

Species Counterpoint: Three Voices



LET'S HEAD BACK TO *SPECIES I* AGAIN, BUT ADD A *THIRD VOICE*!



UH... DO WE HAVE TO?

RELAX...

IT ACTUALLY HELPS US SEE HOW THIS ALL RELATES TO THE *FOUR-VOICE CHORALE STYLE* OF OUR MAN *BACH*...

...AND EVEN WITH ADDING A *WHOLE NEW SET OF INTERVALS* TO LOOK AT, IT'S REALLY NOT THAT BAD!

IN GENERAL, THE RULES FOR *MELODIES* AND *COUNTERPOINT* ARE THE SAME FOR *SPECIES I* IN *TWO VOICES*.

WE STILL NEED TO USE *ONLY CONSONANT INTERVALS* BETWEEN EACH *UPPER VOICE* AND THE *BASS*...

BUT THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE *UPPER TWO VOICES* CAN BE *DISSONANT*... IT CAN EVEN BE A *TRITONE*!

A musical staff with two staves (treble and bass clef) showing a three-voice setting. The top two staves have notes, and the bottom staff has notes. Chords are indicated below the staff: C, (d), C⁶, a⁶, b⁶, and (C). A starburst labeled 'a4' points to a tritone interval between the two upper voices in the fifth measure.

THE CHORDS CREATED SHOULD BE *TRIADS*. YOU CAN FORM *INCOMPLETE TRIADS* OCCASIONALLY BY HAVING A *DOUBLED ROOT* AND A *THIRD*, BUT AVOID HAVING *OPEN FIFTHS* EXCEPT ON THE *FIRST* OR *LAST CHORD*.

TECHNICALLY, THE TRIADS MUST BE *MAJOR* AND *MINOR* IN *ROOT POSITION* AND *FIRST INVERSION*, AND *DIMINISHED TRIADS* IN *FIRST INVERSION* ONLY.

BUT IF YOU FOLLOW THE RULES ABOVE ABOUT *CONSONANT* AND *DISSONANT INTERVALS*, IT PREVENTS YOU FROM USING THE *WRONG INVERSION*!



OOH! BECAUSE *SECOND-INVERSION TRIADS* AND *ROOT-POSITION DIMINISHED TRIADS* ALL HAVE *FOURTHS* ABOVE THE *BASS*!

AS WITH *TWO-VOICE COUNTERPOINT*, *PARALLEL PERFECT INTERVALS* ARE FORBIDDEN BETWEEN ANY VOICES!

AND *PERFECT INTERVALS* STILL NEED TO BE *APPROACHED* WITH *CARE*: YOU STILL CAN'T GO WRONG WITH *CONTRARY, STEPWISE MOTION*!

A musical staff with two staves showing voice leading. Two voices are shown moving from one chord to another. A fifth interval is highlighted between the two voices in the second measure.

HOWEVER, IN *THREE VOICES*, *PERFECT INTERVALS* CAN ALSO BE *APPROACHED* WITH *BOTH VOICES* MOVING IN THE *SAME DIRECTION* IF THE *TOP VOICE* MOVES BY *STEP*, AND IF THE *THIRD VOICE* MOVES IN *CONTRARY MOTION* WITH THE OTHERS.



AVOIDING *PARALLEL PERFECT INTERVALS* AND *SECOND INVERSION TRIADS*? KEEPING *DIMINISHED TRIADS* IN *FIRST INVERSION*? THESE ARE ALL *FANTASTIC IDEAS*!



USE THEM, *BACH*! USE THEM LIKE THE *WIND*!