

# Elemental Bridges to FUNctional Harmony

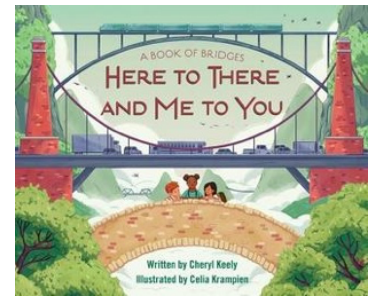
MFC Vol III, pg. 36, #10  
Process by Drue Bullington

The actual Bridge of Avignon explored playfully will reveal the “frozen music of architecture” in new movements, melodies, and a I-V bass line. This Volume III piece provides a structured pathway to FUNctional harmony!

## Activating Prior Knowledge, Curiosity, and Wonder

Invite students to discuss what they know about bridges, what they are for, how do they work, etc. Share this book by Cheryl Keely (used with permission), “Here to There and Me to You.” This gives learners an opportunity to fill their imaginations with different kinds of bridges.

In free space, invite students to explore how they can shape their bodies like the bridges in the images that will be shared with them. There will also be music to listen to, so talking or communicating will need to be non-verbal. If the learners would like to connect with another mover, they may.



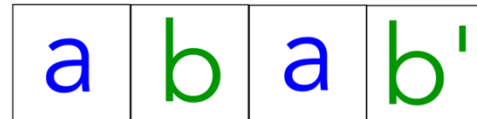
Music: [“Bridges.” by Bill Staines](#) (Used with permission - QR Code for the YouTube Video)



Use these images of some bridges that your students are familiar with and/or famous bridges images in movement and vocal improvisations.

## Create

Each partner should create a movement and a vocal sound for a particular aspect of the bridge image. Combine these into this elemental form:



Share these in some way. It could be half share, half observe and listen.

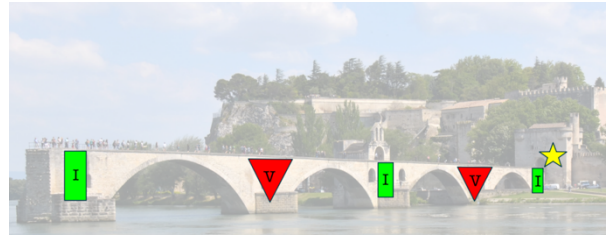
## Connect Prior Knowledge to New Learning

Here is a famous bridge located in Avignon, France. What do you notice about this bridge?

Ask students to discuss the aspects of this bridge. Draw special attention to the piers and the arches.



Teacher points to the piers, and when this happens, the students pat their legs. The teacher should point this rhythm beginning with the first pier on the right, travel left to the outermost part of the bridge and then return back to the gate-house.



The rhythmic visual is not for the students to see, but for the purpose of giving the teacher a chance to connect the rhythm to the image for their students).

Next, ask the students to create a new way of adding body percussion to this rhythmic pathway as the teacher points for them. Point out the special importance of the change in the last measure. Here's a suggested body percussion option:

Adding a hand drum to this, ask the students to create a movement pathway like on the bridge where they get to the end at the 5th pier and turn around and go back to where they started.

Clap  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Patsch 1 2 3 4

Clap  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{2}{4}$

Patsch 5 5 4 4 3 3 2 1



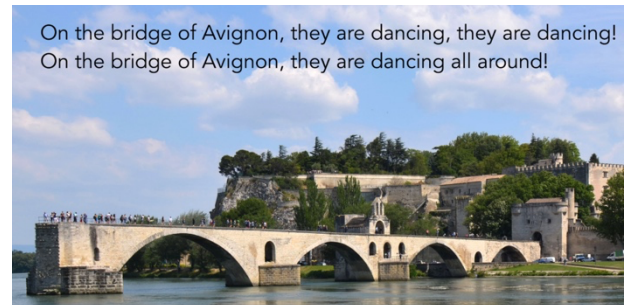
1	2	3	4
5	4	3	2

Ask students to consider changing their body percussion into a more creative, more flowing, and interesting movement that could indicate at some point the need to move around people, over a pothole, or perhaps even under something that may be a bit low, like a tree limb. Add a repeat to this so they travel the bridge two times.

## The Melody Appears

When the students are confident with the ideas of the "Bridge Pathway," ask them to make that "their job" and the teacher should sing the melody on English words to the song:

Have the students explore different pathways and invite them to create a more interesting dance for their pathway that feels like it flows more with the melody that is being sung.



## The I-V Bass emerges

Next invite the students to take a look at this image Ask the students to stand in place and show the basic pat on their legs for each pier of the bridge as the teacher points to the bridge pathway.

Ask students to recall the home tone of the song that the teacher has been singing and call that "do." "Do" = I, and low "So" = V.

Next, students should clap gently for the I chord and pat for the V chord, the teacher will sing the I and V pattern of the melody on “do” and “so.”

