

Chapter 5

Principles of Voice Leading

MUS 112

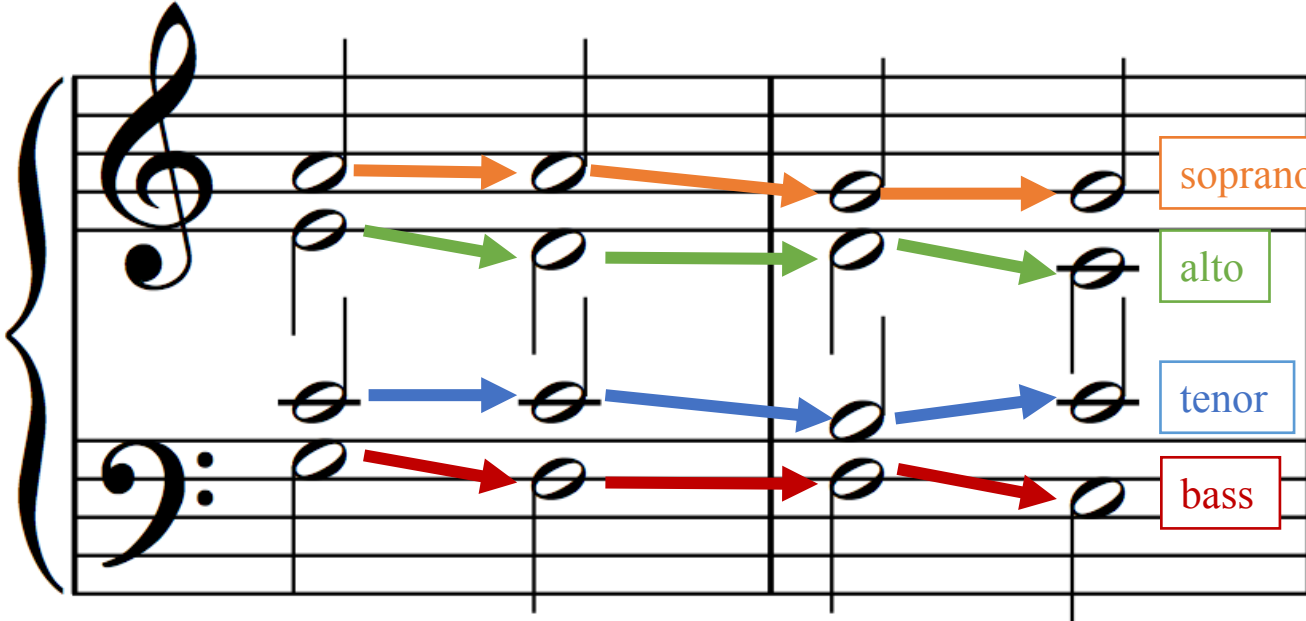
February 13-15, 2017



Introduction

- We have looked at most of the chords you will see in tonal music.
- **Harmonic Progression**: A series of chords

When notating multiple parts or voices on a single staff, it is necessary to have the stems of the top part point up and the stems of the bottom part point down



The diagram illustrates voice leading for four voices (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) across four measures. The notation is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The stems of the top part (soprano and alto) point up, and the stems of the bottom part (tenor and bass) point down. Colored arrows indicate the movement of each voice line from one measure to the next, showing smooth transitions between notes.

- soprano
- alto
- tenor
- bass

- **Voice Leading**: The way in which chords in a harmonic progression connect
- **Part Writing**: Voice-leading of several individual musical lines, that result in chords when the lines are combined.

Notating Chords

The diagram illustrates rules for notating chords in musical notation across six measures. It features a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. Chords are represented by notes with stems, and specific examples are highlighted with pink rectangular boxes. Annotations above the staff indicate whether a notation is 'good' or 'no' (not good), with arrows pointing to the relevant notes.

