

Monteverdi Gloria for 8 voices M 24

Explore a passage in the Gloria applying what you've learned in Activity 23 to understand how Monteverdi uses chords to help express the words. You might want to listen to this passage on a recording after you have absorbed the information so you can listen with more awareness to what is going on. It's at 2.10 on the Youtube recording. Then you could play the chords on the online player to concentrate on them.

It's the section that starts in bar 39. To save clutter, just Choir 1's music is written out. Choir 2 has the same chords - and, most importantly, the same notes at the bottom. This short-score layout shows clearly how detached the bass notes are from the other parts. Acoustically, this works best, especially in a very resonant acoustic like St Mark's.

All the chords are named for you. RP means Root Position. 1st In means First Inversion. Don't worry about the coloured notes. They are suspensions. Activity 29 explains them.

Monteverdi sets up a harmonic rhythm - changing the chord every half bar. That makes for lots of energy.

Notice how the in the first section, all the chords are in root position. That creates a jumpy bass line, but makes the music very positive and affirmatory - suiting the words. "Gratias" onwards is gentler - there are some first inversions, making a smoother bass line. The prayer-like "Domine" section starts with an A minor chord - right after a glorious A major one. It carries on with mainly minor chords, changing only once a bar. Everything calms down.

G maj RP D min RP A min RP E maj RP A maj RP D maj RP G maj RP

lau-da-mus te, be-ne di-ci-mus te, a-do-ra-mus te, glo-ri-fi-ca-mus te, la-da-mus te, be-ne-di-ci-mus

lau-da-mus te, be-ne di-ci-mus te, a-do-ra-mus te, glo-ri-fi-ca-mus te, la-da-mus te, be-ne-di-ci-mus

C maj RP G maj RP D maj RP D maj RP G maj RP E maj RP A maj 1st In D maj RP

te, a-do-ra-mus te, a-do-ra-mus te, glo-ri-fi-ca-mus te. Gra-ti-as a-gi-mus ti-bi

te, a-do-ra-mus te, a-do-ra-mus te, glo-ri-fi-ca-mus te. Gra-ti-as a-gi-mus ti-bi

G maj 1st In C maj RP A min RP E maj RP A maj RP

prop-ter ma-gnam glo-ri-am, glo-ri-am tu-am.

prop-ter ma-gnam glo-ri-am, glo-ri-am tu-am.

A min RP E min RP D min 1st In E maj RP

Do-mi-ne, Do-mi-ne De-us.

Do-mi-ne, Do-mi-ne De-us.