Modern Harmony Method

Michael Griffin

A text designed to progressively teach the fundamentals of melodic harmonisation in the jazz and popular genre.

2nd Edition

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Introduction

There are many texts written for the tradition of harmonising melodies in 4-part vocal style, but relatively few in the field of modern keyboard harmony. This book reveals simply but thoroughly how to choose and voice modern chords, the nature of chord progressions, and instruction into extending and altering chords. It will be of value to all students of composition and musical arrangement, and also to classically trained pianists who yearn to play modern sounds and extend their harmonic vocabulary.

Modern Harmony Method is divided into two sections. Part A deals with harmonisation choice and Part B the voicing of chords. Each section includes examples, exercises and solutions.

Part A and B can be taught as separate entities or simultaneously depending on the goal of the student.

A companion to this text –*Modern Harmony Exercises* consists of 15 original 8-bar practice exercises with full solutions. Aural files of this set can be downloaded from www.musiceducationworld.com.

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About the author

Michael Griffin has been teaching music for over 20-years, and at the time of publication holds the position of Head of Music, Dubai British School.

Graduating with a B.ED in Music Education, Michael has a performance diploma in piano (A.Mus.A) and Master of Educational Studies through the University of Adelaide. Much of Michael's career occurred in Australia, where he became known for his excellence as a choral conductor and jazz ensemble director. Numerous national awards and prizes with school ensembles resulted in public recognition including the 'Education and Arts Ministers' Award 2006, a National Award nomination for Teaching Excellence

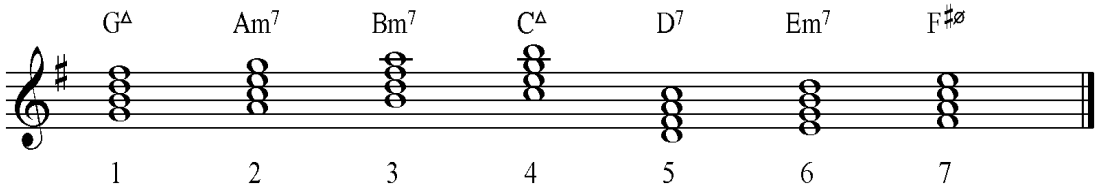
2005 (NIQTSL), and entries in the South Australian 'Who's Who' 2007 and 2008.

Michael is a regular presenter on educational and musical topics at schools and conferences world-wide.

As a pianist, Michael has worked throughout Australia, and is presently performing on a regular basis in Dubai.

(sample from page 12)

Example 3a based on G major



The quality of these chords holds true for all major keys. Therefore, in **all** major keys:

7TH chord built on degree 1 and 4 = major 7
7TH chord built on degree 2, 3 and 6 = minor 7
7TH chord built on degree 5 = dominant 7
7TH chord built on degree 7 = half diminished 7

N.B the half diminished 7 chord is also known as minor 7 flat 5 (m^7b^5).

Do **exercise 3a** to practice building 7th chords on major scales.

Sample only for use

Building 7th chords on major scales

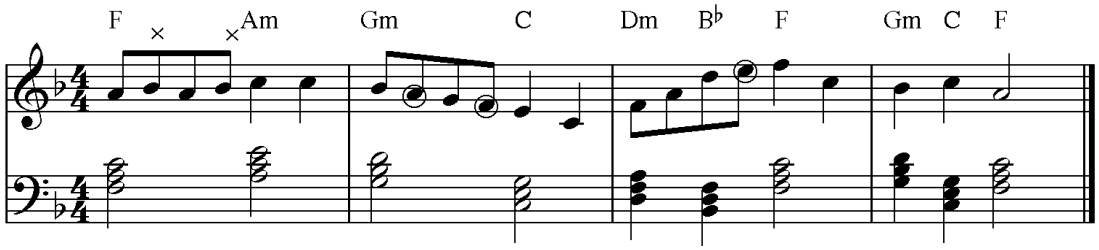
Study the G major example and complete the other 7 scales

etc

(sample from page 17)