- Measure 1:** Labeled "good". Shows a treble clef with a whole note chord (two notes) and a bass clef with a whole note chord (two notes).
- Measure 2:** Labeled "no, unless parts cross". Shows a treble clef with a whole note chord (two notes) and a bass clef with a whole note chord (two notes). A pink box highlights the treble chord.
- Measure 3:** Labeled "good". Shows a treble clef with a whole note chord (two notes) and a bass clef with a whole note chord (two notes). A pink box highlights the bass chord.
- Measure 4:** Labeled "no". Shows a treble clef with a whole note chord (two notes) and a bass clef with a whole note chord (two notes). A pink box highlights the bass chord.
- Measure 5:** Labeled "no". Shows a treble clef with a whole note chord (two notes) and a bass clef with a whole note chord (two notes). A pink box highlights the bass chord.
- Measure 6:** Labeled "no". Shows a treble clef with a whole note chord (two notes) and a bass clef with a whole note chord (two notes). A pink box highlights the bass chord.

Annotations above the staff indicate the quality of the notation:

- "good" (above Measure 1)
- "no, unless parts cross" (above Measure 2)
- "good" (above Measure 3)
- "no" (above Measure 4)
- "no" (above Measure 5)
- "no" (above Measure 6)

Arrows point from the text labels to the corresponding notes or chords in the staff.

Where we are headed.....

- We are beginning on our journey of mastering chorale writing.
 - *Goal: Three and four voice chorales that include any chord/inversion you choose, modulate to other keys, mix the major and minor modes, and chromatically embellish melodies.*
- Why?
 - By developing all of these skills you master the intricacies of tonal harmony
 - Doing so will allow you to:
 - Have more flexibility as a composer.
 - Have more understanding as a listener.
 - Make more informed musical decisions as a performer.
- Chorale writing provides us an ideal tool to develop these skills

The Melodic Line

- The fundamental element of chorale writing is the melodic line.
- Chorales are built by layering melodies on top of one another.
- Let's begin by developing the ability to write simple melodic lines in *vocal style*
 - *A melody that easily lends itself to singing*
- There are five guidelines to follow to compose a melody in vocal style.
 - **Rhythm, Harmony, Contour, Leaps, Tendency Tones**

Guidelines for Composing a Melodic Line

1. Rhythm

- Keep the rhythm simple, with most durations being equal to or longer than the duration of the beat.
- The initial note should occur on a strong beat.

2. Harmony

- Every melody note should belong to the chord that is to harmonize it.

3. Contour

- The melody should be primarily **conjunct**(stepwise).
- The shape of the melody should be interesting but clear and simple, with a single focal point, the highest note of the melody.

a Good

C: I V I - IV V I

b Uninteresting contour

C: I V I IV I V I

c Two focal points

C: I IV V I IV V I

Melody note not in chord

Guidelines for Composing a Melodic Line

4. Leaps

- Avoid the following intervals
 - augmented intervals
 - 7ths
 - intervals larger than a P8.
 - Diminished intervals may be used if the melody changes direction by step immediately after the interval.
- A melodic interval larger than a P4 is usually best approached and left in the direction opposite to the leap.
- When smaller leaps are used consecutively in the same direction, they should outline a triad.

5. Tendency tones

- $\hat{7}$ has a strong tendency to move up to $\hat{1}$.
 - An exception to this is the scale wise line descending from $\hat{1}$: $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$.
- The only other tendency tone that needs to be considered is $\hat{4}$, which often moves down to $\hat{3}$, but not with the regularity with which $\hat{7}$ goes to $\hat{1}$.

a Good

a: i V i V - i V i V i

b

a: i - V i V i V i iv i

- Many ornate and complicated melodies, are just elaborations of these of these guidelines.

b

i V i V i ii° V i

Composition Assignment No. 1

Voicing a Single Chord

- Once you have decided on what chord to write, you must decide how to voice it.
- **Voicing**: The distribution or spacing of the members in a single chord.



