Demo: Counterpoint by Construction

Youyou Cong
Tokyo Institute of Technology
Tokyo, Japan
cong@c.titech.ac.jp

John Leo
Halfaya Research
Bellevue, WA, USA
leo@halfaya.org

Western music of the common practice period tends to loosely follow sets of rules, which were developed over time to ensure the aesthetic quality of the composition. Among these rules, those for harmony [Piston et al. 1987] and counterpoint (harmonically interdependent melodies) [Fux 1965] are particularly fundamental and continue to be taught to music students, not only as a means to understand the music of that period, but also as a foundation for modern art and popular music.

To help analyze and synthesize tonal music, it is worthwhile to encode these rules into a programming language. As shown by recent studies, functional programming languages are particularly suited to this task. In the past decade, Haskell has been extensively used to encode the rules of harmony [De Haas et al. 2011, 2013; Koops et al. 2013; Magalhães and de Haas 2011; Magalhães and Koops 2014] as well as counterpoint [Szamozvancev and Gale 2017]. Haskell's static type sytem is used to encode these rules, so that "well-typed music does not sound wrong". Unfortunately the type system of plain Haskell is not powerful enough to guarantee these properties. Previous studies have thus incorporated language extensions such as GADTs [Cheney and Hinze 2002] and singleton types [Eisenberg and Weirich 2013] to approximate dependently-typed programming.

In this demonstration of work in progress, we present Music Tools [Cong and Leo 2019], a library of small tools that can be combined functionally to help analyze and synthesize music. To allow simple and natural encoding of rules, we built the library in Agda [Norell 2007], which is a functional language with full dependent types. As an application of the library, we demonstrate an implementation of species counterpoint, based on the rules given by Fux [1965]. Thanks to Agda's rich type system, we can express these rules naturally, and thus ensure by construction that well-typed counterpoint satisfies all the required rules.

As an example, the simplest of Fux's rule systems is first-species counterpoint, in which one starts with a base melody (the *cantus firmus*) and contructs a counterpoint melody note-by-note in the same rhythm. "Dissonant" intervals (2nds, 7ths and 4ths) are probibited, as are are parallel and similar motion of perfect intervals (5ths and octaves). The latter is encoded in Agda as follows.

```
motionOk : (i1 : Interval)
           (i2 : Interval) → Set
motionOk i1 i2 with motion i1 i2
         | isPerfectInterval i2
motionOk i1 i2 | contrary | _     = ⊤
motionOk i1 i2 | oblique  | _     = ⊤
motionOk i1 i2 | parallel | false = ⊤
motionOk i1 i2 | parallel | true  = ⊥
motionOk i1 i2 | similar  | false = ⊤
motionOk i1 i2 | similar  | true  = ⊥
```

The music must also end with a cadence, which is a final motion from the second or seventh degree to the tonic (first degree). These rules are encoded in the following type, whose terms are exactly valid first-species counterpoint.

```
data FirstSpecies : PitchInterval →
                    Set where
  cadence2 : (p : Pitch) →
    FirstSpecies
      (transpose (+ 2) p , maj6)
  cadence7 : (p : Pitch) →
    FirstSpecies
      (transpose -[1+ 0 ] p , min10)
  _::_ : (pi : PitchInterval) →
         {pj : PitchInterval} →
         {_ : motionOk pi pj} →
         FirstSpecies pj →
         FirstSpecies pi
```

Explicit conversions from PitchInterval (which ensures the inteval is not dissonant) to the general Interval have been omitted in the listing above. Note that motionOk is an implicit argument of the cons constructor, and is able to be resolved automatically by the type checker, and thus the proof does not need to be supplied by the user. Valid first-species counterpoint can thus be written very naturally as in the following simple example.

```
example : FirstSpecies (g 4 , per8)
example =
  (g 4 , per8) :: (c 5 , maj10) ::
  (c 5 , per8) :: (c 5 , maj10) ::
  (e 5 , min10) :: (g 5 , per8) ::
  (cadence2 (c 6))
```

Conference'17, July 2017, Washington, DC, USA
2018. ACM ISBN 978-x-xxxx-xxxx-x/YY/MM...$15.00

At the FARM workshop, we intend to give a gentle introduction to counterpoint, and describe our Agda implementation, showing how the type-based approach both aids human composition and allows for computer-generated creation of correct counterpoint. We then contrast our work to a recent study on generating natural-sounding counterpoint by machine learning [Huang et al. 2017], which does not provide correctness guarantees. Finally, we discuss further applications of our library, including representation of functional harmony.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the participants of the Tokyo Agda Implementors' Meeting, especially Ulf Norell and Jesper Cockx, for many helpful suggestions that improved our Agda code.

References

James Cheney and Ralf Hinze. 2002. A lightweight implementation of generics and dynamics. In *Proceedings of the 2002 ACM SIGPLAN workshop on Haskell*. ACM, 90–104.

Youyou Cong and John Leo. 2019. Music Tools. https://github.com/halfaya/MusicTools.

W. Bas De Haas, José Pedro Magalhães, Remco C. Veltkamp, and Frans Wiering. 2011. HarmTrace: Improving Harmonic Similarity Estimation Using Functional Harmony Analysis. In *Proceedings of the 12th International Society for Music Information Retrieval Conference (ISMIR '11)*. 67–72.

W. Bas De Haas, José Pedro Magalhães, Frans Wiering, and Remco C. Veltkamp. 2013. HarmTrace: Automatic Functional Harmonic Analysis. *Computer Music Journal* 37:4 (2013), 37–53. https://doi.org/10.1162/COMJ_a_00209

Richard A Eisenberg and Stephanie Weirich. 2013. Dependently typed programming with singletons. *ACM SIGPLAN Notices* 47, 12 (2013), 117–130.

Johann Joseph Fux. 1965. *The Study of Counterpoint*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Cheng-Zhi Anna Huang, Tim Cooijmans, Adam Roberts, Aaron Courville, and Douglas Eck. 2017. Counterpoint by Convolution. In *Proceedings of ISMIR 2017*. https://ismir2017.smcnus.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/187_Paper.pdf

Hendrik Vincent Koops, José Pedro Magalhães, and W. Bas De Haas. 2013. A Functional Approach to Automatic Melody Harmonisation. In *Proceedings of the First ACM SIGPLAN Workshop on Functional Art, Music, Modeling & Design (FARM '13)*. ACM, 47–58. https://doi.org/10.1145/2505341.2505343

José Pedro Magalhães and W. Bas de Haas. 2011. Functional modelling of musical harmony: an experience report. In *Proceedings of the 16th ACM SIGPLAN International Conference on Functional Programming (ICFP '11)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 156–162.

José Pedro Magalhães and Hendrik Vincent Koops. 2014. Functional Generation of Harmony and Melody. In *Proceedings of the Second ACM SIGPLAN Workshop on Functional Art, Music, Modeling & Design (FARM '14)*. ACM. https://doi.org/10.1145/2633638.2633645

Ulf Norell. 2007. *Towards a practical programming language based on dependent type theory*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Chalmers University of Technology.

W. Piston, M. DeVoto, and A. Jannery. 1987. *Harmony*. Norton.

Dmitrij Szamozvancev and Michael B Gale. 2017. Well-typed music does not sound wrong (experience report). In *ACM SIGPLAN Notices*, Vol. 52. ACM, 99–104.