

**BLITZ!**  
**How To ~~Pass~~**  
**Grade 4 Theory**  
**Teacher Guide**

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## Introduction

When I first started writing BlitzBooks, I had been preparing students for AMEB theory and musicianship exams for twelve years. Over this time, I had tried several texts and workbooks, none of which my students found particularly stimulating. I also found that the various texts did not address the way in which the questions are asked in the actual exams. My inspiration to write a series of books arose from this lack of appropriate materials.

It is now 10 years on and BlitzBooks has celebrated its – you guessed it – 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. I am delighted to say that there are now some students who used BlitzBooks who have grown up to become teachers who recommend BlitzBooks.

This teacher guide is designed to support and enlighten teachers who are unfamiliar with the general expectations of AMEB examiners.

I hope that the workbooks together with engaged teachers will create confident and well prepared students. If students know their stuff and they know what to expect when they walk into the exam room, they should come out feeling like they “blitzed” it.

## About Book Four

If the jump from grade 2 to grade 3 was big, then the jump from grade 3 to grade 4 is even bigger! Grade 4 requires a sound understanding of all the rudiments covered in grade 3 as well as a firm grasp of basic chords and cadences.

## Note To Teachers Of Instruments Other Than Piano

Although the Grade 4 workbook will be easy to follow no matter what instrument is being learned, there is no question that non-pianists are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to harmony. In order to hear their harmony examples students will rely on either their instrumental teachers having piano skills (and indeed access to a piano during the lesson) or a friend who can play for them. The same is true of 4-part vocal style – it's not as if one can commission a choir to perform harmony examples!

As a piano teacher it is easy for me to say that students must always hear what they have written in order to develop an inner ear, however I understand that this is not always possible. I have deliberately left out such instructions as 'play this phrase' in favour of 'see if you can get someone to play this phrase for you'. I believe that as difficult as it may be to organise, students **MUST** hear their harmony examples played at some stage if they are to develop an 'inner ear'. It is true that simply following rules and regulations can enable a student to complete a harmony example, but it then becomes less about music and more about maths.

It would be helpful though to organise a couple of sessions during the year with a piano (and pianist if necessary!) to play through all the harmony examples and discuss why they may or may not sound good.

In learning about the keyboard suites of Bach, recordings should be used wherever possible.

## About This Course

These books are written specifically for those students preparing for AMEB written examinations. For each grade there is a workbook, teacher guide and answer book.

Each new concept is introduced with a 'step-by-step' worksheet which shows the student how to approach the question. Key words are missing which promotes discussion and interaction with the teacher during the lesson. The idea is that by reading through the page together (aural and visual) and by writing in answers along the way (kinaesthetic), you are sure to reach every student in some way! (This is especially good for group tuition.) The students can then go on and complete the other worksheets by themselves or for homework.

Many teachers who use BlitzBooks prefer their own methods of explanation for new concepts and leave the 'step-by-step' pages until close to the exam, when the student can use them as a revision resource.

The conversational style of the worksheets makes revision easy, and the book sets out the concepts in the same order as an AMEB exam. The multiple-choice section shows up silly (and not so silly!) mistakes in an amusing way that appeals to children. There is also a Test Paper at the end for students to mark. This is a great way to help students understand how to check their work.

This teacher guide contains suggested answers for some of the missing words, outlines certain points for discussion and shows common mistakes or variations of acceptable answers. Answer books are also available – these consist of replicas of workbook pages with answers written in.

## How Long Will It Take To Complete This Book?

This depends on the type of music lesson. If theory is taught as a small part of a practical lesson, each book will last approximately 9-12 months. If lessons are solely theory or musicianship, it will potentially take much less time. However, teachers should allow a minimum of approximately six months to cover syllabus requirements and at least a further 2-3 months for revision. The workbook is designed to make revision easy: it would be quite adequate to read through all the 'Remembers' and 'Hot Tips' and anything else highlighted or boxed on the page.

The important thing for teachers to remember is that apart from this book, there are three important ways to practice for an exam:

Past papers, past papers and past papers!!

There is no better learning experience than seeing your mistakes. However, the process of giving a past paper to a student, giving them a week (or two!) to complete it for homework, getting it back from them, marking it and giving it back to them again, and allowing time for them to take in and learn from their mistakes, before giving them the next homework paper, can take about a month!!

Over the years I have been caught out by this process myself and have found that my students have only done one or two past papers prior to the exam. I have included a 'Preparation Guide' on page 19 which can help to organise the term. I highly recommend the lesson devoted to 'Exam Conditions' – this can be an eye-opener for some children!

