



NIKOS TSIANTAS

KEYBOARD
harmony

Harmony 1st Year

NIKOS TSIANTAS

First Year of Keyboard Harmony



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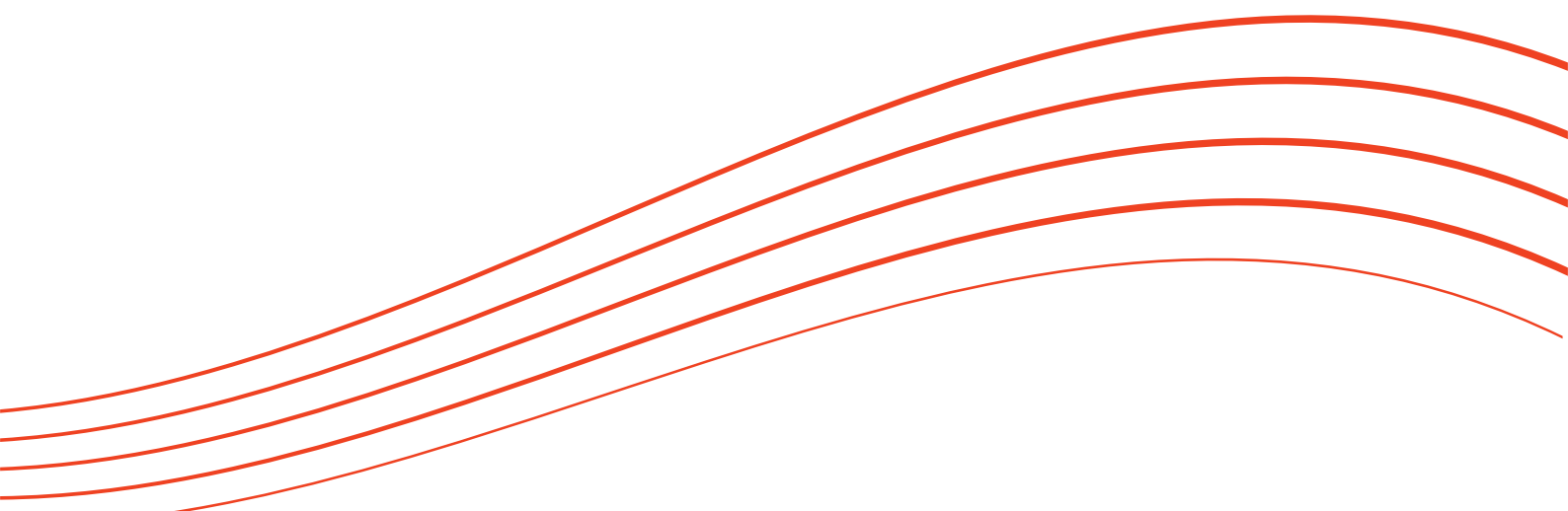
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Preface

Keyboard Harmony stems from a teaching experience in advanced theory and harmony over many years. The book is addressed to both students and teachers, aiming to offer an in-depth understanding of the principles of harmony, and a thorough exam preparation as well. It is also designed to be an effective, accessible source of material for the musicians who wish to further pursue their practical understanding of tonal scales, chord progressions and harmonic relations, and to improve their harmonization and chordal accompaniment skills on key instruments.

The reader will notice that I chose the close chord position throughout the book. Personally, I consider this position to be the most feasible for beginners; once learnt, the student may easily proceed to open chord positions. To provide additional practice in chord spacing, each exercise is followed by several chord progressions to be played by memory in various positions. Furthermore, at the end of each chapter, the student will find a series of melodies, figured and unfigured basses in various keys, to be harmonized on the keyboard. Again, I suggest the close position for the beginner.

I must stress that the effectiveness of the exercises depends greatly on the provided fingering. By studying it carefully and acquiring a secure, solid knowledge of the technical, pianistic aspect of it, the student will be able to play, transport and harmonize any melody in any given key.

The exercises presented here are written in various keys. I focused, though, on keys up to four accidentals, since the music education system moves mainly at this level of difficulty. Furthermore, to clearly demonstrate the connection between major and minor keys, exercises in minor keys are similar, with the necessary alterations, to the respective exercises in their relative major keys.

