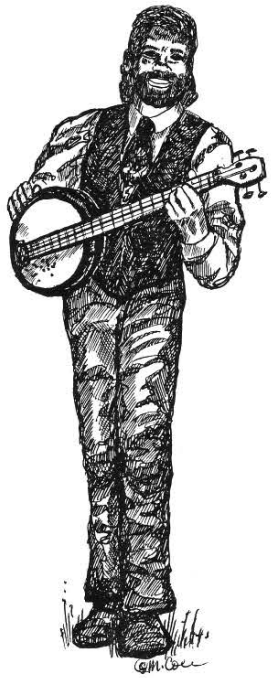
Step #3 – Select Chords for Harmony

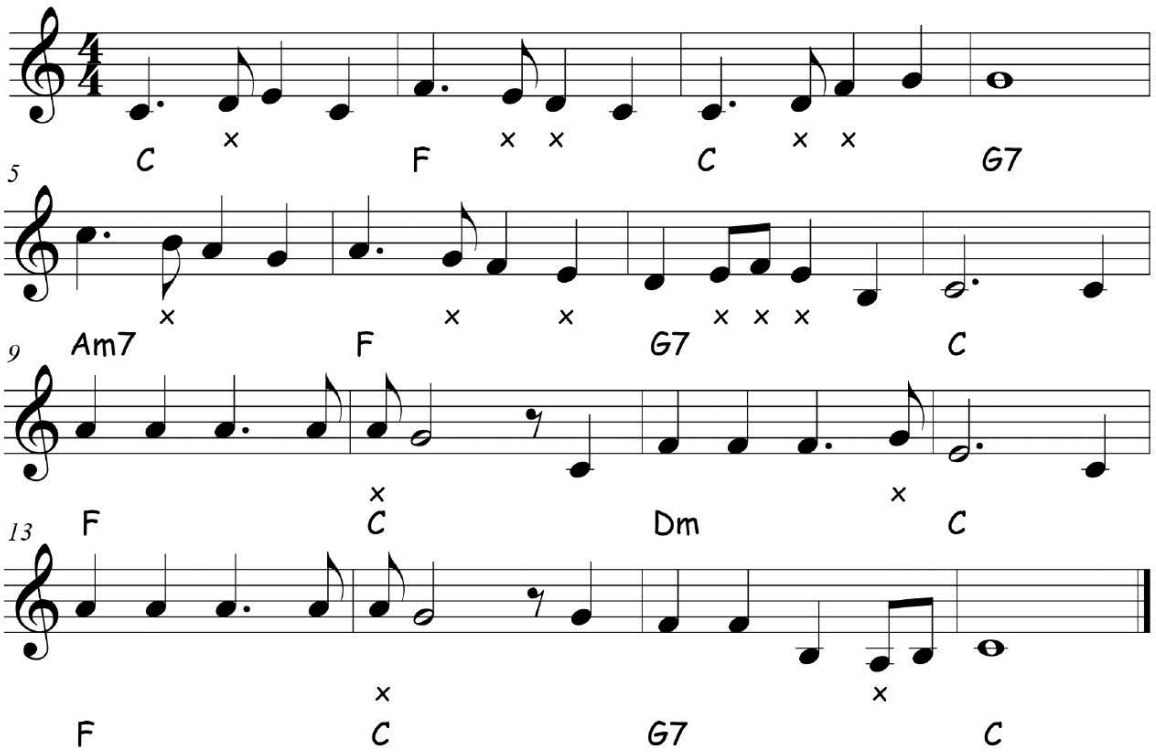


Before you can select chords to harmonize the melody you have just written, you need to be able to "see" which chord would sound the best in each measure by quickly visualizing the chord, or chords, that is being used in each measure. This is a great skill to have especially when improvising on hymns or popular music.

However, this skill is a little challenging to master since not every tone in a measure belongs to the chord that is harmonizing that measure. These tones are non-chord tones, and they have several different names, but we are not going to study names of the non-chord tones in this book. If you want more info on non-chord tones, Wikipedia explains them in detail.

