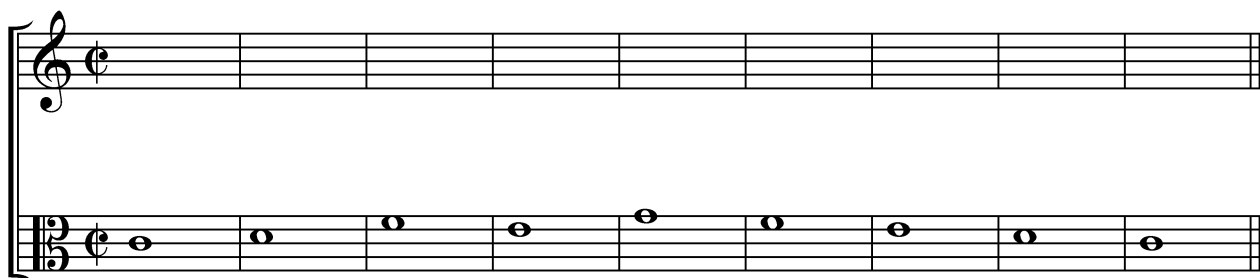


Writing 2v Fifth-Species Counterpoint: Writing an Upper Counterpoint

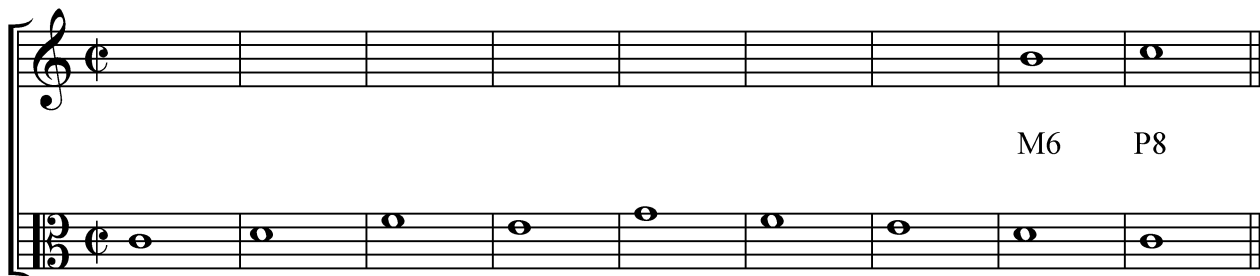
Fifth species teaches how to write a well-paced vocal melody against a given melody, using a variety of fluid rhythms. Because fifth species focuses on sixteenth-century sacred vocal style, melodic lines generally avoid quick changes of pace. They instead gather and release energy gradually, usually starting slowly. Each type of rhythm follows the rules of their respective species: half notes follow second species, tied halves follow fourth species, quarter notes obey third-species rules.

As with all species counterpoint, all dissonant embellishments are stepwise (the passing tone, the neighbor tone, and the suspension) or are idioms closely derived from such stepwise motion (double neighbor and *nota cambiata*, and ornaments applied to suspensions). Fifth species add a few ornaments, including eighth notes, that can be applied to suspensions. Although fifth-species melodies ultimately can be reduced to the earlier species, using any of the previous species as a basis for composition can be difficult and not always yield the best lines. Whatever approach one uses, one must have a good command of all the earlier species, in order to know how to use its respective note values and rules at the right moments.

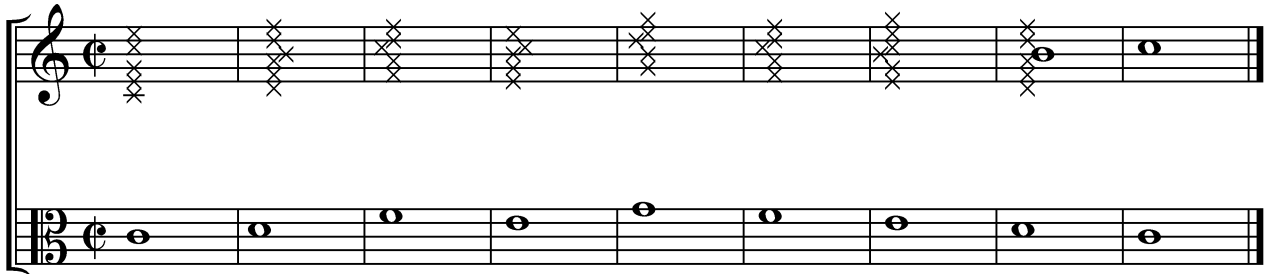
1. Study the Cantus Firmus. Determine the key (major or minor), and notice its shape and the location of leaps by singing the tune.



