Improvising in the style of Herbert Howells
- a student’s guide

1. Herbert Howells’s style:
   - H.H. rhapsodized on a single theme and the form was governed by melodic ideas and the moods
   - “complex moods”
   - ‘remoteness’
   - impressionistic harmony (modal, pentatonic, inversion of chords, plagal cad.)

2. First steps: The ARCHFORM

Model: ‘Like as the Hart’

**Background** (on G): **piano**

![Background notation](image1)

**Foreground** (on C): **forte**

![Foreground notation](image2)

**Linking bar: VIIb - I**

![Linking bar notation](image3)
EPILOGUE (on E): dying away
use Background scheme.

CODA (on E): ‘last chord embellishment’

3. The Howells Scale
What is it? A major scale with a raised 4th and flattened 7th.

4. Howells’s Signature Chords
4.a. Augmented Triad
4.b. Augmented Eleventh Chord

Aug. Eleventh Chord in 5th inversion:

C major triad

4.c. Eleventh Chord (non-augmented)

5. Cadences
5.a. Howells’s English Cadence:

5.b. Other Cadences:

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6. Motifs

a. 

b. 

c. 

7. Practical tips

• think in “tonal centres” – they should ideally be in thirds apart (d minor – b flat minor)
• therefore, long held pedal notes are desirable
• if stuck, use this as a back up:

Manuals

Pedal