Since the primary chord and its secondary chords share some of the same tones, the composer always has at least two choices of chords with which to harmonize each measure. Shown below, the composer has written a melody for you to study. She has placed a small "x" beneath the non-chord tones. Then she has handwritten the letter names of the chords that she has selected to harmonize each measure.

Melody Showing Non-Chord Tones



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Let's analyze the chord movements in "**Melody Showing Non-Chord Tones**" on the previous page:

M1: Start on the Tonic Chord which is _____

M2: Down a fifth to _____

M3: Up a fifth to _____

M4: Up a fifth to _____

M5: Up a second to _____

M6: Down a third to _____

M7: Up a second to _____

M8: Down a fifth to _____

M9: Down a fifth to _____

M10: Up fifth to _____

M11: Up a second to _____

M12: Down a second to _____

M13: Down a fifth to _____

M14: Up a fifth to _____

M15: Up a fifth to _____



M16: Down a fifth to the Tonic Chord which is _____

You can see by the above chord movement analysis that chords very much like to go up or down in intervals of fifths.

NOTES: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Fun Brainteaser Exercises

Many different chords can be used when harmonizing a composition. You do not have to stay with the I, IV, V chords or the secondary chords of ii, iii, vi, and vii°. You can use unusual chord choices and sometimes those choices sound great when used with your melody. Give your creative brain free-rein by selecting some great sounding chords in the brainteasers below. The first one has been done for you.

List and spell the chords that contain the **C** tone:

1. C Major: C E G
2. C Major^{7}: C E G B
3. F Major: F A C
4. F Major^{7}: F A C E
5. A minor: A C E
6. A-flat Major: A-flat C E-flat
7. D Major^{7}: D F-sharp A C
8. D minor^{7}: D F A C
9. F minor^{7}: F A-flat C E
10. F-sharp dim: F-sharp A C
11.
12.

List and spell the chords that have the **D** tone:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.



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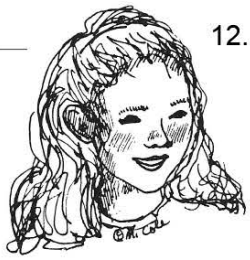
List and spell the chords that have the **E** tone:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

List and spell the chords that have the **F** tone:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____



List and spell the chords that have the **G** tone:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

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List and spell the chords that have the **A** tone:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____



List and spell the chords that have the **B** tone:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

Answers: C tone: 11. C Aug: C E G-sharp, 12. A-flat Aug: A-flat C E; **D tone:** 1. D minor: D F A, 2. D dim: D F A-flat, 3. G Major: G B D, 4. G^7: G B D F, 5. E Major^7: E G-sharp B D, 6. E minor^7: E G B D, 7. G-sharp Dim: G-sharp B D, 8. D Major: D F-sharp A, 9. D^7: D F-sharp A C, 10. E-flat^7: E-flat G B-flat D, 11. D minor^7: D F A C, 12. D dim^7: D F A-flat C; **E tone:** 1. E Major: E G-sharp B; 2. E minor: E G B; 3. E^7: E G-sharp B D; 4. E dim^7: E G B-flat D, 5. C Major: C E G, 6. C^7: C E G B-flat, 7. A Major: A C-sharp E, 8. A minor: A C E, 9. A^7: A C-sharp E G, 10. F Major^7: F A C E, 11. F minor^7: F A-flat C E, 12. E dim: E G B-flat; **F tone:** 1. F Major: F A C, 2. F minor: F A-flat C, 3. F^7: F A C E-flat, 4. D minor: D F A, 5. D Dim: D F A-flat, 6. D Dim^7: D F A-flat C, 7. G^7: G B D F, 8. G minor^7: G B-flat D F, 9. B dim: B D F, 10. B-flat Major: B-flat D F, 11. B-flat^7: B-flat D F A-flat, 12. F Major^7: F A C E; **G tone:** 1. G Major: G B D; 2. B minor: G B-flat D; 3. G^7: G B D F; 4. G minor^7: G B-flat D F; 5. C Major: C E G, 6. C minor: C E-flat G, 7. C^7: C E G B-flat, 8. E minor: E G B, 9. E-flat Major: E-flat G B-flat, 10. E-flat Aug: E-flat G B, 11. E-flat^7: E-flat G B-flat D-flat, 12. E minor^7: E G B D; **A tone:** 1. A Major: A C-sharp E, 2. A minor: A C E, 3. A dim: A C E-flat, 4. A^7: A C-sharp E G, 5. A dim^7: A C E-flat G-flat, 6. F Major: F A C, 7. F^7: F A C E-flat, 8. D Major: D F-sharp A, 9. D minor: D F A, 10. D^7: D F-sharp A C, 11. D minor^7: D F A C, 12. D-flat Aug: D-flat F A; (answers continued on next page)

