

ASPECTS OF SUCCESSFUL MELODY WRITING (Major/Minor System)

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1. Active steps have particular directional tendencies: 4-3,6-5,7-8
Active steps may move opposite their directional tendencies. In any case, the manner of resolution derives from the tendency of the last note in a series of active tones.
2. The second scale degree most basically moves to the first, but it can easily move to the third scale degree.
3. In minor, the harmonic minor scale is most often used for harmonies, while the melodic minor is most often used to avoid the augmented 2nd in melodies. But the tendencies of active steps are the same as major.
Note: Sometimes augmented 2nds are used to outline diminished 7th chord contexts.
4. Sometimes in minor, the harmonic background forces a descending passage to use an ascending melodic minor form. This would occur to avoid a minor dominant.
5. The diminished 7th interval occurs frequently.
6. Two or more leaps in the same direction should involve only notes that form a harmony that is acceptable to functional harmonic style.
7. Two large leaps (6th or more) in the same direction which fit into the same implied harmony should be avoided because they take the line in one direction too suddenly. Rather, after a large leap, have the melody turn in the opposite direction.
8. Generally, a leap followed by stepwise motion is preferable to stepwise motion followed by a leap. The faster the movement of notes involved and the wider the leap, the more objectionable is the step-leap succession.
9. Repetition of melodic elements is useful and supports continuity.
10. Try to avoid leaps over bar-lines. It is acceptable when the leap is from a strong to a weak beat.
11. Sequence of melodic elements is a very important device in music. As a rule, use no more than three consecutive appearances of a pattern.
12. To maintain unity and coherence, don't use too many different rhythmic patterns or too widely divergent values in the melody.
13. Generally, avoid direct halts in the rhythmic motion unless it is for a specific musically impact.
14. Focus on rhythmic motion in a weak beat to provide a sense of propulsion into the strong beat.
15. Be aesthetically aware of the impact of melodies which are mainly stepwise, mainly with movement by skip, or melodies which have a climax, semi-climax or no climax.