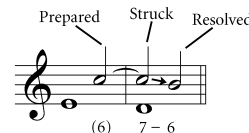


T251 / Fourth species counterpoint: principles

Basics The characteristic rhythm of this species is the syncopated half note, and the signature dissonance is the dissonant suspension.

Suspensions Dissonant suspensions are accented dissonances, and involve three stages:

Prepared (consonance, last half note of previous bar)
Struck (dissonance, first half note of new bar)
Resolved (consonance, down by step, second half note)



16C composers overwhelmingly preferred dissonant suspensions that resolve into imperfect consonances. So we will use only 7-6, 4-3 (upper voice) and 2-3 (lower voice) suspensions.

Suspensions can be chained in a series (generally no more than three of one type in a row).

Decorations The basic suspensions can be decorated idiomatically with one of these figures. Incorporate these as you like, aiming for variety (the first one is not usually used for the final cadence, however).



Consonant syncopations Not all syncopations need to involve dissonances. Tied consonances can occur on downbeats too. Since they are not constrained to resolve downwards, you can leap away from them. Perfect consonances on downbeats can be broken up by imperfect consonances on weak beats, so successions such as 8 10 | 8, 8 6 | 8, and especially 5 6 | 5 are fine.

Second species Second species is still available to you, including the dissonant passing note (♩ ♩).

Summary

⌣ ♩ | If the downbeat is consonant: you can leap away from it to another consonance, which can be tied into the next bar (fourth species) or untied (second species); or you can use the passing note idiom (second species).
If the downbeat is dissonant, it must be a suspension and it must resolve downwards by step.

| ♩ ⌣ Unless it is a second species PT, the second beat will always be consonant, and will usually be tied into the next bar.

Cadences You can now write your own cadences.

- Cadences are made by setting $\hat{7} - \hat{8}$ against the cantus firmus's $\hat{2} - \hat{1}$.
- One voice must always move by half-step, so if it's not already in the mode, raise $\hat{7}$ to create a leading tone (in the Phrygian mode, the half-step is already located between $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{1}$, so you don't need to raise $\hat{7}$).
- The leading tone is always introduced by a dissonant suspension, giving the following formulas:



- It's quite common to have chains of suspensions leading into the final cadence.
- The final note of the exercise is always a whole note.

Some illustrations of this species

A counterpoint above the cantus firmus:

Francesco di San Daniele fecit