Learning scales, accidentals, major keys, enharmonic scales, and natural, harmonic and melodic minor keys is a laborious and challenging task for the student. To clarify differences and similarities alike, I opted for grouping together the one below the other, all same-name scales, so that the student can easily compare them, distinguish between the various types of scales and eventually secure his/her knowledge of them. The scale tables are presented in Appendix A.

With the same goal in mind, I designed two concise chord tables found in Appendix B. Each table includes name, quality of chord, Roman numeral, root and inversion symbols. The term “altered chords” refers to those chords built on the fourth and second degree of the scale, such as augmented sixth chords, the Neapolitan chord, and the supertonic diminished seventh chord. I would like to point out that I have intentionally given “unconventional” four-part writing and rhythm in certain exercises on borrowed and augmented sixth chords. In my opinion, these solutions help the student not only to grasp the concept of these chords easily but also to play them on any key instrument without difficulty.

To give a more melodious, musical character in the exercises, I offer a more pianistic style of chordal accompaniment in Appendix C. However, I suggest using them only when the student has mastered the exercises as they are written, and is able to play them comfortably and without mistakes.

There remains the pleasant task of acknowledging assistance of all kinds in the writing and publishing of *Keyboard Harmony*. A special thanks goes to my student Evi Kompoura, for her invaluable help in the digitalization of this book. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues, for their valuable comments and suggestions on *Keyboard Harmony*. Last, but not least, I wish to express my warmest thanks to my

exceptional teachers and now colleagues, Yannis Grampas and Constantinos Tsougras, not only for their constructive comments on this book, but also for the vast musical knowledge they offered me since my student days. My gratitude goes to them for opening to me the world of musical creation: a world full of challenges, but also filled with wonderful experiences.

October, 2016
Nick Tsiantas

Chords in Root Position

Chords in Root Position C Major

EXERCISES

1. In the above exercise, symbolize the chords with Roman numerals.
2. Play on the piano three different versions of the following chord progressions, in C major, in close position.

I-V-I	I-IV-I	I-IV-V-I	I-V-VI-V-I	I-III-IV-V-I
I-II-V-I	I-VII-I	I-VI-IV-V-I	I-VI-IV-II-V-I	I-IV-V-VI-V-I

3. Practice on the piano and play by memory the scales of exercises 1 and 6 (Appendix A). Name the key signature and leading tone for each scale; compare each minor melodic scale with its same-name major and minor scales as well.

Chords in Root Position

A minor

EXERCISES

1. In the above exercise, symbolize the chords with Roman numerals.
2. Play on the piano three different versions of the following chord progressions, in A minor, in close position.

