

# MAKING MUSICAL DECISIONS

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STUDENT **CREATIVITY**  
IN THE CHORAL CLASSROOM



# MAKING MUSICAL DECISIONS

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STUDENT **CREATIVITY**  
IN THE CHORAL CLASSROOM

## **CREATIVITY**

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What?  
Why?  
Who?  
When?  
Where?  
How?

**LET'S  
SING!**

Pre-activity

TEACHER INSIGHT

Skill Learning Sequence	Teacher Gives	Students Respond
Imitation on a neutral syllable	neutral	neutral
Imitation using assigned syllables	syllable	syllable
Aural-Oral labeling	neutral	★ syllable

(<http://gjml.org/mlt/lsa-sls/>)

LET'S  
SING!

A musical staff with two horizontal lines. Below the staff, the notes Do, Fa, Sol, and Do are written in a light blue color. The notes are positioned at the bottom of the staff, with Do at the far left and far right, Fa in the middle-left, and Sol in the middle-right.

A musical staff with two horizontal lines. Below the staff, the notes Mi, Do, Re, and Mi are written in a light pink color. The notes are positioned at the bottom of the staff, with Mi at the far left and far right, Do in the middle-left, and Re in the middle-right.

Sol                      La                      Ti                      Do

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Sol                      La                      Ti                      Do

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Mi                      Do                      Re                      Mi

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Do                      Fa                      Sol                      Do

Sol                      La                      Ti                      Do

---

Mi                      Do                      Re                      Mi

---

Do                      Fa                      Sol                      Do

**TEACHER INSIGHT**

Sol	Do	Re	Sol
Mi	La	Ti	Mi
Do	Fa	Sol	Do
I	IV	V	I

TEACHER INSIGHT

Simple Chord Progressions

I	V	I	V
I	IV	V	I
I	IV	I	V
I	V	vi	IV

TEACHER INSIGHT

Simple Chord Progressions

Sol	Do	Sol	Re
Mi	La	Mi	Ti
Do	Fa	Do	Sol
I	IV	I	V

Do	La	Sol	Ti
Mi	Do	Mi	Re
Do	Fa	Do	Sol

# ACTIVITY

Steps & Guiding Questions for Students

*Instructional Thoughts & Asides for Teachers*

## ACTIVITY

- 1) Sing through each line as a group.
- 2) Decide who will sing what part (line).
  - a) Have each part sing their line to make sure everyone feels confident on the line they're singing!
  - b) Put all parts together. (You could try different combinations of two parts or just go for all three!)

.....

*These instructions: YOU determined the number of beats dedicated to each chord.*

## ACTIVITY

*These instructions: STUDENTS determined the number of beats dedicated to each chord.*

.....

- 1) Sing through each line as a group.
- 2) **Make a musical decision!** How many beats will be dedicated to every chord? (2, 3, or 4?)
  - a) Have each part sing their line to make sure everyone sings their chord pitch the correct number of times for each chord! (Each pitch in the line 2, 3, or 4 times)
  - b) Put all parts together. (Try all three! You can always go back and try two at a time.)

.....

*This is a perfect checkpoint for success!*

## ACTIVITY

Now that you've heard that chord progression with every chord pitch sounding on every beat, **get creative!**

- 3) What should the rhythm for each part be? (Remember the "**Beat 1 Root Rule!**")
  - a) Try having *one part* sing their chord pitches on a different rhythm within the [number/number options of] beats dedicated to each chord. Next, combine that with the other parts to see how your progression sounds with the new rhythm!
  - b) Do you want another part to have a similar rhythm? A different rhythm? Try different rhythms and combinations until you like how your progression sounds with all parts. (Remember to isolate and practice the new rhythm first, then put the parts together! You can repeat this until you like how it sounds!)

## ACTIVITY

*You could extend the activity by including guiding questions about dynamics and articulation; however, be sure you've had a "checkpoint for success" with the addition of the new rhythmic factors.*

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Let's hear all of the different arrangements you created!

The Lion Sleeps Tonight

Key: D Level 2



**Intro:**

D G D  
Dee deede dee dee, dee dee-dee dee, de-wee-um, um, a-weh  
(D) G D A  
Dee deede dee dee, dee dee-dee dee, de-wee-um, um, a-weh

**Bridge:**

(D) G  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D A7  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D G  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D A7  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh--

**Verse 1:**

D G D A7  
In the jun-gle, the migh-ty jun-gle , The li-on sleeps to-night;  
D G D A7  
In the jungle, the mighty jungle, The li-on sleeps to-night

**Chorus:**

D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh-  
D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh-

**Verse 2:**

D G D A7  
Near the vil-lage, the qui-et vil-lage, The li-on sleeps to-night  
D G A7  
Near the vil-lage, the qui-et vil-lage, The li-on sleeps to-night

repeat **Chorus.**

**Verse 3:**

D G D A7  
Hush my dar-ling, don't fear my dar-ling, The li-on sleeps to-night  
D G D A7  
Hush my dar-ling, don't fear my dar-ling, The li-on sleeps to-night

repeat **Chorus;** then:

D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh (fade)

www.cathyschords.com

**Bridge:**

(D) G  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D A7  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D G  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D A7  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh--

Small steps of success—start with a verse &/or chorus

**Verse 1:**

D G D A7  
In the jun-gle, the migh-ty jun-gle , The li-on sleeps to-night;  
D G D A7  
In the jungle, the mighty jungle, The li-on sleeps to-night

**Chorus:**

D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh-  
D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh-



**Verse 2:**

D G D A7  
Near the vil-lage, the qui-et vil-lage, The li-on sleeps to-night  
D G D A7  
Near the vil-lage, the qui-et vil-lage, The li-on sleeps to-night

repeat **Chorus.**

Lead Sheets, Lyric Sheets, Something Else?