## Exam Techniques

Students need to have a few good 2B pencils and a really good eraser. Also, some students prefer/need to use a ruler for bar lines and/or stems.

I often put my hair in a tight bun, put glasses on and, just for a joke, pretend I am the "fussy old lady" who is going to mark their exam! It's amazing how their performance improves.

We all know how hard it is to proof read our own work. This course aims to help the kids to get it right the first time, but the most important thing is for them to be able to check their work properly. So I tell them they must turn themselves into the "fussy old lady", and go about marking their own paper two or three times. This works wonders!

## Revision

Many of these worksheets are step-by-step instruction sheets with one or two examples. With my own students I usually continue this step-by-step style on the whiteboard for at least 2-3 more examples or until I'm sure they've really got the hang of it. Even so, upon revising these concepts most students have forgotten the specific order of processes required. I feel that a lot of the art of teaching theory lies in getting the students to understand all of the concepts at the same time! The step-by-step pages provide an excellent resource for revision.

Doing past papers is a very important learning device for students and teachers. Attempting a past paper two or three months before the exam will show up any weak spots and will perhaps jolt the more laid back student into doing some revision!

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# Guide to Workbook Sheets

For each worksheet there is an objective and comments. Some worksheets are not featured in the guide as they are either straightforward revision or self-explanatory.

Answers can be found in the Grade 4 Theory Answer Book, available from all good print music stores.

## New Keys - pp.3-7

### Comments

The new keys for Grade 4 are B, F sharp, D flat and G flat major, and B, F sharp, C sharp, F and B flat minor. This makes a total of 23 out of a possible 24 keys... who knows why the syllabus is structured as such!

Whilst the workbook sets out and drills these new keys in much the same way as grade 3, I feel that a broader approach can be taken which helps the students to understand the entire system of key signatures. Kids should know all about the cycle of fifths by this stage of their learning. They may not always be diligent in learning their key signatures, but at least they've got the bigger picture.

In terms of the practicalities of memorising key signatures, students' lives can be made much easier with a key signature table. The problem with most tables is that they are either too hard to read or too hard to write out. Students need to have a table that is incredibly easy to remember and write out — this ensures they are looking at a CORRECT key signature table in the exam! The Blitz Key Signature Table is a booklet that teaches a particular (foolproof) way of writing out a cycle of fifths.

Having said that, it is of course important for kids to know their key signatures off by heart, but I find that this will eventually happen through learning to play the scales.

## Double Sharps and Double Flats - p.8

### Objective

To learn how to write these accidentals.

### Comments

This is usually quite a straightforward concept. Occasionally I have had students who think that by changing F sharp to F double sharp that it is raising the **F sharp** by a tone, hence the 'Hot Tip' about there being no sign to raise or lower a note more than a tone!

It is very important to know the differences between diatonic and chromatic scales and phrases. A diatonic scale is one in which each note has a different letter name, which is why an F double sharp is needed to raise the 7th of G sharp minor, rather than simply writing the note G.

Unfortunately there are no keys set for study in grade 4 which require the use of a double sharp. Although it is not featured in the workbook, I think it is important for

students to write out the scales of G sharp, D sharp and A sharp minor in order to see the function of double sharps within a scale.

## Modulations – pp.10-11

### Objective

To identify a modulation in a given melody and to understand key relationships.

### Comments

In terms of exam questions, most of the time the melody ends in a different key. Sometimes, however, the modulation can take place in the middle of the melody, which then returns to the tonic key. This is a much more musical format, as pieces usually do start AND end in the same key!

I find that no matter how familiar students are with their key signatures, it can sometimes be quite confusing working out the effect of accidentals on the key signature. In the fourth example on page 17, the melody modulates from D major to B minor. Many students see the extra sharp and immediately think: "3 sharps=A major!", whereas in this case the accidental is the leading note of the relative minor key.

In minor melodies, it is the **absence** of an accidental that will indicate a modulation to the relative major, due to the 7th no longer being raised. This is the trickiest one to spot and I find I am constantly reminding my students to consider the possibility of a modulation to the relative major.

There is a common misconception that the dominant key of a minor key is major. This is not true – it is only the dominant **chord** of a minor key that becomes major, due to the leading note being raised. It is worth reinforcing the 'Groovy Guidelines' about tonality – that a modulation to the relative major or minor is the **only** time a melody can switch tonality!

## Intervals: Minor 2nds and 7ths – p.12

### Objective

Introduces minor intervals not found above the tonic in diatonic scales.