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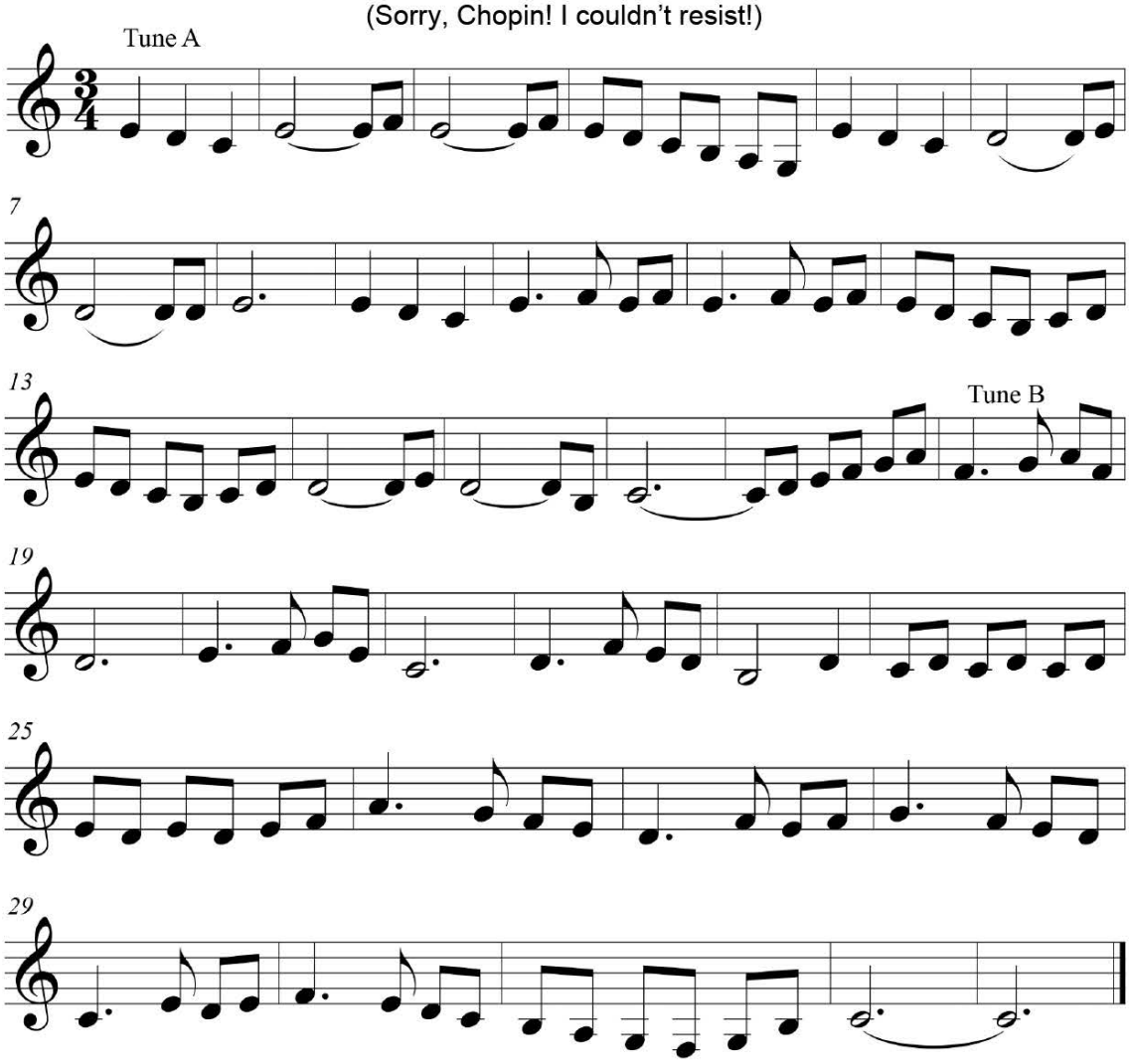
Answers: (continued from previous page) **B tone:** 1. B dim: B D F, 2. B Major: B D-sharp F-sharp, 3. B^7: B D-sharp F-sharp A, 4. G Major: G B D, 5. G^7: G B D F, 6. B Aug: B D-sharp Fx, 7. E Major: E G-sharp B, 8. E minor: E G B, 9. E^7: E G-sharp B D, 10. C $Major^7$: C E G B, 11. C Aug^7: C E G-sharp B, 12. G-sharp dim: G-sharp B D



