

K/P Chapter 5: Principles of Voice Leading

**The Melodic Line**

(pp. 73-76)

1. Return Test 2, take attendance and take questions about the Test 2, as necessary.
2. To provide an appropriate context for our study of Ch. 5:
  - Introduce the concept of a Bach *chorale* using the pdf handout: *The Chorales of J.S. Bach*.

Play J.S. Bach's Chorale, "Ich bin's ich sollte bussen,"  
from *St. Matthew Passion* (1727)

- As discussed in the handout:
  - + Introduce the concept of a *reduced score*
  - + Introduce the four voices: S, B, and then T&A
  - + Introduce the concept of the *outer-voice framework*, that is, the two-voice counterpoint formed between the S & A.

3. Using Bach's chorale as a model:

- Introduce the concept of **voice leading** (p. 73)

"...the basic vocabulary of tonal harmony consists of triads and seventh chords and its grammar involves the ways in which these chords are selected...and connected." K/P

Yes, voice leading is the study of how we connect the chords, however, it is also the study of how

"...chords are produced by the motion of individual musical lines." K/P

That is, *horizontal* lines create the *vertical* sonorities themselves. In our study of Chapters 5-13, please emphasize the *horizontal* and *vertical* dimensions equally.

- Introduce the concept of **part writing** (p. 73)
  - + As "composition" exercises that allow the student to learn the basic principles of harmony and voice leading.
  - + As four-voice chorales "in the style of J.S. Bach"
- Introduce the following concepts which are discussed in **The Melodic Line** (pp. 73-76)
  - + **Conjunct** motion (stepwise)
  - + **Disjunct** motion (melodic motion including leaps)
  - + **Contour** (overall melodic shape)
  - + **Focal point** (highest note in a phrase)

+ **Handling leaps**

- In general, melodic leaps create “tension” which should be resolved through stepwise motion in the opposite direction.
- Upward leaps are natural, downward leaps are somewhat unnatural (esp. large ones)
- Jumps through triads in the key do occur
- Jumps through dissonant intervals are quite rare

*Ask the students to sing all melodic phrases you examine using a neutral syllable like "doo".  
Play with them at the piano, supportively.*

+ **Rhythmic and metrical concerns:**

- The majority of the notes in a chorale melody should be quarter notes. From time to time, eighths, halves, etc. will occur to create rhythmic interest.
- Melodic patterns should not violate the strong-weak alternation pattern implied by the meter.
- 2/4 S W
- 4/4 S W S W
- 3/4 S W W
- etc.

#### 4. **Instrumental Writing vs. Vocal Writing**

Make a distinction between melodies written for instruments and melodies written for voice. For example, Ex. 5-3 & 5-4 are written for voice, whereas Ex. 5-5 is written for a Baroque keyboard. (It's obviously easier to press a key than to sing a line. Thus, the former allows for more freedom.)

Unless otherwise stated, when students are asked to write "melodies" in Chapter 5-13, I want them to write a melody that can be sung by a voice. A student **MUST** be able to sing anything he or she writes. If they write something too high; ask them (politely) to sing it; If a student writes an awkward interval, ask them (politely) to sing it. (Any octave will do; falsetto is also okay, etc.). To emphasize this point, everything you write in class should be sung.

5. Throughout Ch. 5, review **tendency tone** motions, as necessary.
- In major:  $\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ , and  $\hat{4}-\hat{3}$
  - In minor:  $\uparrow\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{4}-\hat{3}$
- + Also review, control of  $\hat{6}$  and  $\hat{7}$  in a minor key, for example:
- $\uparrow\hat{6}-\uparrow\hat{7}-\hat{1}$
  - $\downarrow\hat{7}$  and  $\downarrow\hat{6}$  are free to proceed downward

#### **HOMEWORK**

1. Bain Worksheet 5-1 CYOW Assignment (pdf on Web site w/ answer key)

#### **MATERIALS**

1. The Chorales of J.S. Bach (pdf handout) with CD recording {MUSC 115 CD 2, Track 1}
2. Bain Worksheet 5-1