2. Write the Cadence. If the CF ends with 2-1, use 7-1. In minor, you will need to raise the leading tone at the cadence, following melodic minor.



3. Put an "x" on Every Allowable Interval on Downbeats of Each Measure. The exercise may start with a P1, M3/m3, P5, or P8 above. (Lower counterpoints can only start with a P1 or P8 below.) Other measures may have any consonant interval above (3rds, P5, 6ths, P8, 10ths). Also mark P1 in every measure, as they can be useful for leaps inside the measure.



4. Select a Good Melody using the "x"s. Although it may not be easiest starting with first-species as a basis and although several opportunities for a good fifth-species counterpoint might be missed, let's try this as an approach, because it is slightly more algorithmic.

You will construct a first-species melody, planning ahead for the fifth-species byproduct:

1. Second-species opportunities
 - a. A skip of a third is a great place for a passing tone. Dissonant passing tones are best.
 - b. Other intervals will require some sort of leap, which will take more thinking about leap resolutions and melodic shape.
 - c. Be wary of using 2nd species with repeated whole notes, as the neighbor tone is forbidden in half-note motion (only in the strict form of species counterpoint).
2. Third-species opportunities
 - a. Stepwise motion in the same direction can be ornamented by a double neighbor.
 - b. Stepwise motion that changes direction can be ornamented by a *nota cambiata*.
 - c. Other intervals, including repeated notes, can be filled in by stepwise motion and carefully controlled leaps in third species.
3. Fourth-species opportunities
 - a. Whenever a stepwise descending passage occurs in whole notes, it is possible to use a suspension. Excellent suspensions are 4-3 & 7-6 (upper) and 2-3 (lower). 5-6 is okay.
 - b. Whenever ascending parallel sixths occur, it is possible to use an ascending 5-6 suspension chain.

The choice of the numerous available musical figures above is ultimately a musical choice requiring experience. As usual, however, you should check your first-species line for egregious errors, such as parallel octaves or fifths, or unresolved large leaps.

Here is some general advice:

- a. Your first-species basis may not be that good, as long as large leaps (>P5) are recovered in opposite direction. If the first-species recovery is not stepwise, you will make it stepwise when putting in the ornaments in second- or third-species motion.
- b. Prefer contrary motion and plan ahead for a melodic line that will eventually move by step when the CF leaps.
- c. Try to plan for a fifth-species line that will move mostly by step with a few choice leaps, while also using a diverse number of melodic and rhythmic figures.

Below is the first-species basis for a fifth-species line (step 4).

P1 M6 M3 P8 P5 M6 m6 M6 P8

Below is a fifth-species line based on the above first-species counterpoint.

P1 m7 M6 M3 +4 P5 M6 P8 m7 m9 P8 P5 P4 M3 P4 M6 M3 +4 m6 m7 m6 m7 M6 P8

* Here there is a cross-related tritone from B to F ("mi vs. fa") error.

It is nice to put in the traditional eighth-note ornament on the concluding suspension.

P1 m7 M6 M3 +4 P5 M6 P8 m7 m9 P8 P5 P4 M3 P4 M6 M3 +4 m6 m7 m6 m7 M6 P8

5. Check Your Work! Use your error-detection skills from WebCT exercises.

- a. Sing your melody and check for melodic errors, such as bad intervals, unrecovered leaps, or no climax.
- b. Listen to the two parts together and check for harmonic errors, such as dissonances on upbeats, unprepared suspensions, suspensions that don't resolve downwards by step, or parallel octaves or fifths on the surface or in the underlying first-species counterpoint.

