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Nine versets on Duke Street. Each verset illustrates one of more of the techniques presented in chapters 2-9.

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Chapter Preview

Basic Symbols

S

Chr

1:1, 2:1, 3:1, 1:2, 1:3

Auxiliary Symbols

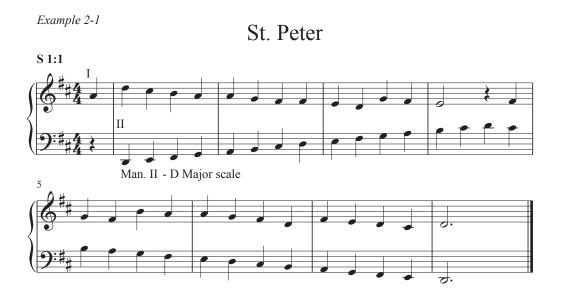
Pp F g

Scales as Harmonic Partners provides additional ways of supporting many hymn tunes.

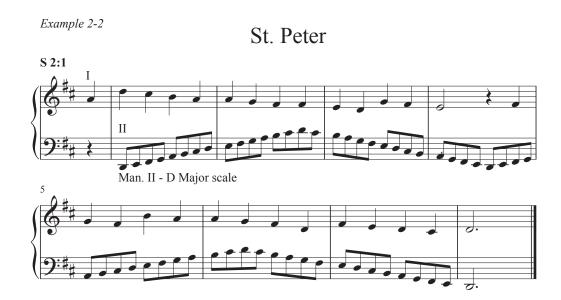
- The scales may be played ascending and descending, or vice versa.
- The scales may be major, minor, or chromatic.
- The relationship or ratio of the scale to the melody may be 1:1; 2:1; 3:1; 1:2; 1:3
- A scale's compass usually spans two-octaves.
- Scales are played by the left hand; the hymn melody is played by the right hand.
- The right hand plays the melody on one manual while the left hand plays the scale on another manual. In some cases, both hands may play on the same manual.
- **Pedal point** may be one among several options that provide variety.

Introduction

Off the Page provided many suggestions and examples for using hymnal harmonizations as the basis for extemporization. By way of contrast, this chapter shows how to use scales as another way to create a hymn-based organ setting. This combination of tune and scale results in a transparent, two-voice texture with simple attractiveness. Using different ratios of scale notes to hymntune notes, this kind of partnering is applicable to major, minor/modal, or chromatic scales.



Playing *Examples 2:1* and 2:2 will quickly introduce you to pairing the same hymn tune with a scale in different ratios. Try them on the organ using a different manual and timbre for each part. The lower voice can be a little softer in character so that it minimizes the repetition of the scale and doesn't overshadow the hymntune.



As you proceed in this chapter, you will become acquainted with pairing different ratios of scale notes to hymntune notes. Various suggestions and tips will help guide you in adapting this technique not only to major scales, but also to minor/modal and chromatic scales.

Visual Assistance: Coordinated Symbols

Several symbols, Basic and Auxiliary, that help one quickly identify key facets pertaining to the **Scales as Harmonic Partners** extemporization technique, are:

Basic symbols

- $\mathbf{S} = \text{Scale}$
- **Chr** = Chromatic Scale
- ratio numbers: e.g. 1:1; 2:1; 3:1; 1:2; 1:3 and so on
- diagonal lines: / \

Auxiliary symbols

These can be within parentheses immediately to the right of the basic symbol to help recall other aspects. If helpful, consider creating your own symbols. Three common auxiliary symbols are:

- Pp for Pedal point: = (Pp)
- a capital letter to identify a major scale: (F) = F major
- a lower case letter for a minor or modal scale: (g) = g minor or mode

Getting Started

Overarching Points of This Technique

This listing includes the most commonly used aspects of adapting scales as harmonic partners with hymn melodies. These are demonstrated in the music illustrations in this chapter.

- Ratios indicate the number of notes played by the left hand (the first number) to the number of notes in the right hand (the second number).
- Scales are played in the left hand and the melody in the right hand; each part is usually played on a separate manual.
- Using two manuals permits contrasting timbres and pitch selections, projecting better clarity and individuality of each part. The use of two manuals eliminates the problematic crossover of parts when the melody goes lower than the upper part of the scale.
- Scale passages commonly use a compass of two octaves; occasionally, single octaves may be used.

