

# COUNTERPOINT ONLINE

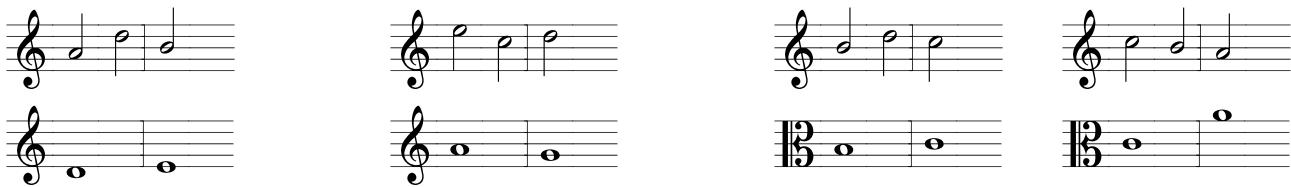
## SUPPLEMENT 2A

In second species counterpoint, bear in mind that the counterpoint is now moving twice as fast as the cantus firmus, and as such it can and should range further in register than in first species. If your counterpoint spends most of its life within the range of a fourth, then it is timid and uninteresting. On the other hand, since the counterpoint is moving faster, and is considered to be a "vocal" line, it should contain more stepwise motion than in first species; any passage with three consecutive leaps in the same direction is bad, and any passage with four consecutive leaps in mixed directions is also bad. Consider the second type of passage to be a yodel.

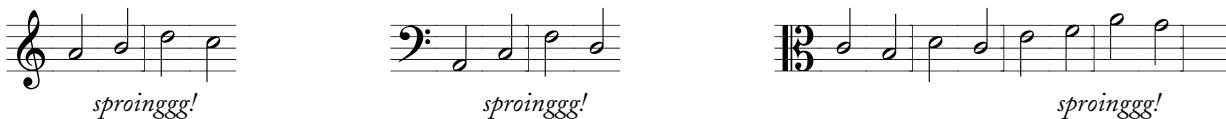
The usual caveats regarding parallel and direct motion hold in second species. They look less obvious on the page, however. The following are all examples of bad direct motion to perfect consonances:



In addition, if the *same* perfect consonance is repeated on consecutive downbeats, then it is a bad parallelism, as well (Consider an octave and a unison *equivalent* in this regard). All of these examples are as bad as it gets:



The *sproinggg* melodic rule comes into force in second species and carries over into third species. The *sproinggg* rule is as follows: you may not leap *up* from an anacrusis to a downbeat if the anacrusis had been approached from below. The *sproinggg* rule is a *melodic* rule. Here are a few examples:



Also, you may not write successive downbeats that are a tritone (or an augmented or diminished interval) apart, whether or not the offending interval is "outlined." Remember that if the first cantus tone is returned to, then the downbeat note in the counterpoint should not be the same note with which it began.

Normally, you should avoid using the same note on successive downbeats, but it is not wrong to do so. However, it is considered extremely weak to begin the second bar of the counterpoint with the same note on



which the counterpoint began; in music of any period, it is usually considered weak or boring to begin an exposition with music that stays in one place (another reason your professor is not partial to Bruckner).

Remember that you have a choice for your beginning: you may begin either with two half notes or a half rest followed by a half note. Even if you begin with the rest, the first note must still be a unison, fifth or octave for counterpoint above, and an octave for counterpoint below.

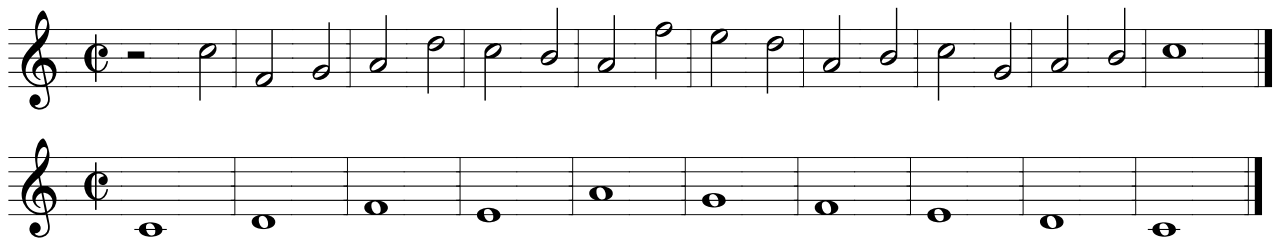
Be careful about long melodic sweeps in the same direction in second species, particularly when they contain leaps. Although context and musicality should be the best judges of just when you've gone too far relentlessly in one direction, the following easy pointers should serve as a guide: ☞ Any sweep of six notes in one direction should subsequently move in the opposite direction. ☞ After any sweep of four notes in one direction that contains a leap you should change direction. ☞ You should change direction after two leaps in the same direction. ☞ You should not leap twice in the same direction if it is preceded by two stepwise moves in that direction. ☞ If you have four notes that move by step in the same direction, you should not follow them with a leap in the same direction. In third species, long stepwise sweeps are greatly encouraged. You probably can't wait, can you?

It is very easy and tempting to create segmented lines in second species, particularly those of the following type:



So, just don't do it!!!!™

Second species gives you the time to develop a line with more peaks and valleys and with more tonal information in it. So you will be able to attempt a well-shaped line that resembles good lines in Western music composed as recently as this morning. The most well-shaped line will have a climax that is leapt to on a syncopated part of the measure (in second species, this means the anacrusis) and which is "resolved" by stepward motion down; the climax ideally should be preceded by one, two or three (or in Wagner's case, dozens of) sub-climaxes which are progressively higher on the way to the ultimate climax. For gravy, get some other sub-climaxes on the way down to the cadence. Remember, a syncopated climax that is leapt to is the most dramatic and likely to get you that NEA grant. A syncopated climax also guarantees that it is not coincidental with the cantus firmus.



Composer: Ruth Spevack, October, 1992

Endeavor to avoid writing "upper neighbor" notes in second species; do not follow a downbeat note with an anacrusis a second higher, and then follow that with the original note on the next downbeat. In many cases, it saps energy from the line; it is not *specifically* prohibited until third species, however.