at the end of each progression!



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Remember: when you are setting your ideas for presenting the chords, vary the **'rate of harmonic change'**. Some chords last for just one beat, and 2 bars like this would have lots of chord changes. In such cases, the 'rate of change' would be very quick.

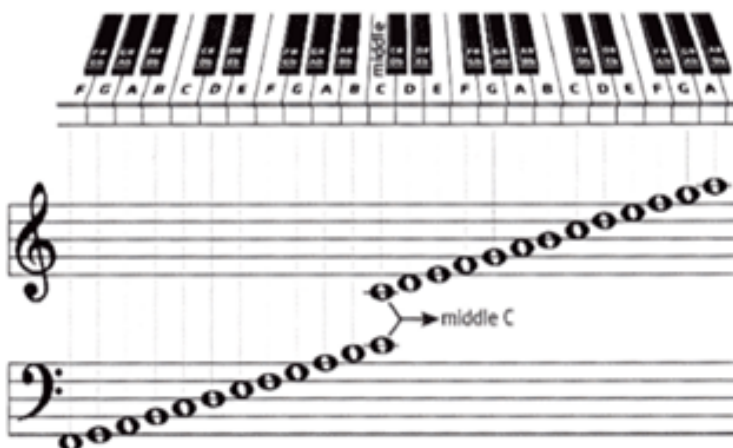
At other times, a chord can last for much longer – from 2 beats to a few bars, or even more. In such cases, the ‘rate of harmonic change’ is slower.

Write a phrase of music, i.e. a chordal progression, where the chord changes on every crotchet beat. A good idea here would be to write a phrase which covers 9 beats; 8 beats for the harmony work and a final beat for the conclusion of the phrase.

For example:



Write your chords on the stave, or as letter names if you prefer.

[illegible]

Sharp and flat note names

