

FUNCTION CHORALES™ by © Stephen Melillo IGNA 1980

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Dear Conductor...

We aspire to hear Music rendered with purity and precision. As a Composer, I long to hear Music as it was *meant* to be heard... in tune, and beautifully intoned.

We ask kids... and *professionals*... to do this all the time. Yet, when have we given our young student Musicians a crystalline-clear procedure, a well-defined, specifically articulated system to address the most crucial aspect of Music making?

These are the **FUNCTION CHORALES™**. They can be rendered with 4 students, or delivered by the forces of the *Mahler 8th Symphony*. They can be played by *any* group, at *any* age, and in *any* key.

Go through the book *slowly* so that you understand it well *first*. Then proceed with your students. I have found this tool to be one of the most efficient, time-effective, task-oriented devices to date. I am confident that you will hear the results while teaching your students valuable lessons about the inner workings of Music. Carefully, patiently approached, the bridge between theory and practice will become ever so clear.

If you have any questions along the way, please consider me a resource. I will be glad to assist you in what certainly reveals itself as a noble pursuit.

Remember... there is much, *much* more here than meets the eye... or ear. Layer upon layer of Teaching and Learning await you and your students. To that purpose...

Godspeed!



FUNCTION CHORALES™

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Abraham Lincoln said, “**If I had 8 hours to cut a tree, I’d spend 6 sharpening the axe.**”

Many directors feel the pressure of time, limited resources and support. **FUNCTION CHORALES™** is an investment. By taking the time to accurately teach and then reinforce the precepts embodied within these chorales, hours upon hours of otherwise useless rehearsal will be **reclaimed** and there will be noticeable improvement in **all** of the Music that comes after and during.

The pages of this resource are occupied by brief, four-part chorales. These studies have been designed to help the ensemble instrumentalist learn and eventually perfect concepts and specific skills in: **SEEING** where a Pitch will Sound, **INTONATION**, Ensemble Listening, **TUNING**, Vertical Hearing, Knowledge of Function & Transposition, Knowledge of Progression & Harmony, Knowledge of Interval, & Knowledge of Inharmonic Devices such as Suspension, Retardation and Passing Tone.

This learning process occurs **while** the ensemble is “**warming-up**”, the **FUNCTION CHORALES™** serving to draw the student’s focus to the above-listed concepts. By thinking numeric, mathematically pure **FUNCTION**, the student is able to **SEE** where the Music will sound in advance. Just as one sees a target before aiming at it and then firing upon it, so must the Musician “hear” where a note is going to sound **before** it is played.


Each **SATB** Chorale contains functional representations of the vertical and horizontal sounds normally implied by music notation. These innocent-appearing **NUMBERS**, enhanced by your continued and reinforcing guidance, help the student identify each sound as an “exact” place or point in **SOUNDSPACE**.

Because the notation is numeric, students can be directed to switch parts, reading different lines and experiencing a different role in the musical architecture. At all times, students are encouraged to play in comfortable octaves. Do not worry about cross voicings. In fact, by allowing them to switch lines they will soon discover the importance of voicing... or where a pitch has been purposefully, thoughtfully orchestrated.

The game, challenge and/or skill that you will continually pose, teach and reinforce is one of **EXACTNESS**. By means of this exactness, an ever-improving intonation will reveal a more perfect and beautiful Music, a sound liberated from phasing frequencies, the cause of **BEATING** and immature ensemble sound. This is the **LONG RANGE GOAL** and Purpose of the **FUNCTION CHORALES™**.

SHORT RANGE GOALS will embody the above mentioned concepts or skills while reinforcing the basic ideas of sound support and interval presented in the next few pages. The exercises should be conducted slowly, with great regard given to **Perfect** Horizontal Tuning and **Perfect**, Just Vertical Intonation... and to what was formerly called “**balance**”. The more preferred word is “**Mix**”. As students become familiar with the exactness of the pitches, you may then add dynamic swells, tempo changes, and fermati as felt in the manner of the scale-warm-up provided as a Quicktime Movie at **stormworld.com**.

Once familiar with the process, you may wish to compose your own Function Chorale, or, as I have done with orchestral, concert and jazz ensemble students, you may have each of them **compose** a Function Chorale. Music Education at its efficient best. The last page of this booklet, is therefore my favorite.

Enjoy & Godspeed! 

NOTES on THE FUNCTION CHORALES

Letters are used to draw distinction between the sections. This is because part of the **FUNCTION CHORALE** message is this: There is an **EQUAL** amount of responsibility and importance on **ALL** parts or voices. Often 2nd and 3rd players feel less important, while many times *they* are playing the **ROOT** of a chord, or a Suspension-Resolution, or the **THIRD** which defines the chord's **QUALITY**. Often in these studies, there will be an **OBLIQUE** motion in the **TOP** Part while the "2nds and 3rds" change harmonies and colors. Point this out to them.

Students should be directed to play in comfortable octaves, usually their **LOWER OCTAVE**. The tuba should be directed to play in the lower parts of the instrument. The students should think of themselves as collaborative "**orchestrators**" and as such, make musical decisions about octave placement and the optional switching of octaves during play.

