**MGen CA3 rules**

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# Color legend

## Heading colors

Need to rework section

Discuss section with Shegolev

Section is finished

## Rule colors

Mistake is allowed

Mistake has yellow color (prohibited)

Mistake has red color (prohibited)

# Definitions, principles and limitations

## Definitions

### Counterpoint

Counterpoint is the science of melodic lines and their interactions. Counterpoint studies music in horizontal aspect.

Harmony is science of chords and their combinations – studies music in vertical aspect. Harmony and counterpoint complement each other.

### Strict counterpoint

Strict or scholar counterpoint studies interaction of short vocal melodies without modulations[[1]](#footnote-1).

These melodies have to be written over cantus firmus (c.f.) while following strict rules.

### Cantus firmus

Cantus firmus is a given melody, which should be combined with a new melody during counterpoint exercise. C*antus firmus* is written in whole notes in one of modes described below.

## Principles

### Modes

Counterpoint is studied in classic major and minor scales, and also in ancient modes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Major* |  |
| *Melodic minor* |  |
| *Dorian mode* |  |
| *Phrygian mode* |  |
| *Lydian mode* |  |
| *Mixolydian mode* |  |
| *Aeolian mode* |  |

Ancient modes, which are interesting due to their specific sound, are easier to use in counterpoint, than melodic minor. Melodic minor rules can be found starting from §33.

### Main principles of combining the voices

Voices are combined with cantus firmus and with other voices so that in each voice there are chord tones on the first beat of each harmony[[2]](#footnote-2). Each voice can move freely between these reference points. This freedom leads to unexpected combinations of notes, which constitute the main interest of counterpoint. These note combinations should be evaluated by ear. Even if the voice starts not on the first beat of the first measure, the first note of the voice follows the same rules as each note on the first beat of the harmony.

In case of suspension or PDD, the resolution of the suspension or PDD should be chord tone[[3]](#footnote-3):



### Harmonic and melodic notes

Notes, which are required to be part of chord, have both vertical and horizontal meaning. They can be called “chord tones” shortly.

Melodic notes (non-chord tones) surround chord tones. They have only horizontal meaning. Each melodic note should be surrounded by stepwise movement[[4]](#footnote-4) and should not be longer than a previous note, especially if previous note is also a non-chord tone. Chord tones do not have such a limitation and can be surrounded by leaps.

In strict counterpoint we allow a small number of harmonic and melodic tones due to use of diatonic and triads.

All notes of major mode and ancient modes can have harmonic or melodic meaning. It is not true for melodic minor (see §34 и §35).

### Harmonic intervals

The following intervals (simple or compound) are considered consonances between voices:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Unison, perfect octave* |  |
| *Perfect 5th* |  |
| *Major and minor 3rd* |  |
| *Major and minor 6th* |  |

Unison is prohibited in some cases (see §53).

Perfect 4th and tritone are allowed between two voices except bass (see §54).

### Chords

Only the following chords are allowed:

* Major chord in root position and first inversion (6th chord):



* Minor chord in root position and first inversion (6th chord):



* First inversion of diminished chord (6th chord):



* Diminished chord in root position is allowed only when harmonic tritone is not prohibited (see §55).

Augmented chord III# (e.g. CEG# in A minor) is prohibited.

### Non-harmonic tones

Non-harmonic tones can be used in the following cases:

1. Passing and auxiliary tones (§66).
2. Suspensions (§61).
3. Double neighboring tones (§68).
4. Cambiata (§69).
5. Passing downbeat dissonance (§70).

All non-chord tones should resolve correctly (described in respective paragraphs).

## Limitations

### Number of voices

School counterpoint is written for vocal ensemble of 2 to 8 voices.

### Vocal ranges

Voices should be limited in the following ranges:



Each vocal range is evenly divided into three registers. Each voice sounds quiet in the lowest register and loud in the highest register:









Avoid disbalance between vocal ranges, when one of voices is in its lowest register, while another voice is in its highest register[[5]](#footnote-5).

### Counterpoint species

Counterpoint is studied in 5 species. Each species is characterized by obligatory rhythm (see §17).

Starting from 5 voices and above, we limit our study to only first species (whole notes) and 5th species (free rhythm counterpoint).

