

Part-Writing: The Horizontal Rules

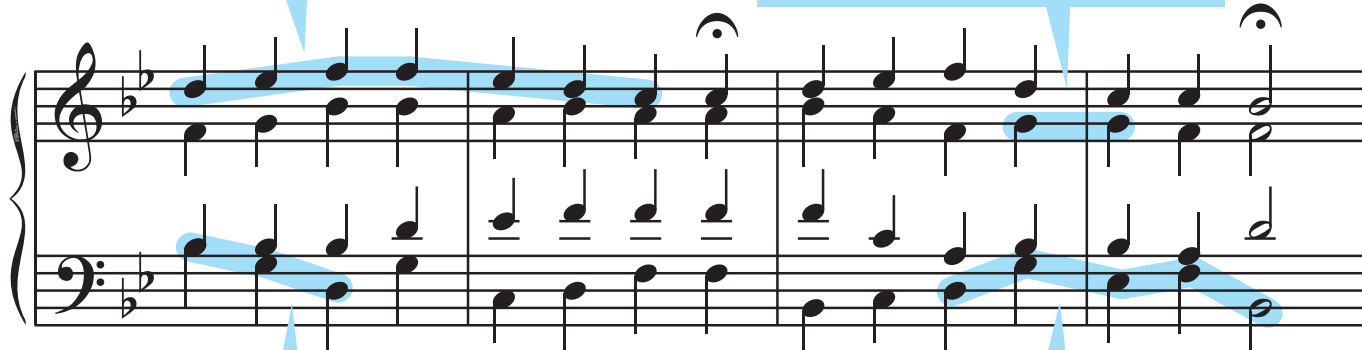


THE **SUPREME GOAL** OF PART-WRITING IS **GOOD VOICE LEADING**...
MAKING EACH INDIVIDUAL VOICE PART **EASY TO SING** BY AVOIDING
AWKWARD INTERVALS OR **LARGE LEAPS**!

BEFORE WE GET TO THE SPECIFIC **DOS** AND **DON'TS**, LET'S TAKE A LOOK
AT SOME **IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS** OF FOUR-VOICE PART-WRITING:

NOTE HOW EACH VOICE MOVES
AS **LITTLE AS POSSIBLE**, GOING
TO THE **NEAREST CHORD NOTE**
IN EACH SUBSEQUENT CHORD!

IN SOME CASES, THE VOICE
CAN SIMPLY STAY ON THE **SAME**
NOTE. THIS IS CALLED
KEEPING THE COMMON NOTE,
AND IT'S **ALWAYS COOL**!



IT'S COMMON FOR THE BASS TO
MOVE IN THE **OPPOSITE DIRECTION**
OF THE **UPPER THREE VOICES**.
THIS IS CALLED **CONTRARY MOTION**
AND IT HELPS MAINTAIN
VOICE INDEPENDENCE.

THE BASS LINE, SINCE IT PROVIDES
THE **FOUNDATION** OF THE **HARMONY**
IN EACH CHORD, TENDS TO INCLUDE
LARGER LEAPS THAN THE OTHER
THREE VOICES, BUT THAT'S OKAY.



VOICE INDEPENDENCE?

FOUR-VOICE HARMONY IS A FORM OF **COUNTERPOINT**,
WHICH IS THE COMBINATION OF **MORE THAN ONE**
MELODY PLAYED SIMULTANEOUSLY. IN COUNTERPOINT,
EACH VOICE IS **EQUALLY IMPORTANT**; NO VOICE IS
GIVEN A ROLE OF ACCOMPANIMENT TO ANOTHER VOICE.

IN COUNTERPOINT, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR EACH VOICE TO
BE **INDEPENDENT**; THAT IS, NO TWO VOICES SHOULD BE
DOING THE **EXACT SAME THING**. IF TWO (OR MORE)
VOICES WERE MOVING IN **PARALLEL**, THE **RICHNESS**
OF THE **TEXTURE** WOULD BE **REDUCED**.

AS A RESULT, COMMON PRACTICE COMPOSERS WERE
VERY CONSISTENT IN AVOIDING TWO OR MORE VOICES
THAT MOVED IN **PARALLEL PERFECT OCTAVES**, **PARALLEL**
PERFECT FIFTHS, OR **PARALLEL PERFECT UNISONS**!



PARALLEL
OCTAVES!

PARALLEL
FIFTHS!

PARALLEL
UNISONS!

THERE ARE ALSO A FEW OTHER
RULES THAT APPLY TO THIS STYLE:

WHEN YOU HAVE THE **LEADING NOTE**
IN AN **OUTER VOICE** (SOPRANO OR
BASS) IT MUST RESOLVE TO THE
TONIC IN THE NEXT CHORD.

YOU MAY NOT MOVE ANY VOICE
BY AN INTERVAL OF AN
AUGMENTED SECOND
OR AN **AUGMENTED FOURTH**.

THE **GOOD NEWS**:
YOU CAN AVOID ALL THREE OF
THESE BY DOING THE FOLLOWING
WHENEVER POSSIBLE:

1. **KEEP THE COMMON NOTE!**
2. **MOVE TO THE NEAREST CHORD NOTE!**
3. **USE CONTRARY MOTION!**