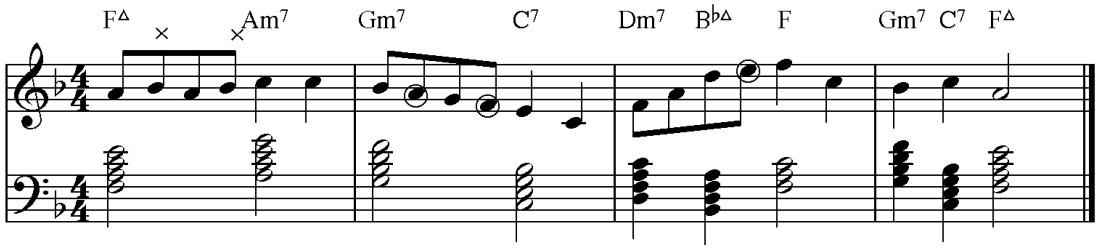
Putting it together

Examine exercise 2a again and see how we can implement 7^{ths}.
Here was a solution using primary and secondary triads:



With knowledge of 7^{ths}, we can extend all triads except for one.

Example 3c



Observe:

1. The four minor triads can automatically be extended to 7^{ths}
2. On three out of four occasions the major triads were extended, the exception being when the tonic was in the melody
3. The 5 chord (C) was extended to C^{7} as it was followed by a 6 chord (Dm) to form an interrupted cadence.

Exercise 3c

Re-harmonise these 6 melodies using as many seventh chords as possible.

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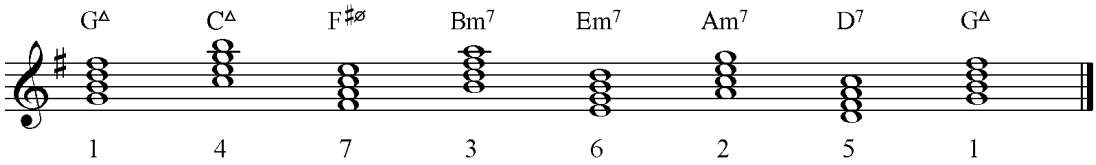
(sample from page 20)

Example 4a



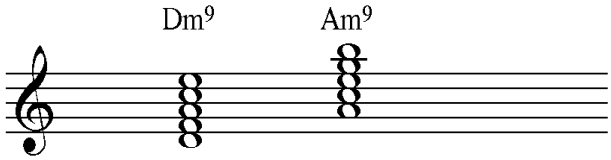
So the 14736251 is really just a series of 5-1 progressions. It cannot be over emphasised how important and useful this progression is.

Exercise 4a

Complete the circle for the key centres listed below, numbering each chord. The one in C serves as an example.

(sample from page 24)

Example 5a



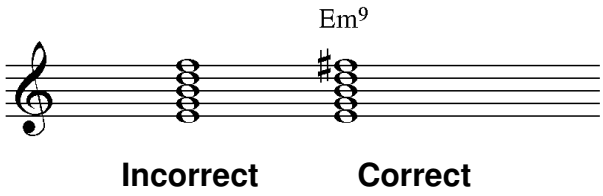
Notice that the 9th itself is the interval of a major 9th from the tonic note. Another way of viewing this is that the ninth is up an octave and a tone. The point is that whenever the 3rd of this chord is in the melody, we will have a semitone clash with the ninth. The 3rd of our 2m9 is F; the 9th is E. This interval is a semitone.

Although certain chord voicing does minimize the effect of this semitone clash, at this stage, stay with the m7 chord if the 3rd of that chord is in the melody.

