

Unit 4

Chapter 18: Diatonic Sequences

Analyze: Bach, Invention in d minor

Sequences In its basic sense, the term sequence refers to a musical pattern that is restated immediately in the same voice at different pitch levels.

A restatement of a motive at a different pitch level either up or down forms a **melodic sequence**. When the entire harmonic or contrapuntal framework is a part of a sequential pattern it forms a **harmonic sequence**.

Diatonic v. Chromatic

In a diatonic sequence generic melodic intervals stay the same when the pattern moves to another pitch level, but the pitch-interval qualities change (for example major to minor, or perfect to diminished). A chromatic sequence will use specific intervals that will include pitches outside of the key.

Harmonic Sequences Based on Root Progressions

A **harmonic sequence** is a combination with an intervallic pattern in the upper voices and the root movement in a progression. This is referred to as a **linear intervallic pattern**. The falling fifth root progression is by far the most common source of harmonic sequences; it is well suited to repetitive patterns both in the outer-voice framework and in the entire musical texture. A sequence is used to expand the tonic area or even provide a basis to move to another key area.

If we examine a few of the most common Falling-fifth sequences, they will contain an interval of a 10th between the soprano-bass outer voices, or

CM: I IV vii° iii vi ii V I
I _____ I

Falling-fifths harmonic sequence expanding the tonic area

alternating intervals of a 6 – 10 between the voices, or

70

CM: I IV⁶ vii^o iii⁶ vi ii⁶ V I

I _____ I

Falling-fifths (alternating 1st inversion triads)

a 6 – 10 alternating outer voices.

71

CM: I⁶ IV vii^{o6} iii vi⁶ ii V⁶ I

I⁶ _____ I

Falling-fifths (alternating 1st inversion triads)

Look at the Bach, Invention in d minor again, consider that pattern formed in measures 7 – 10. What would the harmonic reduction reveal?

Analyze: Handel, Chaconne in G Major Variation 11, 12, and 13

When you write Falling-fifth sequences:

- Follow the same part-writing guidelines as for any two chords with roots related by fifth.
- In most cases, the two-chord patterns will include one voice part with a common tone. Keep the common tone, and move the other voices to the closest chord member.
- If the sequence alternates first-inversion triads, the two chord patterns may or may not have these common tone connections, depending on what you have doubled.

Some sequences can contain seventh chords: all seventh chords, alternating triads and seventh chords, or alternating inversions of seventh chords.

In common practice style:

- When you write a Falling-fifth sequence with all root-position seventh chords, parallel fifths and octaves can easily result. To avoid them, alternate complete and incomplete seventh chords (omit the fifth of the chord). Remember to resolve all of the chordal sevenths down, according to

- Sequences based on Seconds

As we have learned earlier, root progressions of a second will yield parallel fifths and octaves. One intervallic arrangement that can resolve this problem is Falling-seconds sequence of chords in first inversion. This can be done in descending or ascending series of chords. This arrangement of voice leading was not addressed in the previous chapter, chapter 16, because a span of chords in first inversion is used to expand a tonic, predominant, or a dominant area. A prominent feature of the series of first inversion chords is that they contain a intervallic pattern that demonstrates a connection between the soprano-bass voice –leading.

78

79

\flat_3 \flat_3 \flat_3 \flat_3 \flat_3 \flat_3 \flat_3 \flat_3 \flat_3 \flat_3

CM: IV6 _____ I CM: I \flat 6 _____ V6

falling seconds - parallel \flat_3 ascending seconds - parallel \flat_3

In addition to parallel first inversion chords, there are two more ways to break up the perfect intervals from appearing within the Falling-second sequence. First, is to feature a chain of 7-6 suspensions.

80

I _____ I

falling seconds (7-6 suspensions)

Analyze: Handel, Chaconne in G Major, Variation 9

Another sequence framework based on root motion by second is a series of root-position triads moving up by step, then delay arrival of the sixth above the bass one half beat. This will create a linear intervallic pattern of a 5th moving to a sixth on the offbeat, thus preventing from producing parallel fifths because the voices do not move together.

81

CM: I⁶ _____ I

ascending seconds (5 - 6 motion)

Analyze: Hensel, “Neue Liebe, neues Leben”, mm. 69 - 71

Summary:

When we analyze sequences, we need to determine (1) what type of pattern they are based on (a root progression, a melodic idea that’s restated, an interval pattern, or a combination of both) and (2) the intervals of the restatement. When you come across a sequence in a piece of music, a *contextual analysis* beneath your Roman numerals will help clarify the harmonic function and goal of the passage. You may substitute for beat-to-beat Roman numerals a label on the beginning and ending chord, plus a label that describes the type from among the following:

- Falling-fifth (root position or root alternating with inversions, may have sevenths)
- Ascending-fifth (root position or root alternating with ⁶₃)
- Falling-third (stepwise bass or alternating root movements)
- Parallel ⁶₃ chords (roots moving by seconds)
- 7 – 6 motion (roots descending by seconds)
- 5 – 6 motion (roots ascending by seconds)