Use some of the chords you built on the previous pages to harmonize the melodies below. Play the melodies with various chord options on the piano to help you choose which chords you would like to use. Write the name of your chords under the first note of the measures. You may find it helpful to place a small "x" under the non-chord tones.

Wait a Minute Waltz

(Sorry, Chopin! I couldn't resist!)



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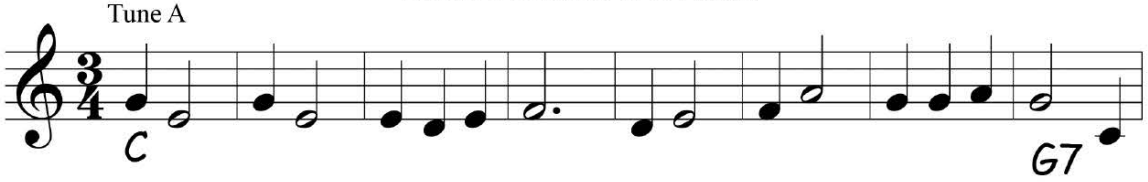
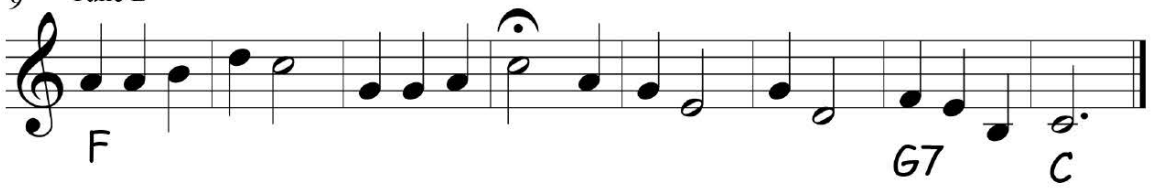
Thank Goodness It's Friday

