

# This &\$@#! arrangement! NOW what do I do with it!

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So... **you bought the song and it doesn't quite seem to work for you.....**

Or..... maybe you want to take it up a notch??

**Identify what isn't working**- this may sound rather basic- but try to narrow down exactly what the problems are. **Learn how to spot these issues..... to be able to anticipate difficulties.**

You may be able to fix **some of the issues** ..... **if** the problems are little and **if there aren't so** many places and **if it's** not too overwhelming.

Also, work on Vocal Skills to better handle some of the arrangements demands!

But in the meantime- **your song may need some 'fixes'** to make it more singable.  
What can you do?

Is this the right key for your singers? Can you move it up or down?  
Are the voicings too high or low? Are they too spread to maintain musicality?  
Lots of accidentals? Tricky chromatics? Jumpy voice leading?  
Fast passages that are too fast?  
Tricky rhythms/ syncopations -- too much to handle easily and need smoothing out?  
Key change a challenge?  
No place to breathe?  
Tempo[s] not within your skill set?

OR do you want to take it up a notch?

Add lead-ins, pick-ups [in any voice part]  
Revoice some places  
**Do it a different way the 'second time' through**  
Put in a Bell chord, solo, patter  
Find color words and add inflections/ textures  
Someplace begging for a swipe?  
Find places to add more musical tension  
Need a key change?  
Add syncopations, tempo change/ stomp or variation  
Add some rap?  
Need a splashier tag or intro?  
Add some visual influence, audience participation or story set-up...

**The moral of the story.....**

Always try to pick arrangements that are a good match for your ensemble's vocal skills, but sometimes there are songs we love so much we go ahead and get the song anyway! Always keep on working to improve your singing! And learn to fix stuff on your own [or come up with ideas of what to do/ take out] and/or make an arranger your new best friend!

# Why Is That So Hard To Sing?

The Intro of a song that a small chorus is preparing for contest is just not working for them.

## DISLIKES

- Leads can't find F# pickup
- Harmony Part leaps awkward
- Difficult to tune
- Descending end of Intro

## LIKES

- Wants to keep Intro lyric
- Wants to keep 4 measures

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **VOICE LEADING** Linear progression of part lines in vocal music
- **TONALITY** Key center based on a specific diatonic scale
- **IMPLIED HARMONY** Chords that arise from a melody & key center
- **CADENCE** Resolution that concludes a phrase, section, song

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- **VOICE LEADING** Are the part lines smooth?
- **TONALITY** Is the key stable?
- **IMPLIED HARMONY** Are chord choices compatible with key center?
- **CADENCE** Is resolution at end of Intro comfortable/singer/listener?

### VOICE LEADING

- Are the part lines smooth?
- **No – There are awkward leaps – try voicing first 3 chords in upper octave.**

### TONALITY

- Is the key stable? Spell all chords correctly then:
  - Write down all pitches in the Intro
  - Separate pitches of the Eb scale
  - Identify the leftover pitches and evaluate

## TONALITY (continued)

- Is the key stable?
- **No – Due to introduction of the B7 chord, there is Tonal Ambiguity – find a chord to substitute for B7 that is closer to the Eb tonal center.**

## IMPLIED HARMONY

- Are all chord choices compatible with the key center?
  - Look at all the chords created with those leftover pitches:

Am7(b5) -- aka F9 aka Cm6

Eb7/Eb9

Fm7(b5)

B7

## IMPLIED HARMONY (continued)

- Determine how they relate to Eb key center:

Am7(b5) is from the Bb Scale -- Circle of 5ths Neighbor

Eb7 is from the Ab Scale -- Circle of 5ths Neighbor

Fm7(b5) is from the Eb minor scale -- the Parallel minor scale of Eb Major

B7 is the Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord of the key of E and is a Tritone Substitution for F7, the Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord of the key of Bb. B7 and F7 are Opposites on the Circle of 5ths.

- Are all chord choices compatible with the key center?
- **Yes –But try finding a substitute for B7 that is more closely related to the key of Eb. (B7 is a tritone substitution for F7)**

## Review So Far

### Problems to Solve

1. Awkward Leaps in measures 1 – 3
2. Tonal Ambiguity due to B7 in measure 2
3. Need chords closer to Eb key center in measure 3
4. Want an ascending end to the Intro in measure 4

### Things to Try

1. Voicing first 3 chords in upper octave
2. Borrowing chord from more closely related scale
3. Using a tritone substitution for B7

### Results

1. Modify melody and revoice measures 1-2
2. Replace B7 with Fm7(b5) from Eb minor scale
3. Change Lead pickup to Ab (double with Tenor)
4. Replace B7 with F7 in measure 3
5. Give Lead a Bb post in measure 4 with echo from Harmony Parts (Dim 7 and Bb7)

# CADENCE

## Cadence Considerations

- A Cadence is used to signal the ending of one section of a song and the beginning of a new section.
- The V7-I or Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> to Tonic Cadence makes a very clear signal.
- When a clear signal doesn't happen in a timely fashion, the resolution to the tonic is said to be delayed.
- Such a delay leaves both the singer and the listener unsure.

## Cadence Question to Answer

- Is the resolution at the end of Intro comfortable for the singer and listener?
- **No – The V7 – I is delayed to the downbeat of measure 6 (the second measure of the Verse).**

## Review with Cadence

### **Problems to Solve**

1. Advance I of Cadence to downbeat of Verse
2. Smooth transition from Intro end to Verse

### **Things to Try**

1. Change first chord of Verse to Eb
2. Add lyric/chord for beat 4 of measure 4

### **Results**

1. Cadence resolves on downbeat of Verse
2. Bb7 inversion leads to open voiced Eb chord

# Final Review

## **VOICE LEADING**

- Revoiced chords to remove awkward Leaps
- Created ascending end to Intro

## **TONALITY**

- Borrowed Fm7(b5) chord from Eb minor scale to replace B7 in measure 2 and eliminate tonal ambiguity
- Created Lead pickup now easy to find

## **IMPLIED HARMONY**

- Substituted F7 for B7 in measure 3 (F7 is the TS for B7 and more closely related to Eb)

## **CADENCE**

- Advanced V7 to I resolution