Observe the 3m9 chord built in C major:

Sample c - not for use

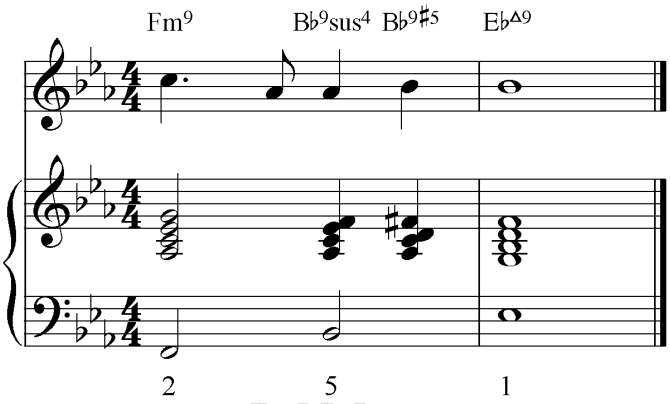
Example 5b



(sample from page 30)

Example 7b.1 demonstrates a typical 2-5-1 ending in Eb.

In the penultimate bar, the dominant chord controls two beats; an appropriate place to use a suspension on the first beat and resolve it on the second. There is no 3rd (D) in the melody. Notice the altered note in the resolution.



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2. Modulation by permission is less obvious due to the lack of accidentals to force a modulation.

Example 9b

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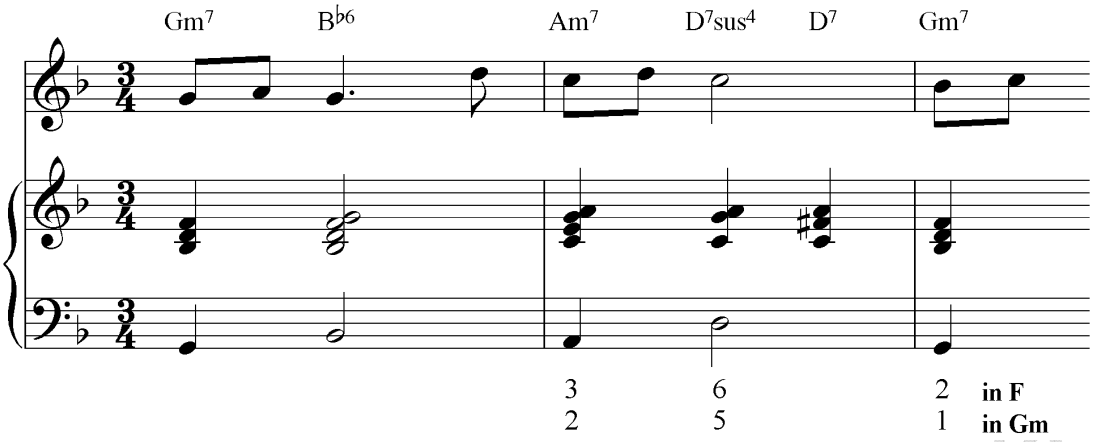

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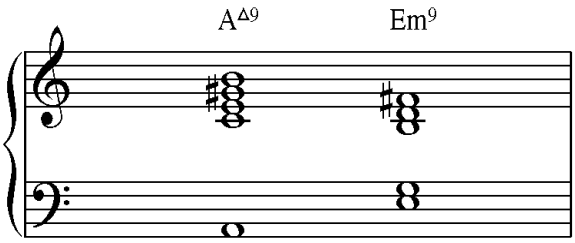
3. 9ths

With 9ths, the **A form** and **B form** are extended as expected:

A form: 1 3 5 7 9 from the bass note upward.

Example 3a



Ninths require a 5-note voicing.

B Form is an inversion of the A form.

Continued.

Exercise 3b

Voice the following ninths using the B form.

End sample.

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Modern Harmony Exercises

Michael Griffin

The companion to *Modern Harmony Method.*

Includes original melodies and fully voiced solutions.

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Introduction

Modern Harmony Exercises is a companion to *Modern Harmony Method* and consists of 15 original 8-bar practice melodies with full solutions. Students of harmony, composition and arranging will find these exercises a stimulating test following on from the methodology course by the same author. Midi files of solutions can be downloaded from www.musiceducationworld.com.

