PowerPoint presentation and materials available at:
NewtownNewMusic.weebly.com/APAC2017

SESSION OUTLINE

What do students gain from AP Music Theory? *(In their own words…)*

What is essential in teaching AP Music Theory?

- ✓ Make it engaging for the students
- ✓ Keep the learning afloat
- ✓ Acquaint students with the exam
- ✓ Treat music as a language

Teaching strategies for AP Music Theory

Skill: Convert music between aural and written forms

Skill: Analyze performed music

Skill: Analyze notated music

Skill: Create music based on cues within a tonal context

Bringing part-writing to life through composition

Why compose?

Advice for composition projects

Example composition projects

See reverse for summary of materials available

***Planning Resource*: Assembling Multiple-Choice Questions for Classroom Practice**
Helps teacher to gather and program multiple-choice questions for in-class practice. Does so by offering an analysis of the sample multiple-choice questions found in the AP Music Theory Course Description (2012). Teachers can easily locate basic questions for early in the year, mid-level questions for winter, etc.

***Classroom Activities*: Skill Drills 1 and Skill Drills 2**
Self-contained worksheets facilitating various classroom activities. Each worksheet includes: 1) a tiny part-writing warm-up; 2) identification and notation of intervals and triads based on aural stimuli; 3) melodic dictation questions (modeled after the AP exam but placed at a mid-year level of difficulty); and, 4) harmonic dictation questions (modeled after the AP exam but placed at a mid-year level of difficulty). Audio files of the melodic and harmonic dictation questions are available online.

***Classroom Activity*: Dictation Warm-ups**
Very short (1-2 measure) warm-up exercises for melodic and harmonic dictation. For use at mid-year, perhaps as a warm-up before administering full-fledged melodic and harmonic dictation questions from the AP exam. Focus areas: rhythm in compound meter, pitch spellings in the minor mode (scale degrees 6 & 7), and common bass lines. Single PDF includes reproducible student page and answer key.

***Classroom Activity*: Aural Multiple-Choice Practice (Template and Example sheet)**
A practice sheet template to facilitate practice of a specific question type: the single multiple-choice ear-training questions that might appear in Section IA of the exam. After printing the template, you can create your own practice sheets by writing in your own questions. (See example sheet.) I base my questions on those from actual AP exams, such as the questions found on pp. 19-21 of the AP Music Theory Course Description (2012).

***Composition Assignment*: Chorale Phrase**
Students compose a single chorale phrase in SATB format, following the 18th-century conventions they have been studying. Intended for early in the school year.

