

First Steps in First-Species Counterpoint

Basic Rules

1. Rhythmically, only use whole notes.
2. Melodically, only use easy-to-sing intervals (mostly steps, no big leaps, nothing dim'ed or aug'ed).
3. Harmonically, only use consonant intervals (3rds, 6ths, or perfect 5ths).
4. Always approach perfect consonances via contrary (or oblique) motion.

The first exercise consists of six measures in common time. The bass line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The treble line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The intervals between the lines are labeled as 8, 6, and 8.

The second exercise consists of six measures in common time. The bass line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The treble line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The intervals between the lines are labeled as 8, 6, and 8.

The third exercise consists of six measures in common time. The bass line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The treble line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The intervals between the lines are labeled as 1, 3, and 1.

The fourth exercise consists of six measures in common time. The bass line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The treble line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The intervals between the lines are labeled as 8, 6, and 8.

The fifth exercise consists of six measures in common time. The bass line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The treble line starts on G4, moves up stepwise to A4, B4, and C5, then down stepwise to B4, A4, and G4. The intervals between the lines are labeled as 8, 10, and 8.