

Accompanying Intonation

When a sacred text is intoned (recited on a single note), a trained keyboardist can improvise an accompaniment to that intonation. Improvised harmonic accompaniment can provide musical variety, a sense of harmonic direction, and even an opportunity for word-painting (illustrating the theological meaning of the text).

A simple example of an intonation accompaniment for the Apostles' Creed is provided below. Please note that:

- The harmony changes once for each new phrase of the Creed. If the harmony were to change much faster than this (say, with every new word) it might be too frenetic and confusing. If it changed much slower (with every couple of phrases), the sense of harmonic variety and direction would stagnate.
- The reciting tone (in this case, the note "G") is always the uppermost sounding note of the accompaniment.
- The accompaniment arrives at the harmonic destination of an E-minor triad at the last phrase of the Creed, "...And the Life everlasting." The E-minor triad contains the next note that the congregation will sing (an "E"), making it easy for them to transition into the "Amen".

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord:

The first system of the musical score shows the intonation accompaniment for the first phrase of the Creed. It consists of three measures. The top staff is a single treble clef with a G4 note, which is sustained across all three measures. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a G4 note in the treble clef and a G2 note in the bass clef, both sustained across all three measures. The lyrics are: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord:"

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate,

The second system of the musical score shows the intonation accompaniment for the second phrase of the Creed. It consists of three measures. The top staff is a single treble clef with a G4 note, which is sustained across all three measures. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a G4 note in the treble clef and a G2 note in the bass clef, both sustained across all three measures. The lyrics are: "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate,"

Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead:

The third system of the musical score shows the intonation accompaniment for the third phrase of the Creed. It consists of three measures. The top staff is a single treble clef with a G4 note, which is sustained across all three measures. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a G4 note in the treble clef and a G2 note in the bass clef, both sustained across all three measures. The lyrics are: "Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead:"

He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost: The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints:

The Forgiveness of sins: The Resurrection of the body;

And the Life everlasting. A - - - - - men.