

SING AND STRUM: Building Harmonic Skill and Understanding Through Singing and Ukulele

Heather N. Shouldice
Eastern Michigan University
hshouldi@emich.edu

Amy L. Sierzega
Ann Arbor Public Schools
sierzega@a2schools.org

I. Tonal Center (i.e., resting tone/home tone)

A. Sing resting tone.

1. Toy toss

Monkey, Monkey

Beth Bolton

Mon - key, mon-key up in a tree, coun - ting the co - co - nuts, one two three.
Mon - key, mon-key up in a tree, bet - ter not fall down. You can't catch me!

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The notes are simple, using quarter and eighth notes, with rests. The lyrics are written below the notes.

©Copyright Bestbael Music 2019

2. Other resting tone activity ideas:

- Pop bubbles
- Jumping (sing r.t. when you land)
- Resting tone “button”
- Hoberman sphere
- Bean bag drop (or die-cut foam shape, etc.)

B. Play resting tone.

II. Resting Tone Ostinato

A. Sing resting tone ostinato.

Donkeys Love Carrots

Traditional

Don - keys like to munch on car - rots. Car - rots don't like that at all.
Hee - haw, hee - haw, List - en to the don - key's call!

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The notes are simple, using quarter and eighth notes, with rests. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Other songs that work with RT ostinato:

- “Bow Wow Wow”
- “Are You Sleeping?”
- “It Rained a Mist”
- “Rain Drops”
- “Sally Go Round the Sun”
- “Thou Poor Bird” (“Ah, Poor Bird”)

B. Play resting tone ostinato.

III. Tonic/Dominant Bordun/Ostinato

A. Sing I-V ostinato (parallel, alternating).

Other songs that work with I-V ostinato:

- “My Pony Bill”
- “Nanny Goat”
- “Row Your Boat”
- “Up the Hickory”
- Most of the songs above for RT ostinato!

B. Play I-V ostinato (parallel or alternating).

IV. Tonic/Dominant Functions

A. Sing

1. Sing tonal patterns (on neutral syllables, then solfege).
2. Label/recognize tonic/dominant function.
3. “Translate” patterns (associate solfege).

Rig a Jig Jig

Traditional

As I was walk-ing down the street, down the street, down the street, a friend of mine I hap-pened to meet, hi - ho, hi-ho, hi - ho! Rig a jig jig and a - way we go, a - way we go, a - way we go. Rig a jig jig and a - way we go, hi - ho, hi-ho, hi - ho!

B. Play/reinforce function skills with ukulele

V. Tonic/Dominant Chords

A. Sing chord roots/chord tones and label function.

Hello, Everybody!

Eunice Holsaert
Charity Bailey

Hel - lo, ev-'ry-bod - y, yes in - deed, __ yes in - deed, __ yes, in - deed. __

Let's make mus - sic, yes in - deed, __ Yes in - deed my friend!

Copyright © 1955, Plymouth Music Co., Inc. Used with permission.

Other songs with simple tonic/dominant chord progressions:

- “Hey Lolly, Lolly, Lo” (JRI 3)
- “Go In and Out the Window” (JRI 2)
- “My Hat”/“Oh, Where Has My Little Dog Gone” (JRI 2)
- “Rig a Jig Jig”/“Biddy, Biddy”/“What Shall We Do When We All Go Out” (JRI 1/3/1)
- “Joshua” (JRI 3)
- “Bow Belinda”/“Sandy Land” (JRI 2/4)
- “Leaves Are Falling” (Unknown)

B. Play chords

C. Add additional chord functions/progressions/tonalities!

1. i-VII songs (O Sinner Man—JRI, Polar Bear—J. Bailey)
2. I-VII songs (“Seasons Round”--H. Shouldice)

Seasons Round

Heather N. Shouldice

Swir - ling 'round, the au-tumn leaves blow, gi - ving way to the fall - ing snow.

Spring, the flo - wers bloom and grow. Round and round the sea - sons go.

3. I-II-V songs (“Lydian Hello”—Unknown)
4. i-vii-II songs (“Monkey Monkey”--B. Bolton)

VI. Tonal Improvisation Over Chords/Progression

A. Patterns

1. Improvise tonic patterns
2. Improvise tonic patterns over tonic ostinato (chorded on uke)
3. Add more pattern functions!

B. Melodies

1. Improvise an ending (“Unfinished Song”—H.N. Shouldice)

Unfinished Song

Heather N. Shouldice

Swing feel

The musical notation is written on two staves in treble clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major). The time signature is 6/8. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The first four measures of the second staff are identical to the first four measures of the first staff, followed by four measures of whole rests.

2. Improvise over chord roots to a familiar song:
 - a) Sing/play chord roots.
 - b) Sing song over chord roots.
 - c) Sing chord tones over chord roots.
 - d) Improvise new melody over chord roots!

VII. Songwriting Using Chords/Progression

- A. Create a melody over a given progression (from chant, poem, etc.)
- B. Students create a progression over which to create a melody
- C. Songwriting from scratch!

References/Resources

- Bolton, B. M. (2019). *Musicianship*. Bestbael Music. *Katangaroo* and *Fives, Sevens, and Crazy Eights* also available. (Contact Dr. Bolton at bolton.beth@gmail.com to purchase her materials.)
- Guilbault, D. M. (2009). The effects of harmonic accompaniment on the tonal improvisations of students in first through sixth grade. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 57(2), 81-91.
- Shouldice, H. N. (2020). Research to real life: Practical applications of music education research for teachers. Retrieved from <https://everydaymusicality.com/research-to-real-life-blog>
- Taggart, C. C., Bolton, B. M., Reynolds, A. M., Valerio, W. H., & Gordon, E. E. (2000). *Jump right in: The music curriculum*. Chicago: GIA Publications.