The Lion Sleeps Tonight

Key: D Level 2



**Intro:**

D G D  
Dee deede dee dee, dee dee-dee dee, de-wee-um, um, a-weh  
(D) G D A  
Dee deede dee dee, dee dee-dee dee, de-wee-um, um, a-weh

**Bridge:**

(D) G  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D A7  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D G  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
D A7  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh--

**Verse 1:**

D G D A7  
In the jun-gle, the migh-ty jun-gle , The li-on sleeps to-night;  
D G D A7  
In the jungle, the mighty jungle, The li-on sleeps to-night

**Chorus:**

D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh-  
D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh-

Teacher Eyes/Brain

**Verse 2:**

D G D A7  
Near the vil-lage, the qui-et vil-lage, The li-on sleeps to-night  
D G A7  
Near the vil-lage, the qui-et vil-lage, The li-on sleeps to-night

repeat **Chorus.**

**Verse 3:**

D G D A7  
Hush my dar-ling, don't fear my dar-ling, The li-on sleeps to-night  
D G D A7  
Hush my dar-ling, don't fear my dar-ling, The li-on sleeps to-night

repeat **Chorus;** then:

D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh (fade)

www.cathyschords.com

The Lion Sleeps Tonight



**Intro:**

D G D  
Dee deede dee dee, dee dee-dee dee, de-wee-um, um, a-weh  
Dee deede dee dee, dee dee-dee dee, de-wee-um, um, a-weh

**Bridge:**

A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh  
A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh A-wim-a-weh--

**Verse 1:**

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In the jun-gle, the migh-ty jun-gle , The li-on sleeps to-night;  
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**Chorus:**

We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh-  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh-

**Verse 2:**

D G D A7  
Near the vil-lage, the qui-et vil-lage, The li-on sleeps to-night  
D G A7  
Near the vil-lage, the qui-et vil-lage, The li-on sleeps to-night

repeat **Chorus.**

**Verse 3:**

D G D A7  
Hush my dar-ling, don't fear my dar-ling, The li-on sleeps to-night  
D G D A7  
Hush my dar-ling, don't fear my dar-ling, The li-on sleeps to-night

repeat **Chorus;** then:

D G D A7  
We-eee - ee-ee-ee- ee um, um, a-weh (fade)

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You got creative with that chord progression...now what?

- ▶ Chord progression determined by the teacher
- ▶ 3 vocal lines determined by teacher to capture chord progression
- ▶ Students made musical decisions to transform progression from simply block chords to a progression that included rhythmic patterns within parts and rhythmic variation between parts
  - ▶ Extended: Students made musical decisions regarding dynamics and articulation/style
- ▶ Students shared their arrangement of the chord progression with peers
- ▶ Teacher connected the chord progression to a familiar song

## Create your own cover of a familiar song!

- ▶ *Foundation: previously arranged chord progression*
- ▶ *Students select a song they will cover from options provided by teacher (one verse and/or chorus only)*
- ▶ *Students make musical decisions to create another arrangement of the chord progression [that includes rhythmic patterns within parts and rhythmic variation between parts]*
  - ▶ *Extend: Include dynamics and articulation/style*
- ▶ *Students make musical decisions regarding how to incorporate the melody into their chordal accompaniment*
  - ▶ *Extend: Vary the chordal accompaniment from verse to chorus*
- ▶ *Students share their arrangement of the chord progression with peers*

"The Lion  
Sleeps Tonight"

Harmonic  
Rhythm

"Try Everything"  
from Zootopia

???  
Endless Options!

Order of Chords  
in Progression

Less  
"Prescriptive"

## RESOURCES ON MY WEBSITE

- ▶ [These presentation slides \(PDF\)](#)
- ▶ [3-part solfège PDFs for simple chord progressions](#)
  - ▶ [Line - by - line](#)
  - ▶ [All 3 lines \(3 melodic lines\)](#)
  - ▶ [All 3 lines divided into chord progression visually](#)
- ▶ [Lead sheets, lyric sheets](#)
- ▶ [Links to websites that list songs that use only certain chords or chord progressions](#)
- ▶ [My contact information](#)



Foster

**CREATIVITY**

by creating opportunities for students to make  
**musical decisions**  
within set parameters  
and at every developmental stage

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

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You can find these slides as well as  
other supplementary materials  
on my website.

I'd love to chat!