

THE ART OF 1-4-5

Post-task : The 1-4-5 progression

1-4-5 in describing the music refers to the sound of the music, primarily. The chord progression does not strictly follow 1-4-5. It varies from song to song.

The 1-4-5 progression is often composed in AABBA form and style, with the B section sometimes modulating to the sub-dominant, while the harmonic movement cycles in a variation of the 1-4-5 sound.

This harmonic chord progression of the 1-4-5, also filters through all other genres after Marabi. Marabi melodies are quite melodic and often repeated in a call-and-response fashion.

Musically speaking, the locations all over southern Africa were a melting pot of so many traces of our music that came to be defined by many different names. But there is something that ties all this music together – the 1-4-5 progression.

Marabi is a South African genre or style that transcends language divisions. Marabi is where South African music meets and becomes one. It is a melting pot of languages and cultures and it really exploded in the vibrant inner city locations of Sophiatown, Marabastad and Umkhumbane, for example.

Marabi is the thread of all genres of all South African music, and not just jazz.

In this style we are going to zoom into three unique compositions, focusing on the melodies of these compositions.

Tsaba Tsaba ke No.1

Pitch Black Follies



uMajaji

The Merry Blackbirds ARR. Emily Motsieloa



Qua Qa

William & Wilfred Mseleku

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Qua Qa'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, and C5, then a quarter note D5, and continues with a series of eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is labeled 'Tpt.' and starts with a '6' above the staff, indicating the sixth line. It features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, primarily on the G4 and A4 lines, with some melodic variation.

Now answer these questions

1. How are 1-4-5 melodies usually constructed?

Can you identify the A and B sections of the above melodies and the call-and-response lines?

2. Can you identify the harmonic movement of the cycle of each song?

3. Can you find the clarinet part in the song uMajaji. The clarinet offers a contrapuntal melody from the main melody, but it does not interfere with the main melody. This is where the ubuntu philosophy shines too. Can you sing or play this contrapuntal melody?

4. Take your favourite Marabi song and compose a variation to the melody. You are welcome to share your variation with us because it adds to our musical archives and South African heritage.