### Comments

There are so many ways of teaching intervals that by grade 4 most kids have tried working them out at least two or three different ways! Up until now, intervals have always been presented above the tonic and have therefore been easy to work out by relating them to the major or minor scale – this is also a much more musical way of working it out compared to (for instance) counting the semitones. However, this means that minor 2nds and 7ths have not previously been encountered, as they do not appear in major or minor scales. By this stage students are so used to regarding the bottom note as the tonic that it can be a hard habit to break. The simplest way of approaching minor 2nds and 7ths is to remember that they are one semitone smaller than major 2nds and 7ths. Of course, this is true of all minor intervals!



Intervals may be presented with or without a key signature in the exam.

## Inversions of Intervals - p.13

### Objective

To learn how to write the inversion of a given interval.

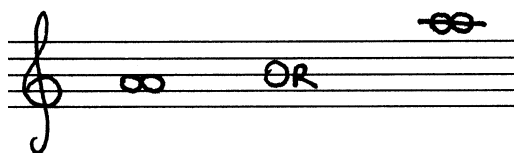
### Comments

Although this is not a difficult subject to teach or to understand, I find that the majority of students forget how to invert and re-name intervals as quickly as they've learnt it! It is the **process** they have forgotten and regular practice is needed so that it will always seem simple.

A very common mistake is the inversion of an octave – it should become a unison, e.g.



when inverted becomes



However, many students write the following:



In this case, the top A has been moved 2 octaves - this is incorrect. It can help to remind students that the interval + its inversion = 9.

## Naming the Inversions - p.14

### Objective

To understand the concept that an interval has a different name when inverted, and to learn how to name the inversion.

### Comments

It is a good idea to name the original interval first, because it is possible that after inverting an interval, the new bottom note (tonic) may be from a key not set for study, therefore making it very difficult to work out the tonality, e.g.



It is very difficult to name the inverted interval here, as G sharp major/minor is a key signature unknown to most grade four students. The answer can simply be derived from the original interval: a major third becomes a minor sixth.

Another point worth mentioning is the placement of the dotted line on which students write their answer. (See examples on p.21 of the workbook) Many students are put off naming the original interval before the inversion simply because of the absence of a dotted line! If the kids are aware that this is the way the exam will be set out it lessens the chance they will be affected by this.

## Diminished and Augmented Intervals - p.16

### Objective

To introduce diminished and augmented intervals in general, and to establish which of these are found in diatonic scales.

### Comments

The fact that the bottom note may not necessarily be the tonic opens up a whole new can of worms in terms of minor, diminished and augmented intervals. However, the only diminished or augmented intervals found in major and minor scales are:

Major	Minor
7 - 4 = Dim 5 <sup>th</sup>	7 - 4 = Dim 5 <sup>th</sup>
4 - 7 = Aug 4 <sup>th</sup>	6 - 7 = Aug 2 <sup>nd</sup>
	2 - 6 = Dim 5 <sup>th</sup>
	4 - 7 = Aug 4 <sup>th</sup>
	6 - 2 = Aug 4 <sup>th</sup>
	7 - 6 = Dim 7 <sup>th</sup>

There is no such thing as an augmented 3rd in a scale (as per one example on p. 16), or a diminished 2nd, or, as I have seen in some textbooks, an augmented 8ve (this would be a chromatic interval, not diatonic!). These intervals may indeed come up in grade 5 but for now it is much more musical to relate intervals to those found in major and minor scales.

An excellent exercise can be to pick out of a box any two numbers between 1 and 7, pick a key, play these scale degrees and name the interval between them.



## Syncopation - p.21

### Objective

To define syncopation and to analyse syncopated examples.

### Comments

I feel strongly that syncopation should be studied from an aural perspective. There is no point in being able to recognize syncopation on the page if one has no idea what it **sounds** like. It's important to clap all the examples through and discuss how they are different from 'normal' rhythms - that is, that the emphasis has not only been put onto weaker beats, but that it detracts from the strong beats. This is quite a generic description, however on page 27 of the workbook the idea is to list specific grouping changes.

Apart from some rock and boogie rhythms, which deal with 'straight' quavers, almost any example of pop or jazz music contains syncopation. Most kids will have heard many examples of syncopation without realising it... the reason that syncopation looks so complicated when notated is that it was never really meant to be written down!

## The Imperfect Cadence - p.24

### Objective

To introduce the imperfect cadence I-V and to learn how to write it correctly.

### Comments

Once perfect cadence writing is well in hand, it is a simple matter to reverse the order of the chords and create an imperfect cadence. Of course, this is only one type of imperfect cadence, but I have found that it is better to concentrate entirely on I-V before introducing any others.

## More Imperfect Cadences - p.25

### Objective

To introduce the imperfect cadences IV-V and ii-V.