There should always be one whole note cantus firmus in each exercise. Other whole note voices are considered to be in species 1.

### Mixed species

See §20.

### Voice order

In each species or species mix, *cantus firmus* is located successively in each voice, which gives more combinations.

*Cantus firmus* can be transposed when it is being moved to another voice.

### General counterpoint principles

Counterpoint rules create limits, which contribute to development of music imagination of a student. Student should achieve flexibility, independence and variety of melodic lines.

The strictness of the rules decreases with increase in voice count. If additional voices are introduced during the course of the exercise, more rules can be ignored as soon as enough voices start to sound simultaneously.

Imitations should be avoided in simple counterpoint, because they are studied in a separate exercise.

# Rhythm rules

### Time signature

We usually study binary counterpoint (2 or 4 notes in measure). It is also useful to write counterpoint in other time signatures.

In this book most examples are given in 2/2 or 4/4 time. Cantus firmus usually consists of whole notes.

Each measure has one downbeat and multiple upbeats:



In this example, note G sounds on downbeat (first beat). Notes A, B and C sound on upbeat (second, third and fourth beats).

### Rhythmic limitations of each counterpoint species

See rhythm inside each measure for combination of species with time signature in table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time signature** | **Species 1** | **Species 2** | **Species 3** | **Species 4** | **Species 5** | **Species 1**  **free rhythm** |
| **2/4** |  |  | not used |  | rare | rare |
| **3/4** | . |  | not used |  | rare | rare |
| **2/2** |  |  | \* |  | free  rhythm | free  rhythm |
| **4/4** |  |  |  | \* | free  rhythm | free  rhythm |
| **5/4** |  | rare |  | rare | not used | not used |
| **6/4** | . | . . |  |  | rare | rare |
| **3/2** | . | 3 x ½ | \* |  | rare | rare |

\* This time signature is not recommended for this species (use 4/4 instead of 2/2 for species 3; use 2/2 instead of 4/4 for species 4; use 6/4 instead of 3/2 for species 3)

**Species 1**. One note against one note. Counterpoint is written using whole notes in time signature 4/4.

**Species 2**. Two or three notes against one note. In time signature 2/2 counterpoint is written using half notes and starts with half note rest. For more counterpoint endings diversity, suspension is allowed in penultimate measure if it resolves to a leading tone.

**Species 3**. Four or more notes against one note. Counterpoint in time signature 4/4 is written using quarter notes and starts with a quarter note rest.

**Species 4**. Syncopations. In time signature 4/4 counterpoint is written using slurred half notes and starts with a half note rest. In difficult cases, one syncopation can be broken per exercise.

**Species 5**. Counterpoint in free rhythm. This counterpoint can use all rhythms of previous species, and also some additional rhythms (see §§ 21-23).

Starting from three voices and above, only one voice obeys rhythmic rules of species 2, 3, 4. Other voices use whole notes only. In species 5, on the contrary, only cantus firmus uses whole notes.

### First measure

No rests are allowed in cantus firmus.

Counterpoint voice always starts with a rest, except for the species 1. No more rests are allowed in counterpoint voices apart from this starting rest.

Allowed voice start for each species:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Species 1: |  |
| Species 2: |  |
| Species 3: |  |
| Species 4: |  |
| Species 5: | or  or  or |

No two voices (except for the species 1) should start simultaneously in the same measure on the same beat[[6]](#footnote-6). In each measure two counterpoint voices should be introduced (or one voice, if it is the last voice to be introduced)[[7]](#footnote-7). In this example digits show sequence of voice starts:



### Last measure

Counterpoint in any species in any number of voices always should end with a whole note.

### Mixed species

In 3 and 4 voices we can mix different species of counterpoint in the same exercise. In this case each voice belongs to one particular species.

**In three voices** *cantus firmus* is combined with half notes (species 2), quarter notes (species 3), or syncopations (species 4).Voices should be introduced as close to each other, as possible, but not simultaneously[[8]](#footnote-8). Such a mixed species is called *mélange*.

**In four voices** *cantus firmus* is combined with half notes (species 2), quarter notes (species 3) or syncopations (species 4). Such a mixed species is called *grand mélange*.

5th species should not be combined with species 2, 3, or 4.

