Before we start combining melodies, we need to understand what constitutes a good melody in the system of species counterpoint.

In general, melodies should be primarily stepwise, with a single, definite high point or low point. Effective melodies tend to progress slowly toward the high or low point and then move back toward the starting pitch.

Oh, and don’t repeat notes like this. Contrapuntal melodies need to be interesting, not boring.

As you can see above, occasional leaps are okay... but they come with a bunch of restrictions.

First, leaps should be no larger than a perfect fifth, with two exceptions: leaping by a perfect octave, and leaping upward by a minor sixth. Don’t do these very often, though!

Second, for heaven’s sake, avoid the tritone! This interval (an augmented fourth or diminished fifth) was actively avoided so consistently that Fux and his pals called it the diabolus in musica... the “devil in music!”

Leaping by a tritone is bad, but it’s also important to avoid the tritone in other ways... for example, this pattern, where a tritone is outlined in the melodic line, would be considered inappropriate.

Third, leaps of a perfect fourth need to be preceded or followed by stepwise motion in the opposite direction, to counterbalance the leap. And if a leap is larger than a perfect fourth, it needs to be counterbalanced both before and after!

Lastly, don’t write three or more leaps in a row. You can write two leaps in a row, but they need to outline a major or minor triad. No diminished triads... they have tritones in them!

And really, to be fair; these are good guidelines for any melody... it’s just that Fux is a little more strict about it.