I-V-I I-IV-I I-IV-V-I I-V-VI-IV-I I-V-VI-V-I
I-II-V-I I-IV-II-V-I I-VI-IV-II-V-I I-VII-I I-IV-V-VI-V-I

3. Memorize and play on the piano the scales of exercise 6 (Appendix A).

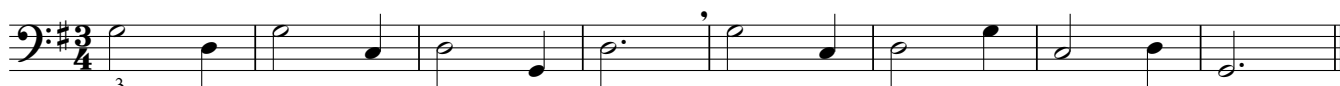
EXERCISES

Figured Bases

Exercise 1



Exercise 2



Exercise 3



Exercise 4



Exercise 5

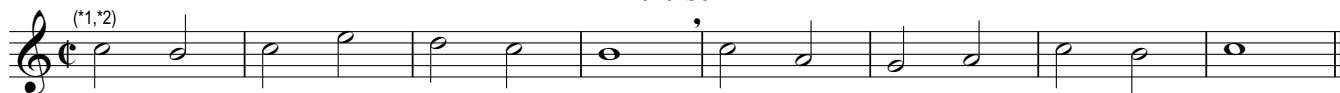


Exercise 6



Melodies

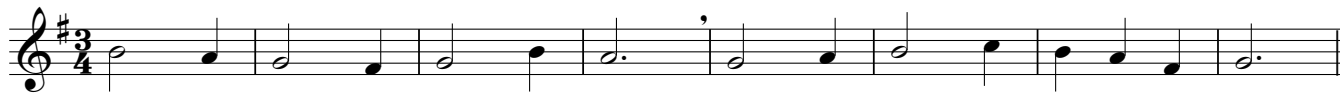
Exercise 1



Exercise 2



Exercise 3



Exercise 4



Exercise 5



Exercise 6



(*1) Start all exercises in close chord position.

(*2) Harmonize the exercises using only primary chords (I-IV-V).

Appendix A

SCALES

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 consists of four staves of music. The first staff is C Major, starting on middle C (C4) and ascending to C5. The second staff is C minor Natural, starting on C4 and ascending to C5. The third staff is C minor Harmonic, starting on C4 and ascending to C5. The fourth staff is C minor Melodic, starting on C4 and ascending to C5. Each staff includes fingering numbers (1, 1, 3) and blue brackets indicating fingerings for the ascending and descending runs.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 consists of four staves of music. The first staff is D Major, starting on D4 and ascending to D5. The second staff is D minor Natural, starting on D4 and ascending to D5. The third staff is D minor Harmonic, starting on D4 and ascending to D5. The fourth staff is D minor Melodic, starting on D4 and ascending to D5. Each staff includes fingering numbers (1, 1, 3) and blue brackets indicating fingerings for the ascending and descending runs.

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 consists of four staves of music. The first staff is E Major, starting on E4 and ascending to E5. The second staff is E minor Natural, starting on E4 and ascending to E5. The third staff is E minor Harmonic, starting on E4 and ascending to E5. The fourth staff is E minor Melodic, starting on E4 and ascending to E5. Each staff includes fingering numbers (1, 1, 3) and blue brackets indicating fingerings for the ascending and descending runs.

Exercise 4

Exercise 4 consists of four staves of music. The first staff is F Major, starting on F4 and ascending to F5. The second staff is F minor Natural, starting on F4 and ascending to F5. The third staff is F minor Harmonic, starting on F4 and ascending to F5. The fourth staff is F minor Melodic, starting on F4 and ascending to F5. Each staff includes fingering numbers (1, 1, 4) and blue brackets indicating fingerings for the ascending and descending runs.

Exercise 5

Exercise 5 consists of four staves of music. The first staff is G Major, starting on G4 and ascending to G5. The second staff is G minor Natural, starting on G4 and ascending to G5. The third staff is G minor Harmonic, starting on G4 and ascending to G5. The fourth staff is G minor Melodic, starting on G4 and ascending to G5. Each staff includes fingering numbers (1, 1, 3) and blue brackets indicating fingerings for the ascending and descending runs.

Appendix B

CHORDS					
Chords	Name	Major scales	Harmonic Minor scales		
I	Tonic	Major (M, maj or +)	Minor (m, min or -)		
II	Supertonic	Minor (m, min or -)	Diminished (dim)		
III	Mediant	Minor (m, min or -)	Augmented (aug)		
IV	Subdominant	Major (M, maj or +)	Minor (m, min or -)		
V	Dominant	Major (M, maj or +)	Major (M, maj or +)		
VI	Submediant	Minor (m, min or -)	Major (M, maj or +)		
VII	Subtonic	Diminished (dim)	Diminished (dim)		
Root position – Inversions and Chord Symbols					
	Root position	First inversion	Second inversion	Third inversion	
7	Root position with 7 th	6 or 6 3	6 4	6 or 4 or 2 4 2	
9 7	Root position with 9 th and 7 th	6 or 6 5 3	6 or 4 4 3	10 or 10 4 2	
13 9 7	Root position with 13 rd , 9 th and 7 th	7 6 5	First inversion with 9 th and 7 th	Third inversion with 9 th and 7 th	
Chord Symbols	II	Capital letters: Major chord			
	ii	Lower case letters: Minor or Diminished chord			
	o	Diminished chord			
	o7	Half diminished chord with 7 th			
	o7+	Full diminished chord with 7 th Raised note			