## Fifth species counterpoint

### Allowed rhythms

The following rhythms are allowed:

* The rhythms of previous counterpoint species, except for whole notes:



* New rhythms:



* Quavers:



* Half note with a dot:

 

Quavers should be written in pairs; they should be surrounded by stepwise movement. Quavers should never appear on downbeat. Number of quavers should be limited.

There should not be more than four notes in one measure[[9]](#footnote-9).

**Exceptions**:

These rhythms are allowed without syncopations only in penultimate measure, irrespective of number of voices:  or 

These rhythms without syncopations are allowed starting from five voices and above[[10]](#footnote-10):  or 

A whole note within the exercise is allowed starting from five voices and above.

### First measure

See §18.

### Rhythms distribution

1. In a single voice neighboring measures should not have the same rhythm. Also, it is not allowed to write two syncopations in a row.
2. Two voices should not have same rhythm in the same measure.

**Exception**:

Starting from 5 voices and above half notes and quarter notes can be imposed over each other.

# Melodic rules

### Stepwise movement

Stepwise movement should be used as much as possible. Stepwise movement in conjunction with contrary movement comprises the essence of the counterpoint.

### Leaps

Leaps should be avoided as long as possible, especially between shorter notes. Leaps from a quaver or to a quaver are prohibited.

Arpeggios are unwelcome in a single voice melodic line.



**Exception**: arpeggio is allowed when melody direction changes:



### Leaps between measures

Leaps between measures should be particularly avoided.

**Exception**:

Leaps are allowed between measures, if melody moves in an opposite direction before the leap[[11]](#footnote-12):



### Melodic intervals between two consecutive notes

1. Allowed:
   1. Minor, major and perfect intervals less or equal to major 6th (minor 3rd, major 3rd, perfect 4th, perfect 5th, minor 6th, major 6th);
   2. Perfect octave (except octave leap to leading tone).



1. Prohibited:
   1. Chromatic intervals:
      1. intervals formed by non-diatonic notes;
      2. intervals between altered and non-altered forms of the same degree.
   2. Diminished and augmented intervals, tritone;
   3. Intervals longer than major 6th (except for perfect octave);
   4. Perfect octave leap to the leading tone.



Leaps of an octave should not be abused. In general, the longer the leaps, the less leaps should be used.

### Melodic intervals between more than two consecutive notes

1. Tritone within 3 or 4 consecutive notes should be prepared or left by stepwise movement in the same direction, because in this case tritone is made inaudible:





1. Tritone within 3 or 4 consecutive notes can be surrounded by movement in opposite direction on both sides, if both tritone notes are prepared or resolved correctly (resolution notes are circled, tritone notes are red):



In major:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Note** | **Should resolve to** |
| IV | III |
| VII | I |

In minor:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Note** | **Should resolve to** |
| II | III |
| III | II |
| IV | III |
| VI | V |
| VI# | VII |
| VII# | I |

1. Even if tritone within 3 or 4 consecutive notes is prepared or left by stepwise movement in the same direction, both tritone notes should be resolved correctly, if last tritone note is repeated inside measure or if last tritone note is longer than previous.
2. Octave should be prepared and left by opposite movement, where possible:



Two consecutive octaves or 6th leaps are allowed in difficult cases:



### Obligatory note preparation

Suspension is the only note that has to be prepared obligatory (see §63).

Tritone note preparation is described in §28.

### Obligatory resolution of chord tones

Leading tone cannot be non-chord tone if it is the last note in penultimate measure. Leading tone in counterpoint has to resolve to tonic when all of the following conditions are met:

1. Leading tone is a chord tone;
2. Leading tone is the last note before the next chord;
3. There is a tonic note in the next chord.

Harmonic tritone resolution is described in §55.

### Notes repeat

Note should not be immediately followed by note of the same pitch in any voice in any counterpoint species.

**Exceptions**:

Whole notes can be repeated in first species, but such a repeat should be used as seldom as possible (one repeat within 10 consecutive notes is allowed).

Starting from three voices, a half note or quarter note can be repeated between penultimate and last measure. First note is called “anticipation” and can be non-harmonic even if it is prepared by a leap. Second note is called “anticipation resolution”:



Anticipation should not be longer than half note and should not be longer than previous note.

### Melody organization

Melody should develop permanently without symmetry or repeats.

