

MUSIC 31 (Spring '09): TONAL HARMONY AND COUNTERPOINT I

Syllabus

Staff paper, 8½"×11", in

portrait format: **12 staves** — **10 staves** — **5 grand staves**

landscape format: **12 staves** — **10 staves** — **4 grand staves**

Course text, exercises

M Mar 30: How to set a chorale: **I (Hassler's "O Haupt" ["O wounded head"])** and **II (Luther's "Ein feste Burg" ["A mighty fortress"])**. Both are step-by-step guides to setting chorale tunes. The former is annotated in detail, explicating each step at some length. The latter omits annotations, leaving it to you to figure out the thinking behind each step. Next Monday I'll go through it at the beginning of class.

- The beginnings of both chorales are included among the **tunes** I gave you for practice. *I recommend you try setting them on your own before consulting the guide.*

The **final exercises** will be due on Thursday May 14 at noon.

W Mar 25: Write progressions in four parts, including suspensions, as instructed. Let each chord be in whole notes; let the suspensions and their resolutions be half notes.

- **E major: V⁷–I.** Suspend the 7th of the V⁷ chord into the I chord. That is, let it move down by step to the appropriate member of the I chord "late," only *after* all the other members of the V⁷ have moved appropriately. To which member of the chord does the suspension resolve?
- **D minor: iv–i₆.** Suspend the bass (= root) of the iv chord into the i₆ chord. Let it resolve down by step to the appropriate member of the i₆ chord. To which member of the chord does the suspension resolve?
- **B minor: V₂⁴–i₆.** Suspend the 7th of the V₂⁴ chord into the i₆ chord. Let it resolve down by step to the appropriate member of the i₆ chord. To which member of the chord does the suspension resolve?
- **E^b major: I₆–^ovii₆–I.** Suspend the root of the I₆ chord into the ^ovii₆ chord. Let it resolve down by step to the appropriate member of the ^ovii₆ chord.
- **G minor: i–V.** Suspend the root (above the bass!) of the i chord into the V chord. Let it resolve down by step to the appropriate member of the V chord. Now consider the chord with the suspension: what single change do you have to make in it to turn it into a cadential i₄⁶?

Haydn, **Tod und Schlaf**; Mozart, **Difficile lectu**

M Mar 23: Study **standard settings of scale patterns**. If you cannot imagine the bass-soprano counterpoints readily from this notation, **I urge you to transcribe**

the counterpoints in standard notation. Not only will the work serve you well, **your transcription will also be a useful reference** in the coming weeks. I'll be happy to check over it, if you like.

Continue work on **“Jesu, der du.”**

From now till the end of the semester, I will not be specifying assignments during every meeting. Instead, I will expect you to work on settings in four parts of **various tunes**, putting in an average of 45 minutes daily (that is, per day of the week, not per meeting). Submit work when you'd like my response, and I will turn it around as quickly as I can. Your endeavors will prepare you for the final exercises, which I will assign within two weeks, to be due at the end of the term.

M Mar 9: Write bass, tenor, and alto under the first phrase of **Rist's “Jesu, der du meine Seele”** (“Jesus, You Who [Saved] My Soul”).

Work through the remainder of the tune assigned on Mar 4.

W Mar 4: Write bass, tenor, and alto under the second and third phrases of the F-minor tune from Feb 16.

Write bass, tenor, and alto under the following soprano. Work through at least the first two phrases of this tune for next Monday, Mar 9.

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 8. The second staff, starting at measure 9, contains measures 9 through 16. The third staff, starting at measure 17, contains measures 17 through 24. The melody is primarily composed of quarter and half notes, with some phrases repeated or transposed. There are fermatas over the final notes of several phrases.

- ◆ What is the form of the tune? Notice antecedent-consequent groups, returns and transpositions of material.
- ◆ While you may set identical phrases identically, differences can help keep the unfolding fresh.
- ◆ While the tune as a whole is in the key of G, it is also possible to hear the third and fourth phrases themselves in other keys that are closely related to G. Experiment, if you like, with setting these phrases in those other keys.

M Mar 2: Read the remainder of the **guide to setting a soprano line**, from Example 9 to the end, and bring questions to class. If there are no questions, I'll assume that you understand the thinking behind each step and are ready for more practice.

Write bass, tenor, and alto under either the first phrase of the F-minor tune or the second phrase of the B-minor tune from Feb 16—whichever you did not work on in class today.

