

The Harmonic “Environment”

It is recommended that, regardless of compositional style or technique, that the composer endeavour to weave the vocal part and its surrounding parts from the same harmonic threads. Subtly infuse your accompaniment with reference pitches, cues, and other support devices to assist and include the voice part in the expository process.

Set a Short Poem

1. Write a ground bass of 4 – 8 notes.
2. Write a solid triad harmonization above, creating an harmonic rhythm over the ground bass. Intentionally mix up chord types – major, minor, diminished, augmented. Inversions are fine.
3. For each chord, write a 5-7 note scale, using the root of the triad as “doh”: Major – major scale, minor, natural minor scale, augmented – whole tone scale; diminished- diminished/octatonic scale (+2, -2, +2, -2, etc.)
4. Use this as the basis for the setting of this poem.
5. Your song may be set for voice and piano or for voice and two-three instruments.

On This Island

WH Auden

*Look, stranger, on this island now
The leaping light of your delight discovers,
Stand stable here
And silent be,
That through the channels of the ear
May wander like a river
The swaying sound of the sea.*

For both the Scene Setting and the Short Poem assignments, establish your performers NOW, and make plans to get music to them and rehearse before next Wednesday. We will present parts of these assignments next Wednesday, January 27. The emphasis in these assignments is on your ideas and the means to convey them. The emphasis in these assignments is not on the appearance of the notation, but rather its content and accuracy.