The following should be avoided:

1. Repeat of melodic fragments:
   1. Immediate repeat of 2 notes is prohibited if length of the first note is the same in original and repeated fragments. The length of the second note does not matter;



* 1. Immediate repeat of 3 or 4 notes 3 times is prohibited if length of each note is the same in original and repeated fragments, except the last note. The length of the last note does not matter;
  2. Non-immediate repeat 3 times of 3 or 4 notes is prohibited if all fragments start on the same beat.

1. Return 4 times to the same note within 9 adjacent notes.
2. Frequent return to the tonic:
   1. Return 3 times to tonic within 6 adjacent notes;
   2. Return 4 times to tonic within 12 adjacent notes.
3. Stagnation
   1. 5 consecutive notes taking no more than a 2nd interval;
   2. 7 consecutive notes taking no more than a 3rd interval (8 notes for species 2; 9 notes for species 3 or 5);
   3. 11 consecutive notes taking no more than a 4th interval (12 notes for species 3; 14 notes for species 5).

## Melodic minor

### Two forms of melodic minor

Melodic minor can be presented in one of two forms, depending on melody direction:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ascending form: |  |
| Descending form: |  |

### Use of melodic notes VI# or VII

Notes F# or G natural in previous example are melodic. They are used as passing or auxiliary notes in the following cases:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Passing tone: |  |
| Auxiliary tone: |  |

### Use of chord tones VI# or VII

1. Note F# can be chord tone only inside an ascending stepwise movement:



1. Note G (natural) can be chord tone only inside a descending stepwise movement:



Avoid doubling of notes VI# or VII.

### Close positioning of two forms of VI or VII degree in melodic minor

1. Altered and unaltered forms of the same note (VI or VII degrees in melodic minor) should not be used in the same voice close to each other. At least 3 other notes should be placed between them:



In difficult cases it is acceptable that these notes can become closer:



1. False chromatic relation is a chromatic contradiction between the altered and the unaltered forms of the same note sounding simultaneously (or in close proximity), in two different voices. It is allowed in close proximity only when there is another harmony between related notes or when at least one of the related notes is not a chord tone:



Starting from 3 voices and above, false chromatic relation of chord tones is allowed between non-extreme voices, especially when related notes are separated in time by other notes.

Simultaneous false chromatic relation is acceptable only when related notes do not start on the same beat. In such case at least one of the related notes is always not a chord tone:



# Harmonic rules

To get best sound from counterpoint ensemble, voices movement should be strictly controlled[[12]](#footnote-13). In this section you will find the rules, which work for any pair of voices in counterpoint. Also, counterpoint chord rules can be found in this section.

### Contrary motion of voices

Contrary motion of voices should be used as much as possible, especially between extreme voices.

Contrary stepwise motion sounds great and comprises the essence of the counterpoint.

### Oblique motion

Oblique motion also sounds great.

Oblique motion to unison is prohibited in some cases (see §53).

Oblique motion to non-chord tone suspension on first beat of harmony should be resolved (see §64).

Oblique motion to harmonic tritone should be resolved (see §55).

Oblique motion to parallel perfect consonance is prohibited in some cases (see §43).

### Similar motion

During similar or contrary motion both notes of first interval end simultaneously, at the same moment both notes of second interval start simultaneously in the same voices.

Similar motion is generally undesired and should be used as seldom as possible. Its usage is regulated by rules, which are described below.

If intervals before and after similar motion are the same, this is called “consecutive parallel intervals”. Consecutive intervals are two same harmonic intervals in two voices. If one interval is minor and another is major, they are still considered consecutive intervals (e.g. consecutive 3rds).

### Consecutive 3rds, 4ths and 6ths

Do not use more than 3 consecutive 3rds, 4ths or 6ths of the same duration (parallel motion)[[13]](#footnote-14).

Do not use three 6th chords consecutively in whole notes if all voices have similar motion[[14]](#footnote-15):



In counterpoint species 4, consecutive 3rds, 4ths or 6ths, which occur due to syncopations, are allowed without limitations.

### Similar motion to 3rd, 4th or 6th

Allowed.

