

SNAKES & LADDERS [THE INFO & THE RULES]

In SNAKES AND LADDERS we jump into something called COUNTERPOINT - a word which means "note against note", so here we're thinking about how we write one melody on top of another one. To do this well as a composer, it's something we learn step by step. Here's the information you need!:

INTERVALS

An interval describes the distance two notes. Two notes on top of each other form a HARMONIC interval, and two notes beside each other form a MELODIC interval. To work out an interval, you count the lower note as the "1st" and count the steps up to the higher note like so: "... 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8ve". ("8ve" is short for "octave").

CONSONANCE & DISSONANCE

Different intervals have different musical characters. CONSONANT intervals tend to sound stable and settled to our ears, whereas DISSONANT intervals tend to sound unstable and unsettled to our ears. Let's agree that:

CONSONANT intervals are: 3rds, 5ths, 6ths and 8ves.

DISSONANT intervals are: 2nds, 4ths and 7ths.

MOTION

When we write two parts in counterpoint, one interval moving to another interval will create one of four musical motions: PARALLEL, DIRECT, OBLIQUE or CONTRARY.

- PARALLEL: when both parts move in the same direction from one interval to the same kind of interval
- DIRECT: when both parts move in the same direction from one interval to a different kind of interval.
- OBLIQUE: when one part remains on the same note, and the other part moves either up or down.
- CONTRARY: when both parts move in opposite directions.

THE RULES!!

1. Please choose TWO melodies from those I have provided.
2. Please write ONE note for each note I have given.
3. Every note you write must create a CONSONANT interval with the lower part.
4. Add LADDERS for ASCENDING steps or leaps, and add SNAKES for DESCENDING steps or leaps (as I have done in the lower part of the first exercise).
5. The first and final notes you write must create a 3rd, 5th or 8ve with the lower part.
6. You may only use CONTRARY motion when moving to a 5th or an 8ve.
7. You may not write the same note twice in a row.

And that is all! Any questions, please ask your parents to email me.

Danny