Outline The Study of Counterpoint from Joseph Fux's Gradus Ad Parnassum

Translated & Edited by Alfred Mann



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MICHAEL MORANGELLI COMPOSER

HAS PERFORMED EXTENSIVELY BOTH IN NEW YORK CITY AND BOSTON. HIS CREDITS INCLUDE THE ANGELO TALLARACCO AND BOB JANUARY BIG BANDS, FIRE & ICE JA22



OCTET, AND THE BLUE RAIN LOUNGE QUARTET. HE WAS ALSO STAFF GUITARIST FOR SOUTH PARK RECORDING STUDIO.

IN BOSTON 1985 - 2004, HE HAS PLAYED WITH THE GEO2GE PEARSON GROUP (LOCAL HEADLINERS AT THE BOSTON JA22 SOCIETY JA22 FESTIVAL IN 1990), URBAN AMBIENCE, AND WAS FOUNDER AND LEADER OF THE WHATS NEW SEPTET (1995). HIS JA22 COMPOSITIONS HAVE BEEN RECORDED BY COMRADERIE TAPES AND INCLUDED IN THE MISSING LINKS TAPE SAMPLER.

COMPOSING FOR FILM SINCE 1996, HE HAS PROVIDED SCORES FOR BOARD STORIES, RULES OF ORDER, THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION AMERICAN LULLABY, THE CITYSCAPE PRODUCTION WASTEBASKET, AND IL MOCCIO - AN APRIL 2004 NEW YORK FILM AND VIDEO ENTRY. HE HAS ALSO PROVIDED MUSIC, EFX, AND SOUND DESIGN FOR ERIC MAURO AND HIS WORK HAS APPEARED ON THEBITSCREEN.COM, THE SEOUL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, ASPEN SHORTFEST, AND THE EXCENTRIS NEW MEDIA FESTIVAL IN MONTREAL.

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FIRST SPECIES COUNTER POINT: NOTE AGAINST NOTE PT 1

CONSONANCE AND DISSONANCE

Consonance:

Unison, 3rd, 5th, 6th, Octave and intervals made up of these and the Octave are Consonances

Unison, 5^{th} , and Octave are PERFECT 6^{th} , 3^{rd} , are IMPERFECT

Dissonance:

 2^{nd} , 4^{th} , dim 5^{th} , tritone, 7^{th} , and intervals made up of these and the Octave are Dissonances

MOTION

Is the distance covered in passing from one interval to another in either direction

Direct - same interval in the same direction

Contrary – moving in opposite direction resulting in different intervals

Oblique – one voice stationary other voice moves, creating different intervals as one voice moves against the stationary voice

Same Interval → Same Interval	Different Intervals	Different Intervals					
Direct	Contrary	Oblique					

4 FUNDAMENTAL RULES

From on PERFECT consonance to another PERFECT consonance must proceed in contrary or oblique motion

From PERFECT consonance to IMPERFECT consonance one may proceed in any of three motions

From IMPERFECT consonance to PERFECT consonance must proceed in contrary or oblique motion

From IMPERFECT consonance to IMPERFECT consonance one may proceed with any of three motions

Perfect → Perfect	Contrary or Oblique					
Imperfect → Perfect	Contrary or Oblique					
Perfect → Imperfect	Any of Three					
Imperfect → Imperfect	Any of Three					
** Oblique is allowed with all 4 progressions						

NOTE ONE

Greater care is needed in moving from note \rightarrow note in DIRECT motion

More IMPERFECT than PERFECT consonances should be employed

Beginning and End must BOTH be PERFECT consonances

NOTE TWO

Treat as a VOCAL performance

No Augmented, Diminished, or Chromatic Intervals

No intervals larger than the 5^{th} – except for octave & min 6^{th} , the minor 6^{th} only in upward direction

No registers too high or too low

No skips following each other in the same direction

Avoid skips not compensated for

NOTE THREE

Next to last bar MUST be a Maj 6^{th} interval if the cantus firmus is the lower part – min 3^{rd} it the upper

The 2nd degree of the mode ALWAYS occurs as the next to last tone in the cantus firmus \rightarrow the 7th degree always as the next to last tone in the counterpoint