- **The Numeric notation has a CONTOUR which suggests the placement of the desired note.**

Parts **A** and **T** players should further be directed to choose starting notes (*regarding octave placement*) which best support the sound of the whole, the upper limit of which is defined by their voice **S** counterparts.

Section leaders are encouraged to communicate voicings to their sections should a question occur, and at all times, the creative input and involvement of the students is welcomed and applauded. **A BLANK SCORE PAGE** is included for those individuals who would like to design their own **FUNCTION CHORALE**.

(When I did this, in both concert and jazz band, each of the students composed his/her own Function Chorale which we then sight read. It was great fun and we accomplished a great numeration of things, as well you can imagine, under the innocent auspices of "warm-up"!)

Players within sections should be encouraged to switch parts, reading different lines at different times. In this way, the student gains a more consummate understanding, not only about elements of music but also about ensemble interplay and mutual importance.

While each **FUNCTION CHORALE** provides practice for the concepts and skills as presented earlier, the following list is provided. This **index** will help you to localize specific attributes of a given chorale and aid in the planning and teaching process.

These **FUNCTION CHORALES**, though numbered, are **NOT** in any specific learning order. The first few, however, develop familiarity with the process and notation. Feel free to mix and match as you see fit. Eventually, these chorales can be strung together to form extended works. Each chorale can become a **SECTION** and plotted into a musical form, such as an **ABA** sonata form for example. **The key to all of this is Creativity, Exploration and Fun.**

FUNCTION CHORALE Index

1. Accesses the **IONIAN**, **PHRYGIAN** and **MIXO-LYDIAN** modes in all keys, exposing the students to the Major-Minor Chords of the Major Scale: **I-ii-iii-IV-V-vi-vii-I**.
2. Accesses **I-IV-V-I** and **I-IV-ii⁷-V⁷-I** in all keys as desired.
3. Utilizes a Plagal Cadence. **IV-I**.
4. Accesses all of the diatonic triads minus the **vii** chord while employing parallel motion in 3rds.
5. This is the same harmonic structure as in #4 but with Non-Harmonic Tones added. They are Passing Tones, Lower Neighbor Tones, Suspension, Retardation, Appoggiatura and Anticipation. Identifying these non-harmonic tones by ear is more important than identifying them by name.
6. Employs a **b⁷** to create a modulation to **IV**. Also introduces **#¹** which allows the **vi** chord to be heard as a Major Triad and as a Dominant 7th.
7. Introduces **b³** and **b⁶**, the modal variants.
8. Places an appoggiatura in the top voice. Moves 3rds, 5ths and 2nds in parallel motion. Illustrates intervals and chromatic cadence. In 3/4.
9. Starts on **ii** to illustrate that a tonal piece can begin on any chord. Rubato. Add dynamics. Uses **b³**, **#⁵**, **b⁶**.
10. A piece in G minor, or actually the **RELATIVE** minor when being transposed to other keys. Uses **b³** and **#⁵**.
11. A piece which employs the Modal variants. Modulates to **b^{VII}**. Uses **b²**, **b³**, **b⁵**, **b⁶**, **b⁷**.
12. Suspensions in voices **B-C-D**, modulating to **iii**. Uses **#²**, **#⁴**, **b⁶**.
13. Good interval study demonstrating **ii-V-I** cadence and **iv (phrygian) V-I** Cadence.

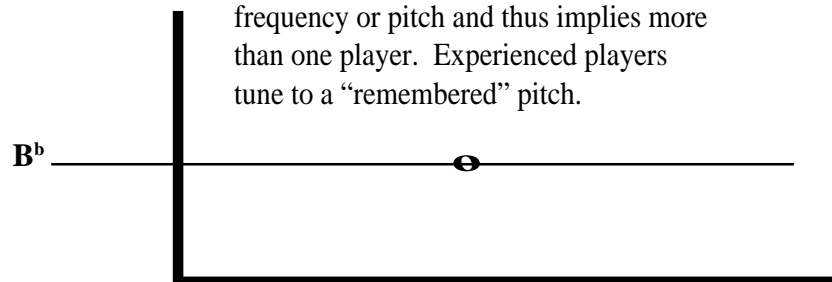
14. **b6-3**, a diminished 4th, sounds like a Major 3rd. Introduces the **bVI** chord and its brightness when played against the established tonality of measures 1 and 2. The mediant degrees of **3** and **6** are both altered.
15. Perfect 5th in voice **A** is accompanied by stepwise motion in **B, C** and **D** in an Eastern (*Greek*) mode. Good for practicing whole and $\frac{1}{2}$ step intonation. Uses **b2, b3, b6, b7**.
16. Introduces the **NEAPOLITAN** sound as a color to **V**. Introduces the Neapolitan as a Plagal feel cadence to **I**. **DECEPTIVE CADENCE** to **vi** in measure 5. **b2-7** sounds like a Major 2nd, but it is a diminished 3rd, characteristic of the Neapolitan sound. Arpeggiated Major chord in measure 3.
17. Minor key as a resolution point demonstrating the interrelationship of the Major and minor. The linear **BASS** controls many of the harmonic changes. A **French Augmented 6th Chord** is introduced in measure 4.
18. Over a **PEDAL**, the 7th chord's **QUALITY** is changed by $\frac{1}{2}$ step motion. Suspensions & Secondary Dominants modulate us to **IV**. Uses **b3, b5, b7**.
19. Oblique (*flat line*) motion in **A**, moving through minor 2nds. Introduces **#2, #4, #5**. Introduces Secondary Dominants and **V⁷** chords with the **root** in the bass.
20. Introduces **PEDAL**. Introduces **b2** and **b7**. Exposes the students to **QUARTAL** (*chords built on 4ths, instead of thirds*) harmonies while modulating to **IV**.
21. Starting on **biii**, this chorale introduces the Phrygian **iv** and **V** chords. Illustrates Major-minor interplay using a new **DOMINANT** tension. (The Phrygian **V** or **V^o**)
22. The **I-v-I** progression which I call the **STORM** Motif is abundant in much of my music for band and orchestra. I began playing this motif when I first became interested in writing music. At the time, 1975-76, these were sounds that "I liked". Later, I learned that this progression of harmony was the **I** chord moving to its **minor v** chord, or the phrygian **5**. This is a good warm-up for those bands playing Melillo pieces, and I just *had* to include it. Godspeed.