### Consecutive 5ths or 8ves

Two consecutive perfect 5ths or 8ths are prohibited in all species, even in contrary motion:



Unison is subjected to the same rule as octave. It is prohibited to use two consecutive unisons or octave after unison (or unison after octave):



**Exceptions**:

Starting from 6 voices and above, consecutive perfect 5ths or 8ves are allowed in contrary motion between internal voices.

Starting from 7 voices and above, consecutive perfect 5ths or 8ves are allowed in contrary motion between any voices.

Starting from 3 voices and above, tritone is allowed immediately after perfect 5th. Perfect 5th is always prohibited immediately after tritone.

 

### 5ths or 8ves, separated by one or multiple notes

Such 5ths or 8ves are allowed when they are separated by at least a whole or its equivalent (e.g. two half notes or four quarter notes):



**Exceptions**:

5ths or 8ves, separated by less than a whole note, are allowed in the following cases if the second interval (5th or 8ve) is not on first beat of the measure:

1. In contrary motion:



1. Even in similar motion, when one of the intervals is formed by a melodic note[[15]](#footnote-16):



Starting from 5 voices and above, 5ths or 8ves, separated by one half note or two quarter notes, are allowed if second interval is on upbeat, without any additional conditions[[16]](#footnote-17).

### Similar motion to 5th or 8ve between extreme voices

Similar motion to 5th or 8ve between extreme voices is prohibited:



**Exceptions:**

Starting from 3 voices and above, similar motion to 8ve between extreme voices in final cadence is allowed, if higher voice is moving stepwise:



Starting from 6 voices and above, similar motion to 5th or 8ve on main degrees (I, IV, V) is allowed between external voices, if higher voice is moving stepwise.

### Similar motion to 5th or 8ve between internal voices

Similar motion to 5th or 8ve between is allowed except when both voices are external[[17]](#footnote-18):

1. If one of voices is moving stepwise[[18]](#footnote-19):



1. Even when both voices have leaps, if one of notes forming interval is part of a previous harmony (common note):



Similar motion to unison is prohibited. Similar motion to tritone without bass is allowed.

**Exceptions:**

Starting from 6 voices and above, similar leaping motion to 8ve is allowed even without a common note, except when both voices are external.

### Consecutive 2nds, 7ths, 9ths

1. Consecutive 2nds should be avoided[[19]](#footnote-20):



1. Consecutive 7ths or 9ths are allowed, especially if second interval is minor 7th or major 9th:



Major 7th and minor 9th sound harsh without another voice. They are allowed if they are accompanied by the third voice, which forms harmonic consonance interval with one of notes of major 7th or minor 9th.

### Similar motion to 2nd, 7th and 9th

1. Similar motion to major or minor second should be avoided[[20]](#footnote-21).



1. Similar motion to 7th or 9th is acceptable between non-extreme voices, especially if it is minor 7th or major 9th:



Similar motion to 7th or 9th is prohibited between extreme voices.

Major 7th and minor 9th can be alleviated with a common note when there are at least three voices:



### 2nd, 7th or 9th at the beginning of the voice

It is allowed to start the voice with vertical major 2nd, minor 7th or major 9th.

It is prohibited to start voice with vertical minor 2nd, major 7th or minor 9th, especially if the other voice does not form consonance interval with one of notes, which form a dissonance interval:



### Distance between voices

The distance between voices is not limited if each voice is in range and there is no voice disbalance (see §11).

### Voice crossing

Voice crossing is the intersection of voices in a composition, leaving a lower voice on a higher pitch than a higher voice (and vice versa). Voice crossings are often justified by melodic development of the voices. Yet, because this can cause registral confusion and reduce the independence of the voices, it should be avoided for good polyphonic balance.

**Exceptions**:

Starting from 3 voices and above, short voice crossings between adjacent voices (up to one and a half measures) are allowed between neighboring voices, except the first and the last measure.

Starting from 5 voices and above, longer voice crossings between adjacent voices (up to two and a half measures) are allowed (including the first and the last measure).

Voice crossing between non-adjacent voices is always prohibited.

### Voice crossing arrangement

Voice crossing can happen during contrary or oblique motion of the voices, but should not happen during similar motion of the voices[[21]](#footnote-22).

