

1 Melody Harmonization: The Basic Technics and the Linear Approach

The ability to harmonize any given melody in an appropriate style is an essential skill for the professional arranger. The traditional four-part close position voicings will be most useful in order to illustrate the basic technics of melody harmonization. This is because four voices are necessary to express most chord types which are commonly used in jazz, and close position voicings make it easier to identify the particular chord tones in relation to the root. The voicings will usually contain the root, third, fifth and seventh or the third, fifth seventh and ninth, although these notes may be chromatically altered. The linear approach can be more clearly illustrated by open position voicings. Open voicings enable the listener to hear the individual instrumental lines more easily. Before considering the technics, however, it is necessary to analyze the given melody in relation to the following features:

- 1) Chord arpeggios or movement from one chord tone to another.
- 2) Scales or scale fragments.
- 3) Melodic movement by half-step.
- 4) The relationship of each note in the melody to the accompanying chord.

EXAMPLE 1 includes the melody and chord progression of *Minor D* with an analysis of the features listed above.

EXAMPLE 1

MINOR D

Medium Jazz Tempo

Bill Dobbins

The musical score for "Minor D" is presented in 4/4 time with a medium jazz tempo. The melody is written in the key of D minor. The score includes several lines of music with detailed annotations:

- Line 1:** Chord Dm^7 above the staff. Fingerings 5, 6, 7, 6, 5 are indicated. Brackets below the staff show half-step intervals between notes 5-6 and 6-7. A bracket below the entire line is labeled "D dorian scale fragment".
- Line 2:** Chord Gm^7 above the first measure, and Dm^7 above the second measure. Fingerings 5, 4, 3, 4, 5 are shown for the first measure. A bracket below the first measure is labeled "G dorian scale fragment". A bracket below the second measure is labeled "D dorian with passing tone".
- Line 3:** Chords Bb^7+11 , $A^7alt.$, Dm^7 , Em^7-5 , A^7+5 , and Dm^7 are indicated above the staff. Fingerings +11, 3, 9, +9, -9, 8(1), 8, -5, 4, 3, 3, +5, 1 are shown. Brackets below the staff indicate "Bb lydian-mixolydian", "A altered scale", and "D blues scale". An "ant." (anticipation) mark is placed under the 8th note. The phrase "to solos" is written at the end of the line, and "D.C. al Coda" is written below the final note.
- Line 4:** Chords Dm^7 , Em^7-5 , A^7+5 , Dm^7 , and G^7+11 are indicated above the staff. The phrase "after solos" is written above the first measure.


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EXAMPLE 2

MINOR D

Medium Jazz Tempo


Bill Dobbins


1  1 **Dm7**

a 

Dm7 **Em7** **Dm7** **Em7** **Dm7** etc.

5	5	7	5	5
3	3	5	3	3
1	1	3	1	1
7	7	9	7	7

2  a1



Dm7 **A7** **Dm7** **A7** **Dm7** etc.

5	9	7	9	5
3	7	5	7	3
1	5	3	5	1
7	3	1	3	7

3  b



Dm7 **C#m7** **Dm7** **Em7** **Dm7** etc.


5	7	7	5	5
3	5	5	3	3
1	3	3	1	1
7	9	9	7	7


4  c



Dm7 **Em7** **Dm7** **Em7** **Dm7** etc.

5	5	7	5	5
3	3	5	3	3
9	9	3	9	9
7	7	9	7	7

9  d



Dm7 **Em7** **Dm7** **Em7** **Dm7** etc.

5	5	7	5	5
3	3	3	3	3
7	7	9	7	7
9	9	5	9	9

EXAMPLE 3

MINOR D

Medium Jazz Tempo

Bill Dobbins



Musical score for "Minor D" in 4/4 time, featuring various chords and melodic lines.

Chords and markings include: Dm7, D7alt., Gm7, Dm7 (triplets), Bb7+11, A7alt., Dm7, Em7-5 A7+5, Dm7, D.C. al Coda, Dm7, Em7-5 A7+5, Dm7, G13.

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Suggested orchestration: Melody: trumpet, flugelhorn, soprano sax, alto sax or clarinet
2nd voice: alto sax, tenor sax or clarinet

EXAMPLE 4

MINOR D

Bill Dobbins

11 Medium Jazz Tempo



Musical score for "Minor D" in 4/4 time, featuring various chords and melodic lines.

Chords and markings include: Dm7, D7alt, Gm7, Dm7 (with triplets), Bb7+11, A7alt, Dm7, Em7-5 A7+5, Dm7, D.C. al Coda, Dm7, Em7-5 A7+5, Dm7, and G13.

