

1. 2.

d d t t | si d d t t | m d d m m | s f f m m r d

9

t t | l l | si f m m r r d t | l l | si m d t | l l | si m m_____ r

choir



CANON IN E MINOR - CHERUBINI

USING THIS CANON

Compiled for the Presto project
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Dublin City University, 2023

FOR DEVELOPING YOUR POLYPHONIC SKILLS

In this canon, we encounter 'si', the raised 7th of E minor, near the beginning, and later the non-raised 'so', as the melody diverts to the relative major, G major, before returning to the original key. Take particular care in learning and placing the interval si-fa (bar 10). It may help to think of the fa as being a semitone above mi, the fifth degree of the key.

Draw on your harmonic awareness to help pitch the melody precisely. For example, in bars 1 and 2, it may be helpful to imagine chords $i - V - i - V$ 'in the background', to help with the accurate placement of the melodic notes. Similarly, at bars 13 and 14, imagining the tonic and dominant chords may help with the secure placement of the leap of a minor 6th from mi up to do.

WITH YOUR CHOIR OR SINGING GROUP

Work in detail on the unison melody before adding the second part, so that the nuances of intonation and movement are well prepared as a strong foundation for polyphonic singing. Take care with challenging leaps, as well as with consistency when returning to a previously sung note. For example, ensure the do at the beginning of bar 3, to which we arrive after an upward leap of a diminished 4th, is exactly the same as the note which opened the piece. Draw on the implied harmonic background to tune the descending line l-s-f-m-r-d in bars 6–8; if helpful, play appropriate bass notes on an instrument to help the singers to place their melodic notes by relating to each bass note.

Encourage the singers to keep a strong feeling for the first and fifth degrees of the key at all times, as these can serve as useful reference points for placing all the notes of the melody.

Experiment with the placement of singers. Try having those singing Part 1 standing together, and those singing Part 2 standing together, and then change the positions so the parts are mixed. This increases the need for close listening, which will ultimately help tuning and blend.

IN THE MUSIC LESSON

Use this canon in the context of learning about music that moves between the minor key and the relative major. Analyse the melody to discover the evidence for modulation, and discuss the effect of the musical changes.