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# AP<sup>®</sup> Music Theory

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

### **Inside:**

#### **Free Response Question 7**

- ☒ **Scoring Guideline**
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**Question 7: Harmonizing a Melody****9 points****I. Arriving at a Score for the Entire Response**

- A.** Score each phrase separately and then add the phrase scores together to arrive at a preliminary tally for the entire response.
- B.** Before deciding on the final score for the entire response, consider giving an extra point to a response that is either extremely good or that would otherwise receive a score of 0 (see **V.B.** below).
- C.** Except for instances where the guidelines specify otherwise, judge the bass and Roman numerals separately and ignore mismatches between them.
- D.** Errors are categorized as either minor or egregious. Two minor errors equal one egregious error (see **IV**).
- E.** A maximum of two egregious errors (or four minor errors) may be marked per half phrase, with a maximum total of three egregious errors (or six minor errors) per phrase.

**II. Scoring Phrase 2****2 points max**

- A.** Judge the bass and Roman numerals separately, considering each in two halves:
- The first half consists of the opening beat and the approach to it.
  - The second half consists of the last two notes (the cadence).
- B. The phrase is scored 2 if:**
1. the bass has no egregious errors and
  2. the final two Roman numerals match the last two bass notes (even if the first Roman numeral is incorrect).
- N.B.: Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied.”
- N.B.: A phrase that receives **2 points** must have a good cadence in both bass and Roman numerals, with the bass and Roman numerals (and inversions) matching one another; otherwise, give the phrase *at most* 1 point.
- C. The phrase is scored 1 if:**
1. the bass has no egregious errors, but any of the two final Roman numerals (and inversions) do not match the final bass notes;
  2. one-half of the bass contains an egregious error, and at least one-half of the Roman numerals has no egregious errors; or
  3. both halves of the bass have an egregious error, but the Roman numerals have no egregious errors.
- D. The phrase is scored 0 if:**
1. both halves of the bass have an egregious error, and at least one-half of the Roman numerals has an egregious error; or
  2. at least one-half of the bass has an egregious error, and both halves of the Roman numerals have egregious errors.

## Summary of the Method for Scoring Phrase 2

| Bass Line                                            | Roman Numerals                                                                | Score |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| No egregious errors                                  | Roman numerals (and inversions) must match bass notes                         | 2     |
| No egregious errors                                  | First half of the phrase contains an egregious error, but the cadence is good | 2     |
| No egregious errors                                  | Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error                          | 1     |
| One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error   | No egregious errors                                                           | 1     |
| One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error   | One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error                            | 1     |
| Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error | No egregious errors                                                           | 1     |
| Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error | One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error                            | 0     |
| One-half of the phrase contains an egregious error   | Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error                          | 0     |
| Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error | Both halves of the phrase contain an egregious error                          | 0     |

## III. Scoring Phrases 3 and 4

6 points max (3 points per phrase)

- A. For each of these phrases, judge the bass and Roman numerals separately, considering each in two halves.
- The first half of phrase 3 consists of the first four beats of the phrase.
  - The first half of phrase 4 consists of the first four beats of the phrase.
  - The last four beats and their approach comprise the last half of each phrase.
- B. Then provide a phrase descriptor both for the bass line and for the Roman numerals according to the following guidelines:
- Judge it to be **good** even if it contains a specific egregious error and one minor error.
  - Judge it to be **fair** if:
    - it contains two egregious errors or two egregious errors and one minor error; or
    - it contains three or more egregious errors, but one-half of the phrase is without egregious error.
  - Judge it to be **poor** if it contains three or more specific egregious errors, with at least one egregious error in each half of the phrase.