6. Turn in Your Work. Remember to submit your homework with intervals written between the staves.

A note: After one has developed some technique through this methodology, one might more successfully write fifth-species lines directly rather than on a first-species basis. This allows for more options and often yields superior melodic lines.

Writing 2v Fifth-Species Counterpoint: Alternative method

The previous method will work, but may not turn out the most musical solutions. The better approach, however, requires more experience.

1. Study the Cantus Firmus. Determine the key (major or minor), and notice its shape and the location of leaps by singing the tune.

2. Write the Cadence. If the CF ends with 2-1, use 7-1. In minor, you will need to raise the leading tone at the cadence, following melodic minor.

3. Put an "x" on Every Allowable Interval on Downbeats of Each Measure. The exercise may start with a P1, M3/m3, P5, or P8 above (or P1 and P8 below). Other measures may have any consonant interval above or below (3rds, P5, 6ths, P8, 10ths). Also mark P1 in every measure, as they can be useful for leaps on inside the measure.

4. Draw a Shape for your Fifth-Species Melody using the "x"s. From the last step, you know all the consonant notes in each measure. Using these, imagine the shapes of your fifth-species melody and how you might place choice leaps (with good recoveries), somewhat ignoring the first-species basis (except for parallel errors). This requires that you have enough experience to know what shapes are possible. You must keep the following issues in mind:

1. The downbeats must be consonant, unless part of suspensions;
2. All dissonances must move by step, except if in a *nota cambiata* or double-neighbor figure,
3. Successive strong beats must not contain parallel fifths or octaves (this means that you can't write a P5 or P8 or P1 followed by the same interval from the third quarter to a downbeat or between successive downbeats), and
4. In quarter-note motion, it's easiest to sing fast leaps from strong to weak beats downwards, and, from weak to strong beats, upwards.

The largest challenge is achieving a good sense of pacing while employing a diverse set of rhythmic values and melodic figures within an idiomatic vocal line. With this approach, one must be more on the lookout for forbidden parallelisms.

Below are the shapes and the first-species basis of the third-species line.

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a wavy line above it, indicating a melodic shape. There are 'x' marks above and below the staff at various points, representing consonant notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a first-species basis of whole notes.

Notice that the first-species line would not be as satisfactory of a first-species exercise; but it serves well as a basis for a fifth-species line.

The exercise below embellishes the previous shapes and basis with several fifth-species figurations.

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a melodic line. Below the staff are interval labels: P5, P4, m3, P4, M3, +4, P5, M6, P8, m7, m6, P4, M3, M3, m2, M3, P5, m3, m6, m7, M6, P5, M6, P8. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a first-species basis of whole notes.

This melodic line is fairly good, with a fluid sense of diverse rhythms and melodic shapes. With a little more effort, one could discover another, better line with a few more interesting leaps for the singer.

Your instructor may comment that the above exercise also displays the "mi vs. fa" error and that neighbor tones would be better on weaker beats and with halfsteps rather than wholesteps

5. Check Your Work! Use your error-detection skills from WebCT exercises.

- Sing your melody and check for melodic errors, such as bad intervals, unrecovered leaps, or no climax.
- Listen to the two parts together and check for harmonic errors, including forbidden parallels and bad dissonance usage. Dissonance usage is determined by the species associated with each note value (e.g., half-note passing tones by second species).

P5 P4 m3 P4 M3 +4 P5 M6 P8 m7 m6 P4 M3 M3 m2 M3 P5 m3 m6 m7 M6P5M6 P8

Another solution can be easily found by doing the same steps, but drawing a different shape. Achieving a highpoint in another location will result a more contrasting solution to the same or a different underlying first-species line. Numerous good third-species solutions exist.

6. Turn in Your Work. Remember to submit your homework with intervals written between the staves.

Summary:

When one is composing a fifth-species line, one must make sure that

- each note value follows the rules of its respective species (i.e., correct dissonance treatment),
- the melodic line contains a variety of species and rhythms,
- the rhythms move forward without any sudden rhythmic changes,
- successive strong beats as well as successive intervals do not contain parallel fifths or octaves.