### Comments

In the exam, students may be asked to write an imperfect cadence. They can choose from any they have learnt - it will be marked correctly provided all necessary rules have been observed.

This worksheet mainly deals with the imperfect cadence II-V in major keys. I think it is a great shame that chord II of minor keys is not on the syllabus for 4th **or** 5th grade - it makes for such limiting minor examples! A diminished chord is not so hard to use and is so beautiful. Grade 6 students can often forget that chord II in a minor key exists, they are so used to **not** using it! I have not dealt with the use of chord II in minor keys in this workbook, mainly because I had no pages left, but many

examiners get very upset when they see chord II used (even when used correctly) simply because it 'is not on the syllabus'. I personally find this view a little absurd, but one way around it is to teach diminished chord II to those students who can handle it and inform them that although it may not be received so well by some examiners, it's their own decision... they will not necessarily be marked down for the correct use of a chord not in the syllabus.

## The Interrupted Cadence - p.26

### Objective

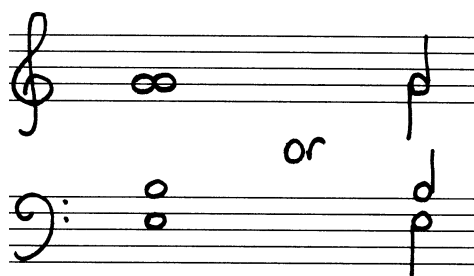
To analyse an interrupted cadence and to establish guidelines for writing this cadence correctly every time.

### Comments

The reason for only 2 notes in the right hand of chord VI in the second example is that the leading note must rise to the tonic, which means that 2 'parts' double the F. The only instance in which one can end up with a 3-note chord for chord VI in piano style is when 'leading note to tonic' is in the top voice, e.g.



The most common errors in writing an interrupted cadence in piano style occur when a 2-note chord is needed. In four-part vocal style, two voices on one note are indicated in either of the following ways:



In piano style this cannot be shown as clearly, therefore it may look 'wrong' when there are only two notes in the RH of chord VI. If the students try to always think in vocal style and remember that there are really 2 'parts' on one note, it makes it much easier.

Mistakes in writing interrupted cadences are only ever due to not following the three steps. If these 3 steps are followed religiously, the cadence will NEVER go wrong! The mistakes in the three cadences at the bottom of this worksheet all arise from the fact that the three rules at the top of the page have not been followed!

I once had a conversation with a student about harmony rules. She was getting quite annoyed with all the different rules for different cadences! I suggested to her that

instead of learning the rules, how about she tries to do all her cadences without following any steps, the only thing she had to do was avoid consecutive 5ths and 8ves.

After a week of trying this, she realised that it was actually much quicker to follow the steps than to scan for incorrect consecutives all the time!

The conversation then moved on to WHY consecutive 5ths and 8ves need to be avoided. The reason is that they don't sound good in 4-part writing; they are too strong and it weakens the tonality. Once there are two consecutive intervals of a 5th or 8ve, it's all the ear can hear.

The most important part of learning harmony rules is to be able to hear why certain things are not allowed. Kids are far more likely to follow the rules of harmony if they have an aural reason to do so, rather than a whole set of mathematical formulae to follow.

The BlitzBook of Harmony Rules has the rules for each type of cadence set out in clear, simple point form. It is an excellent resource for students doing Grades 4, 5 or 6.

## **Supertonic-Tonic Endings - p.28**

### **Objective**

To learn the special treatment of a perfect cadence when the given melody ends with scale degrees 2-1.

### **Comments**

I find that this is the place where even the most diligent students get caught out. There are a few reasons for this:

1. Tripling the root is a totally new concept
2. A 2-note chord is something we come across only occasionally in an interrupted cadence
3. The importance of the third of the chord has never really been discussed before now
4. Students are so used to having a 'note in common' that it's very hard for them to leave it out!

The set of rules on page 42 are very helpful and although it is a lot to learn, once students are good at identifying a Supertonic-Tonic ending, they will have no problems with it. The crux of the matter is in making sure the Supertonic-Tonic ending in the melody is actually noticed!

## **Puzzle - p.32**

### **Comments**

The golden rule is "Leading Note To Tonic"! This is simply a fun way of revising a few key points.

# First Inversion Chords - p.34

## Objective

To understand the voicing of a first inversion chord in 4 parts.

## Comments

The workbook diagram on p.34 clearly names the three notes in the triad as root, 3rd and 5th. These names remain consistent throughout, even when referring to first inversion.

Many textbooks change the name of the 5th to '3rd' and of the root to '6th' because of the name 'I<sup>6</sup>'. I find this is extremely confusing! The root is always the root, no matter where it is situated. The consistency of the names root, 3rd and 5th also help later on when learning doubling rules.