Tune A

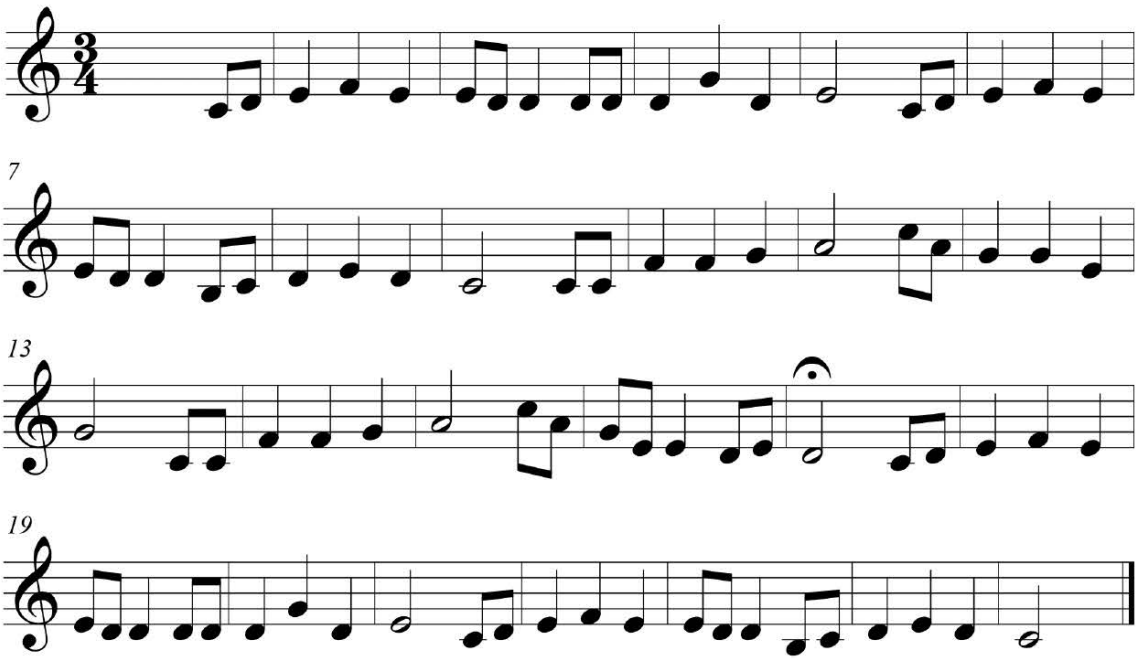


9 Tune B





Saturday Morning



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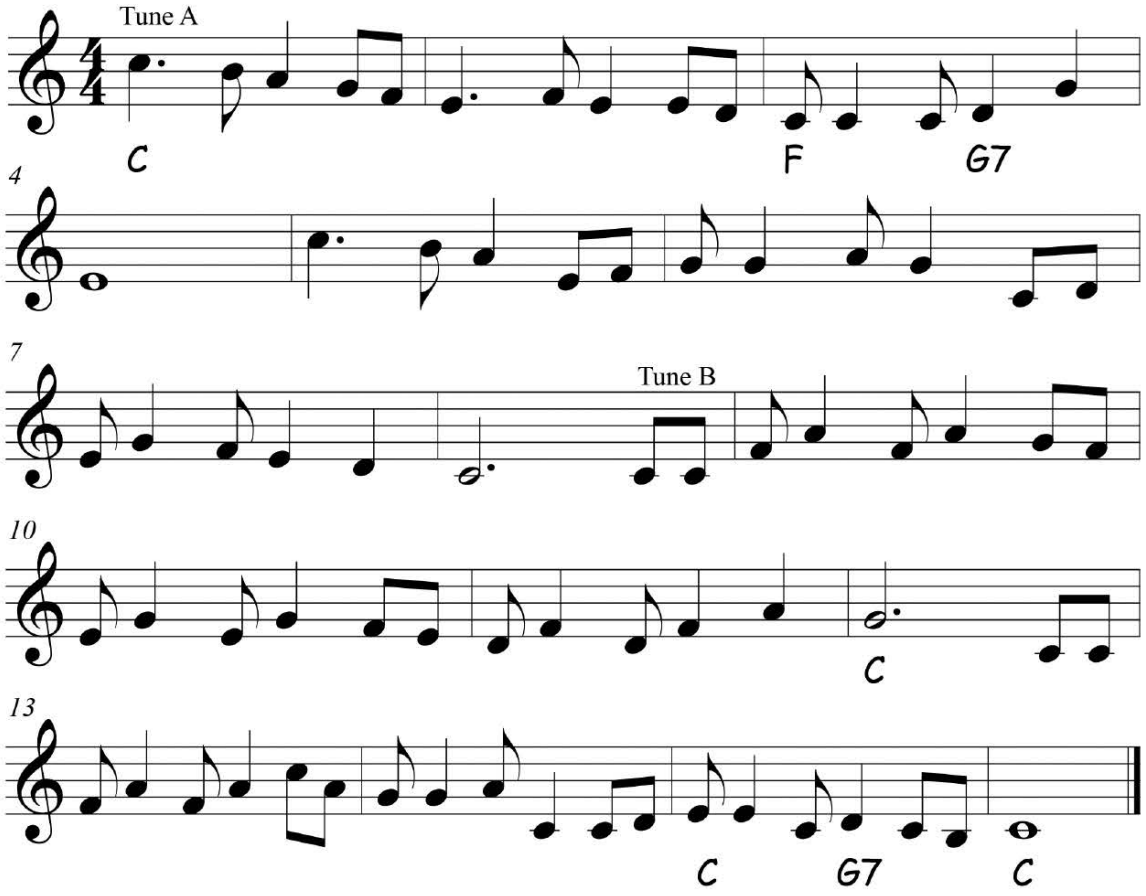
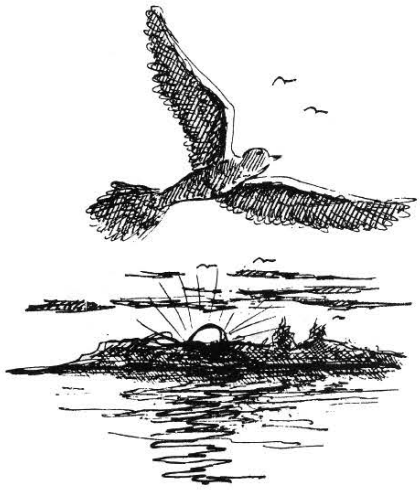
Western Sunset



