

SOPRANO AND BASS COUNTERPOINT

This lesson provides additional information on the relationship between the Soprano and Bass voices. Vocal ranges and voice-leading are covered in more detail in Lessons 16-22.

Basic Principles for Soprano:

1. Keep the range within an octave.
2. Give the melody a nice shape, using mainly steps and some consonant leaps.
3. Typically, leaps are followed by a change of direction.
4. Do not use augmented or diminished intervals or leaps of sevenths.
5. Sing the melody. It should be interesting and comfortable to sing.

Melody A:

1. Stays within a fifth
2. Mostly steps with one leap of a 4th
3. Changes direction after the 4th
4. No sevenths or augmented or diminished intervals.
5. Comfortable to sing



Melody B:

1. Covers an octave plus a 5th
2. Disjunct, too many leaps
3. Three consecutive notes that leap in the same direction
4. Includes an A4 and a m7
5. Very difficult to sing

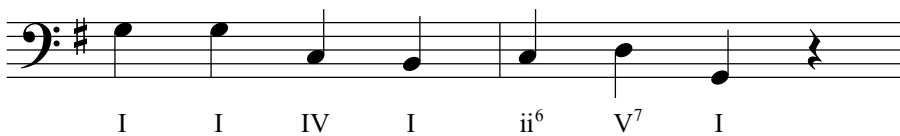


Basics Principles for Bass:

1. The bass will frequently be the root of the implied harmony.
2. Begin on the root of the tonic chord.
3. Will include a combination of stepwise movement and leaps, but should flow smoothly.
4. Follow typical cadence style to close the phrase (I₄⁶ - V⁷ - I, IV - V - I, etc.)

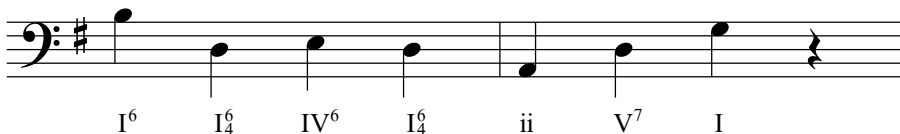
Bass Line 1:

1. Most notes are roots of chords
2. Begins on the root of tonic
3. Includes steps and leaps
4. Typical cadence (ii⁶ V⁷ I)



Bass Line 2:

1. Too many inversions
2. Does not begin on root of tonic
3. Does not flow smoothly.
4. Cadence should include inversion



Relationship of Soprano to Bass:

1. Use consonant intervals.
2. Keep the voices within three octaves of each other but far apart enough to allow for alto and tenor voices.
3. Avoid long sequences of parallel thirds, sixths, or tenths. Vary the interval relationships.
4. Use contrary or oblique motion between the voices the majority of the time.
5. Parallel leaps should be infrequent. Parallels including one leap and one step are more desirable.
6. Avoid Perfect 4th relationships between the two voices.
7. Resolve dissonances correctly.
8. Including some non-harmonic tones in the melody provides tension and variety (Lesson 12).
9. Follow good doubling and voice-leading principles (Lessons 16-20).

Combined Voices 1:

1. Uses consonant intervals
2. Furthest distance apart is 2 octaves plus a third
Closest distance is one octave
3. No strings of parallel intervals
4. Uses contrary and oblique motion
5. No parallel leaps
6. No perfect 4ths between voices

I I IV I ii⁶ V⁷ I

Combined Voices 2:

1. Dissonance on notes 2 and 3
2. (Distance between notes is acceptable)
3. Parallel motion on notes 3 through 6
4. Not enough contrary and oblique motion
5. Parallel leaps on notes 3-4 and notes 5-6
6. 4th relationship on second note

I⁶ vi I₄ I₄ ii V⁷ I

1. The following phrase has three voice-leading errors. One is in the soprano voice, one is in the bass voice, and one is in the relationship of the soprano to bass. Mark and describe each error.

I⁶ V I ii I⁶ IV I⁶ ii₄ IV I⁶ ii⁶ I₄ V I

See Lesson 2 (pages 277-280) for more Soprano-Bass Counterpoint exercises.