Although students understand the concept of first inversion chords from grade 3, writing these chords in 4 parts is a different matter.

There are 2 issues here:

- 1) Students are so used to the bass note being the root
- 2) Students are so used to doubling the bass note!

(No. 2 is the mistake I come across most often)

Once again, the best way to introduce this is through an aural perspective. A first inversion chord sounds less 'stable' than root position, but the different voicing is very appealing.

Throughout the workbook, I have tried to use a mixture of the names I<sub>b</sub> and I<sup>6</sup>, as the former is so commonly used. Personally, I prefer I<sup>6</sup> because this directly relates to reading a figured bass, whereas 'b' and 'c' do not. Actually I find that it's best if students are rather bilingual in terms of naming these chords! This helps in Grade 5 when chord I in second inversion is studied; the 'Cadenial<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub>' is a rather difficult title to understand if the student has only ever called the chord 'Ic'! In the draft for the new syllabus it has been proposed that only figured chord numbers will be used and that the letters 'b' and 'c' will be abolished.

## *Finding the Root*

This hinges on the student remembering that the bass note is not necessarily the root. A chord in 4 parts can be written in many different combinations, so the only way of finding the root is to arrange the notes in a root position triad.

Many teachers use a short cut for this by teaching that the doubled note is the root. This has certainly been the case in the past 10 years of exam papers (!) but I feel this is only reinforcing a habit we are now trying to break; that it is not always the root that should be doubled. There is also no reason why future exam papers might not include an example where the 5th is doubled.

## More About First Inversion Chords - p.36

### Objective

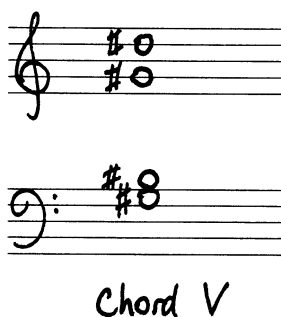
To learn how to identify a root position or first inversion chord (and its key) written in four part vocal or pianoforte style.

### Comments

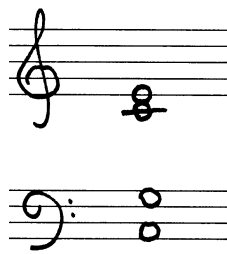
Naming the key and/or number of a chord draws on skills learnt in grade 3, the difference in grade 4 being that a chord in 4 parts is a little trickier to identify. There are many processes involved in answering this question:

- 1) Finding the root of the chord (see above)
- 2) Deciding between the major and minor possibilities of the key
- 3) Remembering to base all decisions about chord number and key on the **root** of the chord, not simply the bass note.
- 4) Checking to see if the root or third is in the bass, hence whether the chord is in root position or first inversion.

It can take many weeks before students become proficient at this. Even so, they are often fine when given lots of practice at it, but when they are trying this question amidst other questions on different concepts, it can so easily fall apart! The question can be even trickier when presented with accidentals rather than a key signature. It is important to drill the 'Hot Tip' on page 31 of the workbook – that dominant chords of minor keys look exactly the same as major if there is no key signature, for example the dominant of C sharp minor:



And this is even trickier for flat keys, such as F minor:



The chord I.D. question may be presented with or without key signatures, and in the case of dominant chords, naming the tonic key as either major or minor would be correct. Once again, some students get quite panicked about the possibility of 2 correct answers, so it's a good idea to prepare them for the fact that this may happen.



## Cadence Points - p.40-42

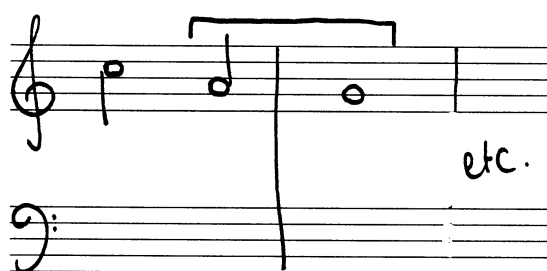
### Objective

To learn how to choose chords for the harmonisation of cadence points.

### Comment

These worksheets are an important prerequisite for the pages to come. It is not really possible to harmonise an entire melody without first allowing for the cadence points.

The most common problem here is that students think the melody note decides the chord, for instance:



They see A to G and think "Oh, that's chords VI - V". Apart from the fact that this choice of chords would create consecutive octaves, it is completely the wrong way of approaching the question.

The melody note is simply **part** of the chord; it could be the root, third or fifth. It may even belong to 2 or 3 different chords... this takes several weeks for some students to grasp. It can help to drill this by looking at melody lines from their repertoire and discussing which chords are indicated by particular notes, an activity in which single clef instrumentalists actually have the advantage here, as they are constantly having to imagine the accompaniment.

