

DISPLAY COPY

Harmony, Melody and Rhythm in Esperanza Spalding's Samba Em Preludio Study Task

Objective: To engage with and describe Esperanza Spalding's use of harmony, melody and rhythm in her performance of Samba Em Preludio.

Introduction

Listen to excerpts from 'Pelo Telefone' (released 1917 by Donga), 'Impressions' (composed 1962 by John Coltrane), and 'Samba Em Preludio' (composed 1962 by Baden Powell de Aquino) and complete the sentences below.

*Samba Em Preludio, composed in 1962 by Baden Powell de Aquino, is an example of ***bossa nova** ('new trend') music, a style developed in ***Brazil** during the ***1960s**. It combines:

*Elements of ***Latin American** music, especially the ***Afro-Brazilian** tradition of ***samba**, including ***syncopated** rhythmic ostinati, layered to create ***polyrhythms** and ***cross-rhythms**,
*With elements of North American / Western ***jazz**, including complex ***extended** and ***altered** chords with ***improvisation**.

*The origins of all three styles are found in the traditional music of ***West Africa**, especially traditional singing and drumming ensembles. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, African and European cultures combined in the Americas as a result of the dehumanising and genocidal transatlantic ***slave trade**.

Use the following word bank to help you:

1960s, Afro-Brazilian, altered, bossa nova, Brazil, cross-rhythms, extended, improvisation, jazz, Latin American, samba, polyrhythms, slave trade, syncopated, West Africa

Starter Activity: Recreating the harmonies of Samba Em Preludio

Study Samba Em Preludio B.23-30 (the beginning of Verse 2). To better understand the types of chord used, build and recreate them at a keyboard. (The chord progression has been slightly simplified to one chord per bar).

Use the following word bank to help you:

Altered, augmented, diminished, extended, major, minor, voicing

Melody

1. These are the most familiar type of 3-note chord. They are known as _____ and _____ triads. Some are _____ chords*.

*Also known as chromatic chords: chords from outside the key

Exercise 1

2. These chords are still triads, but have been changed to include _____ and _____ chords.

Exercise 2

3. These chords have been developed with notes above the triad. They are known as _____ chords.

These chords are built by placing on top of each other the triad, 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th etc. Consider playing with your left and right hand together.

In reality, however, the convention is to omit some notes (shown in brackets).

Exercise 3

4. These are the chords actually used. Following convention, notes are not only omitted but also re-ordered, known as _____ the chords.

Exercise 4

Bass note

Melody

The melody is performed mainly by the ***female voice**, creating a ***melody dominated homophonic** texture, using a vocal register which is mainly ***low** in pitch (a low tessitura) and with mainly ***syllabic** text setting.

The vocal melody of verse 1 is comparatively ***disjunct**, based on an ***ascending** motif outlining the notes of the chord, repeated in inexact ***descending sequence**, some of which include ***chromatic** notes (such as E#), sung with free ***rubato** rhythms.

The vocal melody of verse 2 in comparison is mainly ***conjunct**, with ***syncopated** rhythms. It begins with a recurring ***long (sustained)** note (a push rhythm) and ***stepwise, *descending** motif, (outlining the tonic chord) followed by a pattern containing ***repeated** pitches, especially ***blue** notes. Following an *** leap**, the descending motif is repeated at a *** pitch**. The verse concludes with a *****.

The *** guitar solo** is more complex and virtuosic in comparison, with *** note lengths** and a much wider *** range**.

Harmony and Tonality

The song is in the key of ***** with harmony characterised by complex *** chords** typical of ***** and *****. Although based on the *** chords *** (Bm, Em and F#) the harmony is developed with common features of jazz including:

*** chords**, such as ***** - examples include B.23 Bm11, B.26 F#7 and B.27 Cmaj7b9,

*** or * chords** (from outside the key), including ***** and ***** chords, often containing *** notes** (chromatic notes from the *** scale**) – examples include B.35 G#dim7 containing F natural and B.42 F#7(#5) containing D natural,

***And * chords**, used in chord progressions between or to replace more common chords – examples include B.33 A#dim7/B to replace F#.

Rhythm, Tempo and Metre

Typical of the style, the time signature is $\frac{6}{8}$, performed at a $\frac{3}{4}$ bossa nova tempo. The song begins, however, in $\frac{4}{4}$ tempo with many speech-like $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythms, creating $\frac{3}{4}$ between the $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$ rhythms of the voice and accompaniment. Before verse 1, the $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm begins in the bass and continues through most of the song. The $\frac{3}{4}$ vocal melody continues to create $\frac{3}{4}$ against the accompaniment.

Use the following word bank to help you:

I IV and V, $\frac{4}{4}$, 7ths 9ths and 11ths, altered, ascending arpeggio, augmented, B minor, blue, blues, bossa nova, chromatic, conjunct, cross-rhythms, descending, descending sequence(s), diminished, disjunct, dissonant, dotted, duplet, extended, free, higher, jazz, long (sustained), low, melody dominated homophonic, moderato, octave, primary, repeated, rubato, solo voice, stepwise, substitution, syncopated, syllabic, triplet

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Listen to the following extract which will be played three times

(a) Name the instrument that accompanies the voice at the **start** of the extract. (1)

(b) Describe the tonality at the **start** of the extract. (1)

(c) Describe the vocal melody from where the second instrument enters. (3)

(d) Identify the metre of this extract.

(e) This song fuses elements of Brazilian music with elements of jazz. Describe three features of the harmony that are characteristic of jazz.