Summary of Good/Fair/Poor Determinations for  
Bass Lines and Roman Numerals for Phrases 3 and 4

|      |                                                             |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| good | 0–1 egregious errors (+ 1 minor error), or 0–3 minor errors |
| fair | 2 egregious errors (+ 1 minor error), or 4–5 minor errors   |
| poor | 3 or more egregious errors, or 6 or more minor errors       |

- C. Combine the descriptors to arrive at the following preliminary scores:

| Summary of the Method for Scoring<br>Phrases 3 and 4 |                      |   |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Bass Line                                            | Roman Numerals Score |   |
| good                                                 | good to fair         | 3 |
| good                                                 | poor                 | 2 |
| fair                                                 | good to fair         | 2 |
| fair                                                 | poor                 | 1 |
| poor                                                 | good to fair         | 1 |
| poor                                                 | poor                 | 0 |

- D. Before giving a final score of 0 or 3, first consider the cadence.
1. Award *at least 1 point* for the phrase if its cadence (i.e., its final two chords considered by themselves) is good in both bass and Roman numerals, even if nothing else in the phrase is good; the bass and Roman numerals (and inversions) *must agree* in this case.
  2. A phrase that receives **3 points** must have a good cadence in both bass and Roman numerals, with the bass and Roman numerals (and inversions) matching one another; otherwise, give the phrase *at most 2 points*.
  3. Phrase 4 must end with a perfect authentic cadence.
  4. Secondary functions must be indicated with any symbol that means “of” or “applied” (V/V, [V], V→V, V of V, etc.).
- E. Award at most **2 points** to a phrase that uses half notes exclusively.

#### IV. Weighting Errors

- A. The following are **egregious** errors:
1. Parallel fifths or octaves, consecutive perfect fifths or octaves in contrary motion (*marked on the second chord*)  
N.B.: Perfect fifths to diminished fifths are OK, though some may create other problems with incorrect resolutions of tendency tones and/or chordal sevenths (*marked on the second chord*)
  2. Doubling the leading tone; unresolved or incorrectly resolved leading tone (*marked on the first chord*)  
N.B.: A bass line that moves from  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}$  is OK, i.e., *not* an unresolved leading tone
  3. Tonally inappropriate six-four chord (*marked on the first chord*)  
N.B.: Cadential six-fours, passing six-fours, and pedal six-fours are allowed.
  4. Unresolved seventh or incorrectly resolved seventh (*marked on the first chord*)
  5. Other note-against-note dissonance (including fourths) that is not treated correctly, including Roman numerals (and inversions) that do not match with the given melody note (*marked on the first chord*)
  6. Poor chord succession (e.g., V–IV; V–ii; ii–iii; IV–iii, ii–I; iii–I, vi–I, V–iii, iii–ii, iii–vii<sup>0</sup>, etc.) (*marked on the second chord*)  
N.B.: Motions from V or V<sup>6</sup> to IV<sup>6</sup> are allowed
  7. Root-position leading-tone chord (vii<sup>0</sup>) followed by anything other than root-position I (*marked on the first chord*)

8. Poor chord use, such as  $vi^6$  (unless as part of a parallel  $\frac{6}{3}$  sequence, modulation, or following a strong-beat I—i.e., a 5–6 motion);  $iii^6$  (unless as part of a parallel  $\frac{6}{3}$  sequence) (*marked on the first chord*)
9. Inappropriate leap (seventh, augmented interval, or compound interval), successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad, descending leap of more than a third into a chordal seventh, or leap of an octave that does not change direction afterwards (*marked on the last chord of the leap(s)*)  
N.B.: Leaps of diminished intervals that change direction and resolve by step afterwards are allowed
10. An entire phrase of consecutive thirds or sixths (applicable to phrases 3 and 4)
11. Use of an unacceptable rhythmic value, including all rests

**B.** The following are **minor** errors (two minor errors = one egregious error):

1. Diminished fifth to perfect fifth (*marked on the second chord*)
2. Repeated note and/or Roman numeral (and inversion) from weak beat to strong beat, unless at start of phrase (*marked on the second chord*)
3. Metrically inappropriate six-four chord (*marked on the first chord*)
4. Approach to fifth or octave in similar motion in which the upper voice leaps (*marked on the second chord*)
5. Cross-relation (*marked on the first chord*)
6. Root-position  $vii^o$  triad that moves directly to I (*marked on the first chord*)
7. Four or more consecutive thirds or sixths for half of a phrase
8. Incomplete inverted seventh chord

**V. Other Considerations**

**1 point**

**A.** General considerations:

1. Consider each phrase independently; do not judge the connections between each phrase.
2. Ignore any inner voices supplied by the students; ignore any/all extraneous labels (nonchord tones, etc.).
3. Judge the bass line as either part of a contrapuntal two-part framework or as a bass line for a four-part harmony exercise, giving the student the benefit of the doubt.
4. In judging harmonies, always consider the implied bass line suggested by the Roman numerals (and inversions).