***Composition Project*: Complete Chorale Composition**
This three-phase project takes students through the careful composition of a single chorale phrase and explores how that single phrase can form the basis of a complete multiple-phrase chorale. This is accomplished through literal and varied repetition of the phrase--including transposition to the relative key--as well as the option of composing a contrasting phrase. This project is designed to facilitate a chorale-writing experience with minimal time commitment.
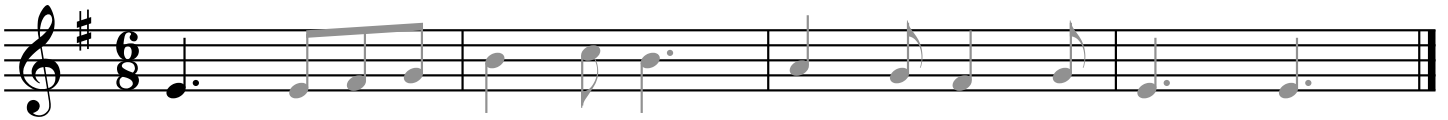
***Composition Project*: Post-Exam Composition Project** *(example from my own class)*
    *Includes Modern Harmony handout**
This composition project can provide an engaging focus for the instructional weeks that follow the AP exam. Students synthesize their learned knowledge and skills while expanding their scope to potentially include post-tonal harmonic approaches.
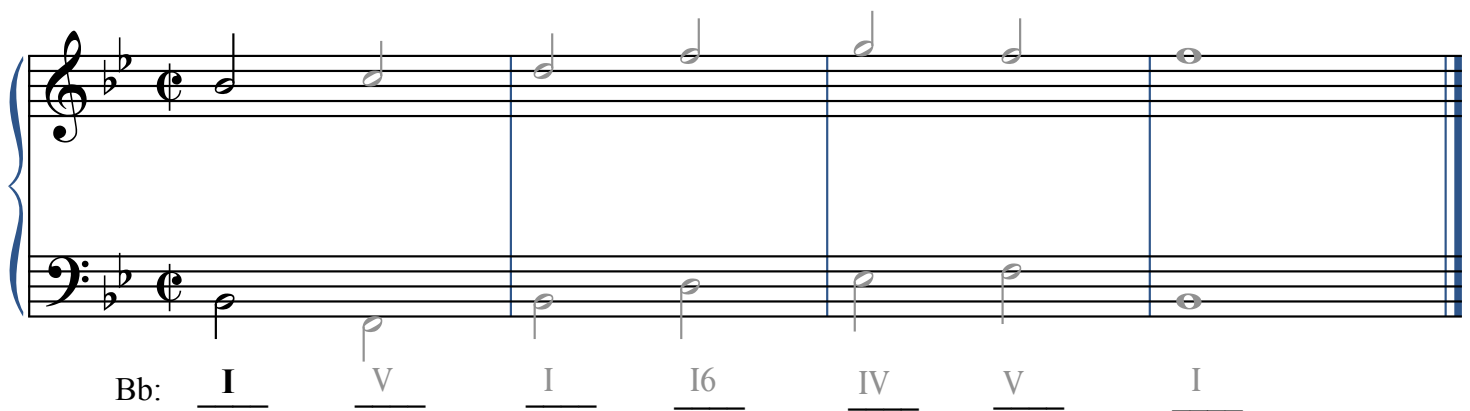
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NAME: _____

Skill Drills 1

A. Part-writing warm-up:
In four parts, continue the given Roman numeral progression.
Follow procedures of 18th-century voice leading.

Bb: **I**   **IV**   **V**

B. Interval identification:
For each interval, provide size and quality (e.g., M3) and
draw the specific pitch heard (above the given note).

Example:

M3   M6   P5   m3   m2   M7   m7   M2   m6   P4

C. Triad identification:
For each triad, provide quality (i.e., M, m, d, or A) and draw the specific
pitches heard (above the given root).

Example:

m   A   M   d   m   A   d   M

D. Melodic Dictation #1: Notate the melody heard.

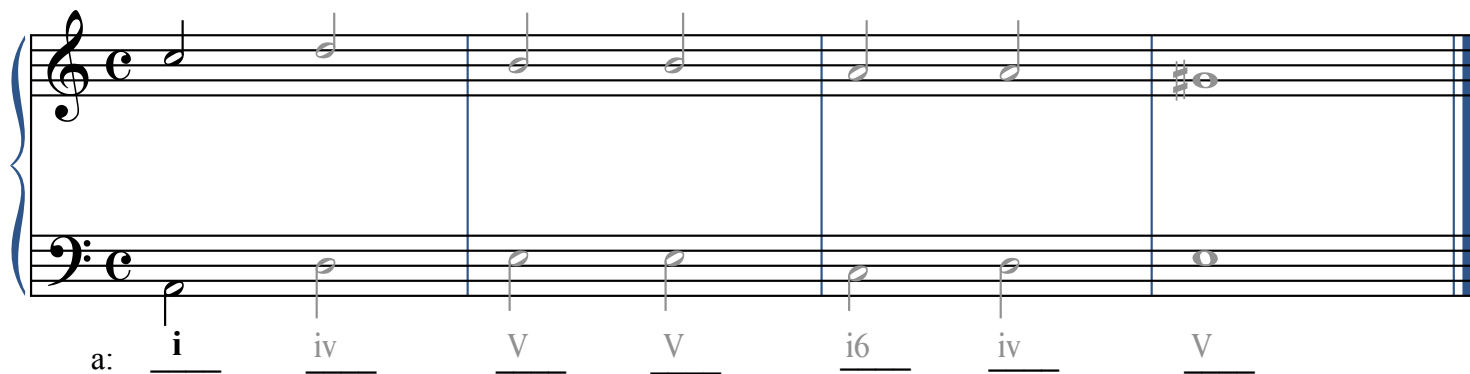3.

