

A close-up, black and white photograph of piano keys, showing the repeating pattern of white and black keys. The keys are slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth. A light blue curved line separates the image from the text below.

# Soprano and Bass Lines in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Style

Chapter 11

# **Note to Note Counterpoint in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Style**

- **Study of hymns, chorales, and patriotic songs usually use 4 parts, but show principles of counterpoint between the bass and soprano lines**
- **Previously, we've examined mostly examples of 1<sup>st</sup> species written in "strict style"**
  - **Whole note durations**
  - **Only consonant intervals**
  - **No strong forward momentum**
  - **Only sense of arrival is at the close**
  - **Voices have equal importance**
  - **CF can be top or bottom part**
  - **CPT can usually be inverted (used above or below the CF)**

# Note to Note Counterpoint in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Style

- **18<sup>th</sup> Century style features the following:**
  - **Durations are normally half and quarter notes or quarter and eighth notes**
  - **Both consonant and dissonant harmonic intervals drawn from 7<sup>th</sup> chords to create forward motion**
  - **Parts aren't equal: bass line becomes the foundation of the harmonic progression, with the melody in the soprano. This is not usually invertible.**
  - **Occasional deviations from species counterpoint will pop up but overall, the basic guidelines of counterpoint are used.**

# 18<sup>th</sup> Century Contrapuntal Motion

- **Same as strict style:**
  - **Each bass note corresponds to a single soprano note in the same rhythm**
  - **Intervals are a mix of perfect and imperfect consonances**
  - **Mostly contrary motion**
  - **Same closing pattern**
- **Different from strict style:**
  - **Immediate repetition of notes**
  - **Use of more oblique motion**
  - **Stronger tonal cadence (5→1 in the bass and 7→1 in soprano)—ex 11.2**

# 18<sup>th</sup> Century Contrapuntal Motion

- **Phrase—unit of musical thought that ends with a point of closure or rest**
- **Cadence—combination of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements that create closure at the end of the phrase**
- **5→1 motion in the bass implies dominant to tonic. This combined with a 2→1 or 7→1 close in the soprano make the strongest kind of cadence.**
- **Ex. 11.3 and Try It 1**

# Chordal Dissonance

- **Dissonant harmonic intervals that occur as a part of a 7<sup>th</sup> chord.**
- **Traditionally approached by step in one or both voices**
- **Must resolve to a consonant interval**
- **Most common source is a V<sup>7</sup> chord**
  - **Root and 7<sup>th</sup> of this chord create a m7 and usually resolve to a 3<sup>rd</sup>, implying V→I motion**
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> create a tritone. If the tritone is spelled as a d5, it resolves to a 3<sup>rd</sup>. If it's spelled as an A4 it resolves out to a 6<sup>th</sup> (see 11.4 a)**

# Chordal Dissonance

- **Tendency Tones—**
  - **Always resolve the chordal 7<sup>th</sup> (scale degree 4) down (4→3)**
  - **Always resolve the leading tone up (7→1)**
  - **Ex 11.5**

# Chordal Dissonance

<b>Dissonant Harmonic Interval from V<sup>7</sup> Chord</b>	<b>Direction and Interval of Resolution</b>	<b>Chords Implied</b>
<b>d5</b>	<b>In by contrary motion to a 3<sup>rd</sup>, with 7 resolving up to 1 in bass</b>	<b>V<sup>6/5</sup> to I</b>
<b>A4</b>	<b>Out by contrary motion to a sixth, with chordal 7<sup>th</sup> resolving down a third in the bass (4→3)</b>	<b>V<sup>4/2</sup> to I<sup>6</sup></b>
<b>m7</b>	<b>In to a 3<sup>rd</sup> with leap from 5→1 in the bass</b>	<b>V<sup>7</sup> to I</b>

# Characteristics of Bass Lines

- **Bass lines will generally have conjunct motion at the beginning and middle of a phrase but will typically use disjunct motion toward the end.**
- **At the beginning, the bass line usually implies tonic harmony (1 or 3) or is a V→I anacrusis (5 or 7 moving to 1).**
- **The end will generally feature a leap of a fourth or fifth from 5 to 1 (implying V and I chords in root position)—ex 11.6**
- **Typical closing scale degree patterns for bass lines:**
  - **Conclusive: 6-5-1, 4-5-1, 2-5-1, 1-5-1 (ex. 11.7 a)**
  - **Less Conclusive: 1-7-1, 6-7-1, 5-7-1 (ex. 11.7 b)**
  - **Inconclusive (ends on V chord): 1-5, 4-5, 6-5 (ex. 11.c)**

