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Chapter 7: Leaps between the Thirds of Primary Triads

1. Leaps between the Thirds in the Soprano Voice

When the triads of the fourth or fifth relations (such as T–D, D–T, T–S, S–T) are connected harmonically, a leap of a third within the Soprano from one triad's third tone to another triad's third tone can occur. This upward or downward leap of a fourth or fifth is termed a *leap between thirds*.

The spacing changes when such leaps occur. The triad housing the higher tone in the leap should be in open spacing, while the triad housing the lower tone should be in close spacing:

Example 7-82

The musical notation for Example 7-82 is presented in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for C Major. The treble clef staff contains the melody, with notes grouped by vertical lines and labeled with triad letters (T, D, S) above them. The bass clef staff provides harmonic accompaniment. The sequence of triads in the melody is: T-D-T, T-D-T, D-T-D, D-T-S-T, T-S-T, T-S-T, S-T-D, and S-T-D. Above the first six triad groups, the number '3' is written twice, indicating a leap of a third. The notation demonstrates how the spacing of the triads changes when a leap occurs, with the higher triad in open spacing and the lower triad in close spacing.

After a leap, the melody almost always tends to move in the *opposite direction* to the leap. Only in rare cases (when the subsequent note—S or D's third tone—requires a natural resolution) can the melody continue in the same direction after the leap. In a minor key, a leap from the tonic triad's third tone to the dominant triad's third tone can only *descend by a diminished fourth* because an *ascending augmented fifth* (along with all other augmented intervals) is not permitted (see Chapter 12, Section 4).

2. Leaps between the Thirds in the Tenor Voice

When triads of the same relations (T–D, D–T, T–S, S–T) are connected harmonically, leaps between third tones can also occur in the tenor voice. In these leaps, there is also a change in spacing, but in the opposite direction. When leaping upwards, the arrangement changes from open to close, and when leaping downwards, it changes from close to open.

Example 7-83

2 Chapter 7: Leaps between the Thirds of Primary Triads

A musical score in 3/4 time for C Major. The treble staff contains four measures of triads: C4-E4-G4, C4-E4-G4, C4-E4-G4, and C4-E4-G4. The bass staff contains four measures of triads: C3-E3-G3, C3-E3-G3, C3-E3-G3, and C3-E3-G3. Triads are connected by leaps of a third. The notes are labeled T (Third), S (Second), and D (First) below the bass staff. The first measure is T S T, the second is T D T, the third is S T D, and the fourth is D T D. Triads are marked with a '3' above them.

Note: Leaping by thirds is not employed in the alto voice, as it would create incorrect chord voicing.

Example 7-84

A musical score in 3/4 time for C Major. The treble staff contains four measures of triads: C4-E4-G4, C4-E4-G4, C4-E4-G4, and C4-E4-G4. The bass staff contains four measures of triads: C3-E3-G3, C3-E3-G3, C3-E3-G3, and C3-E3-G3. Triads are connected by leaps of a third. The notes are labeled T (Third), D (First), S (Second), and T (Third) below the bass staff. The first measure is T D, the second is S T, the third is T D, and the fourth is S T. Triads are marked with a '3' above them. The word 'Bad' is written above the treble staff.

3. Exercise Analysis

In addition to analyzing exercises as discussed earlier, it's important to identify which leaps constitute leaps of a third and the associated changes in spacing.

Example of Harmonization:

Example 7-85

A musical score in 3/4 time for a minor. The treble staff contains eight measures of triads: A4-C#4-Eb4, A4-C#4-Eb4, A4-C#4-Eb4, A4-C#4-Eb4, A4-C#4-Eb4, A4-C#4-Eb4, A4-C#4-Eb4, and A4-C#4-Eb4. The bass staff contains eight measures of triads: A3-C#3-Eb3, A3-C#3-Eb3, A3-C#3-Eb3, A3-C#3-Eb3, A3-C#3-Eb3, A3-C#3-Eb3, A3-C#3-Eb3, and A3-C#3-Eb3. Triads are connected by leaps of a third. The notes are labeled T (Third), S (Second), and D (First) below the bass staff. The first measure is T S T, the second is T D T, the third is S T D, and the fourth is D T D. Triads are marked with a '3' above them.