Repetition of a tone (oblique motion) should NOT be repeated more than once

Counterpoint MUST be in the same mode as the cantus firmus

NOTE FOUR

No movement by aug 4th – also avoided when reached stepwise if line is not continued in the same direction ($F \rightarrow G \rightarrow A \rightarrow B$)

Ok to have counterpoint (as lower voice) move above the cantus firmus to avoid incorrect motion

Avoid movement by maj 6th interval as it is not easily singable

10th to Octave movement at beginning of the measure is NOT permitted

3rd to Unison movement should be avoided except at beginning and end of piece

Movement from a more remote consonance (i.e. Octave + 5^{th}) should not be tolerated

'Fa' leads up / 'Mi' leads down – adjust Fa by # if movement ascends

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SUMMARY: FIRST SPECIES

1.	Consonance & Dissonance Perfect Consonance Imperfect Consonance Dissonance	Unison, 5 th , Octave 6 th , 3rd 2 nd , 4 th , 5 th , tritone, 7 th
2.	Motion Types	Direct, Contrary, Oblique
	4 FUNDAMENTAL RULES	Perfect → Perfect Contrary or Imperfect → Perfect Oblique Perfect → Imperfect Any of Three
	NOTE ONE	Beginning & End = Perfect Consonances
	Note Two	No Aug., Dim., Chromatic Intervals No intervals larger than 5 th except octave and min 6 th – min 6 th only upward No registers too high or low No skips following in same direction Avoid skips not compensated for
	NOTE THREE	Next to last bar MUST be a Maj 6 th if cf is the lower – min 3rd if the upper 2 nd degree of the mode ALWAYS occurs as the next to last tone in the cf 7 th degree ALWAYS occurs as the next to last tone in the cp Repetition of a tone (oblique motion) should NOT be repeated more than once Cp MUST be in the same mode as the cf
	Note Four	No movement by aug 4 th – also avoided when reached step wise if line is not continued in the same direction Ok to have counter point (as lower voice) move above the cf to avoid incorrect motion Avoid movement by maj 6 th interval 10 th to octave at beginning of measure is NOT permitted 3 rd to unison movement avoided except at beginning and end of piece Movement from a more remote consonance should not be tolerated 'fa' lead up / 'mi' leads down – adjust 'fa' by # if movement ascends

Second Species: 2 half notes against 1 whole note

NOTE ONE

1st on downbeat MUST be consonant

2nd on upbeat maybe dissonant if moves from preceding note to following stepwise

If second note moves by skip it MUST be consonant

NOTE TWO

Dissonance may not occur except as passing note between two notes a 3rd apart

Follow the same rules of movement as First Species

EXCEPTIONS

Next to last measure should have a 5^{th} followed by a maj 6^{th} with cf in lower voice

Next to last measure should have a 5^{th} followed by a minor 3^{rd} if cf is in upper voice

NOTE THREE

A skip of a 3^{rd} cannot prevent a succession of either two 5^{ths} or two octaves



May use a half rest in place of the 1st note of cp

If voices become so close that further movement with no possibility of using contrary motion – can use the skip of min 6^{th} or Octave

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Third Species: 4 Quarters against a Whole Note

NOTE ONE

General Rule:

Follow from 1st & 2nd Species

If 5 notes follow each other (4 quarters + other note) either ascending or descending – the 1^{st} is consonant, 2^{nd} may be dissonant, 3^{rd} consonant, the 4^{th} may be dissonant if the 5^{th} is consonant

Exceptions:

If the 2^{nd} and 4^{th} notes are consonant, the 3^{rd} may be dissonant

The cambiata – if one goes from the 2nd note WHEN dissonant to a consonant note by skip



since cannot use eight notes yet – line should be
D cb A it is ok to use 7th for the 2nd note

NOTE TWO

Next to last measure cf in lower voice

- if ascending min 3rd-4th-5th-maj 6th-Octave
- if descending Octave-7th-5th-maj 6th (contains a 'cambiata')-Octave

Next to last measure cf in upper voice

min 3rd-5th-4th-min 3rd-Unison

NOTE THREE

If 'mi' against 'fa' need to be adjusted use accidentals to avoid the harshness

comes from the 3 hexachords (hard, soft, & natural)

- the interval 'mi' = B natural (hard hexachord) and 'fa' = F natural (natural hexachord) creating aug 4th use Bb to create P4 or P5 interval -
- -

