



# MELODIC AND RHYTHMIC EMBELLISHMENT IN TWO VOICE COMPOSITION

Chapter 10

# MELODIC EMBELLISHMENT IN 2<sup>ND</sup> SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

- **For each note of the CF, there are 2 notes in the counterpoint**
- **In strict style it's written as 2 half notes against each whole note**
- **Metrical accent—the first of the two half notes carries greater weight than the second half note**
- **Sometimes the 2<sup>nd</sup> half note is known as a diminution because it divides the original 1<sup>st</sup> species framework in half**
- **In second species, we begin to use dissonant harmonic intervals like 2, 4, A4, d5, 7, and 9**

# MELODIC EMBELLISHMENT IN 2<sup>ND</sup> SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

- **In second species counterpoint, a dissonant harmonic interval must fall on the unaccented second half of the measure.**
- **The dissonance must be approached by step from a consonant harmonic interval (known as the preparation) on the downbeat**
- **It must also connect by step to a consonant harmonic interval on the following downbeat. This is known as a resolution—motion from dissonance to consonance.**

# MELODIC EMBELLISHMENT IN 2<sup>ND</sup> SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

- **You can also have two consonances against a single CF note, by skip or leap, or by using 5-6 or 6-5 intervals in stepwise motion (see 10.1 m.2, 3, 6, and 7)**
- **Within each measure the entry of the 2<sup>nd</sup> note creates oblique motion. Motion across the barline is by contrary, similar, or parallel motion.**

# PASSING TONES

- **Most common melodic dissonance in 2:1 counterpoint**
- **A passing tone (labeled P) fills in a skip by stepwise motion**
  - **Approached by step**
  - **Left by step in the same direction**
  - **Introduce 2nds, 4ths, and 7ths on the unaccented part of the measure**
  - **10.2 m. 2, 4, and 7; 10.1 m. 1 and 4**
  - **Consonant passing tones exist as well but are not usually labeled**

# CONSONANT SKIPS

- **Consonant skips (CS) or leaps are when both half notes of the skip or leap form a consonant harmonic interval with the CF.**
- **Add interest by providing contrast to the stepwise motion of passing tones.**
- **Used with passing tones to create a mix of consonant and dissonant harmonic intervals and to balance the steps, skips, and leaps provided by the CF**
- **Help to create a good shape to the CPT line**
- **Don't use too many in a row.**
  - **Too many P makes the line too conjunct**
  - **Too many CS make the line too disjunct**

# NEIGHBOR TONES

- **Labeled N---on unaccented part of measure**
- **Steps to note above or below the accented note and then returns to it**
  - **Approached and left by step in opposite directions**
- **Upper neighbor (UN) is written above the melody pitch**
- **Lower neighbor (LN) is written below the melody pitch**
- **Temporarily take the place of the pitch they decorate**
- **May form consonant or dissonant intervals**
- **Use them sparingly—too many will make the line too static**
- **10.3 m. 4,5,10**



# WRITING 2:1 COUNTERPOINT

- **Same general procedure as 1:1 counterpoint: write the beginning and end and then fill in the middle.**
- **Opening interval must be a P8 or PU (or P5 if CPT is in the upper voice)**
- **First note of counterpoint may be on the downbeat followed by another half note or may be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> half note, preceded by a half rest (preferred to allow the voice more independence)**
- **Last note of CPT should be a whole note PU or P8.**
- **Penultimate measure can be 2 half notes or a whole note (see 10.4)**



# WRITING 2:1 COUNTERPOINT

- **If the penultimate measure is a whole note, it ends just like it were first species.**
  - **If in minor raise both the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> scale degrees. Treat the A4 or d5 as a dissonant PT in the last half of the measure (see 10.4 d and e)**
  - **If the penultimate measure is 2 half notes, the harmonic intervals will generally be 5-3-8 or 5-6-8 (allows for use of a dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord)**
  - **Other than the 1<sup>st</sup> measure and last measure or 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> species CPT will have 2 half notes per measure. Pitches may not be immediately repeated, whether within a measure or across the barline.**