- As you can imagine, there are innumerable possibilities for the voicing for any given chord

Voicing a Single Chord

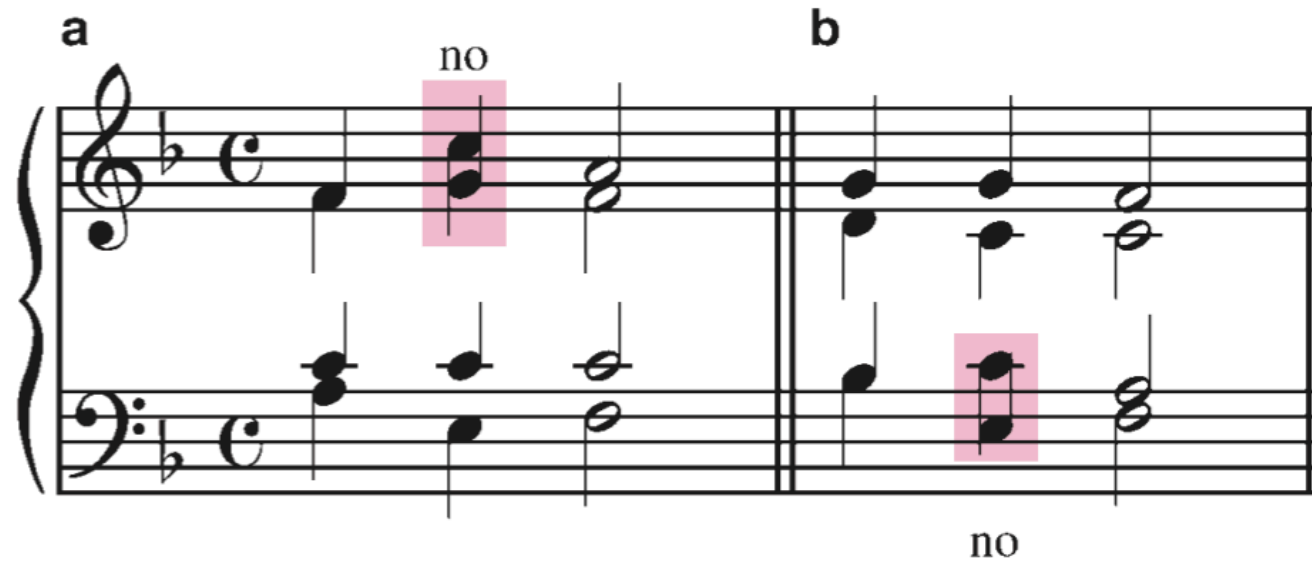
- There are two ways that we can describe the voicing of a chord:
 - **Open Structure**: more than an octave between the soprano and tenor voice
 - **Closed Structure**: Less than an octave between the soprano and tenor voice

The image displays a musical score in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It illustrates three types of chord voicings across four measures. Above the staff, brackets labeled 'close', 'open', and 'close' indicate the voicing type for each measure. The notes are marked with pink squares. The first measure shows a close voicing with a soprano note on the second line and a bass note on the first space. The second measure shows an open voicing with a soprano note on the third line and a bass note on the first space. The third measure shows a close voicing with a soprano note on the second line and a bass note on the first space. The fourth measure shows an open voicing with a soprano note on the third line and a bass note on the first space. The notes are marked with pink squares. The first measure shows a close voicing with a soprano note on the second line and a bass note on the first space. The second measure shows an open voicing with a soprano note on the third line and a bass note on the first space. The third measure shows a close voicing with a soprano note on the second line and a bass note on the first space. The fourth measure shows an open voicing with a soprano note on the third line and a bass note on the first space. The notes are marked with pink squares.

Part-writing Guidelines

- Avoid **Crossed Voices**.

- This is where a voice is higher than the voice part above it, or lower than the voice part below it.



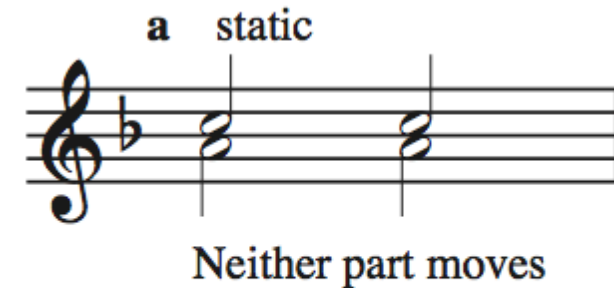
Part-writing Guidelines

- Voice **Spacing**
 - Avoid overly spacious chord voicings
 - There should be no more than an octave between each voice, excluding between the tenor and bass.



