MUSIC THEORY FOR MUSICIANS AND NORMAL PEOPLE BY TOBY W. RUSH

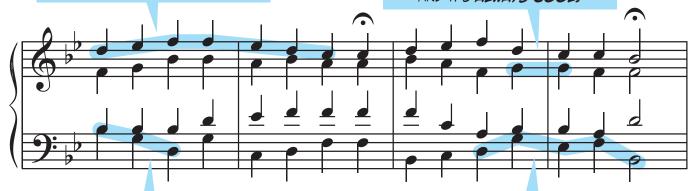
Part-Writing: The Horizontal Rules



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 **POS** AND **PON'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 TONE IN EACH SUBSEQUENT CHORD! IN SOME CASES, THE VOICE
CAN SIMPLY STAY ON THE SAME
NOTE. THIS IS CALLED
KEEPING THE COMMON TONE,
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.

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.

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.

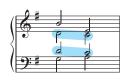
IN COUNTERPOINT, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR EACH VOICE TO BE INDEPENDENT; THAT IS, NO TWO VOICES SHOULD BE DOING THE EXACT SAME THING. IF TWO (OR MORE) VOICES WERE MOVING IN PARALLEL, THE RICHNESS OF THE TEXTURE WOULD BE REDUCED.

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



OCTAVES!





PARALLEL PARALLEL FIFTHS! UNISONS!

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

WHEN YOU HAVE THE LEADING TONE
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 TONE!
- 2. MOVE TO THE
- NEAREST CHORD TONE!
 3. USE CONTRARY MOTION!