



Mini-Lesson: Vocal Production & Intonation with Altered Harmonies

OVERVIEW

This lesson will prepare singers to use of altered pitches with correct intonation as needed in *The Golden Queen*.

LEARNING GOAL

Students will identify altered harmonies visually by locating accidentals in the score. They will sing altered harmonies with good intonation.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- *The Golden Queen* sheet music
- Recording of *The Golden Queen* ([click link to download](#) or email ChoralQuest@composersforum.org for a free Catalog CD)

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Students can sing scales and short patterns in solfege by ascending and descending by half steps.
- Students recognize and know the meaning of sharp, flat and natural signs and how they function in written music.
- Students have practiced the Warm-up “Singing with Altered Pitches”

PROCESS

1. Explain to students that in addition to changing keys within the song, Clausen has also chosen to alter the harmonies within a key. Have students notice that when this happens, they will find accidentals in the music that are not part of the key signature.
2. Play mm. 21-35. Ask students to follow the score and locate places where the music seems to move away from the key.
3. After practicing vocal warm-ups for “Singing with Altered Pitches”, ask students to sing mm. 25-28, alternating the key of the solfege between F Major and E Major. Part 3 can sing the root of the chord on a “do”, strengthening the bass note of the chord.

Example:

The image shows a musical score for three voices: Soprano, Alto, and Bass. The time signature is 3/4. The key signature changes from one flat (B-flat major) to two sharps (D major) and back to one flat (B-flat major). The lyrics are solfège syllables: 'sol mi sol mi', 'sol mi sol fa sol', 'sol mi sol mi', 'sol mi sol' for the Soprano; 'mi do mi do', 'mi do mi re mi', 'mi do mi do', 'mi do mi' for the Alto; and 'do do do do', 'do do do', 'do do do do', 'do do do' for the Bass. The melody is altered through accidentals in the key changes.

4. When this exercise can be sung with good intonation, then add the text to these measures.
5. Find other places in the score where the melody is altered through accidentals. Play these sections first as written, and then as they would sound without accidentals. Discuss the tone quality the composer achieves with the use of altered tones.

ASSESSMENT

Students perform altered harmonies with good intonation.

EXTENSIONS

Using this solfège approach, students can practice sections in the song that are written in traditional harmony (Ex. mm. 46-51). This use of solfège in practice supports good intonation and vocal blend.