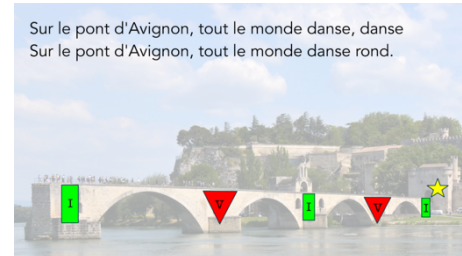
## The Melody Returns in French!

Have the students take over this job of singing the bass line. While they do, the teacher should sing the french words to the melody:

Sur le pont d'Avignon, tout le monde danse, danse  
Sur le pont d'Avignon, tout le monde danse rond.

The teacher should first speak in French and have the students echo, and then sing the phrases in French and have the students echo.

The teacher should take over the bass line part on “Do” and “So” while the students sing the French words and melody. Eventually, they should be able to sing the melody, and move their bass line patterns.



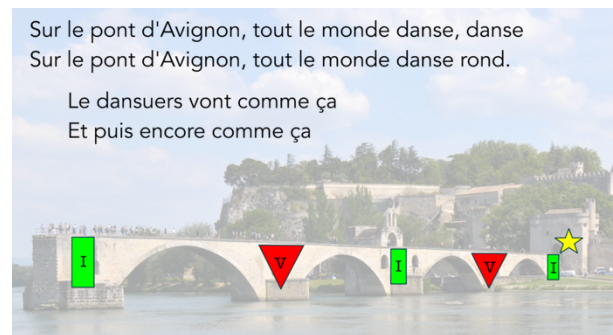
## Extending into New Territory:

After some practice of the melody in French has commenced, at some point when the two parts are completed, the teacher should continue to sing:

Le dansuers vont comme ça  
Et puis encore comme ça

And explain that the text means, “The dancers do this, and then again do this.”

This is an invitation to a game where one mover creates an idea and a partner follows it in a kind of movement echo. A switch in roles then occurs when the first follower takes over the leader job and the first leader must then become the follower or “echo.” These could be done facing each other: mirroring; or these could be done where both movers are facing the same direction with the leader in front: shadowing.



Practice this mirror and shadowing exercise, and develop creative, interesting movements.

Have students sing the whole song while they move. Half could sing the melody, and half could sing the bass line. Partner movers create their own movement/mirror in the second section.

## Bonjour! Hello in French

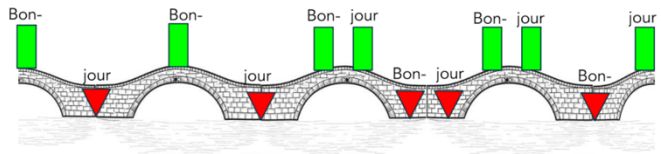
Ask students what one might say if they wanted to greet someone in the city of Avignon? Eventually, an exploration of vocal inflections of “bonjour” should occur.

Ask students to explore how “Bonjour” could become the text for our bass line pattern. Guide them to something that sounds a bit like the piers and arches of the image below.

Ask the students to see if they can discover this pattern on their instruments if the home tone is G, or F (You could choose either one, it is written in F, which works nicely if adding ukuleles; also, it can be advantageous to play it in G because then you can use recorder improvisations quite easily.)

Sur le pont d'Avignon, tout le monde danse, danse  
 Sur le pont d'Avignon, tout le monde danse rond.

Le dansuers vont comme ça  
 Et puis encore comme ça



As written: The home tone or root of the I chord is F (*do*) and the root of the V chord is C (*so*).

Transposed to G, the home tone or I is G and D is the V.

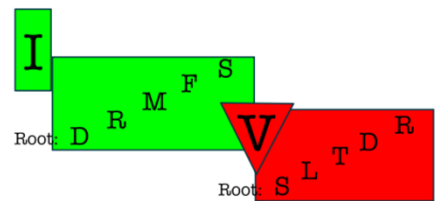
Ask the students to discover how to play this pattern on barred instruments using the long bar F and long bar C.

Put this together with the other parts of the piece so that students are playing the bass line in and singing the melody in French in the A section, singing and doing some improvised movement in the interlude section (even if they are sitting) and then singing and playing “Bonjour” for the B section.

## Exploration of the Melodic Elements

The purpose of this step is to give the students practice with individual melodic patterns. Using this image, help students understand the structure of the two chords:

Sing them, and play them on the correct notes on the instruments. Notice where they overlap.

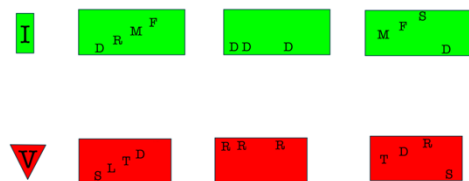


Next, first with the I chord and then with the V chord, explore these patterns first with solfege and with playing the instruments. Individually echo each pattern, and then have

the students choose one to sing so that all three patterns are happening at once, and then have them switch to a new pattern, and finally to the third pattern.

## Melody Creation a la GarageBand!

Once there is a level of comfort, have the students alternate between I and V. Choose a I chord pattern and then a V chord pattern to create a short sequence that yields a I V melody. Then have them create a new combination and finally, a third combination. Play and sing several of these student creations. The idea is to take a small pattern and arrange them in new ways, like melodic building blocks, to create new ideas.