Fourth Species of Counterpoint

NOTE ONE

Two half notes are set against a whole note – they the same tone across the bar line and connected by a tie

First must occur on the upbeat – (beat 2) the second on the down beat (beat 1)

This species is called 'ligature' or 'syncopation' and can be either consonant or dissonant

- the upbeat must always be consonant
- consonant ligature results when both half notes (upbeat & down beat) are consonant
- dissonant results when the half note on the upbeat is consonant and the downbeat note is dissonant



NOTE TWO

These dissonances DO NOT occur nonessentially (by diminuation) but functionally and on the downbeat

They must resolve into the following consonance

NOTE THREE:

Resolution of the Dissonances

The held notes are retardations of the notes following

On this account dissonances should always resolve descending stepwise to the next consonance

- resolved to the consonance which would occur on the downbeat of the following measure if the retardation were removed
- Cantus Firmus is in the lower voice
 - interval of the second → unison
 - \circ 4th \rightarrow 3rd
 - \circ 7th \rightarrow 6th
 - 9th \rightarrow Octave
 - No Unison \rightarrow 2nd (creates 2 successive Unisons
 - No Octave \rightarrow 9th (creates 2 successive Octaves)
- Cantus Firmus is in the upper voice
 - \circ 2nd \rightarrow 3rd
 - \circ 4th \rightarrow 5th
 - \circ 9th \rightarrow 10th
 - Resolution of the 7th → Octave is not good BUT inversion (2nd → Unison) is ok

NOTE FOUR

A $7^{th} \rightarrow 6^{th}$ should appear in the next to last measure if cantus firmus is in the lower voice

 $2^{nd} \rightarrow 3^{rd}$ should appear in the next to last measure if cantus firmus is in the upper voice – concluding with a unison

Occasionally a measure will appear where no 'ligature' can be introduced – use plain half notes till opportunity for syncopation comes again

Avoid interval repetition in succeeding measures – singing and progression considerations

THE FIFTH SPECIES OF COUNTERPOINT

NOTE ONE

This species is called florid counterpoint – should have a plastic melodic line, liveliness of movement, beauty and variety of form

A recapitulation and combination of all the preceding species

Maintain care to write a singable melodic line

NOTE TWO

Expands on the ligatures of species Four

With the addition of 'idem' is added are variants used in the interest of the melodic line or movement

These interrupt the ligatures



OR







NOTE THREE

Two eight notes may occasionally be used

Only on the 2^{nd} and 4^{th} beats – but NEVER on the 1^{st} and 3^{rd} – of the measure

NOTE FOUR

In approaching downbeats use oblique motion or syncopations in most instances

Melodic line will see to lag if two quarter notes occur at the beginning of a measure unless:

- connect them by ligature with the notes following
- use additional quarters to provide further motion





WORKING SUMMARY OF PART 1: 5TH SPECIES

1. Consonance & Dissonance

Perfect Consonance	Unison, 5 th , Octave
Imperfect Consonance	$6^{th}, 3^{rd}$
Dissonance	2^{nd} , 4^{th} , 5^{th} , tritone, 7^{th}

Resolution of Dissonance:

	Should always resolve descending stepwise to the next consonance if result of retardation
2 Motion	
A - 4 Fundamental Rules:	Perfect \rightarrow PerfectContrary or ObliqueImperfect \rightarrow ImperfectAny of three
B - Intervals:	No Aug., Dim., Chromatic Intervals Repetition of a tone (oblique motion) should NOT be repeated more than once 10 th to Octave at beginning of a measure is NOT permitted Avoid movement by Maj 6 th interval Avoid 3 rd to unison movement except at beginning and end of piece Movement from a more remote consonance should not be tolerated NO movement by Aug. 4 th – also avoided when reached stepwise if line is not continued in the same direction
3. Form	Start & End with Perfect Consonance Next to last measure follows formula by species to create final cadence
4. Modality	Cp MUST be in the same mode as the cf 7^{th} degree ALWAYS occurs as the next to last tone in the cp 2^{nd} degree of the mode ALWAYS occurs as the next to last tone in the cp

