



# Voice Leading: The Science behind a Musical Art (MIT Press)

By David Huron

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**Voice Leading: The Science behind a Musical Art (MIT Press)** By David Huron

Voice leading is the musical art of combining sounds over time. In this book, David Huron offers an accessible account of the cognitive and perceptual foundations for this practice. Drawing on decades of scientific research, including his own award-winning work, Huron offers explanations for many practices and phenomena, including the perceptual dominance of the highest voice, chordal-tone doubling, direct octaves, embellishing tones, and the musical feeling of sounds "leading" somewhere. Huron shows how traditional rules of voice leading align almost perfectly with modern scientific accounts of auditory perception. He also reviews pertinent research establishing the role of learning and enculturation in auditory and musical perception. Voice leading has long been taught with reference to Baroque chorale-style part-writing, yet there exist many more musical styles and practices. The traditional emphasis on Baroque part-writing understandably leaves many musicians wondering why they are taught such an archaic and narrow practice in an age of stylistic diversity. Huron explains how and why Baroque voice leading continues to warrant its central pedagogical status. Expanding beyond choral-style writing, Huron shows how established perceptual principles can be used to compose, analyze, and critically understand any kind of acoustical texture from tune-and-accompaniment songs and symphonic orchestration to jazz combo arranging and abstract electroacoustic music. Finally, he offers a psychological explanation for why certain kinds of musical textures are more likely to be experienced by listeners as pleasing.

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Voice leading is the musical art of combining sounds over time. In this book, David Huron offers an accessible account of the cognitive and perceptual foundations for this practice. Drawing on decades of scientific research, including his own award-winning work, Huron offers explanations for many practices and phenomena, including the perceptual dominance of the highest voice, chordal-tone doubling, direct octaves, embellishing tones, and the musical feeling of sounds "leading" somewhere. Huron shows how traditional rules of voice leading align almost perfectly with modern scientific accounts of auditory perception. He also reviews pertinent research establishing the role of learning and enculturation in auditory and musical perception. Voice leading has long been taught with reference to Baroque chorale-style part-writing, yet there exist many more musical styles and practices. The traditional emphasis on Baroque part-writing understandably leaves many musicians wondering why they are taught such an archaic and narrow practice in an age of stylistic diversity. Huron explains how and why Baroque voice leading continues to warrant its central pedagogical status. Expanding beyond choral-style writing, Huron shows how established perceptual principles can be used to compose, analyze, and critically understand any kind of acoustical texture from tune-and-accompaniment songs and symphonic orchestration to jazz combo arranging and abstract electroacoustic music. Finally, he offers a psychological explanation for why certain kinds of musical textures are more likely to be experienced by listeners as pleasing.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Huron has written a brilliant and eminently readable synthesis of decades of empirical work on the cognitive and auditory principles that underlie polyphonic compositional techniques. This book is an ideal entry point for musicians interested in the field of music cognition, as Huron carefully leads the reader through the process of investigating musical knowledge through scientific experiments.

(Ian Quinn, Professor of Music, Yale University)

In this captivating book, David Huron provides a compelling account of the extraordinary capabilities and intricacies of the human auditory system, and how they are artfully navigated and exploited in the practice of multipart music composition. Drawing on over a half a century of interdisciplinary research on human audition, Huron demystifies and expands upon the traditional rules of voice leading, linking them to perceptual and cognitive principles freighted with rich aesthetic and evolutionary significance. This book is a revelation.

(William Forde Thompson, Director, Centre for Elite Performance, Expertise, and Training, Macquarie University; author of *Music, Thought, and Feeling: Understanding the Psychology of Music*)

#### About the Author

David Huron is Distinguished Professor in the School of Music and in the Center for Cognitive and Brain Sciences at the Ohio State University; he is author of *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation* (MIT Press).

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##### David Lau:

This Voice Leading: The Science behind a Musical Art (MIT Press) book is not really ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book is definitely information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. That Voice Leading: The Science behind a Musical Art (MIT Press) without we know teach the one who reading through it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't always be worry Voice Leading: The Science behind a Musical Art (MIT Press) can bring if you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even mobile phone. This Voice Leading: The Science behind a Musical Art (MIT Press) having very good arrangement in word and layout, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

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