# Characteristics of Bass Lines

- **In minor keys:**
  - **if the bass line goes from 7 to 1, make sure to add the correct accidental to create the leading tone**
  - **If the bass line ascends from 5 to 1, make sure to use the ascending melodic minor (raised 6 and 7)**
  - **If the bass line descends from 1 down to 5, make sure to use the descending form of melodic minor (lowered 6 and 7)**

# Characteristics of Soprano Lines

- **Typically more conjunct than the bass line**
- **Typical closing scale degree patterns for soprano lines:**
  - **Conclusive—ending on 1: 3-2-1, 2-7-1, 6-7-1, 2-2-1 (ex. 11.8 a)**
  - **Less Conclusive—ending on 3: 5-4-3, 2-3 (ex. 11.8 b)**
  - **Inconclusive—ending on 5, 2, or 7: 6-5, 4-3-2, 2-1-7 (ex. 11.8c)**

# Opening the Counterpoint

- **Want to begin with a strong sense of tonic**
  - **Bass and soprano pairings with 1 or 3 is strongest (11.11a-c)**
  - **More ambiguous is soprano with 5 and bass with 1 or bass with 3 and soprano with 5 (triad could be major or minor; could be an inverted tonic chord OR could be a submediant chord in root position)**
- **Pieces that start with an anacrusis generally imply the dominant while the first downbeat would be the tonic,**
- **Some pieces will imply tonic on both the anacrusis and the downbeat—may either use different notes between anacrusis and downbeats or may just repeat (good way is an exchange as in 11.14a; 11.14 b-c show ambiguous beginnings)**

# Writing Counterpoint with a Given Line

- 1. Identify the key and mode and write the scale degree over each note.**
- 2. Look at the beginning and the end and see where it implies a I or a V<sup>7</sup> then choose scale degrees that match the implied harmonies and make a strong cadence at the end. Fill in the first few and last few notes and write in the intervals and implied Roman numerals.**
- 3. Look at the shape of the middle portion of the given part. If there are several steps in a row, write a skip or leap in your line; where there are skips or leaps in the given line, write steps in your line**

# Writing Counterpoint with a Given Line

- 3. Try to balance the shape of your line with the given line. Choose a possible high point with an interval consonant with the given line's note.**
- 4. Fill in the middle, watching the intervals between parts and the overall shape. Label intervals and check for parallel fifths and octaves.**

# Checklist for Writing Counterpoint

- **Does it imply tonic harmony or a V→I anacrusis at the beginning?**
- **Does it close with a standard type of cadence?**
- **Does it form consonant harmonic intervals or chordal dissonances with the given line?**
- **Is there a balance of perfect and imperfect consonances with more imperfect than perfect?**
- **Does it avoid parallel octaves and 5ths?**
- **Does It have a good overall shape that complements the given line?**

# Melodic Embellishment in Chorale Textures.

- **They can appear in different parts and on different beats in 18<sup>th</sup> century style (11.18)**
- **Three types of passing tones:**
  - **Accented (dissonant PT on the beat if 8<sup>th</sup> notes or on a strong beat if quarter notes)**
  - **Unaccented (dissonant PT off the beat if 8<sup>th</sup> notes or on a weak beat if quarter notes)\*\*\*\*most common**
  - **Unaccented consonant**
- **Consonant and dissonant neighbor tones**
- **Consonant skips (also known as a chordal skip since they are now often in the context of a chord)**

# Suspensions

- **Mixed with other embellishments rather than being the main focus (like in 4<sup>th</sup> species strict style) or reserved for setting up a cadence**
- **May be connected to the preparation by a tie (as in strict style) or a longer note duration (half note instead of 2 tied quarters)—ex. 11.20**
- **Same suspensions as in strict style: 4-3, 7-6, 9-8 in upper part and 2-3 in lower**
- **Rearticulated suspension—when the suspended note is not tied to its preparation (ex.11.21 m 10)**
- **Length of the preparation, suspension, and resolution may vary but suspension MUST arrive on the beat**

# 2:1 Counterpoint

- 1. Continue to follow rules for 1:1 counterpoint in terms of motion type and conventions of good melodic writing. Phrase beginnings and endings should imply dominant and tonic harmonies.**
- 2. Use chordal skips, dissonant passing tones, and neighbor tones on offbeats and occasional accented passing tones and neighbor tones on the beat.**
- 3. The P4 should be treated as a dissonance...as a passing tone, neighbor tone, or part of a 4-3 suspension.**
- 4. Avoid similar motion to perfect intervals unless the upper voice moves by step.**
- 5. Don't use parallel 5ths or octaves across barlines or from downbeat to downbeat.**
- 6. Use occasional dissonant suspension, especially when approaching a cadence.**