2.4 Elementary Contrapuntal Motions

Contrapuntal comes from the word counterpoint, which means "note against note." Contrapuntal motions are the different ways two parts can relate when they move from one chord to the next.

1. Static Motion
   In static motion, both voices hold their notes. Static motion really means no motion at all.

   static sixths (G-E=6th)

2. Parallel Motion
   In parallel motion, both voices move in the same direction and the interval class stays the same. The quality of the interval may be different (e.g. major vs. minor or perfect vs. diminished).

   parallel thirds
   m3 m3 M3 M3

   parallel fifths
   P5 P5

   parallel fourths
   P4 +4 P4

3. Contrary Motion
   In contrary motion, one voice moves up and the other voice moves down. Both voices change pitches.

4. Oblique Motion
   In oblique motion, one voice restates the same pitch while the other voice changes.

5. Similar Motion
   In similar motion, both voices move in the same direction. Unlike parallel motion, the two intervals are different classes (e.g. seconds vs. thirds, etc.).

   downward similar motion
   m3 P4 P5 m6

   upward similar motion
   P5 M3

   upward similar motion
   P4 M6 P5