

Chapter 6: Root Position Composition (Part-Writing)

MUS 112 – Molloy College

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Introduction

- Up to this point in the semester we have been primarily focused on the elements of music
 - Meter
 - Rhythm
 - Pitch
 - Harmony
- From here on out, we will primarily be focused on combining these elements into music (i.e. composing)
 - *Not just writing individual chords and melodies, but combining it all together*
- We will continue to focus on and develop writing music utilizing tonal (functional) harmony.

Composition (Part-Writing)

- We will be doing a lot of 4-part chorale writing to develop and reinforce a mastery of tonal harmony.
 - I strongly encourage you to think of this as composing for a quartet of musicians.
 - To that end, *we* will be performing examples in each class.
 - There will be two groups of 6 people. A Monday group, and a Wednesday group.
 - You will bring your instrument or sing.

Root Position Composition

- Now that we know all of our diatonic chords in all keys every inversion, we can begin to connect chords together in a meaningful way
- We will begin by focusing on only triads. We will compose with seventh chords later in the semester.
 - You are still responsible for recognizing seventh chords in analysis
- We will also limit our triads to root position so we can master how each part individually moves to help create a specific harmony.

Doubling in Root Position Chords

- When writing a triad in 4 voices:
 - All members of the triad are present. (usually)
 - Double the root. (usually)
 - But do not double $\wedge 7$.
 - So if you have vii° , double the third of the chord.
- Incomplete chords are also possible.
 - This is a chord that omits the 5th

Root-movement

- **Root-movement:** the interval by which the root moves when switching harmonies.
 - **I – V** has a root-movement of what?
 - By a fifth
 - Which is equal to by a fourth, why?
- What are the different types of root movement?
 - Stay the same
 - 2nd (equal to 7th)
 - 3rd (equal to 6th)
 - 4th (equal to 5th)
- Now let's look at the smoothest way to compose these various root movements.

Repeated Root

- The root stays the same between two chords
 - (Which means the chords stays the same!) Why?
 - Because both chords are in root-position
- Basically, anything goes!
 - The upper voices may be arpeggiated freely, as long as the spacing conventions are followed.
 - The bass may also jump by an octave
 - When the root is repeated, it is a great opportunity to re-voice the chord



Root movement by 4th (5th)

- Root movement by a fourth or fifth describes the most important harmonic progression in tonal music.
 - V to I
- We are going to develop some strategies to help us compose root-movement of a 4th or 5th and avoid objectionable parallels.
- KEEP THE COMMON-TONE!
 - Whenever possible, keeping the common-tone helps to create very smooth part-writing.
- If you can't keep the Common Tone move step-wise.
- When you have root-movement by a 4th, one of the three upper voices will stay the same, and the other two will move by step.

Transposing Instruments

- On **Transposing Instruments** notes do not sound at the same pitch as they are written.
- Written pitch = the note on the page
- Concert pitch = the note sounding
- Transposing Instruments present at many different transposition level.
 - D, Eb, F, G, A, Bb, octave, etc.
- A transposing instrument will often indicate what key the instrument is in:
 - Horn in F
 - Trumpet in Bb
 - Eb Baritone Saxophone
- The key of the instrument tells us what note **sounds** when a C is written
- *For example, on Bb Trumpet, when a C is written a Bb is the sounding pitch*

Appendix A

HEY JUDE

WORDS AND MUSIC BY
JOHN LENNON AND
PAUL MCCARTNEY

MODERATELY ♩ = 74



“Hey Jude” Chordale

Handwritten musical notation for the "Hey Jude" Chordale. The notation is written on two staves, Treble and Bass, in 4/4 time. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The chords are indicated by Roman numerals below the staff.

Treble Staff:

- Measure 1: Chord I (F major), notes: F4, A4, C5.
- Measure 2: Chord V (C major), notes: E4, G4, Bb4.
- Measure 3: Chord IV (F major), notes: F4, A4, C5.
- Measure 4: Chord I (F major), notes: F4, A4, C5.
- Measure 5: Chord IV (F major), notes: F4, A4, C5.
- Measure 6: Chord I (F major), notes: F4, A4, C5.
- Measure 7: Chord V (C major), notes: E4, G4, Bb4.
- Measure 8: Chord I (F major), notes: F4, A4, C5.

Bass Staff:

- Measure 1: Chord I (F major), notes: F3, A3, C4.
- Measure 2: Chord V (C major), notes: E3, G3, Bb3.
- Measure 3: Chord IV (F major), notes: F3, A3, C4.
- Measure 4: Chord I (F major), notes: F3, A3, C4.
- Measure 5: Chord IV (F major), notes: F3, A3, C4.
- Measure 6: Chord I (F major), notes: F3, A3, C4.
- Measure 7: Chord V (C major), notes: E3, G3, Bb3.
- Measure 8: Chord I (F major), notes: F3, A3, C4.

Chord Progression:

F: I V IV I IV I V I

Composing with Roots a 3rd (6th) Apart

- The voice leading that involves root position triads a 3rd or 6th apart is usually quite smooth because the two triads will always have two pitch classes in common.
- **Two common tones and stepwise.**



G: I

Composing with Roots a 2nd (7th) Apart

- When the root is doubled, which it normally should be:
- Move in contrary to the bass to the nearest chord tone.