**B.** Special scores:

- Award 1 additional point for a truly musical response or for a response that is solid throughout.
- Award 1 point to a response that otherwise would earn a 0 but that has two or more redeeming qualities.
- 0** This score is used for a response that represents an unsuccessful attempt to answer the question (has no redeeming qualities, or only one) or a response that is off-topic or irrelevant.
- NR** Reserved for blank responses

**Total for question 7**

**9 points**

## Supplemental Summary Chart of the Weighting Errors (IV)

| Egregious Errors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Minor Errors                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A.1.</b> Parallel fifths or octaves, consecutive perfect fifths or octaves in contrary motion ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>B.1.</b> Diminished fifth to perfect fifth ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )<br><b>B.4.</b> Approach to fifth or octave in similar motion in which the upper voice leaps ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> ) |
| <b>A.2.</b> Doubling the leading tone ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> ); unresolved or incorrectly resolved leading tone ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>A.3.</b> Tonally inappropriate six-four chord ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>B.3.</b> Metrically inappropriate six-four chord ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                                                                                              |
| <b>A.4.</b> Unresolved seventh or incorrectly resolved seventh ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>B.8.</b> Incomplete inverted seventh chord                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>A.5.</b> Other note-against-note dissonance (including fourths) that is not treated correctly, including Roman numerals (and inversions) that do not match with the given melody note ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                                                                          | <b>B.5.</b> Cross relation ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>A.6.</b> Poor chord succession (e.g., V–IV; V–ii; ii–iii; IV–iii, ii–I; iii–I, vi–I, V–iii, iii–ii, iii–vii <sup>o</sup> , etc.) ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )                                                                                                                                                              | <b>B.2.</b> Repeated note and/or Roman numeral (and inversion) from weak beat to strong beat, unless at start of phrase ( <i>marked on the second chord</i> )                                                         |
| <b>A.7.</b> Root-position leading-tone chord (vii <sup>o</sup> ) followed by anything other than root-position I ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>B.6.</b> Root-position vii <sup>o</sup> triad that moves directly to I ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                                                                        |
| <b>A.8.</b> Poor chord use, such as vi <sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel $\frac{6}{3}$ sequence, modulation, or following a strong-beat I—i.e., a 5–6 motion); iii <sup>6</sup> (unless as part of a parallel $\frac{6}{3}$ sequence) ( <i>marked on the first chord</i> )                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>A.9.</b> Inappropriate leap (seventh, augmented interval, or compound interval), successive leaps in the same direction that do not outline a triad, descending leap of more than a third into a chordal seventh, or leap of an octave that does not change direction afterwards ( <i>marked on the last chord of the leap(s)</i> ) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>A.10.</b> An entire phrase of consecutive thirds or sixths (applicable to phrases 3 and 4)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>B.7.</b> Four or more consecutive thirds or sixths for half of a phrase                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>A.11.</b> Use of an unacceptable rhythmic value, including all rests                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Write your response to QUESTION 7 on this page.

**Question 7.** (Suggested time—20 minutes)

Complete the bass line for the melody below, following eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Below the bass line, write the Roman and Arabic numerals that indicate the harmonies and inversions implied by the soprano and bass.

Observe the following.