Parallel Motion

- In tonal music, it is important to consider the relationships between any voice in the texture and every other voice in the texture.
 - When music progresses from one chord to the next, there are five possible relationships between any two voices (or parts).



- In a four-part texture, there are six distinct pairs of voices, that each have their own movement type for each chord change.

Objectionable Parallel Movement

- A hallmark of this style we are learning is the independence of voices.
- P5 and P8 are the most stable and pure intervals
 - When two voices are at an interval of a P5 or P8 and move in parallel motion the voices become linked and the independence of each voice is lost.

The image displays three musical examples, labeled a, b, and c, illustrating voice movement in two staves (treble and bass clef) in C major. Each example shows a progression from a tonic (i) to a dominant (V) and back to a tonic (i).

- a parallel 5ths**: Shows parallel motion of perfect fifths. The intervals are labeled (6) in the treble and (5) in the bass. The bass staff has pink shading under the first two measures.
- b parallel 8ves**: Shows parallel motion of perfect octaves. The intervals are labeled (8) in the treble and (8) in the bass. The treble staff has pink shading under the first two measures, and the bass staff has pink shading under the last two measures.
- c good**: Shows independent voice movement. The intervals are labeled (3) in the treble and (3) in the bass. The bass staff has pink shading under the first two measures.

Below each example, the chord progression is indicated: b: i V i.

Contrary 5ths and Octaves

- We also avoid contrary movement in 5ths and octaves.

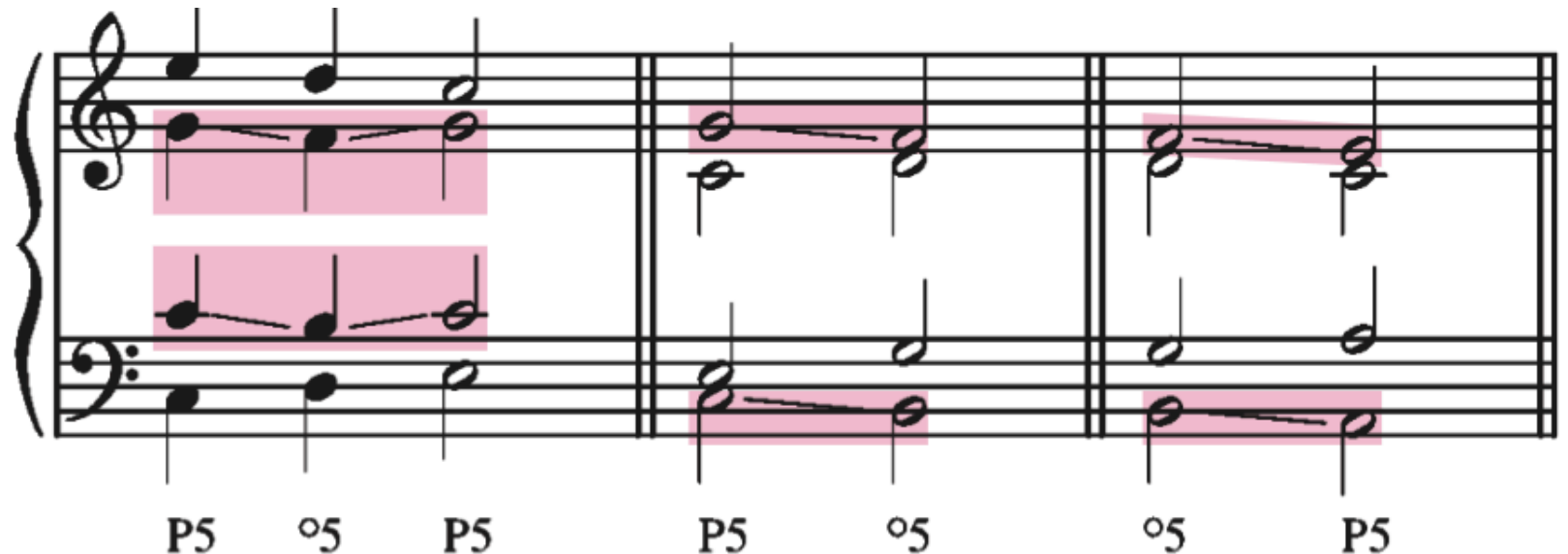
A musical score for D major, consisting of two measures. The first measure shows a V-I cadence with pink shading. The second measure shows a V-I cadence with pink shading. The notes are: D4 (treble), F#4 (treble), A4 (treble), B4 (treble), D5 (treble), F#4 (bass), A4 (bass), B4 (bass), D5 (bass).

