



Counterpoint

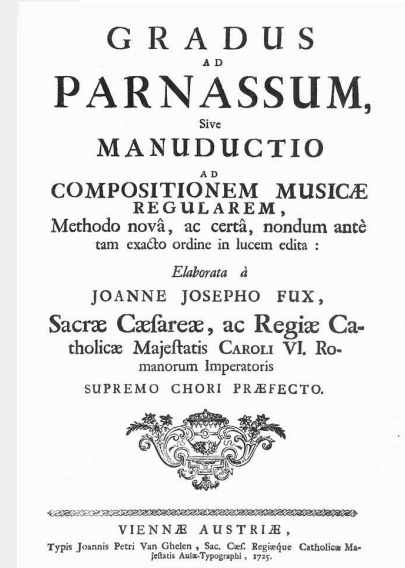
Counterpoint: The art of combining different melodic lines in a musical composition.



Origin of Species Counterpoint



- **Johann Joseph Fux, an Austrian composer and music theorist, wrote Gradus ad Parnassum (Steps to Parnassus) - Parnassus is a mountain in central Greece**
- **He was the first to publish a work on what he called Species Counterpoint**
- **It became the most widely used method of teaching counterpoint**
- **In Gradus ad Parnassum J. J. Fux created five "Species" of counterpoint**
- **Cantus firmus - Latin: "fixed song" is a preexistent melody under a polyphonic musical composition - Counterpoint is the compositional technique of creating and managing these melodic lines**



MELODIC Rules for the Soprano Line

- The soprano line should move mostly by step without excessive leaps (conjunct motion)
- You should begin with the most stable of sonorities: perfect consonances (1 or 5)
- The soprano line should use M2 m2, M3 m3, P4, P5, M6 (low sol to mi) (no augmented or diminished intervals, no intervals larger than a 5th)
- Ascending leaps of a 5th or 6th must be resolved stepwise in the opposite direction
- The leading tone should always resolve up by step
- The soprano penultimate note will always be the leading tone and move to tonic on the last note

MELODIC Rules for the Bass Line

- You should begin with the most stable of sonorities: perfect consonances (1 or 5)
- The bass line will use melodic leaps (contrary motion to the soprano)
- The bass line should use M2 m2, M3 m3, P4, P5, M6 m6, P8 (no augmented or diminished intervals)
- P8 leaps should be followed by changes in direction
- Do not leap to an octave unless the movement is oblique (soprano remains on the same pitch)
- Successive leaps in the same direction are permitted if you are outlining a triad
- The leading tone should always resolve up by step
- Repeated bass notes are only acceptable if they start on a strong beat
- Repeated notes may start on a weak beat if it's the beginning of a phrase or if the second note is a suspension

The HARMONIC Rules – Intervals

Perfect Intervals

- You should begin a P1, P5, or P8 between soprano and bass
- If there is a P1, P5 or P8 between Soprano and Bass your next interval cannot be the same (do not duplicate perfect intervals in succession)
- If there is a perfect interval between soprano and bass the soprano's next pitch should be a 2nd away
- Always end on a P1 or P8
- Do not have a unison between soprano or bass at any other time than the final note
- Do not use the harmonic P4 it is considered to be a dissonance.
- Only harmonic intervals permitted are 3rds, 6ths, 5ths and 8ths

Other Information:

- You should never have a leading tone in both voices on the same beat
- There should never be more than 3 consecutive 3rds or 6ths
- Resolve all 7ths according to common practice in reference to tendency tones

The HARMONIC Rules – Motion

- Motion between soprano and bass should vary
- Avoid combining similar motion with leaps, especially large ones at most, only once per exercise, and ideally, never
- A harmonic 5th or 8th of any kind must not be approached with similar motion only contrary or oblique motion is permitted (this is called hidden or direct octaves)
- Parallel motion is only allowed with 3^{rds} and 6^{ths} and there must not be more than 3 consecutive instances.

Direct fifths or octaves. *also called hidden fifths or octaves

This rule is tricky. If you make a vertical fifth or octave, you may not approach it in similar motion. Only contrary or oblique motion are acceptable ways to enter into a fifth or octave. The idea is that similar motion into a 5th or 8ve causes it to “pop out” of the texture, interrupting the overall smoothness.

The diagram is divided into two sections: 'ILLEGAL' and 'LEGAL'.
Under 'ILLEGAL', there are two pairs of diagrams. Each pair shows two lines of music. In the first pair, both lines move in the same direction (up or down) towards a vertical interval of a fifth or octave. In the second pair, both lines also move in the same direction towards a vertical interval of a fifth or octave. Below these is the caption: (similar motion into 5th or 8ve).
Under 'LEGAL', there are two pairs of diagrams. In the first pair, one line moves up and the other moves down towards a vertical interval of a fifth or octave. In the second pair, one line moves up and the other moves down towards a vertical interval of a fifth or octave. Below these is the caption: (contrary or oblique motion into 5th or 8ve).

These next four examples would all be bad.

Four musical examples are shown on a single staff in treble clef, each with a label above it:
1. 'direct 5th': A vertical fifth is formed by two notes. Arrows point from the notes to each other, indicating they were approached in similar motion.
2. 'direct 5th': A vertical fifth is formed by two notes. Arrows point from the notes to each other, indicating they were approached in similar motion.
3. 'direct 8ve': A vertical octave is formed by two notes. Arrows point from the notes to each other, indicating they were approached in similar motion.
4. 'direct 8ve': A vertical octave is formed by two notes. Arrows point from the notes to each other, indicating they were approached in similar motion.

The HARMONIC Rules – Chords

- All implied chords should make harmonic sense
- Acceptable chords are I i, ii, ii^o, IV, iv, V v
- You can repeat chords in the same inversion as long as you start on a strong beat unless it is an anacrusis to the beginning of the melody.
- Ideally repeated chords will be inverted
- Apply the rules of tonic, pre-dominant, and dominant function

Cross Relation

- a type of dissonance that describes a chromatic contradiction between two notes sounding simultaneously (or in close proximity) in two different voices or parts (for example a tritone between two notes of adjacent chords)
- Make sure that your harmonic intervals are consonant not dissonant (no augmented or diminished intervals)