- A. Keep the portion you compose consistent with the first phrase.
  1. Write an appropriate cadence at each phrase ending, including a perfect authentic cadence at the final cadence.
  2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Embellishing tones are not required. If you choose to use them, the only acceptable embellishing tones are unaccented passing tones, unaccented neighbor tones, and unaccented chordal skips.)
  3. Vary the motion of the bass line in relation to the soprano.
  4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)
- B. Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

**Start here**  
↓

**Key: F**

*Chord analysis:* I V<sup>6</sup> I I IV ii V I V vi IV I <sup>V</sup>/<sub>N</sub> <sup>V</sup>/<sub>N</sub>

*Chord analysis:* I<sup>6</sup> <sup>N</sup>/<sub>6</sub> I<sup>6</sup> I<sup>6</sup>/<sub>4</sub> IV<sup>6</sup> ii<sup>6</sup> V I<sup>6</sup> I V<sup>4</sup>/<sub>3</sub> I<sup>6</sup> ii<sup>6</sup> V I

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Observe the following.

**A.** Keep the portion you compose consistent with the first phrase.

1. Write an appropriate cadence at each phrase ending, including a perfect authentic cadence at the final cadence.
2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Embellishing tones are not required. If you choose to use them, the only acceptable embellishing tones are unaccented passing tones, unaccented neighbor tones, and unaccented chordal skips.)
3. Vary the motion of the bass line in relation to the soprano.
4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)

**B.** Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

F C E G A B  
C E G A B F

Start here

Key: F

Chord analysis: I V<sup>6</sup> I I IV ii V I V vi IV I V<sup>7</sup> I

Chord analysis: I IV V<sup>6</sup> I<sup>6</sup> IV<sup>6</sup> V V I<sup>6</sup> I V<sup>6</sup> I<sup>4</sup> V V I

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Complete the bass line for the melody below, following eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Below the bass line, write the Roman and Arabic numerals that indicate the harmonies and inversions implied by the soprano and bass.

Observe the following.

- A. Keep the portion you compose consistent with the first phrase.
1. Write an appropriate cadence at each phrase ending, including a perfect authentic cadence at the final cadence.
  2. Give melodic interest to the bass line. (Embellishing tones are not required. If you choose to use them, the only acceptable embellishing tones are unaccented passing tones, unaccented neighbor tones, and unaccented chordal skips.)
  3. Vary the motion of the bass line in relation to the soprano.
  4. Use mostly quarter notes. (Where appropriate, note values ranging from half notes to eighth notes may be used.)
- B. Do not notate alto and tenor lines.

Start here  
↓

Key: F

Chord analysis: I V<sup>6</sup> I I IV ii V I V vi IV

Chord analysis:

I V<sub>4</sub> iii I ~~IV~~ ~~III~~ ~~II~~ I IV vi ~~III~~ I vii I

## Question 7

**Note:** Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

### Overview

This question assessed students' ability to:

- compose a bass line following the rules of eighteenth-century counterpoint;
- write standard authentic and half cadences;
- harmonize a melody with an appropriate chord progression;
- use conventional harmonic patterns;
- recognize and correctly use a secondary dominant chord;
- correctly harmonize a chromatically-altered scale degree 4 in the melody;
- use six-four chords according to conventional common practice;
- treat the leading tone correctly, concerning both chord voicing and voice leading; and
- use embellishments correctly in a two-part framework.

### Sample: 7A

**Score: 9**

This represents an excellent response. In the second phrase, the bass line and Roman numerals are both without errors, and the cadence is good with a bass line matching the Roman numerals. This phrase earned 2 points. In the third phrase, the bass line is without errors. In the Roman numerals, the  $ii^6-I^6$  is a poor chord succession and is an egregious error, and the  $I_4^6$  is an inappropriate  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord and is an egregious error. With a good bass line and fair Roman numerals, the phrase earned 3 points. In the fourth phrase, the bass line and Roman numerals are both without errors. With a good bass line, good Roman numerals, and a good cadence with a bass line matching the Roman numerals, this phrase earned 3 points. The scoring summary for this response is 2/3/3. However, the figuration in phrase 3 and the scalar passage in the bass in phrase 4 make this response qualify as truly musical, and therefore the response earned 1 additional point for a total score of 9.

