

# Harmony Comes Together-Book1

by Margaret Brandman

Published by Jazzem Music. Reviewed by Wendy Armstrong

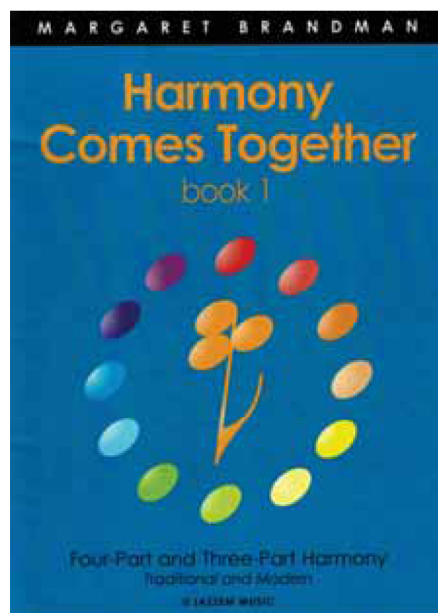
**M**argaret Brandman is a well-known and widely-published Australian music educator and composer with over 30 years experience and is the major contributing writer to the AMEB's *Music Craft Student Workbook*. Accordingly, she is well placed to understand the educational and motivational needs of students in what is a most challenging area of music teaching and learning—harmonic writing.

*Harmony Comes Together* is a comprehensive workbook that aims to develop knowledge and understanding of harmonisation in both vocal and piano styles that will prepare students for examinations, or simply for their own composing and arranging. There may also be teachers who are not as adept at harmony as they might want to be, and this publication may be just what is needed to inspire and enable them to undertake their own ensemble arrangements! Spiral bound in A4 size, with a sturdy cover, *Harmony Comes Together* is a handy professional reference.

A series of tutorial sections is followed by exercises for completion. It can be used both for self-instruction or to teach from. The format makes it very useful in the school setting, allowing teachers to spend time with individuals while having set exercise for other students to work on at their own pace. Some exercises have the answers at the back of the book for self-correction, and exercises are colour coded to ensure that the task of marking is simple and easy. However, one colleague commented that, as a student workbook, additional exercises would be needed for the publication to be listed as a required text—perhaps a book of supplementary exercises would be helpful. This is a wonderful resource for more senior students—however, at a price of \$49.95, it is comparatively expensive.

The book's presentation is appealing, with clear print, highlighted headings, and boxed annotations. A student commented that, being new to harmony, she particularly appreciated the sections—and accompanying 'mind maps' on what to avoid and what to aim for. Graphics such as a skull and cross-bones to indicate sounds to avoid, and a smiley face for a preferred option, provide a refreshing alternative to the overcrowded and dry-as-dust presentation of some more dated theory and harmony textbooks.

Another appealing feature of *Harmony Comes Together* is that it endeavours to cross the boundaries of classical, jazz and contemporary harmony. For example, the book gives an explanation of the relationship between parallel harmonies of



Gregorian chant, and the appropriate use of similar harmonies in the contemporary context, yet points out that it is inappropriate within traditional four-part harmony. The book refers to examples in traditional, jazz and contemporary styles, with notated examples of traditional British folk songs being provided—however, it would have been good to find some Australian examples!

The inclusion of both English and American terminology, together with clear definitions at the beginning of the book, as well as both traditional chord figuring and chord symbols, is useful from cross-cultural and cross-stylistic perspectives.

*Harmony Comes Together* focuses on root position harmony to develop a clear understanding of the effects of chord

progression without the distraction of inversions. Although the topics are logically sequenced for working through from beginning to end, the book is also a great reference for practising aural skills, with the ability to turn, for example, to the cadence section to find examples to play. A pleasing feature is that playing and listening are encouraged throughout the exercises, which promotes a Gestalt approach (a whole view) of seeing, hearing and understanding.

I found myself being side-tracked into completing exercises along the way, rather than continuing my review of this book ... now that's a good sign! I particularly recommend *Harmony Comes Together* as a most useful teacher reference. **MIA**

*Thanks to our reviewer, Amanda Armstrong, an instrumental teacher with the School of Instrumental Music in Western Australia, and class music teacher at Donnybrook District High School.*

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