Differences between TUNING & INTONATION (Page 1 of the Student Booklet)

The more correctly you, as a musician, approach the initial exercises provided by the conductor, the more ready you will be to meet the architectural challenges of the horizontal and vertical process of Music.

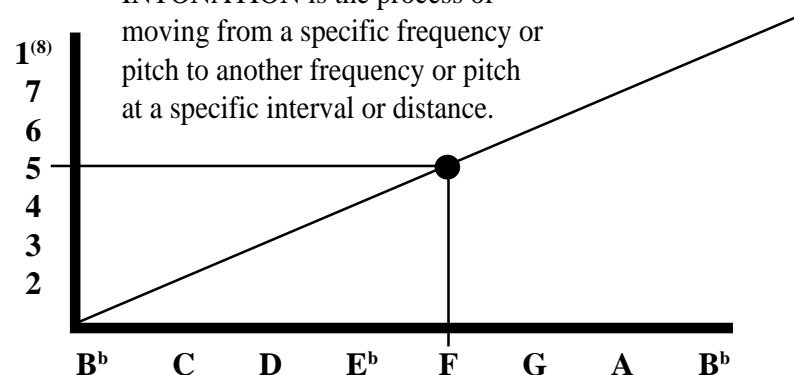
TUNING is HORIZONTAL

TUNING is the process of matching a frequency or pitch and thus implies more than one player. Experienced players tune to a “remembered” pitch.



INTONATION is VERTICAL

INTONATION is the process of moving from a specific frequency or pitch to another frequency or pitch at a specific interval or distance.



Your **GOAL** is to learn and improve: **Your ability to SEE where a Pitch will Sound, INTONATION, Ensemble Listening, TUNING, Vertical Hearing, Knowledge of Function & Transposition, Knowledge of Progression & Harmony, Knowledge of Interval, & Knowledge of Inharmonic Devices such as Suspension, Retardation and Passing Tone.**

S

Piccolo (Flute Double)
Eb Clarinet
Oboe
Flute 1
Clarinet 1
Trumpet 1
Horn 1
Vibraphone (Soft Mallets)
Violin 1-2

A

Flute 2
Clarinet 2
Alto Sax 1
Trumpet 2
Horn 2
Trombone 1
Tenor Sax 1
Violin 3
Viola

T

Clarinet 3
Alto Clarinet
Alto Sax 2
Tenor Sax 2
Trumpet 3
Trombone 2 - 3
Horn 3 - 4
Marimba (Soft Mallets)
Cello

B

Bass Clarinet
Bassoon
Baritone Sax
Contra Bass Clarinet
Baritone
Euphonium
Tuba
PAD Bass
String Bass
Harp
Timpani

#3 "Plagal Cadence" by Stephen Melillo

RHYTHM	o	o	♪ ♪	o	'	o	o	o	o	o
S	1	2	3 1	7	1	7	6	1	1	
A	5	5	4	5	3	5	4	6	5	
T	3	2	1	7	1	7	1	1	3	
B	1	7	6	5	6	3	4	4	1	
Chords in B ^b	B ^b	F	E ^b	F	Gm	Dm	E ^b	E ^b	B ^b	
Analysis	I	V ⁶	IV	V	vi	iii	IV	IV	I	

Musical notation for the Plagal Cadence exercise. The notation shows a 4-measure phrase in B-flat major, 4/4 time. The melody starts on B-flat, moves to F, then E-flat, and ends on F. The bass line consists of sustained chords: B-flat, F, E-flat, and F.