Appendix C

Suggestions for chordal accompaniment



Keyboard Harmony, one of the most important aspects of the study of harmony, is a significant component of harmony examinations as well. Unfortunately, Greek musical literature still lacks specialized textbooks which provide a complete and in-depth study of the subject; as a result, students not only have great difficulty with harmonizing on the piano, but also perform poorly in the oral part of their harmony graduation examinations. The book that Nikos Tsiantas gives us today is an excellent contribution to the study of harmony; by presenting the material in practical, effective ways, it leads teachers and students alike towards a thorough understanding of the functional laws, underlying logic, and evolution of tonal music.

Giannis Grampas
Musicologist, MSc, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki
Professor of Advanced Theory
Principal of the "Contemporary Conservatoire", Larissa

It is with great pleasure that I received Keyboard Harmony, the two-volume textbook written by Nikos Tsiantas, an exceptional colleague and wonderful friend. The work covers the requirements of harmony courses as defined by the Program of Study. My initial enthusiasm was further enhanced by the quality of the material, its impressive quantity and, moreover, by the author's meticulous handling of a difficult field of study, which has, until now, often been ignored due to the lack of a manual providing sufficient depth and direction. Nikos Tsiantas succeeds in restoring our lost faith in harmonizing accurately and with ease, according to the rules commonly practiced today. He leads the student step-by-step through the chapters, so as to understand the nature of melodic intervals, chord progressions and, indeed, all harmonic phenomena. A marvelous and exemplary feature of the book is the inclusion of all tonalities in the examples, given that the level of pianistic technique and experience varies greatly among students. The gradual overall presentation of the material, at the same time both explicit and musically valid, and the impeccable layout and division of chapters per year of study make Keyboard Harmony a uniquely useful textbook for the teacher, a valuable companion for the student, and an essential part of the libraries of Conservatoires and Music Schools.

Finally, it entrusts the author with the responsibility of, perhaps, more projects in the future. In anticipation, therefore ...

Dimitris Dimopoulos
Professor of Piano and Theory
Pianist, A.R.C.M. London
Principal of "Dimitris Dimopoulos" Conservatoire
Conductor of the Orchestra of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki

This book by Nikos Tsiantas fills a considerable gap in the musical education at Conservatoires in respect of practical application on the piano of tonal harmony and figured bass.

This subject is very important for the completion of harmony courses; it connects theory and practice, introducing students to the sonic aspects of harmony. At the same time, the semi-improvisational nature of harmonizing a melody or bass on the piano offers them an especially useful and valuable skill for their professional musical life -a springboard for any kind of music. Nikos Tsiantas' approach to keyboard harmony, as presented in this handbook, is the result of many years of both teaching experience and practical application. It is designed very carefully, and covers the harmony syllabus progressively in a systematic manner, thus remedying this educational lack in the best way possible. I hope this book will offer constructive, practical knowledge, and become a useful tool not only for teachers of theory but also for students at Conservatoires and Music Schools as well.

Costas Tsougras
Composer, Musicologist

Until recently, Keyboard Harmony was regrettably missing from the bibliography of the Greek conservatory musical education, despite being a basic, mandatory course in the syllabus of American and European Music Departments. With the present two-volume work, Nikos Tsiantas greatly succeeds in filling this gap. "Keyboard Harmony" is a thorough, rich in content and comprehensible book, full of wonderful musical examples. I am certain that the book will provide a valuable addition to the existing conservatory music literature and be valued by our Music Departments as well. Good luck to the new book!

Michalis Oikonomou
Conductor, Composer
Boston University, MM-DMA

I have studied this book in depth and I am deeply impressed. It is written with fascinating simplicity, but is, at the same time, so rich, starting from the very basics, the obvious and the improvisational and reaches the most demanding paths of sound combinations. Here we have the book that was missing from the "busy" daily reality of our harmony instruction. Let us enjoy it, then, and recommend it to our students, honouring our dearest colleague Nikos!

Natassa Papastathi
Professor of Piano, Voice and Theory