# 2:1 COUNTERPOINT MELODIC CONSIDERATIONS

- **Plan ahead! Try to plan 2-3 measures, looking at where offbeat embellishments can go, overall shape, etc.**
- **Make sure to include dissonant passing tones...their absence is considered an error.**
- **A common problem is to have good details in a small segment while the overall shape is too stagnant (10.5)**
- **Try to give your line the span of an octave or 10<sup>th</sup>**
- **Try to have a primary and secondary high or low point.**

# 2:1 COUNTERPOINT MELODIC CONSIDERATIONS

- **If needed, use a leap of an octave or fifth in either direction or an upward leap of a 6<sup>th</sup> in order to change the range or add interest to the line.**
- **Larger leaps are allowable because you have more options available in 2<sup>nd</sup> species.**
- **Large leaps should be approached and left in ways to balance the line...filling in after the leap with stepwise motion in the opposite direction**
- **Leaps normally appear between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> half note in a measure rather than over a bar line.**
- **SKIP OR LEAP WITHIN A BAR LINE BUT STEP OVER THEM!**

# 2:1 COUNTERPOINT HARMONIC CONSIDERATIONS

- **The harmonic interval on the first half note of each measure must be a perfect or imperfect consonance.**
- **Dissonant intervals are allowed only on the 2<sup>nd</sup> half note, approached and resolved as a passing or neighbor tone.**
- **Unisons are allowed only on the offbeat and must be left by contrary motion to their approach**
- **To avoid hidden or direct fifths and octaves, approach P5 and P8 on the downbeat by step in the upper part, ideally in contrary motion. Don't approach P8 of P5 in similar motion with a skip or leap in the upper voice.**

# 2:1 COUNTERPOINT HARMONIC CONSIDERATIONS

- **Check for parallel unisons, octaves and fifths from downbeat to downbeat (beat to beat parallels) and across the bar lines (adjacency parallels)**
- **No more than three consecutive downbeats should have the same imperfect consonance (3-3-3 or 6-6-6)**
- **Ex 10.7 violates these rules**
- **Perfect intervals on offbeats of 2 consecutive measures are allowed (but no more than 2)**
- **Always try to play it after you finish!**

# THIRD SPECIES (4:1) COUNTERPOINT

- 4 quarter notes are set against the whole note of the CF
- Strongest accent is on the first quarter note (the downbeat); next strongest on the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter note (upbeat)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter notes are unaccented
- Same as 2<sup>nd</sup> species:
  - Harmonic interval on 1<sup>st</sup> quarter note must be consonant
  - Harmonic interval on 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> quarter notes may be consonant or dissonant
  - Parallel perfect intervals prohibited downbeat to down beat or offbeat to offbeat

# THIRD SPECIES (4:1) COUNTERPOINT

- **Consonant skips (esp. 2 or more in a row) are less common than in 2<sup>nd</sup> species.**
- **Leaps occasionally appear to improve the distance between lines, but emphasis is on a smooth, flowing, conjunct CPT line**
- **Connection from 4<sup>th</sup> quarter note to downbeat over the bar line will normally be by step.**
- **Many embellishments are similar to 2<sup>nd</sup> species, i.e. neighbor tones, passing tones, and consonant skips**



# THIRD SPECIES (4:1) COUNTERPOINT

- **Embellishments new to 3<sup>rd</sup> species:**
  - **Cambiata—combines passing and neighboring tones (ex. 10.8); creates an apparent skip from a dissonance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter; the PT on the 2<sup>nd</sup> note of a cambiata resolves on the 4<sup>th</sup> note**
  - **Double neighbor—combines upper and lower neighbors**
    - **Can go in either order but UN first is most common**
    - **2<sup>nd</sup> neighbor must resolve and the figure must continue to the next downbeat in the same direction to complete the pattern (ex. 10.9d)**

# RHYTHMIC DISPLACEMENT IN FOURTH SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

- **In 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> species CPT we use embellishments to create consonant or harmonic intervals and provide melodic motion**
- **In 4<sup>th</sup> species, we also use rhythmic displacement—the shifting of consonant pitches in time to create dissonant harmonic intervals**
  - **These dissonance intervals must resolve to complete the pattern.**
- **Suspension—rhythmic embellishment created by a consonant interval being held over to the first beat of the next measure, creating a harmonic dissonance until the suspended voice moves down by step**

