

Voice Leading

28 Nov 2018

Voice Leading

- Music is a linear, time-based art form
- When more than one voice sounds at the same time, **harmony** is created
- A **harmonic progression** is a series of harmonies over time.
- **Voice leading** is the way each voice approaches and leaves its note in the harmonic progression.
- **Tonal harmony** is constructed around triads, seventh chords, and scales (often we include non-chord tones)
- **Part Writing** is the process of writing 4-part SATB chorales in the style of Bach (or a simplified version thereof)
 - Generally **homophonic** — each voice has the same rhythm
 - Sometimes in **counterpoint** — independent polyphonic lines (different rhythm)

Melodic Line

(PS—these restrictions only apply to part writing for theory class)

- Rhythm — keep it simple (1 beat or longer) + end on strong beat
- Harmony — every melody note must belong to a chord
 - Don't use non-chord tones
- Contour — primarily conjunct (stepwise) motion
 - Interesting, but clear (an arch with some squiggles) with a single **focal point**, or high note

Example 5.1 (pg. 67)

Example 5-1

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

Melodic Line

(PS—these restrictions only apply to part writing for theory class)

- Leaps
 - Avoid augmented intervals, 7ths, anything $>P8$
 - Diminished intervals only ok if followed by contrary stepwise motion
 - Leaps $>P4$ best approached and left by contrary motion
 - leaping up? step/skip down into it and down after it
 - When 2+ smaller leaps in a row in same direction, outline a triad

Melodic Line

(it's all about the leading tone)

- Tendency tones
 - Half steps create tension in tonal music (make the exciting stuff happen!)
 - Often they create dissonance that needs to resolve.
 - Leading tone (^7) **always always always** resolves UP to the tonic (^1)
 - Except if it's part of a descending scale (1-7-6-5)
 - ^4 **very very often** resolves DOWN to ^3
 - Especially as the 7th in a V7 chord
 - Except if it's part of an ascending scale (1-2-3-4-5)

Example 5.2 (pg. 68)

Example 5-2

a Good



Musical notation for Example 5.2a: A single staff in 3/4 time with a treble clef. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The word "Good" is written above the first note.

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

b

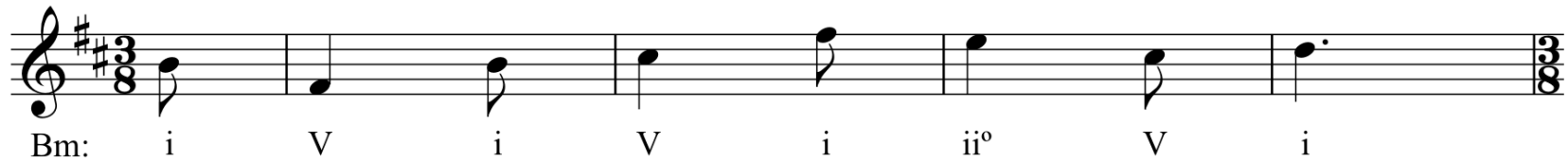


Musical notation for Example 5.2b: A single staff in 3/4 time with a treble clef. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Brackets above the staff indicate fingerings: "4c" for the first two notes (G, A), "4a, b" for the next three notes (B, A, G), and "5" for the final two notes (E, D). The word "Good" is written above the first note.

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

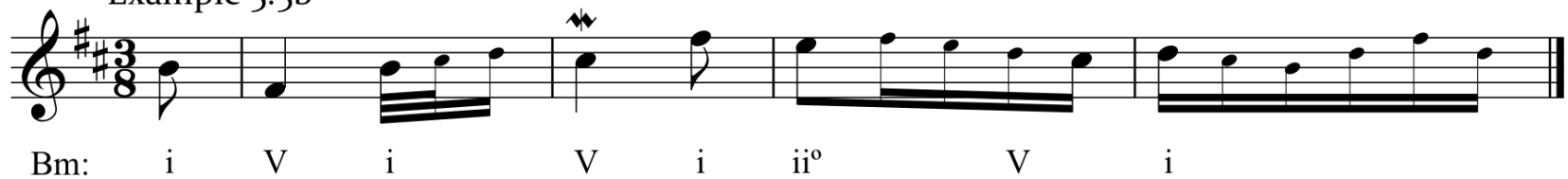
Example 5.5 (pg. 68–69)

Example 5.5



Musical notation for Example 5.5, showing a single melodic line in treble clef, key of B major (two sharps), and 3/8 time. The melody consists of eight measures: B4 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F#5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), and B5 (half). The chord progression below the staff is: Bm: i V i V i ii° V i.

Example 5.5b



Musical notation for Example 5.5b, showing a single melodic line in treble clef, key of B major (two sharps), and 3/8 time. The melody consists of eight measures: B4 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F#5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), and B5 (half). The chord progression below the staff is: Bm: i V i V i ii° V i.