E. Melodic Dictation #2: Notate the melody heard.

F. Harmonic Dictation #1: Notate soprano and
bass voices, and provide Roman and Arabic numerals
to indicate the chords and their inversions.

Bb: **I** ___ V ___ I ___ I6 ___ IV ___ V ___ I ___

G. Harmonic Dictation #2: Notate soprano and
bass voices, and provide Roman and Arabic numerals
to indicate the chords and their inversions.

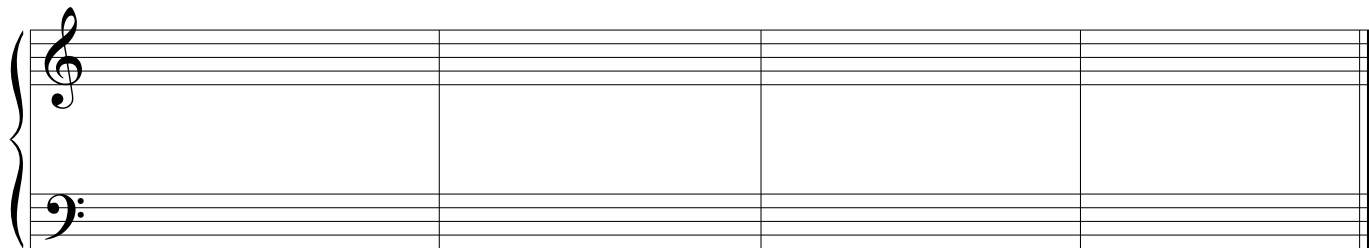a: **i** ___ iv ___ V ___ V ___ i6 ___ iv ___ V ___

4.

Composition: Chorale Phrase

INSTRUCTIONS:

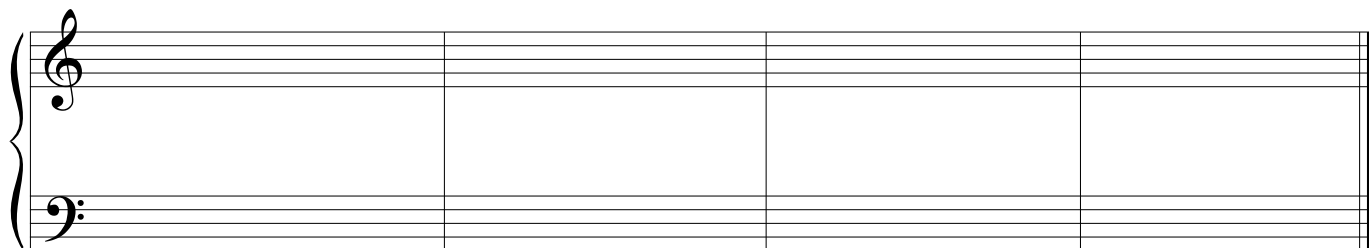Compose a chorale phrase in SATB format. Follow the 18th-century conventions we have been studying.
* Choose and notate your meter (2/4, 3/4, or 4/4) and key.
* Keep rhythm simple: Use *mostly* quarter notes, but for contrast you may use note values ranging from eighth notes to whole notes.
* The final cadence note should occur on a strong beat.
* Must use a cadence type that we have studied (authentic, plagal, or half).
* Use only primary triads (tonic, subdominant, and dominant) in root position.
* Follow 18th-century conventions for chord spacing, doubling, voice-leading, and chord progression.
* Include initial markings for tempo and dynamics.

PROVIDE COMPLETE ANALYSIS THAT INDICATES THE KEY, CHORDS (Roman numerals), AND CADENCE USED.

Optional: The staves below are provided if you wish to re-copy for neatness or produce a final version.

CHORALE COMPOSITION: PHASE 1
Composing one solid chorale phrase

OBJECTIVE: Compose a 4-measure chorale phrase in common-practice style. Use a pencil and the attached staff paper. Follow the workflow specified below and maintain the 18th-century conventions we've been studying. As you work:

➢ Provide complete analysis by labeling the following: key, chords (Roman/Arabic numerals), embellishing tones, and cadence type.