Page 40 provides more practice in harmonising melodies. The 'Hot Tip' addresses another very common mistake, which is harmonising L.N. - tonic with a perfect cadence in the middle of the example. This is **WRONG** - an interrupted cadence or an inverted cadence ( $V^6-I$  or  $V-I^6$ ) must be used.

It's also important to keep track of given rhythm values and to make sure all the notes follow suit.

## Harmonising the Whole Melody - pp.44-45

### Comments

The picture of the child yelling "AAARGHH!" pretty much sums up how my 4th grade students and I feel about this section. It is such an enormous jump from 3rd grade skills that I am surprised more students don't chuck it all in at this stage!

Musicianship students have a much easier and more sensible path through the world of harmony. In 4th grade they must harmonise cadence points, in 5th grade cadence points plus add a bass line... they don't have to harmonise an entire melody in 4 parts until 6th grade! I believe it can only be the concept of an aural exam that drives students to choose Theory over Musicianship when one takes into account the level of difficulty of Grade 4 harmony.

Now that I have said all that, let's get back to the mechanics of actually harmonising the whole melody. It all hinges on the two points on p.46:

- 1) Doing the cadences first
- 2) Choosing a solid bass line for the rest.

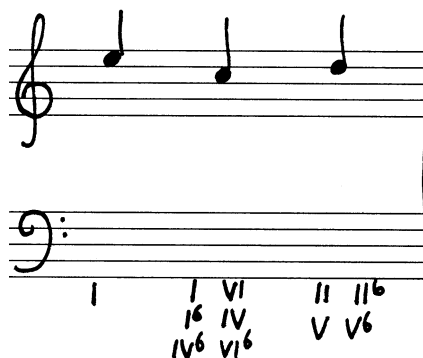
Once the bass line is in, adding the inner parts is the final step. Most students, particularly non-piano students, need some sort of written guide to help them remember which notes are in which chords. In high school, I remember visualising piano chords when doing my harmony, while my cellist friend next to me would write out the following:

I	CEG
II	DFA
IV	FAC
V	GBD
VI	ACE

I have found the above system most useful in helping students. I tell them that if a note from the first 'column' is in the bass, it's root position, the second 'column' is first inversion and that for now **nothing** from the third 'column' is to appear in the bass!

Some examiners do not like to see this little table written on the paper. This is such a shame – it's like enforcing a rule that you can only harmonise properly if you can do it in your head. However, since we don't know who'll be marking the papers, it's probably best if students write the 'table' on spare paper or at least rub it out when finished.

I always get my students to write down every chord possibility (in both root position and first inversion) for each melody note eg.



(It would not be appropriate to harmonise the first chord of a piece with VI<sup>6</sup>, so there is no point in considering this possibility.)

When choosing a bass line, it's a matter of deciding which choice of chord would make the smoothest progression. Students should try to remember that root position chords rising or falling in 4ths or 5ths sound great, as do descending thirds (e.g. I-VI-IV)

Suggestions such as these and all harmony rules up to Grade 6 are summarised in **"The BlitzBook of Harmony Rules"**

## *The Doubling Dilemma*

There are so many different views on doubling that it is difficult to write about any particular right or wrong things to do. Some teachers believe that one must never double the third, some believe one should always double a major third and some believe that there are no hard and fast doubling rules and that if it sounds good, do it!

I must say I was brought up with the latter philosophy. My music teacher would play examples that broke all the 'rules' but which sounded great, and would therefore give them full marks! On the other hand, I have never heard an example sound bad that DID follow all the rules... and that is the crux of the matter. The rules or guidelines exist because of what sounds good. I vividly remember studying Bach Chorales and my teacher saying: "Bach didn't follow the rules, he *made* the rules!"

When teaching harmony to beginners, however, it is not good enough to say that anything goes as long as it sounds good. Very few students can hear what they are writing, and for non-pianists especially it is very difficult to find out how their harmony compositions have turned out unless they have a teacher or relative who plays piano. Students need a clear set of guidelines that will help them to develop good harmony skills. I tend to teach the following:

- Doubling a 'primary' note (i.e. scale degrees 1, 4 or 5) will usually sound good
- Doubling the third of a chord sounds better in a minor chord than a major chord
- Doubling the fifth instead of the root is often a very good option
- Tripling the root is always an option
- Decisions on which note to double should be based on voice-leading, i.e. which notes will enable all parts to have a smooth line to sing.