The composer has helped you a bit by placing chord choices here and there in Western Sunset. In M3 and M15 there will be two chords used. Usually there is only one chord per measure.



What Have We Learned So Far?

1. Write the melody first before deciding on the accompaniment's harmonizing chords. _____ (Yes or No?)

2. To decide the chords that will harmonize with your melody, visually scan each measure to decide which tones in the melody are non-chord tones. _____ (Yes or No?) The

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remaining tones will harmonize with your chord choice. _____ (Yes or No?)

3. Usually measures are "built" around only one chord, but sometimes there are two (or more) chords per measure. _____ (Yes or No?)

4. Sequences mimic patterns but there are slight differences in the two. _____ (Yes or No?)

5. There should be patterns and sequences in each composition. These may be _____ (rhythm and tone patterns or rhythm and tone patterns?) Yes, the author helped you on this question. There should always be rhythm and tone patterns.

6. You may repeat patterns and sequences in both the melody and the accompaniment. _____ (Yes or No?)

7. Repeating rhythm patterns and tone patterns makes your composition sound cohesive. _____ (Yes or No?)

8. Try not to use the same LH pattern throughout the composition. Adding different LH accompaniment patterns throughout is advisable. _____ (Yes or No?)

9. Although the LH patterns shown in this book are built on the tones of the C Chord, these patterns can be used on any other chords the composer choses? _____ (Yes or No?)



Answers: **1.** Yes; **2.** Yes, Yes; **3.** Yes; **4.** Yes; **5.** Rhythm; **6.** Yes; **7.** Yes; **8.** Yes; **9.** Yes; **10.** Yes