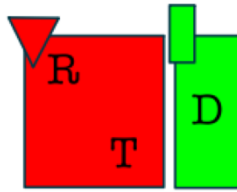
Students should choose their favorite Green-Red pattern and repeat it in *abab* form.



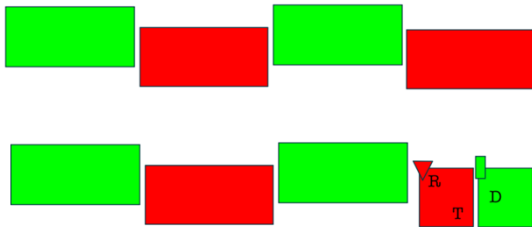
Practice this new creation with a slight adjustment to the ending to make this form now:



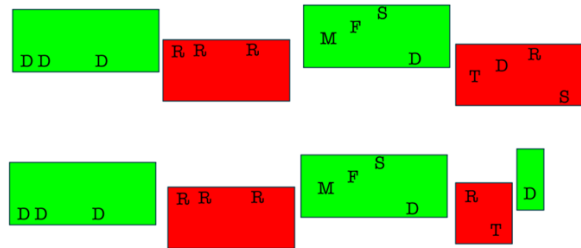
Use this pattern as the new ending:



The new pattern should look like this:

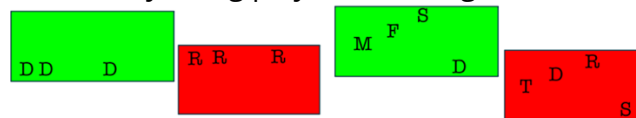


Next, ask students to try the "teacher idea."

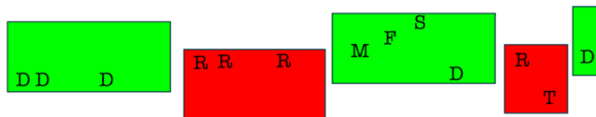


## Playing the Melody and Bass Line

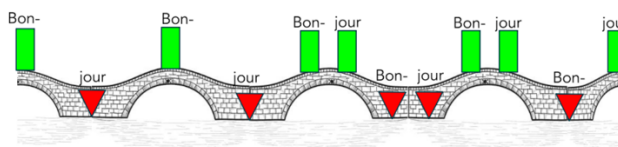
Combine the melody being played and sung and add the bass line.



Sur le pont d'Avignon, tout le monde danse, danse

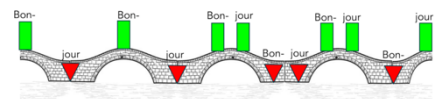
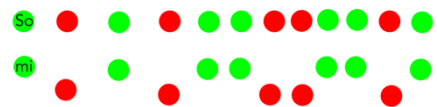


Sur le pont d'Avignon, tout le monde danse rond.



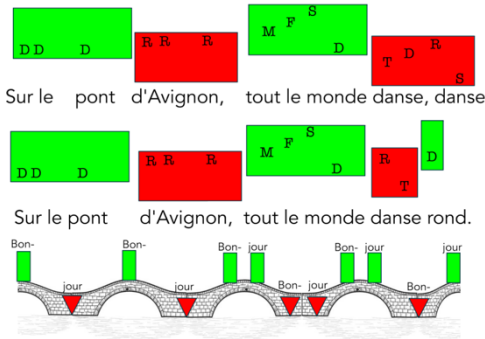
## Exploring Chord Change Voicing

Ask the students through the exploration to start on "mi" and then move only to a neighbor tone that will fit the pattern, ask them to try to figure out the possibilities to create harmony notes for the "Bonjour" part.

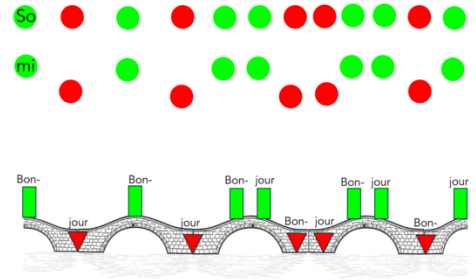


# Combine all the Elements

Put together all of the elements:



Le dansuers vont comme ça  
Et puis encore comme ça



Add the movements from the beginning dance/sing creations back into the game.

- Choose at least two people but four of five partner groups is better to be movers while every-one else remains players and singers.
- The movers will create their Bridge Dance individually, then return back to near their partner. When they arrive back partner one will create a mirror/shadow movement where person one leads during “Le dansuers vont comme çe,” And the other person leads during the second phrase, “Et puis encore comme çe.”
- During the “Bonjour” section, the two movers choose new people to move by waving and invit-ing them to the space with a “Bonjour” and a wave.
- The game and song can continue several times until a whole class of students has had a turn to be a mover and a player. In the absence of a lot of instruments this kind of activity will work well to keep all learners engaged.

Google Slides:

<https://bit.ly/BullingtonAOSA2022>

