

### Adding an accompaniment

If you are adding a piano accompaniment to your vocal melody, try to use piano textures which complement the mood of your setting. Block chords filling whole bars tend to be rather unsatisfying on the piano, as the sound decays as soon as you play the note. Equally, remember that the piano has an enormous range – don't just restrict yourself to an octave each side of middle C. When using a small keyboard or midi input at the computer, it can be easy to forget this fact. Also, try to avoid doubling the vocal melody in the right hand of the piano part. This may legitimately happen on occasions but it would be an unimaginative technique to use throughout the whole song. Aim for some dialogue between singer and accompanist, and do exploit the potential of instrumental interludes and postludes (as Schumann and Norah Jones do in some of their songs).

In the example below, the harmonic indications of bars 5–10 have been realised in the accompaniment. Notice:

- The use of low notes creating a wide piano range
- The use of continuous quavers and a consistent pattern throughout the phrase. Accompaniments tend to be weak if they continually chop and change, never settling on one idea
- The addition of pedal markings and other performance directions for the pianist.

Voice *mf* 5 *f* *mp* *rit.*  
 O my love's like the me-lo-die, That's sweet-ly play'd in  
 Piano *mf*  
 Ped. Ped. Ped.

8 *A tempo*  
 tune.  
 Piano  
 Ped. Ped. Ped.

The ideas above are intentionally 'work in progress' but show some snapshots of how your piece may evolve. As the piece develops, try out your musical ideas with singers and instrumentalists, and evaluate their success – refining them in the process.