

FIGURATION

FIGURATION -- a melodic progression that animates a linear-harmonic substructure by means of a quicker motion or rhythmic displacement. Figuration can occur in any voice, and may occur in more than one voice at a time.

MELODIC FIGURATION

Chordal Skips (Arpeggios)

purposes:

- a. intensify rhythmic activity
- b. break up parallels
- c. varying the melodic line
- d. introduce stepwise motion, especially in the bass

rapid arpeggios -- characteristic of instrumental writing; serve to connect contrasting registers in a widely ranging melody

arpeggiation makes possible the compound melody -- one line suggesting 2 or more lines simultaneously

Passing Motion

passing tone -- a transitional/subordinate tone (or chord) that is approached by step and left by step in the same direction

PTs are usually unaccented but may be accented.

PTs are usually dissonant, but may be consonant (as in the 5-6 passing tones).

They generally fill in the interval of a third (3rd) either within one chord or between two chords.

2 consecutive passing tones may fill in the interval of a fourth.

Neighbor Motion

Neighbor tone-- a transitional/subordinate tone (or chord) that is approached by step and left by step in opposite directions. NTs decorates a stationary tone.

NTs may be upper neighbor (the note above the stationary tone) or a lower neighbor (note below the stationary tone).

NTs may be unaccented (the norm) or accented.

NTs may be dissonant (the norm) or consonant.

Double neighbor -- combination of an upper neighbor and a lower neighbor tone

Incomplete neighbor-- a figure that has only one stepwise connection with the main tone (instead of the normal two) that is used to decorate either the preceding or the following tone.

Escape tone -- a type of incomplete neighbor figure, usually unaccented, that decorates the preceding tone; approached by step and left by leap in opposite directions

Appoggiatura (It. to lean) -- accented incomplete neighbor tones that decorates the following tone; approached by leap and left by step in opposite direction.

RHYTHMIC FIGURATION

Suspensions

suspension -- arises when a tone moves out of its normal position in time and continues into the segment of time belonging to the next tone; approached by common tone and left by step (usually down)

purpose -- to animate and individualize the voice or voices in which the figuration appears

suspension -- contains two tones:

tone 1 - acts as consonant tone of a chord (the preparation) then the dissonant tone held over (the suspension). The suspended tone is normally metrically strong.

tone 2 - the consonant tone that acts as the release of the suspension (the resolution)

Avoid having the tone of resolution present in the chord before the resolution of the suspended tone; the only exception to this is the 9-8 suspension, where you may have the root present already with no effect.

Resolutions may be decorated, delayed, transferred to another voice, elided with another voice, or implied.

Suspensions are normally tied.

More than one note (even a whole chord) may be suspended at one time.

May have a series of consonant or dissonant suspensions (chain of suspensions)

Suspensions are identified by numbers (figures) representing the intervals formed by the suspension and the resolution, normally 9-8, 4-3, 7-6, 2-3.

Suspensions may occur in the bass voice (usually no figures) and are usually 2-3 and 9-10 suspensions.

The 4-3 suspension

accompanied by the 5th and resolves to a root position chord
double the bass; may also double the 5th

Cadential suspension (V_3^4)

enhances the cadences by emphasizing the leading tone (the 3) when the suspension takes place above the dominant

The 7-6 suspension

accompanied by a 3rd and resolves to a first inversion triad
if the 7th is in the soprano -- double the bass
if the 3rd is in the soprano (the 10th) -- double the soprano

The 9-8, $\frac{9-8}{6-5}$, $\frac{9-8}{5-6}$ suspension

always accompanied by the third
either a 5th or 6th may be sustained through the dissonance and the resolution

Anticipations

Anticipations occur when a tone occurs prematurely (rather than being delayed or extended); they are approached by step (the norm) or leap and left by same tone.

Anticipations must occur on a weaker beat or portion of the beat than the tone it anticipates.

Anticipations appear most characteristically in the soprano voice at cadences where the next tone is highly predictable.

Pedal Point

pedal point -- a tone sustained through chord changes or contrapuntal activity; approached common tone and left by common tone.

They typically occur in the bass, but may occur in other voices.

Pedal points are used to prolong a chord, harmony or tonic.

Most important pedal tones -- tonic and dominant.