- The melodic shape of the opening phrase of the hymntune generally determines where the scale passage begins. Scales are played both ascending and descending, or vice versa, in a continuous and even flow.
- Scales are diatonic and are determined by the key of the hymn. Chromatic scales may also be used.
- Chromatic scales have special potential for use with somber texts and melodies. In some instances they can be considered for symbolic expression or text painting.
- Accidentals, when used in the scale accompaniment, ordinarily accommodate a modulation or key change that occurs on an inner phrase.
- Pedal point (Pp) may be an option. See Off the Page, Chapter 8, pages 139-164.
- Tempo selections are significant. A moderate tempo will tend to minimize some harmonic tensions or dissonances, since the scales move through them somewhat faster. Slower tempos tend to intensify those tensions.
- Though only a few articulations and phrasings are indicated in the music examples, a careful selection and use of them can add interest and musicality to a setting.
- A 2:1 ratio presents some opportunities for using dotted rhythms with scale passages.

Use experimentation and musical sensitivity to guide your choices.

Moving Ahead

An Efficient Start

Depending on your familiarity with diatonic scales, you may wish to review them, especially those most likely to be used (see pages 54 and 55). Referring to these pages, play the scales, descending and ascending as printed, in a continuous flow. Each scale spans a two-octave compass. Then try each, beginning on the lowest note, both ascending and descending. See how they are applied in *Examples 2:1* and 2:2.

If you are already comfortable with scales, and wish to take additional introductory steps, consider trying these:

- Try playing a familiar hymn tune with the right hand without having to totally focus on following the melody in the hymnal. Consider trying a familiar tune in a major key, possibly *Lobe den Herren*.
- Review the scale that is in the same key as the hymn (*Lobe den Herren* is usually in F major). Play a two-octave F major scale with your left hand, descending and ascending. Keep a continuous, unrushed flow. Playing the scale fluently without the support of printed notes is the primary objective. A comfortable hymn tempo, or a little slower, is fine.
- Next, combine the scale and hymn tune by playing quarter notes in the left hand against the different rhythms of the melody in the right hand.

Using a 1:1 Ratio

Now that you have some experience with the 1:1 ratio as found in *Example 2:1*, note that several components can be easily modified to add interest and variety within settings that use this ratio. Some melodies have a distinct or characteristic rhythmic feature — dotted quarters followed by an eighth, as in *Lobe den Herren*. With many of these, maintaining even quarter notes in the scale can be quite satisfying musically. The pattern is easier to play, and the steady, even flow in the lower part provides a pleasant contrast to the more rhythmic, dotted feature in the melody. However, if one wishes some additional contrast, occasionally try altering a pair of quarter notes in the scale to a dotted quarter and an eighth:

This modification can be especially useful for creating some variety when accompanying longer hymntunes, especially those with repeated phrases. See measures 7, 12, 14, 19, and 21 in *Example 2-3, Lobe den Herren*.

Several Additional Suggestions

When objectionable dissonances occur between the scale and hymntune in the initial phrase, one of these approaches may be effective.

- Begin the scale in the opposite direction of the original attempt.
- Begin the scale phrase on an accented beat either before or after the melody enters.
- With the 1:1 ratio, mask parallel intervals by changing the rhythm of the two scale pitches, e.g., to a dotted quarter and an eighth.
- Try a new ratio perhaps 2:1 instead of 1:1, or 1:1 instead of 2:1 or possibly 3:1 for one of the previous ratios.

As you begin, keep in mind that just a little experimentation frequently leads to a satisfying musical solution!

Tunes and Scales in Major

Each of the following examples illustrates how a scale passage can complement or partner with certain aspects of the hymn melody.

Tunes that Begin on an Accented Beat with a Descending Scale

Bold is used here to designate a type of melody whose character and sound project a masculine-like strength, in contrast to tunes designated as yielding, which project an inherent warmth and a gentler character.



Yielding is used here to designate a type of melody whose character and sound project an inherent warmth and a gentler character, in contrast to tunes designated as bold, which project a masculine-like strength.

Example 2-4 – a yielding tune.