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Suggested orchestration: Melody: trumpet, flugelhorn, soprano sax, alto sax or clarinet
 2nd voice: alto sax, tenor sax, clarinet, bass clarinet or trombone

MINOR D

Bill Dobbins



Medium Jazz Tempo

Dm⁷
D7^{alt.}

Gm⁷
Dm⁷
D7^{alt.}

Bb⁷⁺¹¹
A^{7alt.}
Dm⁷
Em⁷⁻⁵ A⁷⁺⁵
Dm^{add9}

D.C. al Coda

Dm⁷
Em⁷⁻⁵ A⁷⁺⁵
Dm⁷
G⁹

Suggested orchestration:

Melody: trumpet, flugelhorn,
soprano sax, alto sax or clarinet
2nd line: string bass

EXAMPLE 10

MINOR D

Concert Score



Medium Jazz Tempo

Bill Dobbins

Trumpet

Tenor Sax

Piano Bass

Drums

Trp

Ts

Pno B

Dr

Trp

Ts

Pno B

Dr

MINOR D

Concert Score

Bill Dobbins



Medium Shuffle

Trumpet

Tenor Sax

Piano Bass

Drums

Tpt

Ten

Pno B

Dr

Tpt

Ten

Pno B

Dr

Jazz time "in 4"

fill

Gm7

Dm7

Gm7

Dm7

Tpt

Ten

Pno B

Dr

Bb13+11

A7+9+5

Dmadd4

Bb7

A7+5

Dm7

(bass sounds 8va lower)

MINOR D

Concert Score

Medium Shuffle (♩ = 132)

Bill Dobbins

Trumpet
Tenor Sax

Vibes

Guitar

Piano
Bass

Tpt
Ten

Vib

Gtr

Pno
B

Tpt Ten

Vib

Gtr

Pno B

Gm7 Dm7

Gm7 Dm7

Tpt Ten

Vib

Gtr

Pno B

Bb13+11 A7+9+5 Dmadd4 E7+9+5 A7-9+5 Dmadd4(no 5) A7+9+5

col guitar

Bb7 A7+5 Dm7

MINOR D

20 Medium Jazz Tempo

Bill Dobbins

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of music. The first system has two measures of Dm7 and two measures of D7alt. The second system has two measures of Gm7 and two measures of Dm7, with a triplet in the bass line. The third system has two measures of Bb7+11 and A7alt, and two measures of Dm7 and Em7-5 A7+5 Dm7. The fourth system has two measures of Dm7 and Em7-5 A7+5 Dm7, and two measures of G13. The score includes performance markings such as 'd.p.' (dim. piano), 'ton.' (tutti), 'c.p.' (cresc. piano), and 'D.C. al Coda'.

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Suggested orchestration:

- 1st voice: trumpet, flugelhorn or alto sax
- 2nd voice: tenor sax
- 3rd voice: trombone or baritone sax

MINOR D

21 Medium Jazz Tempo

Bill Dobbins

System 1: Dm7, D7alt. (c.p.)
System 2: Gm7, Dm7 (c.p., 3)
System 3: Bb7+11 (d.p.), A7alt. (Eb7+11) (c.p.), Dm7 (c.p.), Em7-5 A7+5 (la.), Dm7 (D.C. al Coda)
System 4: Dm7, Em7-5 A7+5, Dm7
System 5: Dm7, Em7-5 A7+5, Dm7, G13

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Suggested orchestration:

- 1st voice: trumpet, flugelhorn or soprano sax
- 2nd voice: alto sax
- 3rd voice: trombone or tenor sax

MINOR D

22 Medium Jazz Tempo

Bill Dobbins

Dm7 *D7alt.*

A linear approach is used throughout, except as indicated

Gm7 *Dm7*

Bb7+11 *A7alt. (Eb7+11)* *Dm7* *Em7-5 A7+5* *Dm7*

D.C. al Coda

Dm7 *Em7-5 A7+5 Dm7* *Ab13 G13+11*

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Suggested orchestration:

- 1st voice: trumpet, flugelhorn or alto sax
- 2nd voice: tenor sax
- 3rd voice: trombone or baritone sax

MINOR D

26 Medium Jazz Tempo

Bill Dobbins

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system starts with a Dm7 chord and a D7alt. chord. The second system features Gm7 and Dm7 chords. The third system features Bb7+11, A7alt., Dm7, Em7-5, A7+5, and Dm7 chords. The fourth system features Dm7, Em7-5, A7+5, Dm7, Ab13, and G13 chords. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'd.p.' and 'c.p.'. The piece concludes with 'D.C. al Coda'.