# SUSPENSIONS

- **Suspensions have three parts:**
  - **A consonant harmonic interval (preparation) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the measure**
  - **Consonance held over to the first half of the next measure to make an accented dissonant harmonic interval (suspension)**
  - **Resolution of the dissonance down by step on the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the measure to a consonant harmonic interval (resolution), which may also serve as the preparation for the next suspension**

# RHYTHMIC DISPLACEMENT IN FOURTH SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

- **2 half notes are set against a whole note (like 2<sup>nd</sup> species) but the 2<sup>nd</sup> half note in most measures is tied over to the following downbeat**
- **Parts alternate, with CF primarily on downbeats and CPT primarily on offbeats**
- **CPT begins with half rest**
- **In penultimate measure 2<sup>nd</sup> half note is never tied over but resolves to the unison or octave**
- **You must employ suspensions as much as possible throughout the setting (ex 10.11)**
  - **Works well in stepwise descending parts of the cantus**
  - **Can also tie over a consonance to another consonance**

# RHYTHMIC DISPLACEMENT IN FOURTH SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

- **Because suspensions always resolve down, 4<sup>th</sup> species CPTs tend to “go downhill”**
- **Sometimes you have to “break the species”**
  - **May be needed to keep lines from crossing**
  - **Often used after three suspensions in a row of the same type to make lines less repetitive**
  - **Done when no consonance is available to tie over (m2-3 of 10.11)**

# DISSONANT SUSPENSIONS

- **Suspensions are named by the interval of dissonance and its resolution**
  - **Most common upper voice suspensions are 4-3, 7-6, and 9-8 (see ex. 10.12)**
  - **In 4-3 suspensions, make sure the CPT note creating the 4<sup>th</sup> is not scale degree 7**
  - **Only common bass suspensions are 2-3 and 9-10 (which is also labeled 2-3 generally)**
    - **Writing bass line CPT will require more consonances tied across as well as more breaking of the species**
    - **Don't use 4-5 or 7-8 suspensions or a 4-3 or 7-6 suspension with the dissonance resolving up**

# CONSONANT SUSPENSIONS

- **You can continue rhythmic flow of tied over half notes by connecting a consonant preparation on the offbeat to another consonance on the downbeat.**
  - **Since it's consonant, it doesn't have to resolve**
  - **It may connect by step, sip or leap to any consonant interval to create variety or separate the lines**
  - **Particularly useful when the CF skips, leaps, or uses ascending steps**



# CHAINS OF SUSPENSIONS

- **Used when the CF is a stepwise descending line**
- **Created when you follow one suspension with another of the same type**
- **Actually a displacement of a note to note series of descending parallel 3rds or 6ths (ex 10.15)**
- **Only 4-3, 7-6, and 2-3 suspensions can be used in chains (9-8, 5-6, or 6-5 would imply parallel 5ths or octaves)**

# WRITING 4<sup>TH</sup> SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

- **Write the beginning and ending patterns and then fill in the middle, still beginning with an octave or unison (or 5<sup>th</sup> if the CF is the upper part)**
- **Typically begin the counterpoint with a half rest followed by a half note but you can also start with two half notes, where the 2<sup>nd</sup> half note is tied across the bar line**
- **The ending must be a 7-6 suspension if the CPT is the upper part or a 2-3 (or 9-10) suspension if the CPT is in the bottom part, leading to a final unison or octave whole note**
- **Don't tie over the last note in the penultimate measure.**
- **Raise the 7<sup>th</sup> in minor modes to create a leading tone at the end.**

# FIFTH SPECIES COUNTERPOINT

- **May include quarter notes (3<sup>rd</sup> species), half notes (2<sup>nd</sup> species), half notes tied over the bar (4<sup>th</sup> species), and whole notes (1<sup>st</sup> species) all mixed together (ex 10.16)**
- **Customary for suspensions (particularly 7-6) in 5<sup>th</sup> species to be ornamented (ex 10.16 m8 and 9)**
- **Eighth notes may only be used on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter notes and must be approached and left by step**



# FREE COUNTERPOINT

- **You are free to choose where, how, and with what note values to incorporate melodic and rhythmic elaboration.**