Basic Vocal Jazz Arranging for Music Educators

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Key Understandings within this Presentation

- Chord Changes as written in lead sheets
- Chord Voicings
- Basic Harmonization Techniques
- Voice Leading
- Vocal Jazz Ranges
Lead Sheets

Key Elements

- **Melody**
  - Skeletal
  - When performed, it is often embellished and restructured

- **Harmony**
  - Displayed by chord symbols above staff
  - Rhythms often unspecified, leaves room for improvisation

- **Lyrics**
  - Written below staff

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**Med. Ballad**

**I Thought About You**

Music by Jimmy Van Heusen
Lyric by Johnny Mercer

Dansdata.com
There Will Never Be Another You

Med. Swing

There will be many other nights like this, and
I'll be standing here with someone new.

There will be other songs to sing, another fall, another spring, but

There will never be another you.

There will be other lips that I may kiss, but

They won't thrill me like yours used to do.

I may dream a million dreams but how can they come true if

There will never, ever be another you?
Major Chords

- C
- C6
- Cmaj7
- Cmaj9
- Cmaj7(#11)
- Cmaj13

- Major Chord
- Major Chord + Major 6th
- Major Chord + Major 7th
- Major Chord + Major 7th
  + Major 9th
- Major Chord + Major 7th
  + Major 9th + Augmented 4th
- Major Chord + Major 7th
  + Major 9th + Augmented 4th
  + Major 13th
Minor Chords

- Cmin: Minor Chord
- Cmin7: Minor Chord + Minor 7th
- Cmin9: Minor Chord + Minor 7th + Minor 9th
- Cmin11: Minor Chord + Minor 7th + Minor 9th + Perfect 4th
- Cmin13: Minor Chord + Minor 7th + Minor 9th + Perfect 4th + Minor 13th
- Cmin7(b5): Minor Chord, replace Perfect 5th with Diminished 5th + Minor 7th
Dominant Chords

- C7
  - Major Chord + Minor 7th
  - Major Chord + Minor 7th + Major 9th
  - Major Chord + Minor 7th + Major 9th + Augmented 4th

- C9
  - Major Chord + Minor 7th

- C7(#11)
  - Major Chord + Minor 7th
  - Major Chord + Minor 7th + Augmented 4th

- C13
  - Major Chord + Minor 7th
  - Major Chord + Minor 7th + Augmented 4th + Major 13th
Analysis of “A” Section

- All root position chords (devoid of voice leading)
- No rhythmic directions
Addition of the Melody

Avoiding Close Intervals

- Revoice chords (m. 10)
Rhythmic Arrangement

- Ordinarily, the next step would be to adjust the rhythm of the entire melody to give it life and to fit the style (swing, bossa, ballad, etc.)
- This is a skill that could be the subject of its own session and will not be covered here.
- For the purposes of the next section, I have kept the rhythms “square” for the sake of simplicity.
Chord Voicings
Families and Substitutions

- 3rd – required
- 7th – required
- Root – can be substituted for
  - 9 (most chords)
  - b9 (dominant)
  - #9 (dominant)
- 5th – can be substituted for
  - 11 (minor/dominant)
  - #11 (major/dominant)
  - b13 (most chords)
  - 13 (most chords)
- Doing the above often simplifies voicings to 4 notes
Stripping to just root, 3rd, 5th, 7th

Use of substitutions
### Common Voicings

#### Closed Voicing
- Melody note is in the soprano
- Fill in alto, tenor, and bass using descending families
- For example
  - If soprano is the 7\(^{th}\): 
  - Alto is the 5\(^{th}\) (or substitution)
  - Tenor is the 3\(^{rd}\)
  - Bass is the root (or substitution)

#### Drop 2 Voicing
- Melody note is in the soprano
- Fill in alto, tenor, and bass using descending families but skip the second and fill it in later in the bass
- For example
  - If soprano is the 7\(^{th}\):
  - Alto is the 3\(^{rd}\)
  - Tenor is the root (or substitution)
  - Bass is the 5\(^{th}\) (or substitution)
THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER YOU

Warren / Gordon

Closed Voicings

Drop 2 Voicings

Combo

Closed

Drop 2
Wait! What about those parallel 5ths??!!