5. Voice Leading	
	NO skips following in the same direction
	Avoid skips not compensated for
	OK to have cp (as lower voice) move above the cf to avoid incorrect motion
	'fa' leads up / 'mi' leads down – adjust 'fa' with # if movement ascends
6. Vocal Considerations	
	NO intervals larger than 5 th
	Can use Octave and min. 6 th if voices so close and no possibility of contrary motion – min 6 th only upward
	Watch registers

Note Against note in Three parts: Pt 2

NOTE ONE

This species is the simplest combination of 3 voices and consists of equal notes whole notes – the upper two being consonant with the lowest

Three part composition is the most perfect of all – evident from the fact that in it one can have a complete harmonic triad without adding another voice

If another voice is added, it is only a doubling of an already present voice

NOTE TWO

The harmonic triad should be employed in every measure – if there is no special reason against it

Harmonic triad is a combination of the intervals of the 3^{rd} and 5^{th}

Occasionally – for a better melodic line – one uses a consonance not properly belonging to the triad (6^{th} or Octave)

Solves the necessity of avoiding the succession of two perfect consonances – giving up the 5^{th} or Octave for the 6^{th}



NOTE THREE

The 6^{th} interval combines better than any other with the note 'mi' (3^{rd} degree)

The note which determines the 6th should be considered as if it were moved from its proper place to an unusual one



Especially if 'mi' is followed by 'fa' – if followed by another note, it requires the fifth rather than the 6^{th}

The 3rd must be considered carefully – in relation to the mode and weakness at a cadence

NOTE FOUR

The rules for movement – etc. – should be observed not only from the Bass but if possible from any one part to another

But even in 3 part composition, one may depart from the rigorous observance of the rules leading the other parts ABOVE the bass is there is serious reason to do so

Avoid using leger lines in this type of composition

Singable line must be taken into consideration

NOTE FIVE

Again, watch the third interval at endings - major and minor

- Min 3rd is not capable of giving sense of

conclusion - Maj 3rd cannot be used if min 3rd is present in the mode

ie. Mode D \rightarrow D has an F natural – cannot change to F sharp at conclusion to create a Maj 3rd

Half Notes against Whole Notes in Three Parts: Pt 2

NOTE ONE

A half note for the sake of the harmonic triad occasionally make a succession of two parallel fifths acceptable

-	F	E						
Α	\mathbf{F}	G						
5 th	3 rd	5 th						
]	D	С						

Again, the rules for 2 part composition still apply but can be adjusted in 3 part writing should the occasion need

NOTE TWO

Half notes are used against whole notes – one voice utilizes half notes; the cantus firmus is in whole notes with the other voice also in whole notes

Half notes are ALWAYS 'concordant' (in harmony) with the two whole notes

Quarters against Whole Notes in Three Parts: Pt 2

NOTE ONE

The quarter notes must concur with the whole notes of two other voices

Must take into account previous two part composition discussion + what has so far been said about three part composition

NOTE TWO

Greatest consideration must be given to notes which come on the downbeat

Whenever you cannot use the harmonic triad on the first quarter note occurring on the beat – use it on the second or third quarters (or fourth) of the measure

NOTE THREE

Variation is to have one voice in quarters, one voice in half notes, and the cantus firmus in whole notes

The Ligature: Pt 2

NOTE ONE

The way ligatures were used in two part counterpoint is not changed in three part – should be strictly followed here also

The ligature is nothing but the delaying of the note that follows – same consonance in the third voice if the ligature had been omitted



With ligatures:													
	E	E	D	D	С	С	B	С					
	Ţ	J	<u>.</u>	J	E]	D	С					
(Ι)	I	E	(Ĵ	С					

The nature of the consonance is not changed by the ligatures – it remains the same

When dealing with successions of 5ths - in dissonant syncopations - remember the 'upbeat' (second half of the measure) is the essential part

NOTE TWO

Voice is a consideration in 'what is prohibited' (referencing the succession of 5ths)

- the upper voice is more perceptible and obvious to the ear
- the lower voices can be 'blurred' on account of the lowness and not striking the ear so sharply
- highness accentuates, and lowness subdues
- the more perfect a consonance (5th, 8va, Unison) the less harmony it has

 the dissonances produced by the ligature and the pleasantness and beauty they give the ear HAVE TO BE attributed to the consonances to which they resolve