The main problem I come across is trying to break my students' habit of always doubling the root! There is no easy way around this; to introduce different doubling options as early as Grade 3 would be far too confusing.

As mentioned in regard to melody writing, some examiners will accept things that others will not. It is important for teachers to keep an open mind and prepare their students for this! The main aim is to help students develop an inner ear; no matter how a student is marked in an exam, he/she has done brilliantly if able to **hear** the harmony example while composing it.

## **Adding the Inner Parts - p.46**

### **Objective**

To practice adding the alto and tenor parts once having decided on the harmonic progression.

### **Comments**

If a good harmonic bass has been established (i.e. one that moves in contrary motion to the melody as much as possible), the inner parts will usually be quite smooth. As mentioned on page 48 of the workbook, it is better to try all different combinations of doubling to make the inner parts smooth, rather than change the bass line as soon as something doesn't fit.

## Other 4-part Harmony Rules - p.48

### Objective

To learn to avoid voice-crossing and voice-overlapping.

### Comments

The same music teacher who taught me about doubling taught me that these two terms are completely interchangeable! It doesn't really matter what they are called, as long as students simply don't do it.

Hidden/exposed octaves are not covered in the workbook but can easily crop up. This is when the soprano line approaches an interval of a fifth or octave with the bass **by leap and in similar motion**. This is such a subtle thing for students to look for that I have rarely succeeded in getting 4th grade students to find them. It is actually easier to pick them up by listening than by looking... the consecutives are 'hidden' from the eye but 'exposed' to the ear!

## Composing a Melody - pp.52-54

### Objective

To expand on melody writing skills learned in grade 3.

### Comments

This is approached in much the same way as grade 3 - through analysis. It is much easier for students to understand how to compose a melody if they have heard one that sounds good and can understand the different factors that contribute to it sounding good. In this way, kids start out with a clear set of guidelines but end up with the ability to write good melodies on the spot, without thinking about why a particular phrase sounds good. Even though there are suggested chord progressions in the workbook, it must be remembered that these are **suggestions** and not actual answers.

When writing melodies in a minor key, students should take particular care when using scale degrees 6-7, and AVOID an augmented 2nd. There is often confusion surrounding this issue; many textbooks explain the use of the melodic form of the scale, however neglect to point out that it is **not** necessary, for instance, to raise the 6th degree of the scale if not followed by the leading note!

This is often something that needs constant drilling: use the melodic form of the scale for scale degrees 6-7 only when they are adjacent, and look at the direction of the melody; if it is ascending, raise them both, if it is descending, flatten them both! I have found that my students suddenly become enlightened about the existence of the 'melodic' minor scale... it is literally for use in melody writing.

On the subject of sounding good, this is of course a very subjective thing. A melody that is given full marks by one teacher may not be enjoyed by another.

One year, an adult student of mine sat for an exam, and upon finding that the poetry example was the same as that of a recent past paper, had the opportunity to write down the melody we had worked on together! We had a good laugh when the results

came back – “we” got 8 out of 10. The examiner thought it lacked shape – yet I thought it was great!

Most students at this level of Theory or Musicianship have encountered subjective marking at school. It is important to prepare them for the fact that from now on, in terms of melody and harmony writing, there is no single ‘correct’ answer. I like to tell my students that if Mozart himself sat the exam, he wouldn’t necessarily get full marks!

## Setting Words to Music – pp.55-56

### Comments

Most of the time, the given couplet will fit to a 4-bar rhythm, which draws on skills learnt in grade 3, as does setting that rhythm to a melody. The only difference in Grade 4 is the possibility of having to write a melody in a minor key (see above).

Things that should be brought to a student’s attention are:

- The importance of adding interest to a rhythm at appropriate spots, a topic also covered in grade 3
- Sensitive treatment of the words

The latter is also referred to as ‘word-painting’ - for instance, a student would receive extra credit for this setting:



As opposed to this:



Often there is no particular opportunity for word-painting, but as long as the student can be aware of the more creative possibilities when setting words to music, it will stand them in good stead for song writing in the future.

## Form – p.58

### Comments

There is no change to the Grade 3 requirements: the only forms tested are Binary, Ternary and Rondo.

## Transposition – pp.59

### Objective

To build on transposition skills learned in grade 3.

### Comments

Sometimes I wonder why this question even exists for grade 4. The only difference from the requirements in grade 3 is that the students may possibly need to use or adjust double sharps or flats. Although transposition is a very useful skill, it is thoroughly dealt with in grades 1-3 and just seems so out of place next to questions such as harmonising a whole melody in 4 parts. Of course, there is an upside: this is an area where most students have an excellent understanding of how to approach the question, and provided they are careful with accidentals (as was drilled into them in grade 3) they will achieve good marks in this section.