### Sample: 7B

**Score: 6**

This represents a good response. In the bass line of the second phrase, the C-natural is an incorrect dissonance against the B-natural in the soprano and is an egregious error, and the F, although consonant with the melody, is incorrect for the cadence and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals for the second phrase, the  $V^7$  does not contain a B-natural and is an egregious error, and the I, although consonant with the melody, is incorrect for the cadence. With one half of the phrase without egregious errors, this phrase earned 1 point. In the bass line of the third phrase, the parallel fifths are an egregious error, and the repeated C-C, weak to strong beat, is a minor error. In the Roman numerals, the  $IV_4^6$  is an inappropriate use of a  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord and is an egregious error; the  $IV^6-V$  implies parallel fifths and is an egregious error; the V, although consonant with soprano, is incorrect for cadence and is an egregious error; and the  $V-V$  implies a C-C bass line, weak to strong beat, and is a minor error. With a good bass line, fair Roman numerals, but a cadence that contains errors, the phrase earned 2 points. In the bass line of the fourth phrase, the dissonant fourth F-B-flat is not treated correctly and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals, the  $IV_4^6$  is an inappropriate use of  $\frac{6}{4}$  and is an egregious error, and the  $I_4^6$  is an inappropriate use of  $\frac{6}{4}$  and is an egregious error. With a good bass line, fair Roman numerals, and a good cadence with a bass line matching the Roman numerals, the phrase earned 3 points. The scoring summary for this response is 1/2/3 for a total of 6 points.

## Question 7 (continued)

**Sample: 7C**

**Score: 1**

This represents a poor response. In the bass line of the second phrase, the F–B-natural is a plausible dissonant fourth but it does not resolve correctly and is an egregious error, and the F, although consonant with the melody, is incorrect for the cadence and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals, the IV– iii is a poor chord succession and is an egregious error, the iii does not contain a B-natural and is an egregious error, and the iii is incorrect for the cadence and is an egregious error. With a bass line with egregious errors in one half of the phrase and Roman numerals with egregious errors in both halves of the phrase, this phrase earned 0 points. In the third phrase in measure five, the E in the bass against the D in the soprano is an incorrect dissonance and is an egregious error, and the parallel fifths are an egregious error. In measure six, the A against B-flat is an incorrect dissonance and is an egregious error, the G–A is an incorrect dissonance and is an egregious error, the F–G is an incorrect dissonance and is an egregious error, and the B-flat–E is an incorrect dissonance and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals, the V<sup>4</sup> is an incorrect Roman numeral and is an egregious error, the V– iii is a poor chord succession and is an egregious error, the iii–I is a poor chord succession and is an egregious error, the V does not contain a B-flat and is an egregious error, the IV does not contain an A and is an egregious error, the V– IV is a poor chord succession and is an egregious error (marked on the same spot as the previous error); the iii does not contain a G and is an egregious error, the IV – iii is a poor chord succession and is an egregious error, and the iii is incorrect for the cadence and is an egregious error (the last three egregious errors are all marked on the same spot). Finally, the vi does not contain an E and is an egregious error, and the vi is incorrect for the cadence and is an egregious error (marked on the same spot as previous error). With a poor bass line, poor Roman numerals, and a cadence that contains errors, this phrase earned 0 points. In the bass line of the fourth phrase, the G–A on beat two of measure seven is an incorrect dissonance and is an egregious error, and the D, although consonant with the melody, is incorrect for the cadence and is an egregious error. In the Roman numerals, the IV does not contain an A and is an egregious error, the vi does not contain a B-flat and is an egregious error, the iii does not contain an A and is an egregious error. In measure eight, the I does not contain a D and is an egregious error, the vii<sup>°</sup> implies a doubled leading tone and is an egregious error, the vii<sup>°</sup> is incorrect for the cadence and is an egregious error (marked on the same spot as the previous error), and the vii<sup>°</sup>–I implies parallel octaves and is an egregious error. With a fair bass line and poor Roman numerals, this phrase earned 1 point. The scoring summary for this response is 0/0/1 for a total of 1 point.