1. Contrary motion of the voices

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * 1. Through unison – good: |  |
| * 1. Through second – possible: |  |

Yet, two consecutive seconds should be avoided, because this degrades sound quality:



1. During oblique motion unison is possible if §53 rules are not violated.

### Doubling

1. All notes, harmonic and melodic, except suspension, can be doubled. Leading tone can also be doubled as other notes[[22]](#footnote-23).
2. Note doubling should be accomplished across octave or two octaves. Unison doubling is allowed only when §53 rules are not violated.

### Unison

1. Unison can be used on upbeat. Unison is allowed on downbeat only in the first and the last measure.

**Exception**:

Starting from 5 voices and above, unison is acceptable on downbeat in any measure[[23]](#footnote-24).

Unison should be used on downbeat as seldom as possible, because it makes polyphony sound less rich.

1. Movement to unison should be contrary (stepwise or leap) or oblique (only leap).



In difficult cases you can use oblique motion to unison from major 2nd (but not from minor 2nd):



Similar motion to unison is prohibited, especially not to last or penultimate measure[[24]](#footnote-25):



1. Unison can be left by any movement (similar, oblique, contrary), stepwise (to major or minor 2nd) or by a leap.

### Harmonic 4th

1. Perfect 4th is not allowed between bass and any other voice if both notes of the interval are chord tones.
2. Perfect 4th is allowed between any notes without bass.
3. Perfect 4th is allowed between any voices if at least one of its notes is not a chord tone.

### Harmonic tritone

1. Harmonic tritone is prohibited between bass and any other voice, if both notes of tritone are chord tones.

**Exceptions**:

Starting from four voices and above, harmonic tritone is allowed with bass only in penultimate harmony, when suspension resolves to leading tone in bass:



1. Harmonic tritone is allowed between any two voices except bass, but each of its notes requires correct resolution:

In major:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Note** | **Should resolve to** |
| IV | III |
| VII | I |

In minor:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Note** | **Should resolve to** |
| II | III |
| III | II |
| IV | III |
| VI | V |
| VI# | VII |
| VII# | I |

**Exceptions**:

Each tritone note, which does not continue until the end of current harmony, will not require resolution.

1. Harmonic tritone is allowed if at least one of notes is not a chord tone.

### Second inversion chords

Second inversion chords are prohibited[[25]](#footnote-26):



**Exceptions**:

Temporary second inversion chord is allowed on upbeat if bass immediately returns to tonic and 5th note in bass is not repeated:



### Obligatory harmonies

1. The first and the last measures have to be harmonized with tonic chord in root position.

In two voices counterpoint has to start with degree I or V, and end with degree I.

In three voices, if voice starts with half note or quarter note, this note has to be degree I or V. If first note is a syncopation, it can be a degree III. Notes arrangement in the last measure can be arbitrary (unisons or octaves).

1. Penultimate chord should be:
   1. Chord V (in root position or first inversion).



* 1. Chord VII (in first inversion)



Starting from 4 voices and above, chord VII is allowed in root position if suspension resolves to leading tone in bass (see §55).

* 1. Chord II (in root position), if leading tone exists in this measure as a passing tone to tonic note:



### Incomplete chords

1. Starting from 3 voices and above, all three chord tones should appear on downbeat for rich sound, if possible.
2. In any number of voices, chords in the first and the last measure can be incomplete (3rd or 5th chord tone can be missing) in all counterpoint species (including mixed species).

In other measures (not the first and not the last) incomplete chords are allowed in three voices under the following conditions:

1. There should not be two incomplete chords (the first and the last chords do not count).
2. Two incomplete chords should not follow each other immediately.
3. Penultimate chord should always be complete.

Missing 3rd tone in a chord is allowed only in the first and the last measure.

### Harmonic rhythm

There should not be more than one harmony in a single measure. Yet, the same harmony can continue during several measures.

**Exception**:

Penultimate measure can include two harmonies if penultimate harmony follows §58 rules:



### Modulation

Counterpoint usually does not modulate. Yet, short temporary modulation is possible into closely related key – but not more than once per exercise.

Note, which characterizes new key, should be harmonic and not only melodic. Return to main key should also happen with a harmonic note. Exercises in minor key should not modulate to parallel major through chord III.

Chromatic interval is always prohibited.

# Non-chord tones

## Suspensions

### Suspensions, which resolve down

Suspension of any degree can resolve down.