## Terms and Signs – pp.61-63

### Objective

To revise terms learned in grades 1-3 and list those required for grade 4.

### Comments

Students are still only required to give **English translations** for Italian terms.

It is important for students to be just as familiar with the abbreviations as with the words, and the signs for these abbreviations. There are a lot of new terms for grade 4, but hopefully by this advanced stage students are taking more responsibility for learning them at home and less time can be spent testing/nagging them in class!

## The Baroque Suite – pp.64-67

### Objective

To introduce the Baroque Suite and to provide paragraphs with missing words to encourage students to do their own research.

### Comments

This is another area where being a pianist comes in very handy. My favourite way to approach learning the suite is to analyse the French Suites of Bach, concentrating on one dance movement at a time. I play my students a little of each of the six Allemandes, for instance, and ask them to watch the score and listen while I play. We can then discuss what aspects each Allemande has in common, and therefore arrive at the 'answers' for page 37. The following week, before we go on to the next dance, I get them to quickly study these answers and then write the paragraph on the Allemande (without peeking).

For non-piano teachers, this can work perfectly well with a CD and a score; for cellists, for instance, the cello suites can be fun to analyse, although this does not

really do the trick as the syllabus clearly states that the **keyboard** suites of Bach will be examined... also it's pretty hard to get the concept of fugal treatment on one cello! Once again, the Answer Book contains all the correct information.

### *Other dance movements*

The collective noun for these is actually 'Galanterian', however this word is so rarely used I decided to leave it out of the workbook. If using the French Suites for analysis, this is a good opportunity to play some of the Galanterian movements.

## **The String Family - pp.68-69**

### **Objective**

To learn the instruments of the string family and to research strings enough to be able to give a full description and fill in the grid.

### **Comments**

This section is easy for string players, and for anyone who has access to demonstrations by string players! In past exams only the range and tunings have been tested, but it is useful to be able to describe the instrument and even to be able to name a solo work written for it. The 'Terms Relating to String Playing' section of the syllabus does not cover a wide range of string 'skills'; terms such as vibrato, spiccato and even the meaning of 'harmonic' are omitted. If doing grade 4 theory is the only time non-string students will cover information on strings, it's best to feed them as much knowledge on the subject as possible!

## **Crossword - p.72**

### **Objective**

Like the puzzle, this is a fun way to do some revision, and also to test that the music history research has actually been done! There are a few clues/words that I threw in just for fun that have nothing to do with anything on the syllabus; these are:

**27 Across:** Rugby players want to score this - **Try**

**12 Down:** Person with no magical powers - **Muggle**

**22 Down:** Female vampire slayer - **Buffy**

If your students have no idea of the answers to these clues, at least they can fill in all the rest of the crossword and then have a good guess!

# Test Paper (sort of) – pp.73-80

## Objective

To find all the mistakes and therefore practice 'proofreading' in preparation for checking their own work in the exam.

## Comments

In 'completing' this mock exam paper I have tried to include as many common mistakes as I could think of.

This works best when marked *in the lesson*, stopping for discussion each time a mistake is found. It is also a great idea for the student to rewrite the answer correctly on spare manuscript.

Sometimes answers are wrong for more than one reason, some answers are actually correct! This is sure to provide an amusing resource for revision and is invaluable in helping students learn how to check their work.

At the end of this teacher guide I have provided a marked version of the mock paper for your reference.



## Preparation Guide

All students/classes work at a different pace. As they near completion of the workbook, it will be time to think about enrolling them for an exam. The AMEB conducts written exams in May and August of each year.

The following is a suggested plan for lessons between enrolment and the examination date. Please note that entries are due only ten weeks before the May series, so if your students will be doing a May exam you will need to start this process before the summer holiday break.

<b>Weeks prior to the exam</b>	
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go briefly through a past paper, complete sections together over 2-3 weeks</li> </ul>
13-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete all syllabus requirements.</li> <li>Crossword</li> <li>Revise certain weak spots where possible</li> </ul>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision of all concepts</li> <li>Multiple Choice Section</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue homework paper</li> <li>Mark the 'mock' paper together</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect homework and mark while they do another paper in class. (This means they can take home 1-2 marked pieces of homework – very valuable!)</li> </ul>
<b>Holidays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is each student's opportunity to do intense revision (even if they are going away!)</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return any marked papers</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General revision of book</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue homework paper and identify weak spots in the lesson</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect homework paper</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return marked paper</li> <li>Revision for next week</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Exam conditions' in lesson (has to be a pretty long lesson)</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return marked papers</li> <li>Revision</li> </ul>