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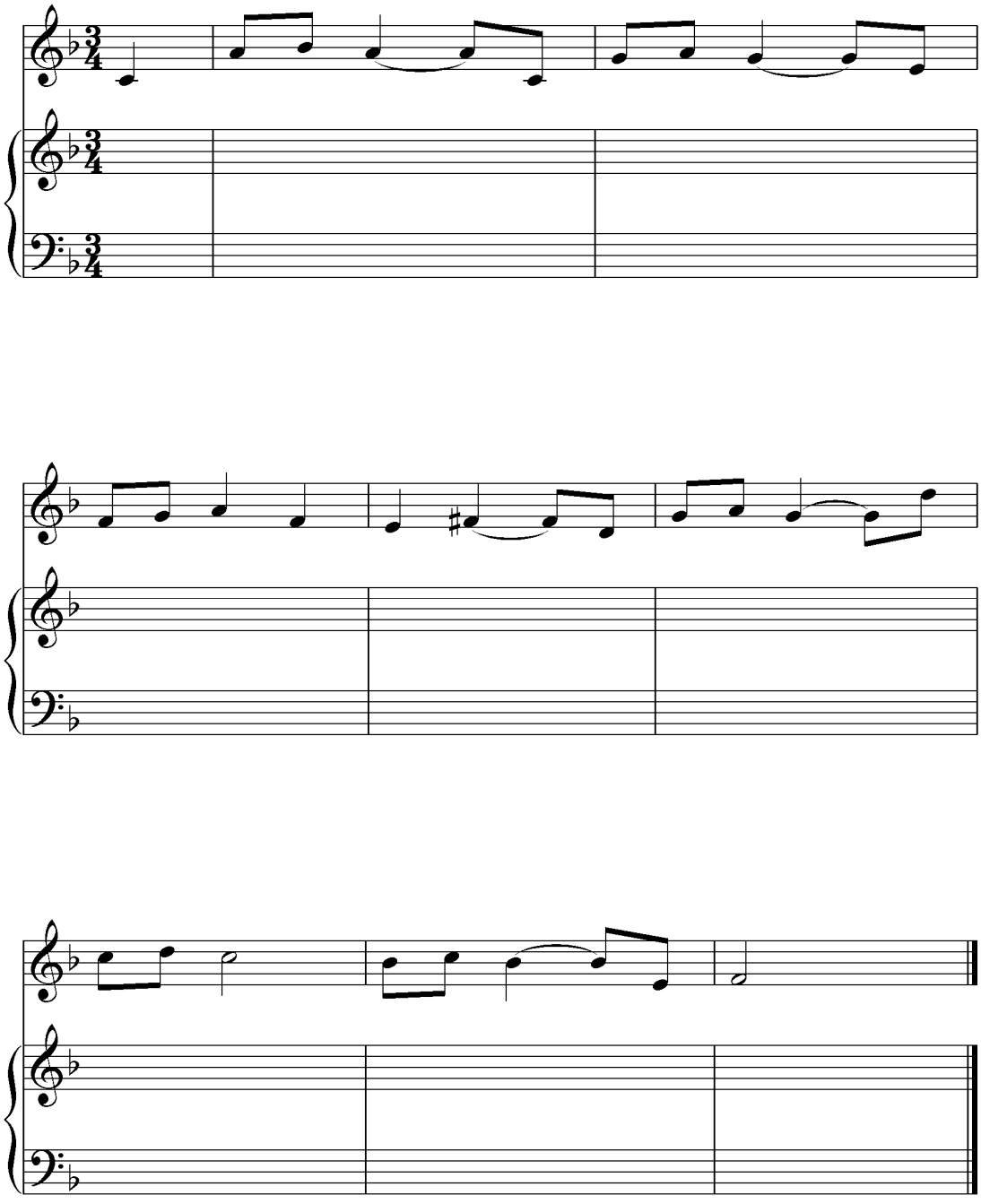
this sample includes exercise 6 only