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Suggested orchestration:

- 1st voice: trumpet, flugelhorn or alto sax
- 2nd voice: tenor sax
- 3rd voice: trombone or tenor sax
- 4th voice: baritone sax

MINOR D

27 Medium Jazz Tempo

Bill Dobbins

A linear approach is used throughout.

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Suggested orchestration:
 1st voice: trumpet or flugelhorn
 2nd voice: trombone or alto sax
 3rd voice: tenor sax
 4th voice: baritone sax

6 Writing for Five Horns

The simplest way to harmonize a melody for five horns is to begin with a basic four-voice harmonization, then double the melody one octave lower. In this way, the basic harmonization of *Minor D* in Example 22 can be easily revised for five horns.

Musical score for Example 22, showing a four-voice harmonization of the 'Minor D' melody. The score is in 4/4 time and D minor. The treble clef part contains the melody and a four-voice harmony. The bass clef part contains a four-voice harmony. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. A 'Dm7' chord symbol is placed above the first measure.

Measures 9 and 10 from Example 22 must be simplified in order to work well in such a basic context.

Musical score for Example 22, measures 9 and 10. The score is in 4/4 time and D minor. The treble clef part contains a simplified four-voice harmony. The bass clef part contains a simplified four-voice harmony. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. Chord symbols 'Bb7', 'A7+5', and '(Dm6)' are placed above the measures.

The basic harmonization of *Blues for Barry* in Example 25 can be revised in the same way.

Musical score for Example 25, showing a four-voice harmonization of the 'Blues for Barry' melody. The score is in 4/4 time and F major. The treble clef part contains the melody and a four-voice harmony. The bass clef part contains a four-voice harmony. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. An 'FM7' chord symbol is placed above the first measure.

Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn used this technic very effectively in close position. Close position sounds strong when there are extensions or altered tones in the melody.

Musical score for Example 25, measures 9 and 10. The score is in 4/4 time and F major. The treble clef part contains a simplified four-voice harmony. The bass clef part contains a simplified four-voice harmony. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. A 'Bb7' chord symbol is placed above the first measure.

MINOR D

Bill Dobbins

31 Medium Jazz Tempo

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system starts with a **Dm7** chord and includes markings for *c.p.* and *ton.*. The second system begins with a **Gm7** chord and includes markings for *l.a.*, *c.p.*, and *ton.*. The third system features a variety of chords including **Bb7+11**, **A7alt.**, **Dm7**, **Em7-5**, **A7+5**, and **Dm7**, with markings for *ton. and l.a.* and *ton.*. The fourth system includes **Dm7**, **Em7-5**, **A7+5**, **Dm7**, and **G13** chords. The piece concludes with the instruction **D.C. al Coda**.

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Suggested orchestration:

- 1st voice: trumpet, flugelhorn or soprano sax
- 2nd voice: alto sax
- 3rd voice: tenor sax
- 4th voice: tenor sax or trombone
- 5th voice: baritone sax

SUITE FOR SWEE' PEA

This extended composition is dedicated to Billy Strayhorn, whose nickname was "Swee' Pea." The entire composition developed from a single tune, *Swee' Pea's Samba*, which is the theme of part III. The vamp from this tune (measure 9 of part III) is based on the opening sounds of a famous Strayhorn composition, *Chelsea Bridge*. The beginning of the theme of *Swee' Pea's Samba* is a reharmonization of the first two notes of the vamp (a \sharp -b \flat).

A kind of backwards development was used in this suite. The motives from the theme of part III were used to compose parts I and II. In this way, part III is a summation of everything which is heard in the first two parts. It unites all the earlier motivic ideas into a simple 32-bar theme. Because of this, I chose to emphasize only one or two motives in each of the various sections which make up parts I and II.

EXAMPLE 30 is a motivic analysis of the melody of *Swee' Pea's Samba*, showing the particular motives which are used in many varied forms throughout the entire suite.

EXAMPLE 30

The musical notation for Example 30 consists of six systems of a single melodic line in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major (two flats). The notation includes various rhythmic values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests. Motives are identified with brackets and labels: 'a' (measures 1-4), 'a1' (measures 5-8), 'b' (measures 9-12), 'bc' (measures 13-16), 'c' (measures 17-20), 'd' (measures 21-24), 'd1' (measures 25-28), 'ad' (measures 29-32), and 'b2' (measures 33-36). First and second endings are marked with '1.' and '2.' above the staff.