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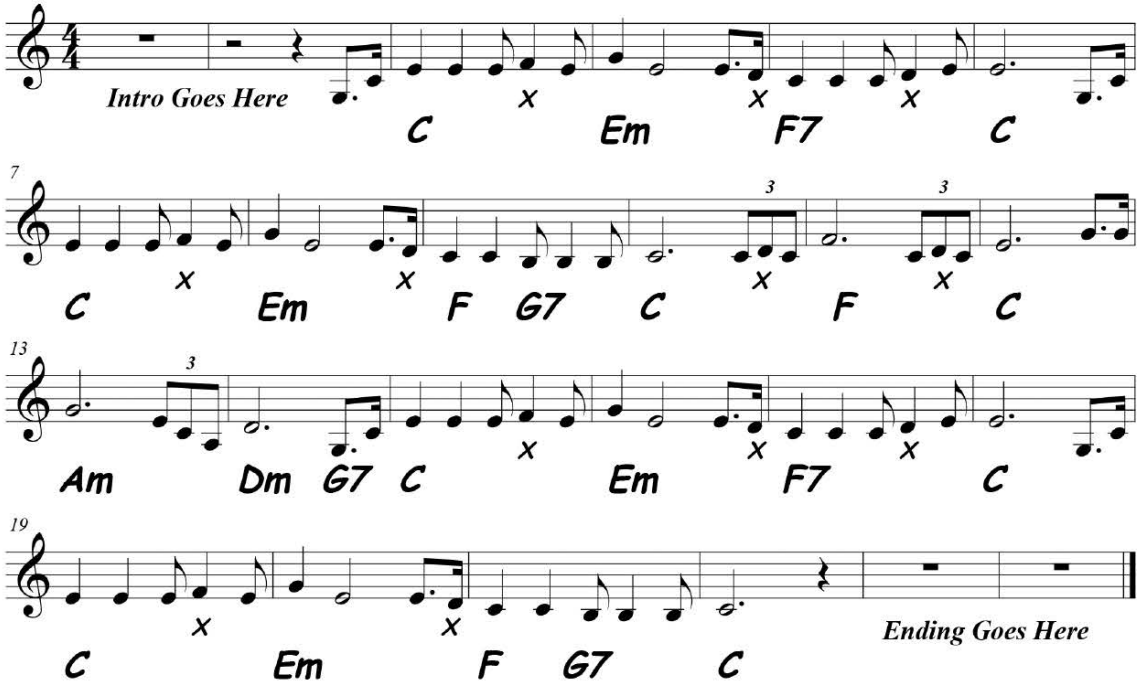
Summer Roadtrip



1. Chords' first choice of movement is _____ (up or down?) a fifth.

2. Chords' second choice of movement is _____ (up or down?) a fifth.

3. If chords cannot move up or down in fifths, then they want to move up or down in _____ (seconds or thirds?).

4. Starting at M12 you will see one of Mayron Cole's favorite chord progressions. Let's analyze it: M12 uses a _____ chord; then down a 3rd to an _____ chord; then down a 5th to a _____ chord; then down a 5th to a _____ chord; which moves down a _____ (4th or 5th?) to the _____ chord.



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5. Look again at M3 and M4. The composer could have used a C major chord in both measures. _____ (Yes or No?)

6. In M4, however, she decided to use a secondary chord _____ (Gm or Em?) which shares two tones with the C Major Chord.

7. What two tones are shared by C Major and E minor chords? _____ (E & G or F & A?)
8. In M5, the composer used an F^7 chord. What four tones are in an F^7 chord? _____ (F A C E or G B D F?)

9. In M14, the composer could have used only a G^7 chord, but instead used two chords that share some of the same tones. What two chords did she use? _____ (Dm & G^7 or Em & C^7?)

10. The composer confesses that she used two different chords in M13 to make the composition more interesting to the listener. What tones are shared by Dm and G^7? _____ (F & A or D & F?)

Answers: **1.** Down; **2.** Up; **3.** Thirds; **4.** C, Am, Dm, G^7, 5th, C; **5.** Yes; **6.** Em; **7.** E & G; FACE; **9.** Dm & G7; **10.** D & F

It is time for you write your melodic tune and "block in" with letter names the chords you chose for your accompaniment. Write the letter names under each measure. You can try one or more chords per measure, but when you are finished deciding on the chords that sound the best, mark through the chords you have discarded. Remember, here is how chords naturally want to move in order of strongest movement:

strongest	down a 5th
↓	up a 5th
↓	down a 3rd
↓	up a 3rd
↓	down a 2nd
weakest	up a 2nd

