

MUS 232 Short Piano Composition Assignment

Compose an eight-measure piece for solo piano in a simple, classical style featuring a left hand accompaniment and a right hand melody. The goal of this assignment is to gain experience for basic piano writing (and notation) while incorporating your knowledge of triads, inversions, chord progressions and melodic lines. If there is time, some of these may be "performed" in class (but not by you, unless you want to).

Layout and Format

- You are encouraged to use music notation software to do this assignment, with the hope that you can generate an mp3 audio file version as well (for possible "performance"/playback)
- Include a title and your name
- Make your eight measures fit on two systems of four measures each
- Indent the first system and put a measure number ("5") at the beginning of the second system
- Incorporate tempo and dynamics instructions
- Put a harmonic analysis beneath your staff systems

Composition

- The meter may be 3/4 or 4/4
- The key can be any major or minor key
- Write chords (**triads only**) in the left hand and a mostly single-line melody in the right hand
- For the first four measures (1-4): start with a tonic chord and end with a V chord on a strong beat (making a *half cadence*)
- For the second four measures (5-8): start with any chord and end with V-I/i, with the final tonic chord on a strong beat (making an *authentic cadence*)
- All other chords should follow the normative progression tendencies
- **Do not write more than one or two chords per measure**
- Your melody should be "motivated" by a *motif*, and be fairly simple and playable
- Not all notes in your melody have to be chord tones
- It is ok (see example) if your melody is similar in mm. 1-4 and mm. 5-8 (this is referred to as "parallel phrases"); same for the chords

General

- While this is not a 4-part texture, mind the basic voice leading standards such as
 - avoiding parallel and direct perfects
 - resolving tendency tones
- Make this simple and playable as if it were an exercise from your class piano book—everything should "fit under the hands"
- Your notation (hand or computerized) should be very neat and adhere to all notation conventions—it will count significantly toward your grade

Accompaniment Patterns

Your accompaniment should be simple, playable and in the style of a classical piano piece. Suggested patterns are shown below (all eight are of the same F major chord), but you do not have to use these, or at least not for every single measure. Also, see the complete examples on the next page, which show the same melody accompanied in two different ways. **Occasional (but not exclusive) use of block chords is acceptable.**

The image displays two musical systems, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) in F major (one flat). The first system shows a continuous eighth-note accompaniment pattern in the bass clef, with the right hand (treble clef) having a whole rest. The eighth notes are grouped into four triplets. The second system shows a block chord accompaniment pattern in the bass clef, with the right hand (treble clef) having a whole rest. The block chord is in the bass clef, and the right hand has a single note in the treble clef.

Below are two complete examples with the same melody, but different accompaniment patterns. Only the first example is analyzed. Links to audio versions of these are on the web syllabus.

EXAMPLE 1
(analyzed)

Allegro JK

mf

F: I IV⁶₄ V⁶ I V

5

I ii⁶ V I

EXAMPLE 2
(not analyzed)

Allegro JK

mf

5