Only VI# degree during ascending movement in melodic minor cannot resolve down.

### Suspensions, which resolve up

Suspension resolution up can be used in the following cases:

1. Leading tone resolution into tonic of a minor and major key:



1. Chord tone suspension:



In the latter case, a perfect 5th can be considered a chord tone – in this case there would be two harmonies in a measure, which is allowed in case of suspension resolution.

### Suspension preparation

1. Suspension preparation should not be shorter than a half note and should not be shorter than the suspension:



Starting from 5 voices and above, suspension can be prepared with a whole note.

1. If suspension resolves to 5th interval, this suspension should not be prepared by 5th interval (same for 8th):



**Exception**:

This is acceptable if second voice moves during the suspension resolution:



### Suspension resolution

If suspension is a non-chord tone, it should resolve to a chord tone with a stepwise motion (see §61-62)[[26]](#footnote-27).

Suspension should resolve on second, third or fourth quarter of the measure (resolution to a note shorter than a quarter is prohibited):



There can be one ornament non-chord quarter tone between suspension and suspension resolution surrounded by a leap of 3rd and stepwise motion:

 

 

There can be two non-chord quaver ornament tones in stepwise motion between suspension and suspension resolution (use upper auxiliary tone for resolution up, lower auxiliary tone for resolution down):

 

If suspension is a chord tone, it still can have one or two non-chord resolution ornament tones, if suspension is resolved stepwise upwards or downwards according to the rules.

If suspension resolution doubles, avoid similar motion to 8ve:



### Suspension and resolution

Suspension resolution should not sound simultaneously with suspension, except for the case, when suspension resolution is in bass and the interval between suspension and suspension resolution has to be greater or equal to 9th:



The interval between suspension and suspension resolution can be a major 2nd:



**Exceptions**:

Starting from 4 voices and above, suspension can sound simultaneously with suspension resolution if resolution is in internal voice and voices have stepwise contrary motion:



Suspension should not sound simultaneously with suspension resolution, if suspension is below when they sound together:



## Passing and auxiliary tones

### Passing and auxiliary tones

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Descending and ascending passing tones | Upper and lower auxiliary tones |
|  |  |

Usually passing and auxiliary tones appear on upbeat. As an exception, passing tone is acceptable on downbeat simultaneously with suspension, especially with contrary stepwise motion:



When harmony does not change during two measures, passing or auxiliary tone can occur on downbeat of the second measure.

Each auxiliary tone has to be surrounded by chord tones on both sides. Multiple passing tones can go one after the other if melody direction does not change. Such a series of passing tones has to be surrounded by chord tones on both sides.

### Simultaneous sounding of melodic and harmonic notes

Passing and auxiliary tones can sound simultaneously with chord and non-chord tones in case of contrary motion.

In case of similar motion these intervals obey the rules § 44, § 45.

See § 53 concerning oblique motion to unison.

See § 34 concerning the use of passing and auxiliary tones in melodic minor.

## Double neighboring tones, passing downbeat dissonance and cambiata

### Double neighboring tones

Double neighboring tones (changing tones or DNT) consist of two consecutive non-chord tones. The first moves in one direction by a step from a chord tone (first chord tone), then skips by a third in the opposite direction to another non-chord tone, and then finally resolves back to the original chord tone (second chord tone). Double neighboring tones appear to resemble two consecutive neighbor tones; an upper neighbor and a lower neighbor with the chord tone missing from the middle. The double neighboring tones function as a way to decorate, or embellish, a chord tone and are also used to provide rhythmic interest between common tones:

 

The first and the last chord tones of DNT should not be shorter than a quarter note. The double neighboring tones should not be longer than a quarter note and should not be longer than the first and the last chord tones of DNT.

DNT sound better if before the first chord tone there is no leap, especially if there is stepwise motion in the same direction as after the first chord tone. The same is especially true for the last chord tone in DNT.

DNT and their resolution tone can sound simultaneously (resolution to octave). DNT cannot resolve to unison.

### Cambiata

Cambiata is a melodic pattern of 4 consecutive notes (chord tone, non-chord tone, non-chord tone, chord tone) where a note is skipped from by an interval of a 3rd in one direction and this is followed by the stepwise motion in opposite direction:

 

The first and the last chord tones of cambiata should not be shorter than a quarter note. Non-chord tones should not be longer than a quarter note and should not be longer than the first and the last chord tones of cambiata.