➢ Try to hear what you compose: by singing the parts, playing the piano, or any other means.

WORKFLOW:

Step I: Setup

1. Use the attached template of staff paper.

2. **Add your time signature and key signature**.

Step II: Constructing the "skeleton"

1. Compose a **root-position chord progression** by sketching in Roman numerals below the bass-clef staff. Roman numerals should be placed carefully to imply the general rhythm of your chord progression. Your chord progression should be strong according to the 18th-century conventions we've been studying. Your progression should should start with a root-position tonic triad and conclude with an authentic cadence or half cadence.

2. **Plot out your bass line, switching a few chords in each phrase to first inversion (2 or 3 first-inversion triads per phrase).** The first-inversion triads will make your bass line smoother and more interesting. For this assignment, stay clear of second-inversion triads.

3. Compose a **soprano line** that complements the bass line and has expressive shape.

4. Add **inner voices**.

5. Double-check your work. Make sure it follows 18th-century conventions for chord spacing, doubling, and voice leading.

Step III: "Fleshing out the skeleton" (Adding decoration)

1. Add **embellishing tones (1–3 per measure).** Be sure they don't introduce new errors (such as parallel fifths/octaves). If you include two simultaneously, they shouldn't clash with *each other* (your ear will be a good judge of this).

2. Double-check your work one more time.

CHORALE COMPOSITION: PHASE 2

Refining (or adding to) your first phrase

So far, you have composed a single chorale phrase. Moving forward, you have a choice:

CHOICE 1: Improve and refine your first phrase. (Any remaining corrections? Could the soprano line be more expressive/interesting/lyrical? Could the bass line be more interesting? Have you missed an opportunity for a beautiful embellishing tone, or have you overused embellishing tones?)

OR

CHOICE 2: If you're genuinely happy with your first phrase, then compose a *second* phrase, following these guidelines:
- Same meter as first phrase
- Can be in same key or in the relative key
- Start on root-position tonic
- End with authentic cadence or half cadence
- Follow the usual 18th-century conventions for voice leading and chord progression

Here are some additional items to keep in mind as you compose and refine:

- Cadence chords should land on strong beats of the measure (beats 1 or 3 in 4/4 time; beats 1 or 2 in ¾ time).
- For the AP exam, we'll keep soprano lines "safe and unadventurous." But for this project, you can aim for slightly more expressive/interesting/lyrical soprano lines. A well-placed leap might be effective, though it should be followed by stepwise motion in the opposite direction.
- Avoid second-inversion chords.
- Embellishing tones:
  - Use mostly unaccented passing tones and possibly some unaccented neighbor tones, both of which may be spread out among the four parts.
  - The other embellishing tones may be used as well and can be extremely expressive. But don't overuse them.
  - The following embellishing tones tend to be used in the *soprano line only*: escape tone, anticipation, appoggiatura.

CHORALE COMPOSITION: PHASE 3

Assembling a chorale from 1–2 solid phrases

STEP I: Get the basic chorale in place

You have composed 1–2 solid chorale phrases. Assemble a complete four-phrase chorale using the appropriate phrase scheme below.

> Note: In these diagrams, a's and b's represent similar and contrasting phrases. The prime sign (as in a') implies a varied repetition (i.e., essentially the same phrase, but with something different about it).

If you have ONE phrase ready:

a	a	a'	a
orig. key	orig. key	*relative* *key*	orig. key

If you have TWO phrases ready:

a	a	b	a

STEP II (*optional*): Refine or elaborate your chorale

After Step I, you should have a chorale that, at a basic level, works. But, your ear may hear spots that need help. Maybe something's too jumpy, a transition is awkward, or you want to add more variety. Try these ideas:

- Add "connective tissue" *in between* phrases. For example:
  - add connective embellishing tones
  - re-voice the cadence chord
  - add an anacrusis chord going into the next phrase (for example, the dominant of the incoming key)
- Add variety to your "a" phrases. For instance, if a a b a is too predictable, a a' b a" might be more interesting. Ways to do this:
  - Vary the cadences.
  - Vary the embellishing tones.
  - Vary the soprano line and adjust the other voices accordingly.
  - Transpose to the relative key.

8.