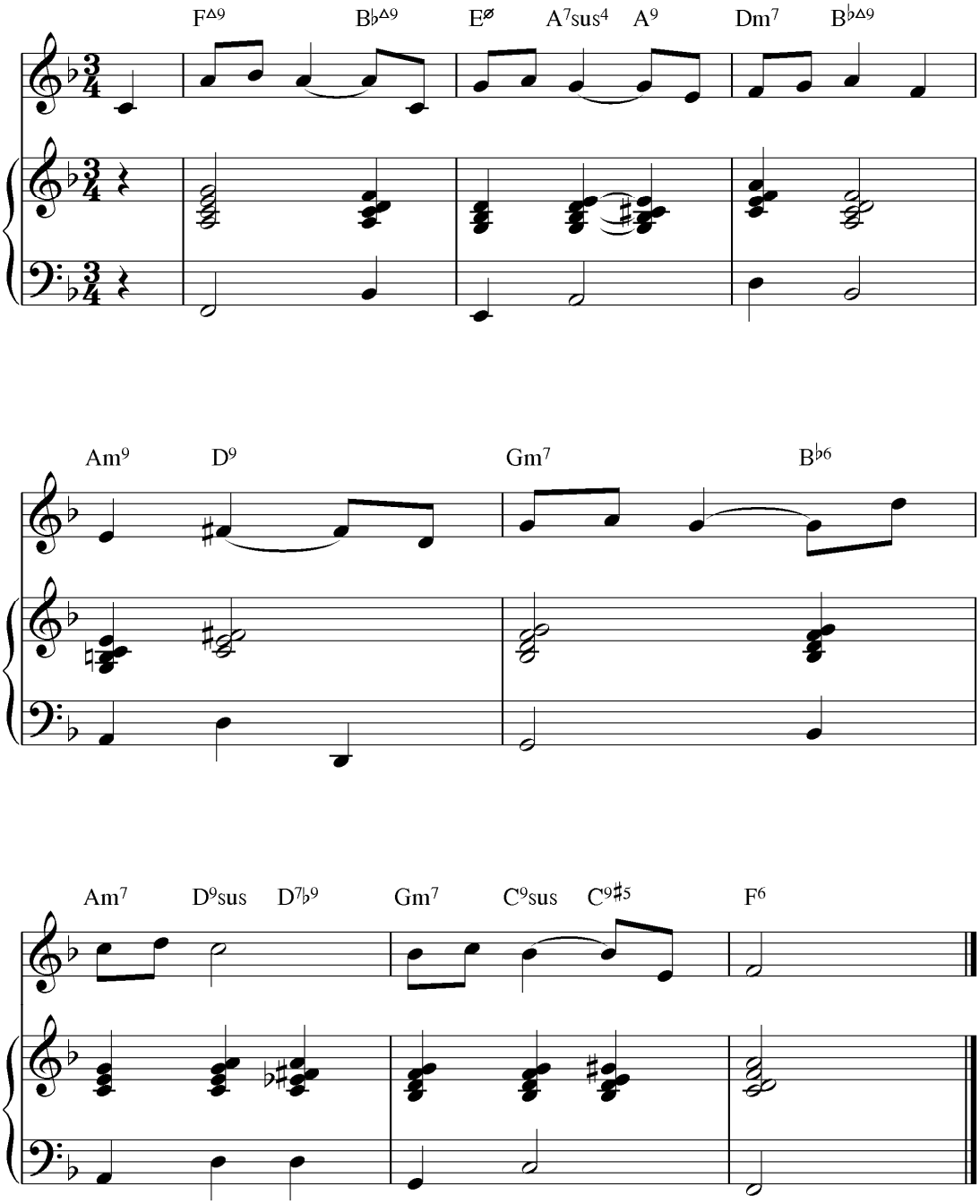
Exercises

6



Solutions

6



end of sample.