- These have a similar sonic effect as parallel 5ths and octaves

Unequal 5ths

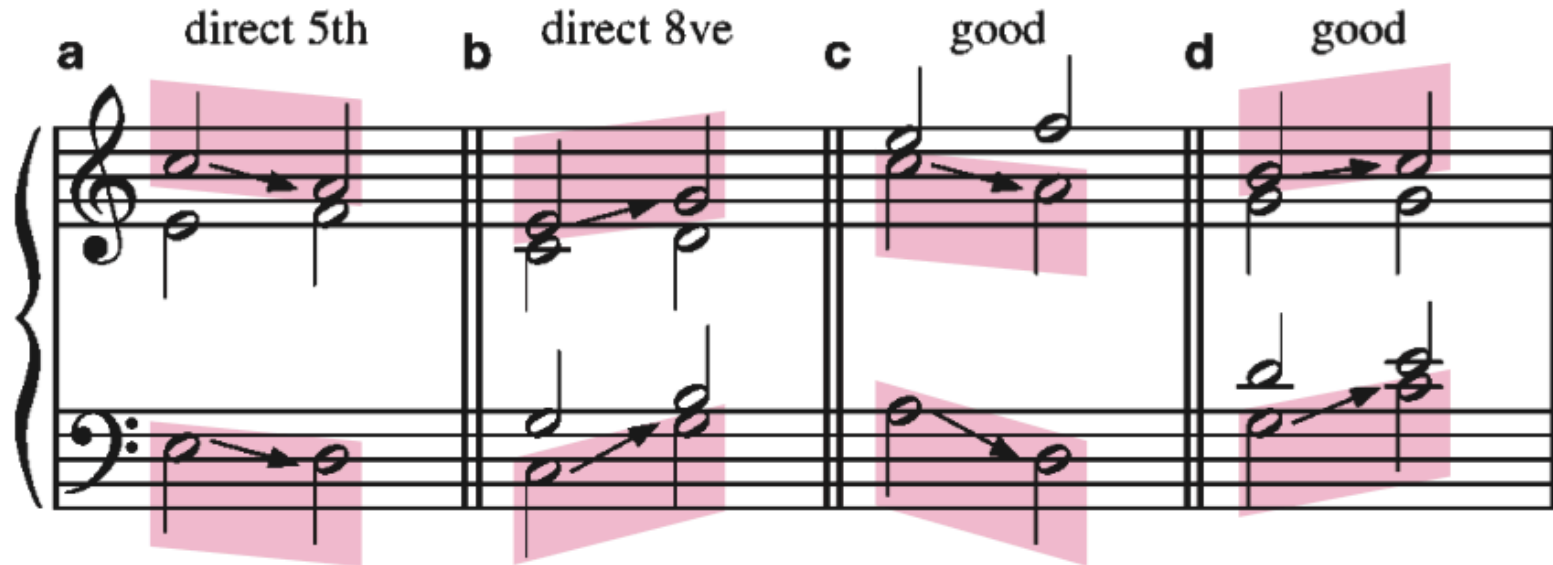
- Unequal 5ths are parallel 5ths where one of the fifths is diminished.
 - $^{\circ}5 \rightarrow P5$
 - $P5 \rightarrow ^{\circ}5$
- These are generally considered acceptable, unless the unequal fifth involves the bass voice and is moving from $^{\circ}5 \rightarrow P5$

- Just avoid them



Direct Fifths and Octaves

- A direct fifth or octave results when the outer voices move in the same direction and arrive on a perfect fifth or octave. The soprano part must be leaping.
 - This sounds very close to parallel fifths and octaves, so we avoid them.



- Essentially, our ear fills in the notes that the soprano leaps over, and this creates the illusion of parallel motion.