

Section 1 – Transcription of Melodies

Solo & Group Performance

Teacher Information

This section has been designed to teach melodic transcription exercises in three and four-part contexts, as required for the Group Performance and Solo Performance Aural and Written Examinations.

It is of utmost importance that the parameters (i.e. what is allowed and what the expectations are for each question type) are known and understood by students undertaking these subjects. Although all the melodic transcription exercises in this book can be undertaken by both Solo and Group Performance students, the **Teacher Pages** (left hand side) indicate which transcriptions are best suited to the parameters of each subject (Solo or Group), as does the chart in this information section.

After the first or second playings of the transcription exercise (at least in the initial stages) students should be encouraged to hum or sing the part to be transcribed. Once the transcription exercise is completed the transcribed part should be sung in solfa, letter names and rhythm names. The other parts could also be sung in this manner (in particular those in the bass clef) to improve the student's inner hearing skills.

Throughout this section, students are encouraged to use a rhythmic shorthand and melodic shorthand method (such as tonic solfa) to dictate the melody first before transcribing it onto the staff provided. This technique has been taught in depth in the Level One and Two books in this series. The rhythmic shorthand taught in these books is by no means the only acceptable version of this, however, it is highly recommended that students have a form of rhythmic shorthand to use whether it be this form or another appropriate version.

Please note: A drums/percussion track may be included in Transcription of Melodies exercises, but will not be notated nor will require transcription (see Melodic Transcription Questions 6, 11 and 16).

Melodic Transcription Exercise Process

The following is a suggested process for students to apply when undertaking this question type. Teachers should work through this process with their students to ensure that they are approaching these tasks thoroughly.

Follow these instructions to complete a Melodic Transcription Exercise.

1. Study the key signature and the notes of the given parts to determine the key before you begin the transcription exercise. Also study the given parts from a harmonic perspective i.e. think about which chords the melody is based on. This can assist in determining the notes in the part to be notated (i.e. notes that belong to the underlying chord progression are likely possibilities). (Note that where the bass part is to be notated, recognition of key and harmonic structure can be more difficult).
2. Before the melody is played for the first time, prepare your shorthand (if required).
3. You will now hear the transcription exercise. The first time you hear the melody try to get the full shorthand of the rhythm and, if possible, the pitch of the last few notes. (These should remain in your memory after the melody has ended).
4. Use the next several repeats of the melody to complete the transcription using your method of shorthand. Note where you hear the tonic or dominant notes, where there are runs or logical leaps such as those found in the tonic triad or other important triads etc.
5. Write your transcription onto the staff before the final playing if possible. You can then use the final playing to check your completed transcription. Be sure to check you have the correct number of beats in each bar. Also check the harmonic viability of the notes you have chosen (i.e. do they "fit" with the notes in the other parts?) In particular check the cadence points and the chord possibilities at these points.
6. If the dictation is in a minor key or a mode, be sure to add the necessary accidentals as required by that key.