

VOICING

Why We Need Voicing

Voicing is a fundamental tool for creating a sense of space and clarity in the music you play. In thick or polyphonic textures, voicing prevents the sound from becoming overly dense or heavy. To achieve a balanced, layered, transparent tonal landscape, it is essential to develop voicing both in your sound imagination and in your physical touch.

Without voicing, several issues commonly appear:

- a melody that lacks expression or definition
- a generally heavy, muddy sound
- unclear melodic lines in double notes or chordal textures
- reduced finesse and coordination when projecting a melody within middle voices

Voicing also supports healthy technique. When guided by sound imagination, it helps you avoid the instinctive tension that often arises when trying to bring out a melody through “force”. Instead, the balance comes from inner hearing, allowing the hand to remain relaxed while shaping the musical line.

Choosing Which Melodic Line to Emphasize

The first step in voicing is simply deciding which musical line you intend to project:

- the main melody
- the bass line
- a hidden melody within a dense or polyphonic texture
- a developed voice within double notes
- the outer voices of a chordal passage

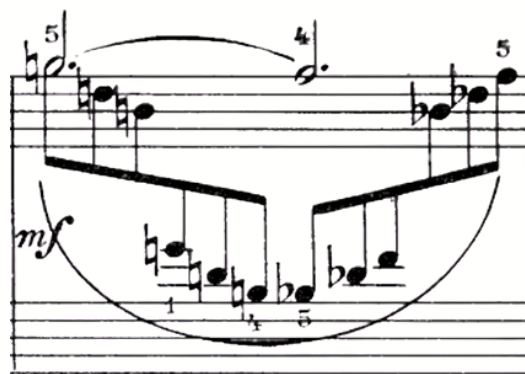
Clarifying this choice at the beginning helps your imagination—and later your touch—organize the layers of musical texture in your mind and sound.

VOICING ANALYSIS

Enhancing Voicing Through Layered Imagination of Long Notes

At this stage, it is important to imagine long-note values with their full duration.

For instance, when playing a melody like the Sol Fa in this example, imagining the long notes will create two layers in your mind: the sustained long notes of the melodic line and the arpeggio-like accompaniment.



The advantage of this layered imagination is that it naturally enhances your voicing.

The smaller notes in the accompaniment will automatically appear softer and more distant in your sound imagination, without requiring any conscious effort to “push down” the melody or “hold back” the accompaniment.

VOICING IMAGINATION

Six Key Points to Remember When Imagining Voicing

1. Use the Appropriate Tempo for Imagination

Avoid imagining the notes too quickly when working on harmony, dynamics, or voicing. Choose a mental tempo that allows every detail to be heard distinctly—approximately *two notes per second*. This pace supports clarity and prevents the imagination from losing focus.

2. The “Zooming-In” Technique

If dynamics relate to the transparency or density of sound imagination, voicing relates to the vibrance, richness and intensity of the imagined tone.

Focus closely on the notes you wish to project. Zoom in on their colour and texture—almost as though you are looking deeply into the sound itself.

For example:

- a zoomed-in *pianissimo* feels spacious and weightless, like clean air in a quiet room,
- a zoomed-in *fortissimo* feels fiery, full, and alive, like stepping into heat and motion.

Students often resist zooming in, fearing it will make the imagined sound louder. In reality, you can zoom in as much as you like—down to the smallest “particles” of the tone. This creates greater roundness, weight, and expressive shape, even when imagining soft dynamics.

*Although the sound may become louder, its dynamic character stays the same,
enriched by greater depth, intensity, and expressiveness.*

As a result, you gain the ability to shape a line expressively even in *pp* and to highlight inner melodic voices within chords or polyphonic textures.

3. The “Distance” Technique

Voicing also depends on the sense of distance between musical layers.

While magnifying the primary melodic line, imagine its sound as being physically close to you. At the same time, and without any deliberate effort, the accompanying notes naturally fall into the distance—perhaps several meters down a hallway.

This contrast in distance naturally creates depth and helps the melody stand out more clearly, while the accompaniment becomes lighter and more transparent without effort.

4. Avoid “Sharper” Imagination

If you imagine the voiced line with a sharper or more pointed quality, the hand muscles will often mirror this sharpness, creating tension.

Keep the same spaciousness and acoustic environment in your imagination—even when zooming in. The sound should feel expanded and vibrant, never compressed or tighten.

5. Avoid “Softer” Imagination

When voicing, imagining the accompaniment softer can paradoxically make it sound louder. Instead, focus on magnifying the melodic line.

When the melody becomes vivid and close in your imagination, the accompaniment naturally fades away, creating a sense of distance and space. The background softens on its own without deliberate effort.

6. Remember Sound Movement

As with dynamics, the length of the imagined sound is essential.

If the tail of the sound is too short, tension tends to appear in the underside of the wrist, and the physical touch becomes vertical, harsh, or percussive.

A long, horizontal sense of sound movement keeps the wrist free and supports a resonant, balanced tone.

VOICING INTONATION

Keeping Intonation Free in Voicing

A common mistake is to unintentionally restrict the openness, resonance, and natural vibration of the inner singing while imagining voicing.

Remember: voicing influences only the colour and texture of your voice, not intonation.

These two aspects—voicing and intonation—belong to entirely different domains: voicing to sound imagination in the mind, and intonation to the vocal cords. They should remain independent.

If, when you sing the voiced melodic line aloud as you imagine it, the intonation sounds flat or muted—like a timid child singing onstage—this indicates that you are inwardly holding back. The inner singing has become constrained, and the natural freedom of intonation is being suppressed.

Instead, imagine the quality of a professional vocalist performing on stage. Even in the softest dynamic, their voice continues to vibrate fully and resonate freely. The colour may change, becoming lighter or more intimate, but the vitality of intonation remain completely free.

VOICING PLAYING

How to Play the Melody in Double Notes

When you project the melodic line clearly in your imagination, the touch adjusts naturally. Your fingers will connect the most prominent notes while slightly releasing those that belong to the supporting voice. This principle is not new—you explored it in Volume I, in the chapter on wrist motion—but in the context of voicing, it becomes fully meaningful. The imagined hierarchy of sound guides the physical hierarchy of touch.

Voicing Ornamentation

When voicing ornamented passages, project only the entry and exit points of the embellishment. If you attempt to voice every note within the ornament, the result often becomes heavy, restless, and lacking elegance—more like a buzzing effect than a musical shape.



Focusing on the starting and ending notes allows the ornament to remain light, graceful, and stylistically appropriate.

OPEN LESSONS