W Feb 25: Study **measures 1–16 from the fourth movement of Brahms's Clarinet Quintet**. With roman numerals and arabic figures under the score, identify

the functions and positions of the harmonies through the first quarter of measure 16. On the score, circle notes that create dissonance.

Read the **guide to setting a soprano line** (the tune is J. Franck's hymn "Herr, ich habe mißgehandelt" ["Lord, I have transgressed"]). It reviews that which we covered today, and presents some new material we'll discuss next Monday.

M Feb 23: I've updated the webpage for bass-soprano counterpoint to include **passing tones**.

Revise at least one of the assignments I handed back today.

Find and submit five examples of passing tones composed by someone else. The idea here is for you to apply what we're doing in class to music you encounter and work with outside of the classroom. Whether you copy them out by hand, print them with music publishing software, or photocopy them, please be sure to give enough context for me to evaluate them.

Write a bass line below the following soprano, following the **models given**. (Like all of the examples below, it's drawn from published repertory.)



Progressions: **working out voice leading backwards**

W Feb 11: **Seventh chords in four parts**

Write nine progressions, each in a different key, about half of them major (excluding C) and the others minor (excluding A), just as in the preceding exercises, except for the cadence. Here, model three cadences on Example 2, three on Example 3, and three on Example 4.

- ◆ The actual *voicing* of your cadences may differ from the models, but the *voice leading* should correspond. In a cadence modeled on Example 2, for instance, your V⁷ may have the seventh of the chord in the soprano, say, instead of the fifth as in the example, and it may be in closed voicing, instead of open as in the example—but the degrees of the V⁷ chord will move just as they do in the example.
- Begin about half of the progressions in open voicing, and the others in closed;
- should you duplicate any progressions (that's not cheating), voice them differently;
- please write six of the nine on one page and three on another. I expect to hand one page back to you next Wednesday, the other the following Monday.

M Feb 9: **V–I in root position**

Write four different progressions in four different keys, two major, two minor; lead the voices and double the root just as you did in the exercise due today, except at the cadences. Here, model the cadences on Examples 1b₁, 1c, 1d, 2b, or 2c, including four of the five.

- ◆ After you decide on your progression of chords—that will determine the bass line—it may be easier to start by writing the upper three voices at the cadence, following the models, and then work backwards from there.

W Feb 4: **Musical form**, continued

The six progressions assigned last Monday are due on M Feb 9.

M Feb 2: **Musical form**

The rest of the **progressions** I assigned last Wednesday are due on W Feb 4. For M Feb 9, please write six different progressions, following the models we've studied so far, each in a different key, three of them major, three of them minor. Write three of the progressions in open voicing, three in closed; let them

- begin with the tonic chord,
- end with dominant → tonic,
- include, between the first tonic and the dominant, at least two chords that are neither tonic nor dominant,
- exclude diminished chords (°vii, and °ii in the minor mode), and
- proceed with the smoothest possible voice leading.

♦ *In the minor mode, remember the leading tone in V!*

W Jan 28:

Progressions of root-position triads in open and closed voicing

There are six pages of these exercises. Two pages each of the open- and closed-voicing exercises are due on M Feb 2; the remainder are due on W Feb 4.

The **exercise** I assigned earlier this week is also due on M Feb 2.

M 26 Jan:

Guide to four-part writing

Exercise: root-position triads in open and closed voicing

1) Please read the **syllabus**. 2) In an e-mail to me, please describe your musical training and experience. 3) Read §§1–4 of the **guide** above. 4) The **exercise** above is due on Monday Feb 2; do enough of it to make sure you understand how to complete it, or to articulate questions you have about it, and bring those questions to class on Wednesday. You'll need to understand it fully in order to begin the next exercise, to be assigned on that day. 5) Above the given bass, write two different soprano counterpoints, one note in the soprano against one in the bass, according to following guidelines:

Let the soprano

- ♦ mix steps and leaps;
- ♦ leap no further than a 5th;
- ♦ end on a member of the tonic triad, approached by step;
- ♦ be smooth, graceful, and coherent.
- ♦ You may tie two notes in one of the sopranos if you wish.

Let the soprano and bass together

- ♦ create intervals that are **consonant** [major/minor 3ds and 6ths, perfect 5ths and 8ves], with imperfect consonances [3ds and 6ths] predominating;
- ♦ mix intervals, so that no single interval occurs more than four times in succession;
- ♦ avoid parallel 5ths and 8ves;
- ♦ not exceed three 8ves at any moment.