NOTE THREE

If the lower voice is a pedal the 1st note of ligature does not have to be consonant

In such a case, ligatures involving only dissonances are not only correct but sound beautiful



NOTE FOUR

Watch for the succession of 'hidden' 5ths where one voice uses ledger lines and actually places pitch on another voice line \rightarrow if only 2 voices at that part of measure



Florid Counterpoint: Pt 2

NOTE ONE

A combination of the five species in three parts

Refer to 5th species in two part counterpoint for review of procedures

Four Part Composition or Writing in Four Voices: Pt 3

NOTE ONE

The complete triad is contained in three part composition \rightarrow the fourth voice is a doubling of a consonance already present in the three other voices (dissonant chords discussed later)

Unison and Octave are considered NOT different in their general designation \rightarrow outside of register and interval

When the octave cannot be used because of incorrect progression the 3^{rd} and more rarely the 6^{th} are doubled (in a footnote, the 5^{th} is also possible)

Rules for progression and motion given in part 1 should be followed as far as possible – not only from bass but from any one voice to any other

May accept progression of hidden 5th or Octave on requirement of the melody, limiting effect of the cantus firmus, or of imitation (when applying the rules of strict counterpoint to free writing)

NOTE TWO

Use numerals to designate consonant intervals from the bass note – to make the doubling clearer

	F		A		С		B		B		D		С		Ε		D		C #		D
3		5		8		3		5		8		5		3		8		3		8	
	D		F		Ε		D		G		F		Α		G		F		Ε		D
8		3		3		5		3		3		3		5		3		5		8	
	Α		F		G		G		G		Α		Α		С		Α		Α		Α
5		3		5		1		3		5		3		8		5		8		5	
D		D		С		G		Ε		D		F		С		D		A		D	

The natural interval order of the voices vertically is 5th, Octave, 3rd

This order should be preserved unless the progression to next measure would violate the rules of

movement \rightarrow natural division in the harmonic division of the octave

If the 3^{rd} is placed close to the bass the result is a dull and indistinct sound \rightarrow the greater the proportional numbers that determine the interval the brighter the sound of the interval

NOTE THREE

Not only the bass (or lowest part) and the other voices concur with the rules BUT the inner voices also

Interval of the $4^{th} \rightarrow$ the nature of the intervals, whether they are consonant or dissonant is determined by reckoning from the Bass – regardless of what may occur between the inner voices

NOTE FOUR

The inflexibility of the cantus firmus will not allow a working out strictly according to the rules of motion and progress – which is easily done in free composition

Half Notes against Whole Notes: Pt 3

NOTE ONE

Review the corresponding section on 3 part writing \rightarrow no difference here except the two half notes must be agree with the three whole notes – as well as the part 3 Note against Note

NOTE TWO

Difficulty in this results from the necessity of setting two half notes against three whole notes

Results in the possibility of some measures with no possibility of proceeding easily

This Part 3 is actually exercises for free composition

Quarters against Whole Notes: Pt 3

NOTE ONE

Again, review corresponding the two and three voice species \rightarrow no difference except that 4 quarters must be concordant with three whole notes

Avoid unison on the down beats

Again, rules of motion while 'should' be followed, deviation can be tolerated if no other possibility for the progression is available

But avoided in the outer voices \rightarrow restrict deviation to the inner voices

This is only because of the requirement of using whole notes in the other voices. The progression would be 'fixed' could half notes be employed in these instances

NOTE TWO

Complete triad on the first quarter with the remaining approaching the next measure simply

The Ligature: Pt 3

NOTE ONE

Review the corresponding section in Pt 2

In this species the ligature MUST sound well together with three notes

Avoid the 7th used with the 5th in the ligature \rightarrow can divide the whole note to solve this:



Rule that one must write three whole notes cannot be so strictly observed in this species

NOTE TWO

Can us the interval of the 4th in INNER voices \rightarrow ie. Octave to 4th considered a movement from a perfect consonance to an imperfect one in direct motion

Florid Counterpoint: Pt 3

NOTE ONE

Again, review previous corresponding sections

The fourth voice must also be in whole notes

Again, the whole note may be divided if required for correct motion

NOTE TWO

Can now attempt to combine the 5 species of counterpoint \rightarrow whole, half, quarter, ligatures