### Passing downbeat dissonance

Passing downbeat dissonance (PDD) is a passing tone on the first beat of any harmony. It is allowed in species 1, 3, 5. In species 2, 4 PDD is allowed in difficult cases:



PDD is allowed only in descending stepwise motion.

PDD cannot be longer than previous or next note. Also, PDD cannot be longer than half note.

Unlike a usual passing tone, PDD has to immediately resolve to a chord tone inside the same measure.

### Combining multiple melodic patterns

Depending on harmony in measure, any melodic pattern (PDD, DNT, cambiata) can be deactivated. In the following examples melodic patterns are deactivated (circled notes are non-harmonic):

 

Multiple melodic patterns can be combined in one measure. Some of patterns can be deactivated. In the following example (circled notes are non-harmonic) measure starts with PDD, then there is a cambiata pattern, which is deactivated, because notes around the leap are harmonic. Starting from third note in measure there is a DNT pattern:



TODO:

- Describe “species 1 free rhythm”

1. Exception: short-term modulations into adjacent mode (see §60). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Exceptions:

   Tritones and 4th intervals on first beat of harmony are allowed between chord tones if these intervals are formed without bass.

   Passing downbeat dissonance (PDD) is described in §70. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Exception: Tritones and 4th intervals can be formed by suspension resolution note if these intervals are formed without bass. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Exceptions: the following melodic shapes can include leaps:

   Double neighboring tones (§68),

   Cambiata (§70),

   Suspension resolution ornament (§64). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Disbalance is acceptable between vocal ranges if it is shorter than a whole note. In difficult cases disbalance is acceptable up to three half notes in a row. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Two voices of species 2 or 4 can start simultaneously (but not more than 2 voices). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In difficult cases only one voice can be introduced in measure, even if it is not the last voice to be introduced. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Fifth species rhythm also can be introduced in one of voices. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Five notes in measure are allowed if first note is slurred from previous measure. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. In difficult cases these rhythms are allowed in 4 voices in soprano. Starting from 5 voices and above, whole note can be slurred with a shorter note. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Leaps of a 3rd, 4th or 5th are allowed between measures in difficult cases, even if they are prepared by movement in the same direction:

     [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Number of voice pair that have to be controlled when number of voices in counterpoint grows:

    |  |  |
    | --- | --- |
    | Number of voices | Number of voice pairs |
    | 2 | 1 |
    | 3 | 3 |
    | 4 | 6 |
    | 5 | 10 |
    | 6 | 15 |
    | 7 | 21 |
    | 8 | 28 |

    [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Compound intervals follow the same rules as simple intervals (e.g. 10th and 3rd). Only unison and octave, 2nd and 9th have different rules. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. You can write three or more consecutive 6th chords, if at least two voices have contrary motion:

     [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Similarly, 5ths between syncopated harmonic notes on downbeat are allowed (but not 8ves):

    

    Similarly, close 5ths or 8ves are allowed, if second interval is formed by harmonic note, surrounded by stepwise motion, resembling a passing or auxiliary tone:

     [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. In difficult cases this exception can also be used in 4 voices. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. This means between two internal voices or between one internal voice and one external voice. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. If only lower voice is moving stepwise, then similar motion to 5th on secondary degrees (II, III, VI) should be avoided in 5 voices. Also, similar motion to 8ve down should be avoided:

     [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Exception: two consecutive 2nds are allowed if second interval is a major 2nd (and never if it is minor 2nd). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Similar motion to major second is acceptable, if one of notes of this interval sounded immediately before this second:

     [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Voice crossing is acceptable during similar motion of the voices, if at least one voice moves stepwise:

     [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Yet, leading tone doubling in bass should be avoided, because it decreases sound quality. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. In 4 voices unison can be used between two lowest voices on downbeat if this is needed for melodic development. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Exception: Direct movement to unison with stepwise motion in higher voice to last or penultimate measure is allowed. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. The following examples are allowed because here no second inversion chord is present:

     [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Suspension can go through multiple harmonies without resolution until it becomes a non-chord tone. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)