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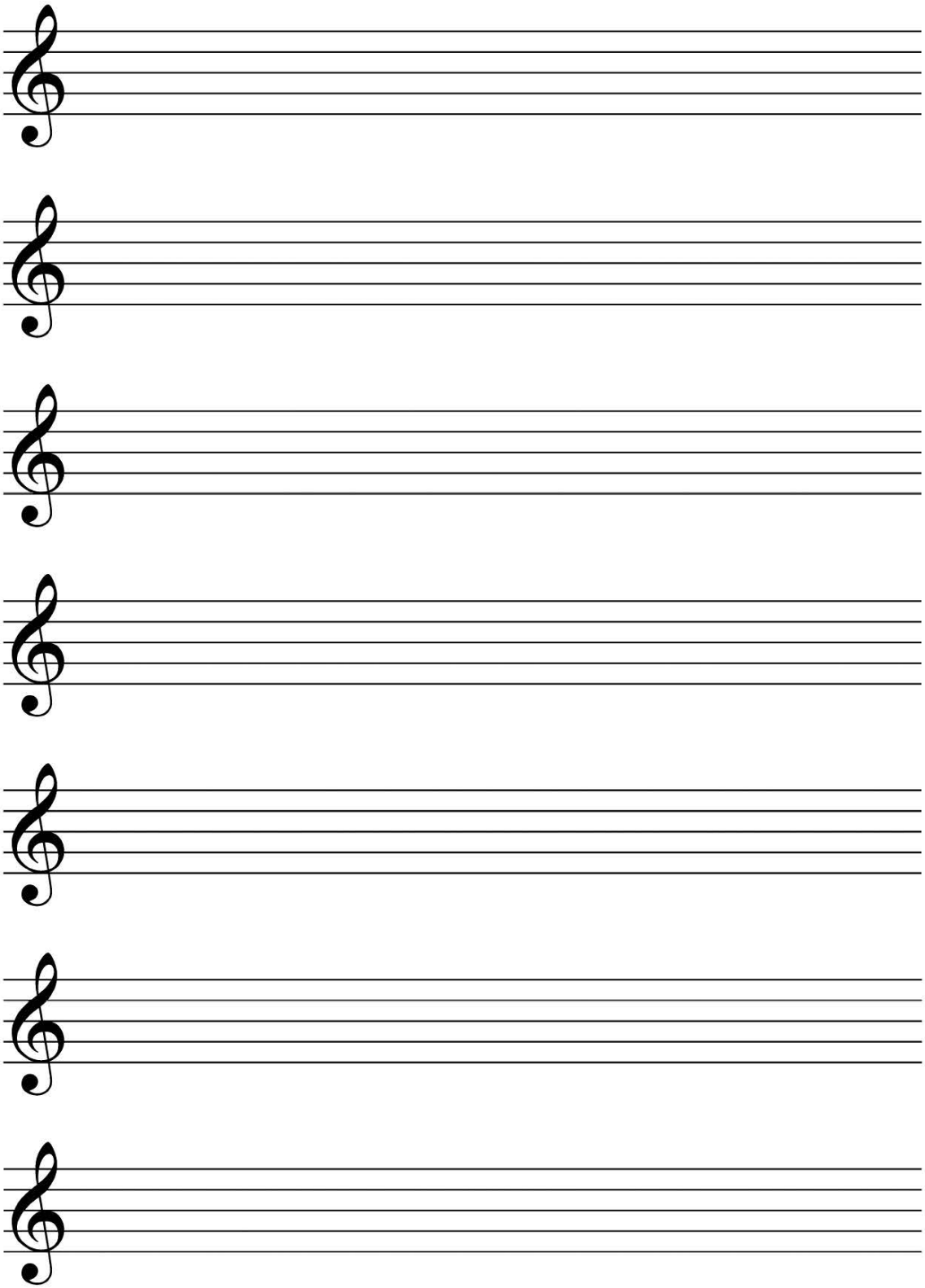

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