- Don’t worry… they will and should happen

- Counterpoint rules that are broken when following these voicing techniques are normal in the jazz idiom

- Voice leading often naturally falls into place when using these voicings
More Voicings

4th Voicing

- Melody note is in the soprano
- Fill in alto, tenor, and baritone using descending fourths, instead of families
- For example, in a Cmin7 chord
  - If soprano is a Bb:
  - Alto is an F
  - Tenor is a C
  - Bass is a G

Spread Voicing

- Good for background parts behind a solo or during a scat section
- For example
  - Soprano is the lead note (usually a substitution for the root or 5th)
  - Alto is the 3rd or 7th
  - Tenor is the 3rd or 7th
  - Bass is the root
4th Voicings

Spread Voicings

Unisons, 2-part, 3-part
Another example of mixed voicings

Parts alternate between octave unisons and closed voicings
Not an exact science: this is where I personally voice them.

The only gap that might occur is when the soprano is reaching the top of the staff and the alto is either too high or too much spread occurs between all the voices.

If this occurs, you can try 5 note voicings!
5 Note Voicings

- Same rules apply with 4 note voicings
  - Needs root (or substitution)
  - Needs 3rd
  - Needs 5th (or substitution)
  - Needs 7th

- Except you can now repeat a family
  - Add a member of the root family or 5th family
  - Use a substitution if you haven’t or use a different substitution
Harmonization Techniques
Repeated Pitches in Jazz Harmony
Instances of Repeated Pitches

- 3\textsuperscript{rd} – required
- 7\textsuperscript{th} – required
- Root – can be swapped with 9, b9, #9
- 5\textsuperscript{th} – can be swapped with 11, #11, b13, 13

Say the melody begins on the 5\textsuperscript{th} of a chord and then changes to the 13\textsuperscript{th}

Note: if the melody note repeats, it’s okay (but not mandatory) to repeat the harmony notes
• Diatonic Approach
  • Melody note is approaching its next pitch by one diatonic step
  • All other pitches approach their next pitch by one diatonic step in the same direction

• Chromatic Approach
  • Melody note is approaching its next pitch by one half step
  • All other pitches approach their next pitch in by one half step in the same direction

Approach Chords
• Dominant Approach
  • Melody note is able to fit in with a dominant 7th chord of the next chord
  • Voice the rest of the notes within a dominant 7th chord of the next chord
Harmonization Techniques

There Will Never Be Another You

Closed Voicing

Diatonic Approach

Chromatic Approach*

Dominant Approach

*Hypothetical: do not change the melody for the sake of voice leading
• Non-traditional intro: a cappella bass line

• Close and Cluster Voicings in mm. 9-12

• 4th Voicings in the treble staff and a 5th voicing in the bass staff in mm. 13-14
• Unison and closed voicings
• Alternation of parts in mm. 24-26
• Leading into the key change at m. 32

But not too much!
The Rest of the Song

Scat Solis

- Easy in theory, challenging in practice
- Compose a melody and harmonize using the aforementioned techniques…that’s it!

Instrumental Solo

- Gives an auditory break from the singing
- Supply your instrumentalist with slashed measures with clear chord changes
Scat Syllables

Tips

- The emphasis is on your melodies/harmonies. Syllables are simply a vehicle for them.
- Simple is best!
- Think of what articulation you want
  - Legato: doo, day, dah
  - Marcato: daht
  - 8th note patterns: da-va-da-’n doo-ya-da-va
Standard Vocal Jazz Form

- **Instrumental intro**: usually 4 or 8 bars
- **Chorus**: as written in the lead sheet; also known as the head
- **Scat Soli**: arranger composes a harmonized melody filling up a chorus or half a chorus
- **Instrumental Solo**: filling a chorus or half a chorus depending on the length of the scat soli
- **Return to the Chorus**: usually the second half to avoid too much repetition; with coda
Thank You for Attending!!!

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